

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

### 13. Properties located at 505, 507 and 511 Talbot Street – Request for Demolition

- Adam Carapella, The Tricar Group - expressing support for the staff recommendation.
- Emily Milson, business owner, tenant at London Roundhouse – indicating that as a tenant of the newly renovated London Roundhouse, she understands the challenges to renovating an older building for repurposing; indicating that she realizes that it would have been cheaper for the owner of the London Roundhouse to demolish the building; indicating that tenants were delayed over a year from occupying the London Roundhouse to provide for the renovations to be completed; indicating that she does not live downtown, but owns and operates a business in the downtown; suggesting that the applicant could do something more interesting at the site by incorporating the building at 505 Talbot Street into the overall design; asking if the developer could retain elements of the past with the new; indicating that many times new buildings are built over the original building; and indicating that Tricar is very well respected builder, but builds standard buildings and indicating that they should try something different.
- Genet Hodder, 20 Mayfair Drive - indicating that she is representing the ACO (Architectural Conservatory of Ontario) London Region Branch; indicating that the ACO is very much opposed to the demolition of heritage buildings; indicating that these buildings have stood the test of time; indicating that the buildings represent a historic street scape; indicating that heritage advocates are citizens of the City; indicating that all citizens reap the benefits of good design; indicating that we should be doing our part to retain heritage; indicating that the ACO also supports increased residential development in the downtown; indicating support of more people downtown; indicating that development should not come at the expense of heritage; questioning why heritage is pitted against growth; indicating that the three buildings are a trio of heritage gems; indicating that the buildings have been in use until recently; questioning why these buildings and this stretch of Talbot Street are not part of the Downtown Heritage District.; indicating that these three buildings should be adapted into the development and be incorporated into the development; and indicating that the City should retain the best of the old and encourage the best of the new.
- John Lutman #28 - 505 Cranbrook Road – indicating that he did the first heritage research for the City; indicating that he walked up and down all the streets in the downtown, including this area; indicating that this section of Talbot Street, particularly 505 Talbot Street, stood out as fine examples of architecture; and indicating that this area represent the wealthy residential neighbourhoods of the past; indicating that the three buildings have significant heritage value.
- Janet Hunten, 253 Huron Street - indicating that much has been made of the importance of the Baptist church; indicating that 505 Talbot Street has been given a priority one rating and is worthy of designation; indicating that 505 Talbot Street, that we all consider to be a magnificent building, was being used; indicating at all the architectural details of the building remain in place; indicating that 505 Talbot Street was originally designed to complement the corner; and indicating that the three buildings support the street scape of Baptist Church and allow the Church to stand out.
- Ian Campbell, previous owner of 505 Talbot – indicating that as the owner and current tenant of the building he can attest to the expense of maintaining the buildings; indicating that the buildings have outlived their usefulness; indicating that he has owned the three buildings for 11 years until his recent sale to Tricar; indicating that the area is clearly not residential; indicating that he has gone to great expense to make the buildings usable, but indicates that continuous maintenance has to be undertaken to the buildings; indicates that the foundation leaks every year; indicating that the foundation has settled making the building uneven by approximately 3 inches; indicating that the outside brick has had to be sealed as he was unable sandblast the brick without doing significant damage to the brick; indicating that the interior of the buildings have been renovated with little of the original interior finishes in place; indicating that he will be

relocating his business to a building, built in 1892 which is being renovated to accommodate his and other business; and indicating that 505 Talbot Street is not a heritage home.

- Sam Trosow, 43 Mayfair Drive - indicating that the fact that the building is not being used for residential purposes is beside the point; and, indicating that just because the buildings have been converted to another use does not mean that the buildings are not significant from a heritage perspective.
- Tim Kingsmill, 19-701 King Street – expressing full support of the Tricar Development; believing that the proposed development fits the area; indicating support for the revitalization of the Downtown; and, advising that the proposed development will be a major contributor to the revitalization of the Downtown; and, pointing out the number of jobs that it will create.
- David Winninger – indicating that he has a law office and rents out two apartments at 555-557 Talbot Street; indicating that one of the lawyers in his building was once a tenant in one of the subject buildings; indicating that the building was built in the 1880's and is of the same relative vintage of the three buildings that the Committee is looking at that were built in 1881 and 1894; reiterating that part of his building is residential and is located about a block away from the site in question; advising that, approximately 25 years ago, when he was elected to the Ontario Legislature, within three weeks, with the assistance of some local heritage activists, he had a private members public bill passed, for students of the history of the legislature, that is very unusual, but it was time sensitive and it was designed to stop the demolition of the Talbot Street block; advising that the Talbot Street block, by many people's estimation was the finest example of uninterrupted Victorian historical landscape in Ontario and was important to preserve; indicating that the impact of the Bill that he passed allowed the City Council to determine the outcome of demolition applications on a local basis; indicating that the power that has been invested in the Council is very significant; outlining that six months after the Bill was passed, Council, by one vote, voted to have the Talbot Street block demolished; pointing out that it sat vacant for ten years and eventually became the site of the John Labatt Centre and is now Budweiser Gardens; advising that no one complains about Budweiser Gardens being there, it is a magnet for the community, for the Downtown, but it did not have to be built on the site of what was probably the finest example of uninterrupted Victorian streetscape in the Province; outlining that it was allowed to deteriorate, unlike these buildings, which look like they are in pretty good shape for buildings that are one hundred thirty years old; advising that when the London Plan was introduced, he thought it was a very bold and visionary statement about London; referencing the London Plan, it has some statements about London's heritage; noting that Mr. Winninger quoted sections of the London Plan; pointing out that the London Plan tells us to promote, celebrate and increase awareness and appreciation of London's cultural heritage, protect, restore and maintain London's cultural heritage so that they can be passed on to future resources and ensure that new development is sensitive to our cultural heritage; noting that the London Plan outlines that the conservation of whole buildings on the register is encouraged and the retention of facades is discouraged; outlining that architectural attributes of a building includes its depth; indicating that the subject buildings should be designated section 129 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* because they have a unique early style, a high degree of craftsmanship, historic value and significance to the London community, they contribute toward the understanding of the community; indicating that these buildings have been featured in heritage walks, talks and books, and, in his opinion, the fact that one might promise photographic documentation if they were torn down, a set of scaled architectural drawings, salvage of selected architectural artifacts for reuse on site or elsewhere will not suffice and a heritage courtyard when the buildings are gone; advising that interpretation plaques do not replace the buildings; indicating that it is important for us to realize, twenty-five years later, after the destruction of the historic Talbot Street block that we should not be further demolishing buildings on the block that take us back to a time when London was newly formed; pointing out that this was London's first suburb and some very important people established their buildings there; pointing out that the building that he owns is on the heritage register and when he looks down the street, he sees gas lamp styled street lighting, it tells him that this is supposed to be a Victorian

street; advising that he looks on the east side of the street and sees many high rises, some commercial, some residential; advising that he is all for residential intensification; enquiring as to why we have to destroy heritage buildings to allow for new development; indicating that in his travels in the United States of America, they have all managed to maintain their heritage; enquiring as to why London cannot retain its heritage; indicating that we do not need more tall buildings on Talbot Street; indicating that just because these buildings are one block outside of the Heritage Conservation District should not mean they are ripe for demolition; advising that the irony is that, if this development proceeds, the developer not only gets bonusing, but also enjoys an exemption of approximately 3.2 million dollars from the Development Charges; reiterating that these buildings do not need to be sacrificed because, in his respectful submission, there are many lots where this building could go up that do not have heritage property on them; outlining that this is an important issue, not just to him, but to the people of London because if we are trying to marry our past to our future and learn from the past when we plan for the future and we really want to realize that the bold and innovative London Plan, we need to be mindful about not sacrificing important heritage along the way.

- Rick Dystra, Member, Talbot Street Church, 513 Talbot Street – indicating that, in 2011, they did renovations to the church to preserve the church structure; noting that they spent just over one million dollars to keep it up as an old building; advising that they were the former owners of 507 Talbot Street and sold the property to Mr. Campbell; indicating that they are about heritage and they want to be in the Downtown and support the Downtown; advising that they have had discussions with Tricar about their project and how it could impact the church and they are satisfied that the design will not be a detriment to the church; and, expressing support for the project.
- Mohammed Moussa, 155 Thonton Avenue – expressing support for the demolitions because Council is looking at more infill downtown and there are very limited spaces Downtown where they can go due to building code or municipal by-laws; indicating that he has been here before talking about heritage buildings; pointing out that he loves heritage but there has to be a point where new can replace old; pointing out that there are 200 residential units coming Downtown; indicating that, if a lack of demolition stands in the way of that, he thinks that this Committee and Council needs to start thinking about redrawing the Urban Growth Boundary because those residential units need to go somewhere; pointing out that, as a City, we are growing; outlining that here is something that is going Downtown and that infrastructure as the urban growth moves further out and out of the City, that is more to the taxpayer that is more money that needs to be spent on roads, infrastructure and everything else; understanding that this Council is about wanting to revitalize Downtown and somehow gentrification has become a bad word; reiterating that we need to have more residential Downtown; and, expressing support for the proposed demolition.
- Nancy Tausky - expressing support for the retention of the three buildings, particularly 505 Talbots Street as it is a wonderful example of Italianate style architecture and woodworking; advising that these buildings form the northern end of a two block section that has remained authentic and illustrates very well the period quality of Talbot Street when it was London's most prestigious suburb; indicating that she is glad that the church is alright with this and applauding the efforts that Tricar has obviously made according to the information in the Agenda in order to make their building fit into the streetscape; advising that she is not convinced that they have succeeded; pointing out that, architecturally, the Church suffers quite a bit from having the proposed skyscraper beside it, despite the podium, which we are told is designed specifically to blend in with the church; believing that this does not succeed because the church is higher than the other buildings on the block; instead of representing the norm of the buildings on the block, it is designed to tower over them; pointing out that churches, by definition, ought to be high and soaring and this one was not an exception; pointing out that even given that Tricar has used the peak of the church as the level of their podium in order to achieve a kind of congruency with the rest of the neighbourhood, that podium, being flat, while the church has gable roofs; advising that the podium seems to be a much larger structure than the church; noting that this is evident in the drawings; indicating that she believes that there is room for development on this block; believing that there could be a

creative blending of old and new but she is not convinced that the design fits the scale of the adjacent designated building as it is supposed to according to the Official Plan.

- Susan Bentley, 34 Mayfair Drive – asking the Committee to not allow the demolition of the three heritage properties; indicating that even though Talbot Street is not in a Heritage Conservation District, has a significant presence in the Downtown and near Downtown; indicating that removing these properties will alter the character and context of that street, paving the way for future demolitions; pointing out that we have already lost Locust Mount, one of London's most splendid examples of the Georgian house style and home to one of its first Mayors; advising that no more of these historic buildings on Talbot Street buildings that give London character and class should be allowed to go the way of the wrecking ball; pointing out that any visitors to London ask to see where the "old" stuff is and soon there will be little for them to find; advising that she is totally sympathetic to the idea of intensification and infill Downtown; pointing out that many people who are interested in urban planning have been saying for years that the Downtown will only revive if you have got people living there; advising that she only proposed developments like that proposed for the proposed former Smugglers' Alley Mall which do not tear down heritage structures but use empty lots or replace ugly utilitarian office buildings; indicating that a good balance between the old and the new with a development between Dufferin Avenue and Queens Avenue is Picton Street, where one heritage house and row houses were preserved and the tall building went in behind it; believing that the Talbot Street lot is not big enough nor is it suitable for a large high rise; and, advising that the developer really should look elsewhere.
- John Fyfe Miller 500 Ridout Street – indicating that he owns the property located at 387 Clarence Street, the Old Bud Gowan building; indicating that there was a great deal of study of the buildings in the Downtown before he made the purchase; advising that one of the biggest challenges that they found was the streetscape of a building does not always mirror what is inside the building; looking at these three buildings he would not be here to argue the fact that they have designs that are important to the City but, when we look at the London Plan, it pushed two things; noting that those were build inward and build upward; pointing out that this development gives us a chance to do that; advising that he is not saying that as a City that there are not times that we have to make difficult decisions, we do, but he thinks that as we talk about these there seems to be an aura or presence sometimes that history is dead in the Downtown; indicating that to walk through the Downtown core, we have beautiful buildings to look at, we have beautiful streetscapes to look at; and, believing that they can marry the two together and come up with a vibrant Downtown that works for everyone.