

**From:** Emily Abrams Ansari

**Sent:** Sunday, November 04, 2012 6:53 PM

**To:** Polhill, Bud; Henderson, Dale; Bryant, Judy; White, Sandy; Swan, Joseph; Lysynski, Heather

**Subject:** 591 Maitland

To the members of the Planning and Environment Committee,

I write as a Woodfield resident in support of LACH's decision to deny a demolition permit for 591 Maitland Street and to encourage your committee to take the same position.

As I understand it, a neighbourhood becomes a Heritage District in order to protect the gradual erosion of a heritage streetscape. Some supporters of the motion have argued that 591 Maitland has less aesthetic merit than others in the district. I believe, however, that if we get into debating the aesthetic merits of individual heritage homes within the district and tear down whichever don't appeal to us personally, we gradually destroy the heritage streetscape that the heritage district designation was meant to protect.

If your committee approves the demolition of structurally sound houses within the Heritage District that simply needs a few improvements, before we know it there will be no heritage district. If we tear down the smaller, slightly less architecturally unique homes like 591 Maitland and replace them with modern homes it will be only a matter of time before only the fancy mansions remain, interspersed with homes constructed in a mix of contemporary architectural styles of varying merit. We can already see areas of Woodfield where this was allowed to happen before the designation was applied and similar developments in older neighbourhoods of cities like Toronto: I think we can all agree that the results are rarely positive. Certainly such buildings will dramatically undermine Woodfield's heritage streetscape, which is frequently marketed as one of London's most unique features, just steps from downtown.

Also at stake if we set a precedent here is a socio-economic issue. At the very heart of Woodfield's uniqueness is its mix of elaborate mansions and small, humble cottages. The resulting socio-economic diversity is another of Woodfield's most precious and rare attributes--one that makes it a model for London neighbourhoods. Again, if we systematically remove the smaller, less architecturally dramatic homes and replace them with expensive modern buildings, we risk losing this diversity through gentrification.

Please do not let the power and influence of developers uninterested in streetscape integrity, aesthetics, or social diversity gradually chip away at this jewel of a heritage district. LACH is precisely the institution that should be trying to resist these powers, influential as they may be, especially when they seem set on exploiting the neighbourhood feel that Woodfield's unique architecture creates and, in the process of exploiting it, destroying it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Emily Ansari  
Woodfield resident