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To the Mayor and Members of London City Council:

RE: Camden Terrace

This letter has two related aims: 1) to recommend that demolition of Camden Terrace be postponed at least until site plan approval or, preferably, until construction is actually beginning, and 2) to question the most persuasive argument put forward by the proponent for demolishing Camden Terrace -- that it must be removed because of underlying soil contamination.

1. Although Council has decided to adjust the zoning of the Camden Terrace site so as to allow the development proposed by Rygar Properties Inc., the very importance of Camden Terrace, as identified by LACH and the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, requires that it not be demolished until it is beyond doubt that the Rygar Properties will be able to follow through on its plans. We strongly urge Council, therefore, to delay demolition at least until the development has gained site plan approval. We recognize that this will require some work on the part of the proponent to assure that the building is safe for the immediate future.

2) Among the most compelling arguments put forward for the immediate demolition of Camden Terrace has been that the terrace must be removed because of underlying soil contamination, partly caused by a former foundry on or near the site; this argument was again brought forward at the recent PEC meeting. In the interest of accuracy, we want to note that, based on extensive research in land records, city directories, fire insurance plans, early memoirs, and other published materials, we have authenticated our claim that there was never a foundry where Camden Terrace is located. The most well-known foundry nearby was that of Elijah Leonard on the southeast corner of Ridout and Fullerton Streets (c. 1840-1865). There were also several manufactories on the block where Camden Terrace is located (the mix of land uses typical of the city's early period). By 1843, the northeast corner of Ridout and Fullerton Streets was occupied by Plummer & Pacey, manufacturers of wagons and sleighs. By the 1890s, the east side of Ridout between Fullerton and Dufferin Streets had become solidly residential. The manufacturing plant closest to Camden Terrace was along Fullerton, well west of the current Rygar property. The buildings occupied by McPherson Fanning Mill and Machine Shops c. 1881 served numerous different functions until the last half of the twentieth century. Our directory research shows conclusively that there were no buildings on the Camden Terrace site until the terrace was constructed.

The site assessment reports from exp Services Inc. include maps showing locations of their boreholes and monitoring wells, and all are outside the house boundaries. The report concludes that metals- and PAH-impacted soils "appear to be confined to shallow depths" and, until a change in land use, "are covered by the asphalt parking lot or the concrete floor slab of the building[s] which provide a barrier from the impacted fill materials. If the buildings were not to remain, then, contaminated soil beneath them would not be an issue.

We therefore urge you to deny the proponent's request for an immediate demolition permit and to designate Camden Terrace in order to retain control over future changes to the building.

Sincerely,

Janet Hunten
Nancy Z. Tausky