

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Demolition Request for Heritage Designated Property – 120 York Street

- Councillor Cassidy: Any technical questions? Councillor Turner.
- Councillor Turner. Thank you Madam Chair. Through you, with respect to this application, the, there's kind of two parts to it. There's the demolition application and then there's the future of the site and often we contemplate the two of those in, in tandem. The future of the site question ends up getting left. My concern is in granting this. Then we, we leave a vacant site I think it's outlined in the report that the intent is set to create parking on that site so it just becomes another parking lot. Is there another part of this process where I think it would probably require a temporary parking permit to be able to operate that site as such and, and, are, what are the options available to Council at this time?
- Councillor Cassidy: Is that Ms. Dent that will answer that?
- Laura Dent, Heritage Planner: I'm going to refer this to one of my colleagues in Development Services.
- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you Ms. Dent.
- I can speak up. Sorry Madam Chair. It's Michael Pease from the site plan group. I was trying to find the hand up button so I decided to speak up.
- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you. Go ahead.
- Michael Pease, I can provide some clarity. So the application here through a site plan is for parking which is an association with another commercial property for the owner and within a hundred fifty meters under the regulations of the Zoning By-law so that's, I wouldn't necessarily call it a commercial parking lot, expansion of the lot to the east is in association with a commercial use within a hundred fifty meters of the property.
- Councillor Turner: Thank you.
- Councillor Cassidy: Any other a technical questions? I wonder if there is a representative for the applicant who's here who would like to speak to this? Do you want to state your name and you have five minutes?
- Hi. My name is Jim Bujouves, the President for Farhi Developments and thank you Madam Chair. In fact it was two weeks ago when I was here and you mentioned you met this gentleman from Farhi back, I believe, January, February, so I just thought I'd say hello now that you've met me again. With regard to the London Advisory Heritage Committee report dated August 12th I just like to acknowledge the recommendation of the Director with the advice of the Heritage Planner specifically on the Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan it does note in the language that it provides policies and guidelines to manage change for approximately three hundred seventy properties within its boundaries. The HDC Plan is to establish a framework by which the heritage attributes of the downtown can be protected, managed and enhanced as this area continues to evolve and change over time. The reason I bring this forward is that Farhi Holding Corporation owns approximately fifty-eight buildings in the downtown district. The commitment to maintaining and revitalizing heritage assets is evidenced in building such as the Capitol Theatre restoration at 204 Dundas, TD

bank building at 220, former Scott's building at 229-231, the Richmond block, Duffield building at 215 Dundas and the historical Idlewyld as a reference point. The restoration of heritage buildings to preserve and bring history to life ensure that they enhance the fabric of the community is evidence in over twenty projects alone London, Ontario. Specifically referring to the Downtown Parking Study that is referred to in section 2.5 of the report I note the following: the 2015 Downtown London Parking Study and the more recent 2017 Downtown Parking Strategy do identify the need for further parking. The problem is it does not address some underlying realities that we are experiencing in the downtown core as follows: London has the lowest rate of commutes outside of the central census subdivisions which means more demand is placed upon its parking facilities; seventy-five percent drive to work, only eleven percent commute. CBRE and Cushman Wakefield analysis non-heritage properties have a twenty-one percent vacancy whereas heritage properties have thirty-four percent vacancy. The respective stalls is two hundred and nine versus sixty-seven per building. Class A building's have a thirteen percent vacancy rate whereas Class B and Class C have thirty-six percent vacancy. The respective stalls is two hundred eighty-one versus fifty-five per building. It is city versus suburb in impact on office has already had, has also had, a significant effect. In Q3 of 2019 alone over one hundred forty-five square feet, thousand square feet, of office space was under construction in the suburbs, none in the downtown. Downtown vacancy is at eighteen point four percent pre-Covid compared to twelve point six in the suburbs. Downtown parking per month is two hundred forty-one dollars versus zero in the suburbs. Overall vacancy attrition through moves to repurposed industrial or urban malls has exceeded one point five million square feet. How does this proposal assist both the City and Farhi? I referred to a couple items. Item number one, the Bell building, specifically within a hundred fifty meter radius. We have successfully revitalized the 100 Dundas properties since its' acquisition with a further one thousand eight hundred fifty employees in the building since its acquisition. Every one hundred thousand square feet results in approximately five hundred thousand in incremental property tax revenue and activates the core with people on the streets. We have no capacity to provide any further parking to increase occupancy. The proposed parking provides incrementally only fifteen parking spots for the submission made on March 13, 2020. We have lost a number of potential office tenants recently due to not having the parking ratios asking for by the leading brokers including Carfax and Compass totaling seven hundred employees. The building itself has the structural capacity and integrity to increase the number of floors and add a further five hundred thousand square feet. In addition we are proceeding with the submission on the Ridout residential development. The community information, the community meeting is pending. The demolition will reduce the existing parking deficiency we're currently have with existing Bell tenants we are contractually obligated to, to provide parking. I have brought that forward to your head of Development Services back in February and a few months ago as well. Item number two, future development: subject to market absorption we have every intention of initiating a redevelopment at 120 York on September 1, 2020, I forwarded the details of initiative, initiatives in concert with CBRE to the head of Planning and Development Services. The initiative incorporates all aspects of The London Plan, creates a mixed use residential and retail development to enhance the recreational, dining, shopping and service district. This will supply over five hundred additional units with approximately six hundred parking stalls.

- Councillor Cassidy: You've just passed your five minute mark and now, sir. I wonder if you could take about ten seconds and wrap it up.

- Jim Bujouves, the President for Farhi Developments: Heritage properties need parking as well and that's what's causing the problem in addition to the one hundred fifty meter proximity and I appreciate the time. Thank you.
- Councillor Cassidy: Thank you very much. So I'll go to the committee rooms to see if there are other if there are any members of the public who have come to comment on this. Anyone at all would like to make a comment or ask a question about this application for demolition request? I'm seeing none so all of a motion to close the PPM.