

Report to Community Advisory Committee on Planning

To: Chair and Members
Community Advisory Committee on Planning

From: Kyle Gonyou, RPP, MCIP, CAHP Manager,
Heritage and Urban Design

Subject: Demolition Request for the Regina Mundi Catholic College on
the Heritage Listed Property at 5200 Wellington Road South,
Ward 14

Date: Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Recommendation

Approval of the demolition request for the Regina Mundi Catholic College on the heritage listed property at 5200 Wellington Road South is being recommended in response to a written request for demolition received by the City. Removal of the property from the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources is recommended. The property owner is encouraged to implement the conservation strategies identified in Section 8.2 of Appendix C.

Executive Summary

The subject property at 5200 Wellington Road South, Regina Mundi Catholic College, is listed on the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources. A demolition request has been received for the subject property, which triggers a formal review process pursuant to the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and the Council Policy Manual.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) that was submitted with the demolition request included an evaluation of the property according to the criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06. The evaluation determined that the property met one of the nine criteria for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. As a property must meet two or more of the evaluation criteria, the evaluation determined that the property does not warrant designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Although the property does not meet the minimum criteria for designation, commemorative strategies have been identified within the Heritage Impact Assessment. Staff recommend that Municipal Council remove the subject property from the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources and allow the demolition to proceed. Staff also recommend that the property owner be encouraged to implement the conservation strategies identified in Section 8.2 of the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Property Location

The property at 5200 Wellington Road South is located on the east side of Wellington Road South between Westminster Drive and Scotland Drive (Appendix A). The property is located in the former Westminster Township, annexed by the City of London in 1993.

1.2 Cultural Heritage Status

The property at 5200 Wellington Road South is a heritage listed property. The property was added to the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources in 2016.

1.3 Description

The subject property at 5200 Wellington Road is located in South London, in the former Westminster Township, annexed into the City of London in 1993. The property remains in a rural setting in its general context. The property is approximately 17 hectares (42 acres) in size and includes the Regina Mundi Catholic College secondary school building as well as a separate building that houses the headquarters for the London District Catholic

School Board on the same parcel. The property also includes internal road networks, surface parking lots, an outdoor running track, and athletic facilities.

Designed by the London firm of Watt and Tillman Architects, the building was originally constructed as a seminary in 1963. The Regina Mundi Catholic College building consists of a three-storey secondary school central school block with north and south Y-shaped additions. The exterior cladding is annotated within the original design drawings for the building as an alternating checkerboard pattern of precast insulated masonry panels and “random stone” with stone trim and copper flashing. The school building formerly included a prominent bell tower that extended above the front entry. The belltower was removed in 2011 due to concerns with its structural integrity.

The interiors of the school have been modified and re-built over time, including an extension renovation project in 1987 that resulted in the removal of the former residential facilities to accommodate an increase in classroom space.

The original portion of the building includes a chapel located on the first floor of the central wing. With an original capacity of 250 (including the use of its balcony area), the chapel is marked by a tapered column frame and a folded plate roof structure. Interior finishes of the chapel include painted glass windows featuring depictions of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. The painted glass is attributed to a Th. Lubbers, based in Montreal. The chapel also includes a memory wall displaying photographs of the former students and staff who passed away during their time at Regina Mundi Catholic College.

Further details related to the property and design of the Regina Mundi Catholic College can be found in Appendix C.

1.4 History

The Euro-Canadian history of the subject property first relates to the colonization of the London and surrounding areas under the efforts of Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe's arrived at the Forks of the Thames with the intention establishing a new capital of Upper Canada. Though his intentions did come to fruition, European settlers began arriving in the early-19th century.

The subject property remained in agricultural use until the construction of the Regina Mundi Catholic College in 1963. The school was original established in 1962 by John C. Cody, then Bishop of the London Diocese, and Archbishop Sebastiano Baggio, apostolic delegate to Canada. Originally named the Regina Mundi Junior Seminary, the school was situated on a 110-acre plot of land and the school included 10 classrooms, a science room, a library, gymnasium, and a chapel.

The school was originally established to provide training for boys intending to enter the priesthood. However, by 1965 the admission policy was widened to offer educational services for boys with other career goals as well. Accordingly, the school was renamed to the Regina Mundi Catholic College, a residential Roman Catholic private secondary school.

By 1971, Regina Mundi began offering non-residential classes, but still operate as a private secondary school with tuition requirements. By 1983, the school became a co-educational secondary school of the London and Middlesex Catholic School Board, alleviating overcrowding concerns at other Catholic schools in the area. The school continued to mix fee-paying boarders with day students.

In 1987, Regina Mundi's boarding school service ended. Later in the same year the expansion of the school was approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Shortly after, the additions to the school were completed to accommodate the increase in enrollment and to remove the former residential facilities in favour of increased classroom space.

In 2005, the London District Catholic School Board opened its new headquarters on the property, in a new building just north of the Regina Mundi Catholic College building.

For further details on the history and use of the property please see Appendix C.

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Legislative and Policy Framework

Cultural heritage resources are to be conserved and impacts assessed as per the fundamental policies of the *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)*, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and *The London Plan*.

2.1.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Heritage Conservation is a matter of provincial interest (Section 2.d, *Planning Act*). The *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)* promotes the wise use and management of cultural heritage resources and directs that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved” (Policy 2.6.1, *Provincial Policy Statement 2020*).

“Significant” is defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)* as, “resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest.” Further, “processes and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.”

Additionally, “conserved” means, “the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained.”

2.1.2 Ontario Heritage Act

Section 27, *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that a register kept by the clerk shall list all property that have been designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Section 27(1.2), *Ontario Heritage Act* also enables Municipal Council to add property that have not been designated, but that Municipal Council “believes to be of cultural heritage value or interest” on the Register.

The only cultural heritage protection afforded to heritage listed property is a 60-day delay in the issuance of a demolition permit. During this time, Council Policy directs that the Community Advisory Committee on Planning (CACCP) is consulted, and a public participation meeting is held at the Planning & Environment Committee. A Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) and/or Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required for a demolition request for a building or structure on a heritage listed property.

Section 29, *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to designate property to be of cultural heritage value or interest. Section 29, *Ontario Heritage Act* also establishes consultation, notification, and process requirements, as well as a process to appeal the designation of a property. Objections to a Notice of Intention to Designate are referred back to Municipal Council. Appeals to the passing of a by-law to designate a property pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act* are referred to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

2.1.2.1 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, establishes criteria for determining the cultural heritage value or interest of individual property. These criteria are consistent with Policy 573_ of *The London Plan*. These criteria are:

1. The property has design or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
2. The property has design or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property has design or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
4. The property has historical value because it has direct associations with a

theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

5. The property has historical or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property has historical or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

A property is required to meet two or more of the abovementioned criteria to merit protection under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

2.1.3 The London Plan

The Cultural Heritage chapter of *The London Plan* recognizes that our cultural heritage resources define our City's unique identity and contribute to its continuing prosperity. It notes, "The quality and diversity of these resources are important in distinguishing London from other cities and make London a place that is more attractive for people to visit, live or invest in." Policies 572_ and 573_ of *The London Plan* enable the designation of individual property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as well as the criteria by which individual property will be evaluated.

2.1.4 Register of Cultural Heritage Resources

Municipal Council may include property on the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources that it "believes to be of cultural heritage value or interest." The property is not designated but is considered to have potential cultural heritage value or interest.

The Register of Cultural Heritage Resources states that further research is required to determine the cultural heritage value or interest of heritage listed property. If a property is evaluated and found to not meet the criteria for designation, it should be removed from the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources.

The property at 5200 Wellington Road South is included on the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources as a heritage listed property.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

None

4.0 Key Issues and Considerations

4.1. Demolition Request

Written notice of intent to demolish the Regina Mundi College building at 5200 Wellington Road South, along with a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), was received as a complete application by the City on September 13, 2023. The subject property is owned by the London District Catholic School Board.

Municipal Council must respond to a notice of intention to demolish a building or structure on a heritage-listed property within 60 days, or the request is deemed permitted. During this 60-day period, the Community Advisory Committee on Planning (CACP) is consulted, and pursuant to Council Policy, a public participation meeting is held at the Planning and Environment Committee (PEC).

The 60-day period for the demolition request for the property at 5200 Wellington Road South will expire on November 12, 2023.

4.1.1 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)

A Heritage Impact Assessment (ERA, dated July 18, 2023) was submitted as a part of the demolition request for the heritage listed property at 5200 Wellington Road South. The HIA included historic research, site photographs, description, an evaluation of the property according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 (Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value of Interest), as well as an impact assessment and mitigation recommendations.

The evaluation of the property included within the HIA determined that the property met 1 of the 9 criteria (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Evaluation of the property at 5200 Wellington Street.

Criteria	Evaluation
1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	No
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	No
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	No
4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	No
5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	No
6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.	Yes
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	No
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	No
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	No

Based on the evaluation, one criterion was met:

- Criteria 6 – The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.
 - *We believe that the subject property possesses historical/associative value due to its association with the locally-prominent firm of Watt & Tillman Architects. Since its genesis in 1908, the firm has designed and constructed a large body of work throughout the London region and beyond, and an evolved version of the firm continues to exist today. Regina Mundi College can be situated within Watt & Tillman’s broader oeuvre, with particularly strong stylistic and programmatic parallels to Mount St. Joseph Academy, constructed for the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1954. (ERA, p. 30).*

Building condition is not a criteria for heritage designation. The integrity of a resource is often considered when evaluating the potential cultural heritage value of a resource. Integrity is not a measure of originality, but a measure of whether the surviving physical features (heritage attributes) continue to represent or support the cultural heritage value or interest of the property. Likewise, the physical condition of a cultural heritage resource is not a measure of its cultural heritage value. Cultural heritage resources can be found in a deteriorated state but may still maintain all or part of their cultural heritage value or interest (MTC, 2006).

With regards to heritage integrity, the HIA states:

Evidence of the site’s reduced integrity includes:

- *The removal of the original bell tower over the front entrance in 2011 due to safety concerns. The bell tower was the primary architectural focal point of the building’s front (west) elevation.*
- *A defective building envelope which has required interim protective measures to buffer the building occupants from falling exterior cladding and debris.*
- *Most of the pieces of glass in the decorative glass windows in the chapel have delaminated and are at risk of falling, due to the use of an experimental method of lamination.*
- *Later additions and alterations, including the expansion of the original convent/garage wing, construction of the second-storey library addition, conversion of the second storey and third-floor residential quarters to classroom spaces, and extensive interior alterations throughout. These alterations have taken place in tandem with a shift away from the school’s operating model as an intimate, residential Junior Seminary.*

The evaluation of the property concludes:

In summary, the site meets one of the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest under Ontario Regulation 9/06 as a result of its historical/associative value but does not meet the two or more criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06 that would make it eligible for designation under Part IV of the Act. This finding, along with the site’s reduced integrity, and the extent of widespread physical deterioration throughout the building, contributes to our assessment that the site should not be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, and that removal of the existing Regina Mundi College building is appropriately mitigated through the conservation strategy proposed in this HIA.

Recognizing that the property meets one of the nine criteria, the property has some cultural heritage value but does not meet the minimum criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Section 8.2 of the Heritage Impact Assessment recognizes this, and has identified conservation strategies to “sustain the legacy” (ERA, 2023 p.46) of the 1963 school within the replacement school. The conservation strategies include:

- *Prior to the demolition, the building should be extensively documented to preserve a fulsome archival record of its existing condition, including detailed architectural plans and elevations of current conditions and photographic documentation.*
- *The preparation of a Heritage Interpretation Plan to identify strategies and implementation measures that will help commemorate the cultural heritage value of the site to the future occupants. The Interpretation Plan could be developed in consultation with the Regina Mundi community and result in material for display in the new school. The Interpretation Plan will provide detailed information regarding the location, content and format of interpretive materials to be used.*
- *A selection of salvaged elements should be incorporated to support the future commemoration and interpretation of the site. This could potentially include, but is not limited to: the red granite surround and inscription flanking the main entry; a representative example of painted glass panels from the chapel, and; exterior stone panels in sufficiently good condition to merit salvage.*
- *The use of a folded plate roof structure in the new school building designed to evoke the style and appearance of the original chapel. This box dormer motif could be used in a prominent common area of the new school.*
- *The installation of a heritage plaque or marker in a prominent location on the site to commemorate the original Regina Mundi College building and convey its historical significance. (ERA, 2023, p. 46).*

Staff agree with the evaluation of the property, and support and encourage the implementation of the conservation strategies through the Site Plan review process for the new school.

4.3 Consultation

As per Council Policy for the demolition of buildings or structures on heritage listed properties, notification of the demolition request was sent to property owners within 120m of the subject property, as well as community groups and interested parties including the Architectural Conservancy Ontario – London Region Branch, and the London & Middlesex Historical Society. Notice was also published in *The Londoner*.

In accordance with Section 27(4) and Section 27(9), Ontario Heritage Act, consultation with the Community Advisory Committee on Planning (CACCP, the City's municipal heritage committee) is required.

Conclusion

A written intention to demolish the Regina Mundi Catholic College on the heritage listed property at 5200 Wellington Road South was received by the City. Through a Heritage Impact Assessment, the property was evaluated according the criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06 and was determined to meet one of the criteria. In order to be eligible for designation under Part IV the *Ontario Heritage Act*, a property must meet two or more of the criteria. Staff agree with the evaluation, conclusions, and recommendation of the Heritage Impact Assessment for the property at 5200 Wellington Road South. While the property does not meet the minimum criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, staff encourage that the conservation strategies identified in Section 8.2 of Appendix C be implemented to commemorate the history and physical elements of the Regina Mundi Catholic College.

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Appendices

Appendix A Property Location

Appendix B Images

Appendix C Heritage Impact Assessment (ERA, July 18, 2023)

Selected Sources

Corporation of the City of London. 2023-2027 Strategic plan.

Corporation of the City of London. Property file.

Corporation of the City of London. *Register of Cultural Heritage Resources*. 2022.

Corporation of the City of London. *The London Plan*. 2022 (consolidated).

Ministry of Culture. *Ontario heritage Toolkit: Heritage Property Evaluation*. 2006.

Ontario Heritage Act. 2023, c. 21, Sched. 6.

Westminster and Delaware Townships: Honouring Our Roots, Volume 1. 2006.

Appendix A – Property Location

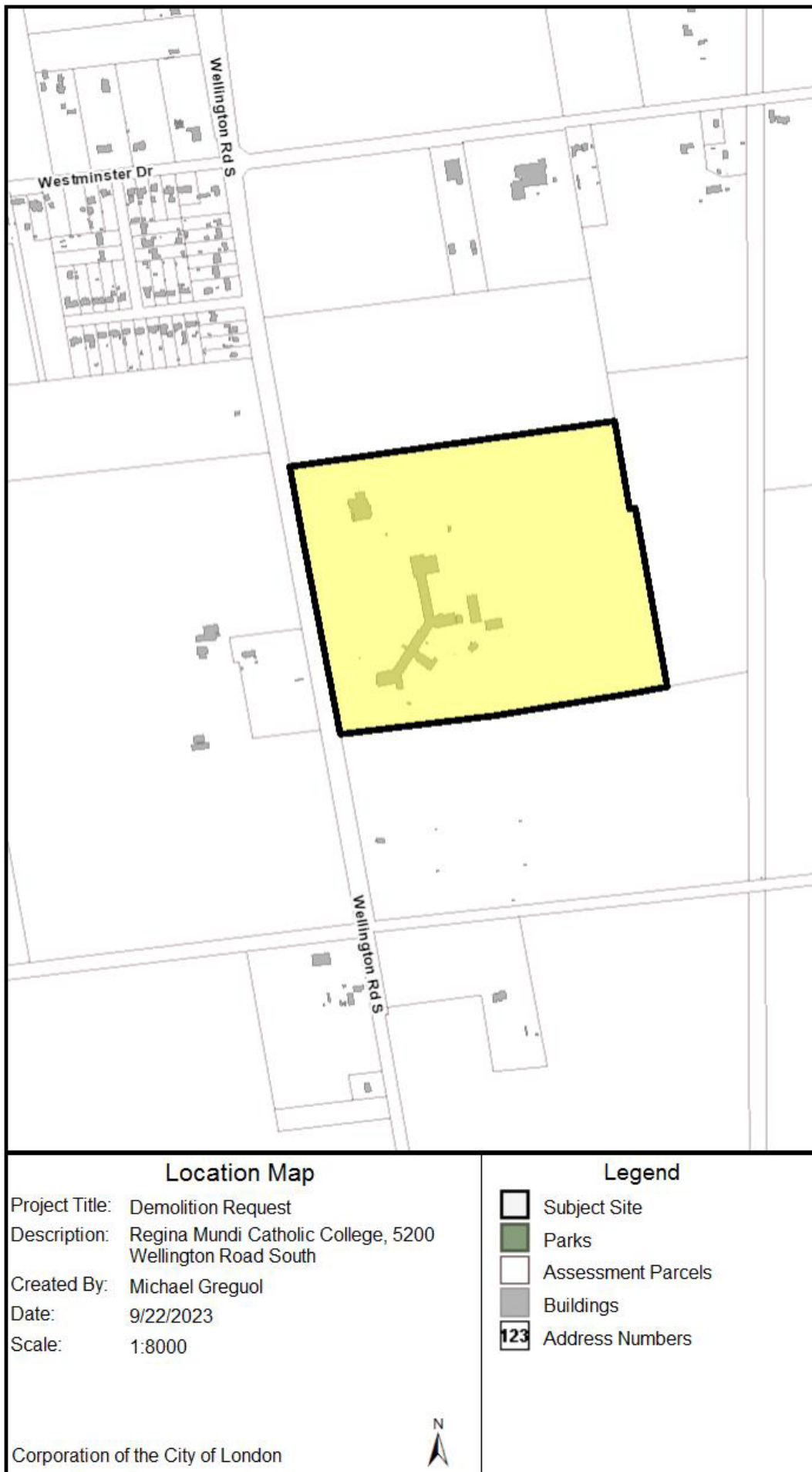


Figure 1: Location Map showing the location of the subject property at 5200 Wellington Road South.

Appendix B – Images



Image 1: Photograph showing the west (front) façade of the Regina Mundi Catholic College at 5200 Wellington Road South.



Image 2: Photograph showing the west (front) façade of the Regina Mundi Catholic College at 5200 Wellington Road South.



Image 3: Photograph showing the cross located above the entry way to Regina Mundi Catholic College. The bell tower that was previously constructed above the front entry was removed in 2011 due to safety concerns.



Image 4: Photograph showing the rear of the Regina Mundi Catholic College, showing the exterior of the chapel.



Image 5: Photograph showing stone exterior on the rear of the chapel at Regina Mundi Catholic College.



Image 6: Photograph showing stone exterior on the rear of the chapel at Regina Mundi Catholic College. Note the steel bracing observed on the exterior of the school is an interim protection measure.



Image 7: Photograph showing the exterior of the painted glass windows of the chapel.



Image 8: Exterior cladding of the Regina Mundi Catholic College showing "checkboard" pattern of precast masonry panels and "random stone" panels.



Image 9: Red granite surround with inscription around the front entry to the Regina Mundi Catholic College.



Image 10: Interior of the chapel in the Regina Mundi Catholic College. Note, the tapered columns around the perimeter of the chapel and the folded plate roof structure.



Image 11: Interior view of the painted glass windows located within the chapel at the Regina Mundi Catholic College.

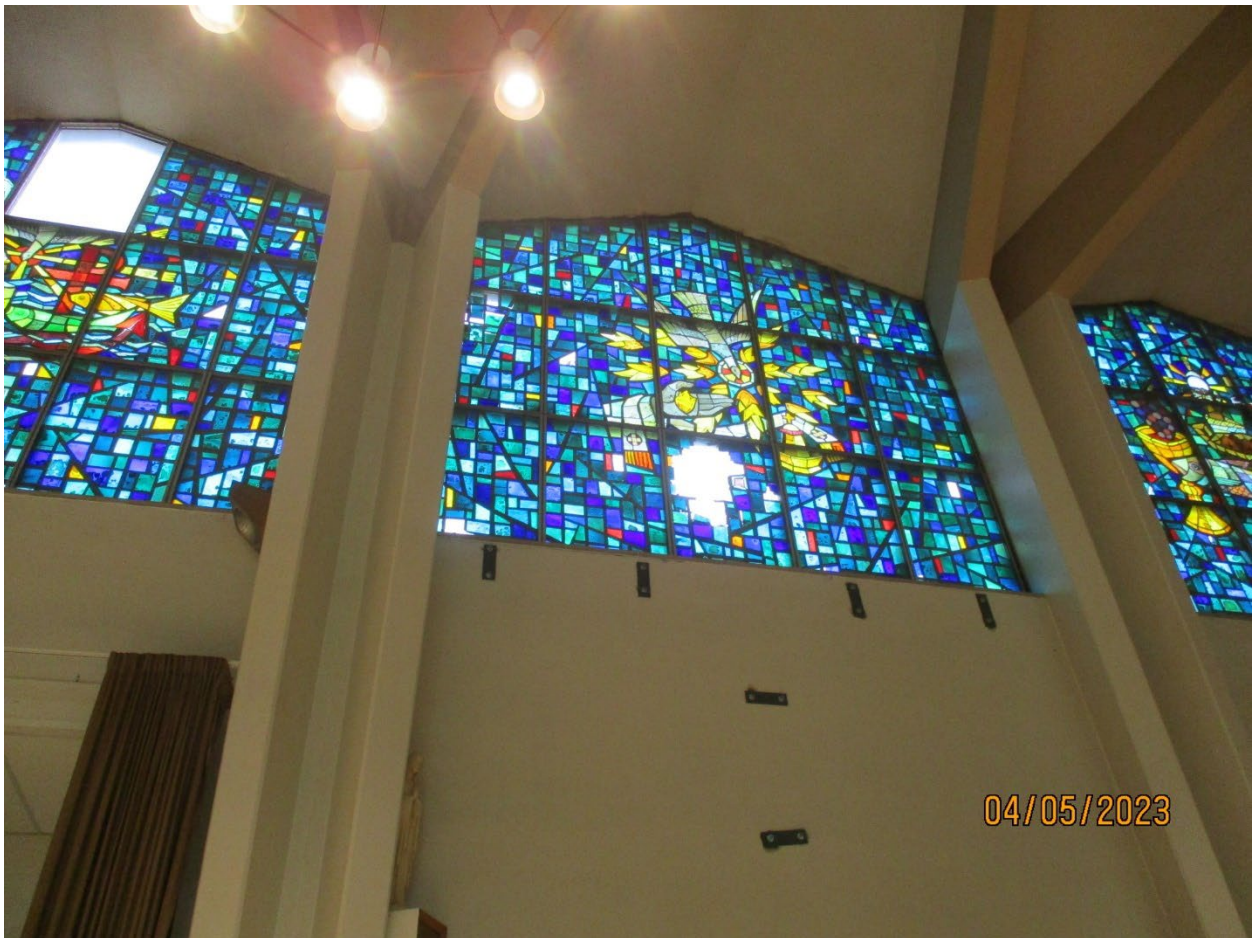


Image 12: Interior view of the painted glass windows located within the chapel at the Regina Mundi Catholic College. Note the white spaces within the painted glass shows the locations of damages and delamination observed on the glass.

Appendix C – Heritage Impact Assessment – ERA

ERA, *Heritage Impact Assessment: Regina Mundi Catholic College* (July 18, 2023)
[attached separately].