



PEC Committee Chair
c/o Heather Lysynski
Secretary, PEC Committee
Re: 1656 Hyde Park Road

April 20, 2016

Dear Councillors,

Architectural Conservancy Ontario, London Region, encourages the PEC committee and London City Council to designate rather than demolish the former farm house at 1656 Hyde Park Road. This lovely old building should not only be saved but celebrated as a rare surviving vestige of the original Hyde Park village, sadly overwhelmed today by strip malls and the ever encroaching power centre from the north.

1656 Hyde Park Road should be spared the wrecker's ball for all three indicators of a Priority One listed property: architectural, historic, and cultural.

Architectural design: It is a rare surviving example of a 19th Century Italianate farm house, typical of the 1880 period, with beautiful design features such as the ornate brackets on the eaves under a shallow hipped roof, and the front porch with chamfered posts with capitals and ornate fret work adorning the spandrels.

Historic: This building is to Hyde Park as Eldon House is to the historic heart of London—it is a visual reference to the past and a material reminder of the original community. The house and surrounding farm land was significant to the development of Hyde Park due to its association with the founding Routledge family, stretching back to Thomas Routledge and family who arrived as Talbot Settlers in 1818.

Cultural or contextual reasons: The associative memories from those familiar with its early gardens, fruit trees and surrounding farm land speak to the importance this house and property has had on the people who grew up in that area. Its presence links Hyde Park to its rural past. Those who remember it more recently recall the building's charm as a destination tea room and later as a flower shop. Known at one point as "the house at the end of the sidewalk", strong memories and warm feelings are associated with the property and its inhabitants.

One of the last few vestiges of the original Hyde Park Village, we encourage you to use your power wisely and spare this building as a treasured asset among the surrounding regularity of strip malls. How fortunate it is that this building has survived! Its potential as a small shoppe, tea room, restaurant, pub or other destination business will be improved now that Hyde Park Road has been relieved of road construction.

Sincerely,

Mike Bloxam
President, ACO London

cc. Kyle Gonyou and the London Advisory Committee on Heritage