

4.7 (b)

Dear Hamilton City Councilors and Mayor Eisenberger,

After the heritage committee's recommendation, the planning committee voted in favour to bring the "intent to designate" the former St. Giles Church in Hamilton to the council meeting on April 14th. This beautiful church is located in ward 3 at Holton and Main. I am writing to ask you to vote for designation today.

I did watch the planning committee meeting April 6th and heard the concerns regarding the incredible urgency for affordable housing in Hamilton. Indwell has offered to advise, share their experience and offer any insights. As you probably know they are experts on building affordable housing and also have experience with church conversions. Indwell is converting St. Mark's Church in Kitchener to affordable housing while preserving much of the original structure. ACO will also work with them to help get any government funding available and, in fact, are already working on this. There are members of Friends of St. Giles, including myself, that would help them fundraise. I'm sure there are many others that would help them. Councilor Jason Farr said that there is someone interested in buying the property and they would build some affordable housing on the site. UPRC or New Vision could sell the property and get a more appropriate tear down or an empty lot if they want a blank slate.

The owners have had since 2018 to do something on the site and have done nothing except sell off interior elements. They have insisted that preservation was impossible when we know it is possible. They submitted an application to demolish the building forcing your hands at the April 6th meeting when that wasn't necessary. Once they are allowed to tear down the building we can only hope they do what they said they were going to do with the property.

We have a petition on [change.org](https://www.change.org) to save the original building that is at 894 as of April 8th! People really do care about these buildings and do not want to see them destroyed.

These architectural gems aren't just beautiful and uplifting to everyone around them, they are an economic and cultural asset. Once these buildings are gone, they are gone forever and we will never see buildings like these again. We cannot save them all but we can and should control the process. This is a landmark building in the area and should be preserved.

Thanks for your consideration.

Jackie Stagen