

NANCY Z. TAUSKY
Heritage Consultant

Grosvenor Lodge
1017 Western Road
London, ON N6G 1G5
Tel: 519-625-2845; 519-432-1904
Cell: 519-697-7451
Fax: 519-645-0981; ntausky@tausky.ca

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To Members of the London City Council:

Re: Heritage Building Retention, Old Victoria Hospital Lands

As the consultant who produced the *Cultural Heritage Assessment of the Buildings in the South Street Hospital Complex* (2011; now available on the City's web site), I am writing, first, to reassert the historical and architectural importance of the Colborne building and former War Memorial Children's Hospital, and to stress my support for the staff recommendation that these buildings be saved. Secondly, I wish to emphasize a point made in the report and mentioned in the staff report's comprehensive consolidation of the *Assessment's* relevant findings: the importance of the streetscape formed old hospital buildings as a coherent whole. While I understand and appreciate the financial considerations detailed in the staff report, I wish to make certain that my comments on the streetscape are not lost in the mass of detail required in the assessment of the streetscape's individual buildings. In many ways, the streetscape is greater than the sum of its highly significant parts.

The Colborne building has great historical importance as the last vestige of the 1896 hospital and, and, because it was originally the wing for paying patients, as a significant monument to the historical transition of hospitals from medical institutions for the indigent to facilities applying scientific medical advancements to the entire population. Its carefully designed foundation, its symbolic massing, and its potentially striking terra cotta detail give it a strong architectural presence. The Children's Hospital achieves a monumental character appropriate to its function as a memorial to those who served in the World Wars with its purposefully designed massing and the pilasters, urns and ceremonial wreaths exhibited on its frontispiece, and also with its considerable setback, allowing for it to be viewed from a respectful distance. Because of its role in the development of Cobalt-60 Beam Therapy, Victoria Hospital has been designated for a National Historic Event by the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada; the Cobalt Bomb, as it came to be popularly known after forming the basis for decades of cancer

radiation treatment, was first used for treating patients in the Children's Hospital building.

In architectural terms, the streetscape along the north side of South Street is obviously harmonious because of the use of the similarly textured and coloured brick in all three buildings and because of the common scale and height of the buildings. What makes the streetscape more notable, however, is the way in which it incorporates and blends buildings by different architects (then the most prominent in London), each of which clearly reflects its own distinctive use. The former Medical School at the west end of the block adopts the collegiate style then considered most appropriate for school buildings, while its particular massing, with the stonework in its foundation, trim, and coursing, make it a particularly fine example of the style. Both the Medical School and the Children's Hospital were designed by Watt and Blackwell. The firm of John M. Moore sensitively designed the Nurse's residence to bridge the differences in style and setback between the two buildings. It's H-shape provides central common areas for all residents. Its centre portion, in which the main entrance and community rooms are located, also reflect the setback of the Children's Hospital, while its arms reach towards the street and setback boundary of the School. The pediment of its entrance frontispiece initially held urns echoing those of the Hospital (note figures 27 and 109 of the report), while the stepped parapets of the wings echo the parapet over the main entrance to the school.

The streetscape forms a model for sensitive urban development. It also forms a distinctive wall of buildings evoking the historical presence of the old hospital and its place in the SOHO community. Significant and striking as the Colborne Building and the War Memoria Children's Hospital building are, even they gain in their visual and historical impact when seen in the context of their long-time architectural companions.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Z. Tausky

An addendum:

The mandate for the 2011 report did not extend to the Hill Street buildings, but I also wish to note the merit of the former London and District's Crippled Children's Centre and the structure at 385 Hill Street.
