

Planning and Environment Committee
London, Ontario
November 29, 2024

Dear PEC members:

Re: December 3 PEC agenda, scheduled item 3.6. Request to remove the Heritage Listed Property at 1927 Richmond Street from the Register of Cultural Heritage Resources.

I am writing to oppose de-listing, and presumably, demolishing, the home at 1927 Richmond Street.

I understand that, under provincial rules, a property must meet at least two of nine criteria for heritage designation and that a city staff report has found this house has only one.

According to the Summary of Evaluation in Part 4.5 of Stantec's report, this house was built in the Italianate style but was renovated to add Tudor Revival elements. Row 1 of the table states that: "This blending of architectural styles does not constitute a recognizable style of a type of architecture that is particular to a group, time, or place. As a result, it cannot be considered to serve as a symbol or portrayal of Tudor Revival or Italianate architecture." Below, Row 9 of the same table states that: "The property is setback from Richmond Street and partially screened by fencing, setback, and vegetation. In addition, views within this area are heavily influenced by the brick wall part of Foxborough Chase (1890 Richmond Street) and the mid-rise apartment building at 1985 Richmond Street."

Respectfully, I would argue the following:

- The fact that an Italianate building was converted into Tudor Revival does not decrease its historical interest and in fact *increases* it. This home shows how an older building can be adapted to newer needs and tastes. It has many of the defining characteristics of the Tudor Revival style, including a steep front gable roof, half timbering, tall narrow windows, and a stucco finish. I would argue that the home does indeed meet Criterion 1 for heritage designation based on these details.
- Neither the Ontario Heritage Act nor Stantec's report appears to define what constitutes a "landmark." The language in Row 9 suggests that the building cannot be a landmark due to fencing and vegetation; if these were removed, and the home more visible from Richmond Street, would this make it a landmark? Row 9 also references walls and apartments but surely proximity to these does not determine a structure's landmark status either. If a building loses its heritage significance because apartments are built next door, then the City of London should not let York Developments build a tower next to the Old Courthouse, lest the view of latter also be "heavily influenced" and lose its historical relevance.
- The city's Register of Cultural Heritage Resources was prepared by architecturally and historically knowledgeable persons in years past. 1927 Richmond does not seem to have changed since being placed on the Register. I see no point in listing buildings if they can be de-listed at the whim of an owner, purchaser or a heritage consultant *hired by them*. This defeats the purpose of the register, to inform the city and public about our shared heritage and to recommend buildings to preserve for posterity.

- The London District Catholic School Board could easily build a school *next to* the home, which could be used for offices or recreation by staff and students. Alternatively, the lot could be severed and the house sold separately. The building is not deteriorating or unattractive. What a charming home it would make for a growing family.

In summary, I believe 1927 Richmond meets at least two of the criteria to merit designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, Nos. 1 and 8. That it is surrounded by newer construction and partially hidden is irrelevant. Please consider denying the owner's request to de-list this property or suggest that the Catholic School Board find a way to preserve it either on or off the future school property.

Sincerely
Jennifer Grainger