

July 10, 2018

Councillor Stephen Turner (Chair)
Planning and Environment Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London Ontario



Re: 172 Central Avenue – Opposition to Demolish a Heritage Property

Dear Councillors:

As President of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Inc. (ACO) I wish to express our opposition to the recent application for demolition of the heritage home at 172 Central Avenue, London. We share the views of our London Region Branch of ACO.

In her letter of July 2, 2018, Jennifer Grainger, President of the London Region Branch of ACO explained the heritage significance of this property. It was the home of Dr. Oronhyatekha, the second indigenous physician in Canada (having graduated from the University of Toronto medical school in 1866) and the first known indigenous Oxford scholar. He was of Mohawk ancestry, born in the Six Nations of the Grand River and buried in Tyendinaga. In addition to his success as a physician and other humanitarian endeavours, he led the Independent Order of Foresters fraternal insurance organization (now Foresters Financial) for 26 years. He was designated a Person of National Historic Significance by Parks Canada in the early 2000s.

It is ACO understands that his London home is the only remaining structure significantly related to his life that is still standing. Even if the house did not have significant architectural merit (which it does), we believe that it should be preserved due to its association with this very impressive, nationally important figure.

We are currently working with our London Region branch to arrange for an independent ACO *PreservationWorks!* assessment of the building by a qualified engineer. *PreservationWorks!* is an ACO program that provides expert advice on conservation and heritage projects across Ontario. The assessment would be, of course, subject to the current owner of the building providing the independent expert with access to the interior and exterior of the building. The London branch has already requested such access (through the City's Heritage Planner), and we encourage you to facilitate this to the extent possible.

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At this stage, it would be appropriate in our opinion to defer a decision on the demolition application until after the *PreservationWorks!* expert has the opportunity to assess the building and review the existing engineering report.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "F. Leslie Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

F. Leslie Thompson
MFA MBA FCSI ICD.D CMC HRCCC
President
Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Inc.

cc

Members of the Planning and Environment Committee
Councillor Maureen Cassidy
Councillor Jesse Helmer
Councillor Ana Hopkins
Councillor Tanya Park
Heather Lysynski, PEC Committee Secretary

Members of the London Advisory Committee on Heritage
Jerri Bunn, LACH Committee Secretary

Jennifer Grainger, President, London Region Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
Kelly McKeating, London Region Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario