

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Application – 160 Oxford Street East

- *(Councillor S. Turner indicating that under the Ontario Heritage Act they have the statutory time period to make a decision whether to designate or not so the clock is ticking on that; choosing not to designate is deemed approval for demolition; indicating that the question that came up in reading some of the package is the concern that this may be used for a future surface parking lot or an expansion of the existing parking; stating that in his presentation, Mr. K. Gonyou, Heritage Planner, said that a Heritage Impact Assessment would be required for any future use, would that extend as well to a parking lot and would the Archaeological Impact Assessment also be required.);* Mr. K. Gonyou, Heritage Planner, responding that it is his understanding that to establish a commercial parking lot on this property, site plan approval would be required; advising that one thing that he neglected to mention in his presentation is that it is not possible to attach terms and conditions of the demolition request for a heritage listed property unfortunately; it is possible to attach terms and conditions for a demolition request for a designated property; however, we do not have that afforded to them for a heritage listed property; Mr. P. Yeoman, Director, Development Services, indicating that for a commercial parking lot, if this was a standalone parking lot, it would require site plan approval, if it was accessory parking to the property immediately to the west, that is something that they would be looking at amending the Development Agreement for; believing that there is a Development Agreement on the site.
- Kelly McKeating, 329 Victoria Street – indicating that, with her husband, she owns the two heritage designated properties across the street and adjacent to this; noting that they own 165 and 163 Oxford Street East; advising that, in addition to them owning those two properties, her small business is one of the commercial tenants at 165 Oxford Street East so she has an interest here with her husband as a property owner and she also has an interest as a tenant, someone who works right across the street; stating that their reasons for opposing this demolition relate primarily to the shortcomings that have been revealed to them in this request; indicating that there are shortcomings in the current demolition request process that they believe unfortunately can only be rectified by City Council denying the request for demolition; stating that what they found out, as Mr. K. Gonyou, Heritage Planner, explained, is that if the demolition application was being made in conjunction with a redevelopment plan then the property owner would be required to prepare an updated Heritage Impact Assessment based on that redevelopment plan and to propose measures to mitigate the negative impacts of the redevelopment on their properties; however, because they do not have a plan, there is no requirement for any mitigation measures, the City's only options, as they have been told, is to either approve the application without conditions or to deny the application; believing that the trouble with approving the application is that they are very very concerned that if that happens and the demolition occurs that the lot at 160 Oxford Street East will sit in limbo for a very long period of time; advising that we are all familiar with the lot at the southwest corner of Central Avenue and Waterloo Street which has been a stretch of ugly gravel for more than twenty years, almost the entire time that she has lived in the City of London; indicating that a friend of hers, over the weekend, brought to her attention another property at 101 Empress Avenue and if you Google street view it, she thinks you will be horrified to see in the middle of a modest residential area there is a vacant lot full of weeds and a hill of dirt and an orange plastic fence around the hill of dirt and it has apparently been there for almost five years; stating that this is what happens when people demolish buildings, you rely on the goodwill of that property owner to not let that happen; advising that the building located at 160 Oxford Street East is in a prominent

intersection on a major London thoroughfare and she thinks that they would all agree that they do not want it to become an eyesore; stating that, if, despite their concerns, the Planning and Environment Committee does decide to grant approval of the demolition request they respectfully request that staff be directed to take all necessary steps to be absolutely certain that those lovely mature trees on the City's property are preserved and protected; pointing out that the London Advisory Committee on Heritage noted in their recommendations on this file that they encouraged the applicant to maintain the building and the vegetation on the property until a redevelopment plan is submitted; noting that is not a condition that the City can impose however; reiterating the fact that it does seem strange to them that the requirements on a property owner who demolishes a building adjacent to a heritage designated property should differ based on whether or not they have a plan on what to do post demolition and that the requirements be less onerous to those who do not have a plan; regardless of what the decision is at the Planning and Environment Committee, they do respectfully request that the Planning and Environment Committee and City Council consider directing city staff to review this issue with the objective of identifying procedures that could be adopted to require reasonable mitigation measures regardless of the existence of a redevelopment plan.