

September 11, 2017

To: Members of Council  
City Hall  
300 Dufferin Ave.  
London, ON  
N6B 1Z2

From: Lambeth Health Organization

RE: The Heritage Designation of 4402 Colonel Talbot Rd. London, ON

Dear Members of Council,

First of all, we would like to thank you for accepting our letter as part of your consideration in the proposal of designating the property, 4402 Colonel Talbot Rd. (the former McEachrean Public School) as heritage.

We don't want to repeat everything in the reports we had submitted for the hearing in January 2017 or the reasons from the Conservation Boards in their final recommendation, we trust the council will have reviewed all correspondence from all parties involved. However, we would like to add a few points we would like draw attention to and are asking the council to take into consideration please.

In our past meeting with Council, May 2016, in the initial discussion of heritage designation, it was suggested because of our initial plans for the project had changed and an obvious lack of attendance from the people of the community, we were not being forthright in the community. We would like Council to know, previous to that meeting and since that time, we had and have had open communications with the members of the community and the associations within the community of Lambeth.

We held public meetings prior to May 2016 and two meetings since then, on September 2016 and again in June 2017 with much support from those members who attended. Our invitation extended not only to the members of the community but also to the Historical Society and to The Lambeth Association. Councillor Anna Hopkins was able to attend the September 2016 meeting and her personal assistant attended the June 2017 meeting. The public did address their issues regarding the project and most of those issues were not related to the heritage aspect of it, but of concerns pertaining to misinformation given via rumours about other issues such as, a possible main entrance made at the back of the property off Marianna Drive, oppose to off of Colonel Talbot Rd. The replacement structure, more so the height of the building and losing the small town feeling visually, if it were to be a skyscraper. Environmental issues during demolition and the requirements for such issues, were some of the issues the community brought forth and was discussed and clarified at our meetings. We found the questions or concerns brought to our attention were not about preserving the old building but about the "fear of the unknown" because of rumours and the uncertainty of what was actually happening within their

community. During our meetings and beyond the nights of our meetings, we have welcomed, respected, addressed and informed the community with any questions or concerns through-out this process and time and are/have continuing to do so.

At our public meetings, we have communicated the importance, obligation and the sensitivity we, Lambeth Health Organization, feels in preserving the history of the former McEachren Public School and have discussed extensively with members of the community and members of the historical society who were in attendance, welcomed suggestions on what/how to obtain that information and history. With help from someone in the historical society, it was discussed to contact TVDSB and ask for some of the memorabilia from the former students of McEachren. We could create an archival area within the new structure to preserve the history of the students and their accomplishments. We also shared what few things we wanted to keep that were left behind within the building to preserve and to use within a planned area of a new structure, to help keep the history alive. Some of the items we have suggested included the crest of McEachren, the art work left of the cork boards from the children studying the native culture of the Onieda nation. The wooden beams that support the main structure of the gymnasium, the corner stones of the building as suggested, a sitting area outside to commemorate the former McEachren, are just a few of the things we believe how we can preserve history to keep within the community or within a new structure.

Please reference the page attached and read the highlighted part of the page “What is Cultural Heritage” at the lower part of the page. “Tangible and Intangible Heritage” where it states; “Today, we find that heritage is not only manifested through tangible forms such as, artifacts, landscape and buildings, but also through intangible forms. The intangible form may include books, through traditions or voices.” **The goal of Lambeth Health wants to preserve both the tangible through the artifacts we can find for an archival area within a new structure and the intangible through the voices and memories of the community.**

At the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 meeting, it was suggested by some council members our intention was to demolish the building. For the record, this was never our intention! Our plan in spring of 2015 was to renovate and have a medical centre operating by late spring early summer of 2016 at the latest. The process to demolish has not only delayed our project but has also has had a financial cost, which we would have avoided being a private and sole owner, by renovating. This has not been an easy process and because of the conditions of the building after we purchased it in 2015, we saw how much it had deteriorated during the time of our initial interest in the building and the meetings with the city in the spring of 2015 and closing date, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 and we were surprised at the deterioration. Regardless, we still intended to renovate. Our decision came after the winter of 2016, when we had a major flood in the 1925 portion of the building and the partial collapse of the roof of the 1925 portion of the building and the obvious continuation of natural deterioration, not only of the newer wings of the school but also the 1925 portion as well, was the deciding factors. It was for those reasons we submitted our permit for demolition in March/April of 2016. The suggestion by council of our intention was always to demolish is not factual, nor feasible for any private owner to take on.

Like the Heritage Department, Lambeth Health feels we have done our due diligence in the process of an appeal with the City of London, against the proposal of heritage designation for the property of 4402 Colonel Talbot Rd. (the former McEachren Public School). We feel we have presented sufficient information during this process to oppose the designation and was agreed upon by the experts of the

Ontario Conservation Board. We acknowledge the final decision does not rest on the Ontario Conservation Boards recommendation, however, we are asking Council to please review all things submitted and agree to uphold and respect the final recommendation from the Board, not to designate the property at 4402 Colonel Talbot Rd. as heritage.

We would like to extend the offer to have a tour on the outside of the building in question. In that tour, you can see the original windows have been bricked up, as well as the original front entrance has been altered from its original state, to name a couple. Also, you will notice the brick and cement work on all the walls, mostly near the top and corners have extensive damage to them. We ask the question, how much historical value is left in the structure the city is wanting to designate when alterations from the original state of the building and natural deterioration is so extensive? If you would like us to attend, please contact us at [admin@lambethhealth.com](mailto:admin@lambethhealth.com) and we would be more than happy arrange that with you.

Also, we would like to thank Councillor Hopkins for her participation during this process. Her attendance in our meetings has been very valued and appreciated. It has been a very difficult time during this process for many and we appreciate Councillor Hopkins presence with us and the community during this process and also understand and appreciate the difficult decision she made not to designate 4402 Colonel Talbot Rd. as heritage.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Lambeth Health Organization