PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Properties located at 467-469 Dufferin Avenue (OZ-8804)

- Will Pol, on behalf of the applicant – asking the Planning and Environment Committee to imagine that you have just graduated from college or university and are looking for your first new place to stay; advising that this application is an exciting housing form, has exceptional housing and is well connected to Woodfield; asking for micro-suites, they are trading a space for downtown living; indicating that, currently, new graduates, young people, are looking to live in hip places like Woodfield, they do not drive cars and they are happier with less stuff, they are happy to live on their laptop, Ipad, where they come to the micro-suite to live but they enjoy the proximity to the downtown; showing a diagram of the application; noting that the yellow part is an easement in favour of the application of the site; showing what they are proposing, a heritage building that fits in the with surrounding; requested that the matter be referred back to staff because they believe that this is exactly what The London Plan is intending. (See attached presentation.)
- Gil Warren, 16-624 William Street, Heritage Chair, Woodfield Community Association, Board Member, Woodfield Community Association – advising that the Woodfield Community Association would like to support the recommendation of City staff and they think that this proposal should be rejected; expressing agreement that it is over intensification of the site which is basically a single family lot at the time, it is divided in half to make a duplex; pointing out that there is no parking and almost the entire lot will be filled with buildings and there is no guarantee that the housing will in fact be affordable; pointing out that in their submission, the developer claimed that it was close to rapid transit and they checked out the latest proposals for the shift project and the closest stops are five blocks away to Colborne Street and King Street or five blocks away to Adelaide Street North and King Street; advising that this building is in a heritage district and the building is protected and no demolition can be done without a demolition permit being approved; stating that he included, in the Planning and Environment Committee Added Agenda, a three page report on the history of this building and he is not going to go into all of that history but he will touch on three or four points of it; advising that it was between 1891 and the middle of the 1890's that the United Labour Hall, the first Labour Hall of the Labour Movement in London, an office and a library, it was where the Labour Education Society started and they started the library and a union newspaper, "The Industrial Banner", which was the biggest union newspaper in Canada; they started the Independent Labour Party, one of the first local branches, they elected City Councillors, a Mayor and an MPP and they were part of the first government in 1919 of United Farmers of Ontario and the Independent Party Labour Coalition, it was also the birth place of the London Public Library; indicating that he noted in the Agenda material provided by the Planning department that they found some documents as well; documenting the unique history of this building; pointing out that, in terms of the architecture, it is probably one of the oldest buildings in Woodfield, various estimates of the age vary between 1845 and 1874, it is a vernacular building or a locally built building from the Georgian period; trying to determine whether the building was built on this site or was it moved to this site at a later date and there is still a lot of historical research going on there; discussing the buildings fate, and this has been the position of the Woodfield Board, the owner is unwilling to restore the building, which is still intact, probably the zoning change will be denied; believing it would be helpful if it was sold to someone else to fix it up and willing to restore it and use it for two units of really affordable housing; believing that the building should stay in its current location because of the historical context and it should be marked as a historical site; dealing with a building that must be within the hundred and fifty year range or older; thinking that there should be a city-wide discussion or even a provincial discussion about the fate of this building and it should not just be an initiative of the Woodfield Community Association; possibly it could be bought by an individual who is not willing to go for the quick, maximum profit, and it could possibly be bought by the City as well in order to help provide for affordable housing; wanting to get a discussion going about the current building that is there and what they can do in terms of the history of it and preserving it; reiterating that they support fully the recommendations by the Planning staff and he thinks that they have done an excellent job of looking into the situation and it certainly is over intensification as far as they are concerned.
- Todd Armstrong, 503-505 Maitland Street – indicating that you have a twelve unit building and is he to expect that with visitors there are no vehicles at all so he is not sure where they are supposed to park; wondering where they are supposed to park their guests; indicating that he has also seen rental numbers as low as $435 and as high as $800; wondering, if he was to rent one today, what would he be charged for rent; wondering what they are aiming for for their clientele for this particular building; during the

presentation, he noticed that in one of the images there was a light standard that was photoshopped in one of the images; wondering what else is not honest in the presentation; wondering why stuff was added to a picture that is not there; noting that one of the pictures is almost from his driveway.

- Burton Moon, 485 Dufferin Avenue – advising that he has lived at his residence for forty years so he is very familiar with this particular site; stating that it was shown on the map that there is a jog from Maitland Street to Dufferin Avenue and the whole thing of how, not only parking, but how people drive in that little section, what on street parking that there is on one side but directly across the street as was shown in the presentation, there is the commercial building that is currently unoccupied but there has been for thirty-eight of his forty years in the neighbourhood occupied and it is often common for that commercial building to have service vehicles and people stopping to use the service of the business there and block the traffic going around; the parking that is available on the street is on the south side of the street and certainly if you have units since they cannot have cars, there will be service vehicles and there will be visitors and there will be a restriction in the number of spaces; advising that in the past week, because of the Colborne Street and Queens Avenue and Dufferin Avenue construction, there was a detour using Maitland Street and Maitland Street, with the parking there, you cannot have two cars and parking go up and down Maitland Street; stating that there is always a premium of traffic and this would just add to that sense of intensity and dysfunction at the street level, driving.
- Hazel Elmslie, 63 Acadia Avenue – advising that she lived in Woodfield for over forty years and then she had the opportunity to buy her family home so she moved; referring to page 450 in the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda, which quotes, on the lower half of the page, “the property appears to be in very good condition”; noting that the statement was made in 2004; so the state of this property today is clearly an example of demolition by neglect and it is reflected in the comments from the people that commented, that she has just recently read, showing how they want to get rid of this eyesore; stating that it was not an eyesore twenty-five years ago, it was a viable rental property; asking of the Planning and Environment Committee and the developer what is wrong with restoring it to its long-time use, a one floor duplex with parking and a backyard; pointing out that as the historical studies have shown, this has been a viable rental property for more than one hundred years; commenting on the heritage, in The Globe and Mail on November 18, 2017, had an article on Garrison common cottages and to her mind, they are identical to this cottage, a one-floor duplex; believing that this makes this building one of the oldest, other than Eldon House, in London; stating that when they did the East Woodfield Heritage Conservation District Study, the gentleman that did the study was very impressed with the vernacular architecture of East Woodfield; stating that this is a perfect example of vernacular architecture, very old, probably pre-Confederation because it does not fit with any of the other storey and a half or two storey with peaked roof houses that are in the Woodfield Conservation Area; advising that it is very important that we realize how old this building is, how long it has lasted and it has only been in the last ten years or so that it has deteriorated; commending the staff on very thorough reasons why this does not fit in any of the City of London planning processes.
- Nancy Tausky, on behalf of the London Branch, Architectural Conservancy of Ontario – advising that she has investigated the interior of the building and to try to put the architectural features of both the interior and exterior into historical context that explains them to some extent; expressing appreciation that Ms. Elmslie brought up the issue of style because she has kind of been cringing as people talked about how ugly the buildings were and how getting rid of the buildings is one advantage of a new application; pointing out that what she has discovered is that the buildings are very old, some of the mouldings in the house, such as the flattened Grecian oval show something of what was a common feature here in the 1840’s and 1850’s in this vicinity; the form of the buildings is purely Georgian in a way that one does not usually find in London; some of the characteristics of this are the symmetry of the façade, the return eaves, the shallow roof and the way in which the eaves have a box form that is carried right around into those return eaves and that is a feature that one does not often find on heritage buildings here; in the back, there are two extensions of the house, probably kitchens, there is one extension for each part of the house and these, too, copy the form of the house, they have a shallow roof, the box return eaves and a near symmetry in the way that they are placed; advising that she has talked about the architecture, although she does recognize the tremendous importance that accrues to the house because of its association with Joseph Marks’ labour efforts and because it was the first public library in London; thinking that is tremendously significant; the form of the house has not been getting due recognition; admittedly, it looks pretty much a mess right now and has been allowed to seriously deteriorate and fixing it up would require a labour of love but it could, if restored properly, be a tremendous virtue within the neighbourhood and a tremendous asset to the City of London; indicating that both Mr. G. Warren and herself have been doing research into trying to figure out where it was originally as a very old house; this is as exciting as the idea of the Garrison and they are

keeping in contact to see how they are both coming in their research but another possibility and this is only a possibility, is that it was associated with the Lawrenson estate or maybe even the Schoffield estate that occupied that land before these houses before or while the houses were built; these houses have very much the aura of early estate labourers cottages and she is exploring that; so far she has discovered that there were two householders living there as early as 1864 and working back; advising that she admires John Nicholson's design for the new structure and she admits that it fits beautifully into the streetscape but she does not think that Heritage Conservation Districts are about creating a new illusion of sameness, it seems to her that one of the virtues of Heritage Conservation Districts and certainly of the East Woodfield Heritage Conservation District, is that it provides a meaningful and rich layering of the area's history, we have this very early house, next to it, on the west, is the house where Joseph Mark's lived while he was working on labour issues and on the east is the house that was built considerably later; thinking that that combination shows something of this rich layering; advising that she would like to see another structural study of the house as the one that was done seems to be very superficial and was based soley on walking around.

- Kate Rapson, Chair, Woodfield Community Association – hearing some great discussion tonight over this property; thanking city staff for their excellent report; reiterating what Mr. G. Warren said that the Woodfield Community Association supports that; noting that they do support infill where it is appropriate, the Jarvis building was one example, now called the Woodfield Commons, a new development along Princess Avenue and they have also approved other infill projects; reiterating that they support infill where it is appropriate and fitting and in keeping with the Heritage Conservation District's policies; indicating that this does not seem to fit any of those tests; realizing that we are not discussing the heritage value of this but they have this important heritage district with the West Woodfield and the East Woodfield, which makes one of the largest districts in the city; thinking that with the rezoning there will be an automatic demolition request so she feels that, with the rezoning, if it was approved, it would be on its way to being demolished; if that is the case and if we cannot do something about this building, we will not find many other buildings in this city that have such a historic significance, then she is not sure what strength the heritage districts will have going forward; expressing concern because that would mean everything in Woodfield, in Old South, Old East, everything, could be up for demolition if they are a profit margin and the case made to intensify it.
- Janet Hunten, 253 Huron Street – advising that the staff report has pointed out the inadequacies of the proposal; expressing support for the staff recommendation; stating that the reason that they are all talking about the historic buildings is because the proposal would require their demolition; pointing out that many of the letters in the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda spoke to the dilapidated state of the present buildings and that is the dilapidated state of the front yard and the boarding up of the façade; pointing out page 459 of the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda shows the buildings when they were lived in and very attractive; indicating that page 466 of the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda shows the deterioration over only five months from the time that the proponent bought the buildings; advising that it is clear that they can be attractive and useful, lived in buildings as they exist if they are fixed up.
- Sandra Miller, Architectural Conservancy Ontario, London Branch – indicating that on page 465 of the Planning and Environment Committee Agenda, there is a communication from ACO, London Branch; advising that she is not going to reiterate all of the points that have been made tonight by the previous speakers; stating that all too often when we are talking about heritage buildings, it seems like we seem to focus on the pretty buildings, the grand estates of which Woodfield has several and there are many others across the city but we seem to forget that heritage is not just about pretty grand buildings, it is about all of the architectural styles throughout the eras dating back to teepees, mud huts, right through all of the era's across Canada and Ontario including, as Ms. N. Tausky, pointed out with her great expertise, the Georgian influence of this particular house that is of a very early era; whether it was built on site or moved there, they do not know, this is still a point of research; thinking that we need to remember that when we talk about conserving and whether we look at heritage buildings it is not just about grand and pretty buildings, it is about the historical value of architecture as it has evolved in our city and our country through all eras and continues to evolve as we build new designs and new architecture of our own era and the things that our children and grandchildren will look back on that were built these years and say what an amazing heritage building; noting that we laugh about that now but that is what is going to happen and that is what will come to be; expressing appreciation to the staff for their incredible research, this is a very thorough project and they support the staff recommendation to turn down this project; recommending that the Planning and Environment Committee consider the value of history as embodied in buildings and how we have come to not wake up one morning and found this building in a dilapidated state, this is her personal opinion and she would argue many heritage advocates would say that this is possibly a deliberate attempt to leave a building to decay

as we have seen so often and still continue to see and will probably continue to see of buildings that are left to rot and decay so that they can easily be presented as an argument for demolition as they are no longer pretty or inhabitable but they usually are and they can be restored and if you take off the aluminum siding you will find the real history underneath.