

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Demolition Request for Heritage Listed Property at 247 Halls Mill Road

- Councillor Hopkins: Thank you and thank you for the presentation. I do have a quick technical question. We're here to do tonight to give notice of intent to designate if that's what the Committee chooses to do. I understand that there is a Order to Make Safe on the property right now and I wonder if staff can comment on what is an Order to Make Safe mean and then what happens depending on what we do here today/tonight with the Order to Make Safe.
- Councillor Cassidy: Mr. Kokkoros, is that you?
- Mr. P. Kokkoros, Deputy Chief Building Official: Thank you Madam Chair and through you that is indeed correct. Our, our Department issued an Unsafe Building - Order To Make Safe on December 13, 2019 and basically the remedial action that was required was either to repair and rebuild the roof and walls to support the roof in compliance with the 2012 Ontario Building Code, excuse me, or demolish the building in its entirety and to answer the Councillor's question, what happens if the Order is not complied with, the *Building Code Act* is very clear that in that case the Chief Building Official may order prohibit use or occupancy of the structure, of the building, and also make cause the building to be renovated, repaired, I'm just reading verbatim out of the *Building Code Act*, repaired or demolished to remove the unsafe condition or take such other action as he or she considers necessary for the protection of the public.
- Councillor Hopkins: Thank you for that and so when with that come about, if I know we're in the process right now to designate but what are the, what's the time frame around the Order to Make Safe.
- Mr. P. Kokkoros, Deputy Chief Building Official: Thank you and once again through you Madam Chair the actual Order has a compliance date of January 9, 2020 but seeing that we have been in communication with the owner and obviously pending the outcome of tonight's PEC meeting and essentially Council's decision whether to designate or not, we would proceed accordingly with any action after following that.
- Councillor Cassidy: Any other technical questions? No, I'm not seeing any so I will go to the public. If you would like to comment on this item or ask questions. Any questions staff will take note of them and at the end of the public portion of the meeting staff will respond to any questions that have been raised throughout the public portion so if you have a comment or question come to the mic, state your name, if you're comfortable state your address and you have five minutes. Go ahead.
- Jennifer Granger, I live at 956 Colborne Street. I am President of ACO London and as per the letter that we sent in we would like to offer our support for the recommendation of the City's Planning Department and LACH that the property at 247 Halls Mill Road be designated under part 4 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and that the demolition request of the property owner be denied. Furthermore, we suggest that the City require the property owner to repair the barn to its pre-September 2019 condition as soon as possible, establish a firm deadline for the completion of the repair work and take whatever action is permitted by law for the City to implement the required repairs at the property owners expense and if the property owner fails to do so by the, the established deadline to make sure that this is done at his expense. I would also just like to address the Make Safe Order. As a general rule Orders to Make Safe a heritage designated or heritage related, heritage listed structure, should not include the option to demolish because that gives the property owner, who was demolishing by neglect, the exact outcome that he's seeking. Thank you.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you. Any other public comments? We have four microphones, two at the top and two on the bottom. Just make your way to a mic, state your name, if you're comfortable your address and you will have five minutes.

- Madam Chair and Committee my name is Debbie Park and I live at 1288 Halls Mill Place. Excuse me. I had written up a large paper to present today and left it sitting at home so I'm just going to try and cover a few of the things that I thought were most important. The barn itself is extremely, it's a magnificent piece of architecture, it's very important. In the book London Street Names, I just would like to point out on page, put my glasses on here, page 52, that they have an illustration of the barn and this is representing the reason why Halls Mill was well known and how it came about to be called Halls Mill and interestingly enough, they use the structure of the barn to represent this significant historical area. In the letter that was put in The London Free Press discussing the designation, the historical designation of I think it was 12 different neighborhoods in the City of London they used, again, 247 as their wonderful example of historical properties that should be designated. In this, the quote from the City is the report prepared by City Staff sums up the potential opportunity for new heritage areas. Cultural heritage is an important community resource, it's a source of knowledge and memory, it contributes to the quality of life of a community, it is a collective legacy. This is our collective legacy, what is going on on Halls Mill and the barn is the centerpiece of that. You see it when you drive into Byron, it is at the very top of the hill so it's the one thing out of all the homes that you do see. Being an owner of historical property myself I understand the problems in it and the expense in maintaining historical properties. I would like to ask that perhaps the City go over there rules about maybe, I know it was a provincial thing happened a few years ago, but granting tax incentives, grants, incentives to help people maintain their property and perhaps we won't have quite as many purposeful neglect of historic properties. Also, if there's a way to follow up when the neighbors do mention that there's a problem with one of the historical properties that there's a system set that they will follow up on the request and not leaving it up to neighbours which is kind of an awkward position for us to be in to report on the damages being done to historical buildings. The wood is there, the main structure on the first floor is there, I would like to see the building rebuilt. Thank you very much.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you. Are there any other members of the public that would like to speak to this? Make your way to the microphone ma'am you will have 5 minutes.

- I'm Nancy Tausky, I live at 288 St. James Street and I'm here in two capacities, one as a member of the Executive of the Regional Branch of the Architectural of Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. I want to reinforce the letter that is on your agenda from our President Jennifer Granger and I want to support, like she does, the recommendation put forward by LACH and also the other recommendations that she notes there. I also want to speak briefly on my own, in my own capacity. As you know from the Heritage Planners report, I included this building in a book that I published back in the 1990's about London buildings. I accepted the contract from Broadview Press to do a second book on London buildings because my first book had, concerned only the buildings by a particular architectural firm and there were others I wanted to write about but it turned out that I didn't have a very broad palette from which I was able to choose the buildings in the second book. I was supposed to only include sixty entries. I managed to eke it up to sixty-six but I had to fight for every last one so any building that is in that book was there because I felt strongly about it. As an experienced Building Analyst I had several convictions about when I wanted the buildings in that book to represent, I didn't want it to be a survey of the sixty or sixty-six homes of London's richest citizens or it's most important institutional buildings, I wanted it to include institutional buildings, homes of the wealthy, buildings that were utilitarian and buildings that were decorative. I wanted it to include things that were important for the poor as well as the rich and when I begin to look at all of those criteria sixty six buildings wasn't very many. I also felt very strongly, as I still do, that the buildings that represent the history of a small community which later gotten absolved or eaten up into

London, that those buildings are especially important as representing that small community and here the barn/coach house that was built by one of the most important mill owners in what was originally Halls Mills certainly meets that criteria so I urge you strongly to support its retention. Thank you.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you Ms. Tausky. Anybody else like to speak to this? Any other members of the public? Yep. Come ahead. Come to the microphone.

- Going back to Ms. Park, if you want to, I don't see here, there she is, email your remarks you can email them to PEC@London.ca and the Clerk will ensure that those get sent to all the members of Council. Thank you. Go ahead sir, if you state your name and if you are comfortable, your address and you'll have five minutes.

- My name is John McLeod, my wife and I are the owners of 247 Halls Mill. Ok, I'm a little confused why I'm even here because I thought this issue was over in 2008. I saw up on the screen here where it was mentioned, it said it was subject to a demolition application which I find a little misleading. I think it should have said that there was a demolition permit issued. I have a letter from the Planning Committee and from Don Menard who was the Heritage Commissioner in 2008, he states the inventory listing does not distinguish what structure or structures on this site are of heritage interest or value. There is a lot of discussion about this in meeting that I went to in 2008 because it wasn't clear which building, the accessory building or the house. The recommendation was is given the difficulty of retaining a deteriorating structure which is of no value to the applicant and the opportunity to designate the residential home and this is what came out of that, this agreement was that we would designate the home and it said it is recommended that the demolition application for the removal of the coach house, be approved. Now that's a letter from the Planning Committee yeah and from Don Menard. Like I said, I'm a little bit confused about why I am even here speaking to this and I guess I have a question for the Heritage Planner and that question is do you intend to renege on what you've already agreed to. Thank you.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you, sir, and at the end of the public participation meeting we'll get, we'll get those answers. Is there any other member of the public who would like to speak to this item? Any other public comments or questions? Come to the microphone, sir, state your name, your address if you're comfortable.

- My name is Robert Dore, I live at 78 Blackthorne Crescent: I am also a business owner in Blackfriars and I certainly appreciate heritage in our city and I support keeping heritage buildings in our city but when it was brought forward before that we should understand context I think that we need to understand the context that this is a barn and also that is a home for many rodents and it has deteriorated for many, many, many years and it's quite easy for other members of the public or for Council to suggest restoring the barn to the grandeur of many years ago but I would second the motion if you want to enforce that type of law to, to have it restored then I think you need to provide the funding to do that. When the barn and the property was purchased years ago it was already in a very bad deteriorating state. There was no heritage designation on it at that point and to fast forward to 2020 and to say it must now have a designation, it must now be restored, you know I just, I just think that that's easy to say but if the City wants to have heritage properties then they need to kind of put the money where the mouth is and they need to provide some kind of funding that for that. Once again I'm a heritage advocate, I love heritage buildings but this is not a residence that someone was living in, this is a barn that rodents we're living in and just, we need to understand that context and that's my input this evening.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you, sir. Any other members of the public who would like to speak come to the microphone, state your name, go ahead.

- Thanks. My name is Stephanie Radu and I reside at 592 Pall Mall Street. I live nowhere near Byron but as our previous speaker said I too am an advocate for heritage in the city. I would say, I would just encourage for us all to think about the precedent that a building like this can set so as to say, you know, these examples, singular examples, it's hard to just think of them as one time incidences or individual architectural pieces because the way that we treat them really dictates future treatments of our heritage sites and current understandings of how our Councillors, how our citizens and how our city overall treats heritage and values heritage so I just wanted to put my voice in there, too, in support of the recommendations set forth by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and LACH and to say that I think it's very important that individual examples of heritage structures like this and our treatment of them are understood as we've been talking about a little bit with regards to context within the broader context of how the city treats their heritage structures and discourages benign neglect.

- Councillor Cassidy. Thank you very much. Anybody else? I have 4 microphones.

- Hi, my name is Brent McLeod: Here I've ever a lot of talk about a lot of feelings and the thing with feelings is they don't mean anything, facts mean everything and the facts are in 2008 a demolition permit was approved and it was approved on the basis that the structure was unsound, okay and in the twelve years that have passed the structure certainly has not improved, in fact, has got much, much worse. That's an important fact to consider. Let me think here. The other thing, too, this gentlemen here mentioned too about it being a house for rodents and racoons and mice and skunks and you name it is in there, it's also now an eyesore, okay. It's fallen in on itself and is it, it is now of zero used to the owner whatsoever and not a, not a penny will be going into it and I don't see where it go from there. So that's it. Thank you.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you, sir. Any other members of the public? Come to the microphone sir.

- My name is Milyn Hall: I tried to save 211 Halls Mill Road which is at the bottom of the "T" block in the village of Westminster, which was really, I mean if you didn't save that building, it was the Commission Magistrates building, it was the principal property of the Sirinias Hall Enterprise from 1833 on and it was the distillery house as well. I mean, what city tears down their distillery house. I spent over three thousand hours trying to save that building, I did about eight hundred hours before the first draft went to the LACH, they didn't do a thing with it and George Goodlet, the chair, basically was going to submit the draft, they hadn't worked on it at all so, as far as I'm concerned, the most important thing about 211 or any of the Halls Mill properties is that your recognize the top of the street where the Mill Creek flowed that ran the mill and that should be designated because it's the first property that the City bought in relationship to the pump house and changing the water borne illness that plagued this city for thirty years even though we had a railway and we had a, a termination highway from the lake head at Lake Erie, we had Dundas Street terminating at, and we had the rail way. I mean these sort of things make a city bloom, it wasn't until the Springbank water changed everything in 1878 and then the city exploded. Some things about Halls Mill are, are very important but the importance is gone. What you need to do is we need to build cairns and we need to describe what the stream fed system meant to the first pioneers and the industrialists as well as what the riverfront in 1833 operation added to that system sustaining the garrison. That's your context. If you don't go with that it's just a bunch of buildings on an old street that are aging. I would say that the block busting thing happened seventeen years ago and that's what you're fighting right now and I, I think that whoever jacked the hole through 211 Halls Mill Road and then the City who had their people stabilize the building let it go into a dilapidated state because they didn't make it waterproof. So, you know, I've pretty much spent a lot of time trying to do the right thing to get some steam orientation to, to change the Ontario Curriculum Development program concerning what the Canada West movement actually meant

here outside of the city limits of London at one time and so I'll close by saying I think we need a cairn at the bottom of the street where 211 Halls Mill Road describing what happened there and I think we need a cairn at the top preserving that last piece of glacial topography and land untouched. It's, it's one of the most important things is to preserve the "T" block and at least demark it. Thank you.

- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you very much Mr. Hall. Anybody else? Make your way to the microphone carefully and then you'll have your five minutes.

- Hi my name's Joe Santin: This won't take five minutes. I guess I have to start with a question first. Unless I misread it, was not the demolition permit revoked a year later? That's a question that I thought I understood but maybe I didn't and I guess secondly, long time just down the road from this property lived there. I was never inside I admit that but it seemed to be standing structurally reasonable until a deliberate act to start pulling it apart happened and then after an Order to Stop you continue. You grant this demolition, he gets what he wants, he's going to apply for severance so that he can sell land that was the whole plan when he did it way back when and having said that, I like analogies, what Eldon House is to Downtown London is what this place is, actually the whole street, is to Byron. Really think about that because if you let him take it down the application for severances will be in in no time. Thank you.

- Councillor Cassidy: Okay and I just want to remind people to not make assumptions on what anybody's motives are or anything we're just here to talk about this application for a demolition permit. Is there anybody else who would like to speak to this? One more time, any other member of the public who would like to speak to this issue? And I'm not seeing any.