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Pilon, Janet

Subject: Listed Places of Worship and 1107 Main St. W.

From: Sarah Sheehan

Sent: Tuesday, June 7, 2022 11:38 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca; Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Powers, Russ <Russ.Powers@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Danko, John-Paul <John-Paul.Danko@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Pearson, Maria <Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Brenda <Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Ferguson, Lloyd <Lloyd.Ferguson@hamilton.ca>; VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>; Whitehead, Terry <Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca>; Partridge, Judi <Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Listed Places of Worship and 1107 Main St. W.

Mr. Mayor, respected Councillors,

As you vote to approve zoning and Official Plan amendments for the redevelopment of 1107 Main St. W. (former Grace Lutheran church), I hope you will remember the city's commitment to climate action and green conservation of built heritage, especially heritage places of worship.

William Russell Souter is an important Hamilton architect, whose neo-Gothic Basilica of Christ the King — designed with his late partner Gordon Johnston Hutton — **won a papal medal**. Yet the developer appears to see only the \$7.5M land value, wishing to demolish a listed heritage property and salvage the facade only, like a headstone or garden feature.

We need developers to show sensitivity to the local Hamilton context. The applicant's dismissive take on the church's architectural value is at odds with the city's estimation of Souter's design. This property is on the city's heritage Register. Plus, the applicant was held to a higher standard in Kingston, where they **built condos around a listed heritage property**.

Demolition of Souter's church in Westdale would ignore important historical context, especially the **diversity and resilience that both Adas Israel Synagogue and Grace Lutheran represent**. Both synagogue and Lutheran church stand on a single block, in an area notorious for its bigoted restrictive covenants — not struck down by the federal government until the 1940s.

In such scenarios, it is customary to negotiate, and **balance community and developer interests**: if the applicant gets their 15 storeys of luxury condos — mainly high-turnover investor units — why not ask for some heritage adaptive reuse?

Even if it needs to be moved, in 2022, we know how to do that. (Compare the heritage move planned in Ancaster.) The church structure can be retained as residential or commercial space, and **the city has ample incentives to support**, especially since staff and the Heritage Committee found it worthy of designation.

If the applicant finds this challenging, perhaps they could partner with one of our **many local experts in church reuse**, such as Indwell (St. Mark's Place, St. Peter's Lutheran, Wentworth Baptist), Tal Dehtiar (16 West Ave. S.), or LCH Developments (Wywrot brothers: The Connolly, 415 Broadview, 175 Jones).

We cannot justify bulldozing this history.

Sincerely,
Dr. Sarah Sheehan

More info:

<https://sarahsheehan.ca/2022/03/17/churches-as-social-infrastructure/>



Churches as social infrastructure – Sarah Sheehan

A fascinating opinion piece on church buildings as crucial community infrastructure: in last Wednesday's Spec, the CEOs of Anishnabeg Outreach and Trinity Centres Foundation argue for the healing power of social infrastructure, in the form of repurposed church buildings. This piece is also very timely, considering the number of at-risk church buildings in Hamilton and beyond, as well as the ...

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<https://sarahsheehan.ca/2022/06/01/grace-lutheran-at-risk/>