



Mayor Matt Brown and Members of Council,
City of London,
300, Dufferin Avenue,
London, Ontario.

August 4, 2016

Dear Mayor Brown,

At Heritage London Foundation's June Board meeting the topic of Camden Terrace was raised by one of our Board members whose office overlooks the rear of the buildings. He had witnessed the interior being scooped out and all its distinguishing heritage features being removed. As two of our directors sit on the LACH they were able to bring us up to date with the situation, which is that there is currently an application in place to demolish this significant piece of London's architectural and social history.

This information resulted in a motion being passed by our board instructing me as Chair to write to the City asking for the protection of this late Victorian Terrace. Not only is it one of an ever diminishing set of Victorian terraces in or near the core, it was home to a prominent Londoner, Samuel Peters, builder of Grosvenor Lodge, a heritage property owned by the City of London and managed by HLF.

Later we found out that LACH has recommended to PEC that Camden Terrace be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and, at the very least, that the facade be preserved and incorporated into any future development on that site.

The position taken by LACH strikes us as being the best outcome for what has been an unfortunate oversight in the collection of heritage-designated buildings in the City.

As I said in a recent letter to Mr. Squire and the members of PEC, we in London are in danger of removing the heart and soul of the downtown in allowing developers to chip away at the edges of the downtown Heritage Conservation District. Talbot Street has been gutted recently and yet it still remains a valuable approach road to the downtown and has a decent number of stunning heritage buildings left which bring a charm and a character to London that is rapidly being removed the closer one gets to the core.

William Morris, the brilliant 19th-Century writer, designer, and founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, said this:

"every old building is to be regarded as a bequest of the art of the past, a bequest which we owe to the art of the future. It is not our own property... We are only custodians and trustees...our...duty is to hand on to posterity the priceless heritage as we received it."

It is already too late to hand on much of that “priceless heritage” in London, but let us preserve the best of the rest. We badly need to keep the examples of our built heritage that remain for posterity and for future generations to appreciate, to enjoy, and to understand what came before them.

Our request is that London City Council take seriously its responsibility as trustee and custodian of that heritage and seek to preserve as much of the remaining structure of Camden Terrace as possible.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Bentley

Chair, Heritage London Foundation