

Save RMC

Central Secondary School was built in 1922; with numerous upgrades since, it is still standing. Catholic Central Secondary School was built in 1950; it, too, after many renovations, has been able to remain upright. Yet Regina Mundi College, built in 1963 and expanded and refurbished on a number of occasions, has been determined by the London District Catholic School Board to be in such decrepit shape that it must be torn down.

The Board earlier asked the province for \$16 million in renovations, a request which was twice denied- possibly because the school's population has dwindled from its peak of nearly 2,000 students in the late 1990s to less than half (812 in 2014). Instead, the Board was recently granted over \$19 million with which to construct a new school.

This makes no sense- unless, of course, the Board has other plans for the property on which the school currently sits. That property consists of 50 acres; most of it is green space, and includes a wildfowl refuge and pond onto which the school backs, with a forest- earlier used by students for nature study and cross-country skiing- partially surrounding the pond.

The Board's intentions have not been made clear; in fact, to a question I posed in this regard, my own representative on the Board, Sandra Cruz, replied: "I am certain that Regina Mundi College will be in its original space as it is now. The students will continue their education at RMC while the construction is taking place. The construction will be done in sections so that there is no interruptions to the classroom." This is quite different from the answer given someone else who also inquired, which was: "It will be torn down." Apparently this also includes the largest Chapel in any of the Board's schools, with its \$200,000 organ and magnificent stained glass windows.

A few years ago, the Thames Valley District School Board decided to expand Northridge Elementary School and, over the objections of many who had attended or had their children attend, tear down much-beloved Northdale Public School. The property was then sold to Wastell Homes, which now has built 40-odd houses on the former school grounds.

There is no secondary school anywhere in the world surrounded by such a glorious natural environment which, as a conservation area, will always remain as such. Not only that, but its proximity to both London, St. Thomas and the 401 means that it would be readily accessible to people visiting the premises. Quite frankly, if I were a developer, I would consider it a perfect location for a nursing home or something similar. The only thing that bothers me is that, unlike the other schools mentioned (or even the former St. Joseph's Academy, re-purposed as an assisted living facility), instead of refurbishing this historically significant building, the Board would simply rather tear it down.

So my questions are:

- (1) Has any arrangement been made or intended for the disposition of the property (and adjacent area) upon which Regina Mundi College currently sits?
- (2) What would happen to the Chapel (including organ and stained-glass windows) were the school to be torn down?
- (3) Would any member of the London District Catholic School Board, or any other organization or individual directly or indirectly associated with the school board (or the school), stand to benefit, directly or indirectly, financially or otherwise, from the sale of the property upon which Regina Mundi Catholic College currently stands?

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