

## **London Black History Coordinating Committee**

Correspondence Office:  
505 Dundas Street,  
London, ON N6B 1W4  
[www.lbhcc.org](http://www.lbhcc.org)

London Advisory Committee on Heritage  
c/o Heather Lysynski, Committee Secretary

### **Application to Demolish 275 Thames Street in London, Ontario**

Dear Chairperson of the London Advisory Committee on Heritage,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the London Black History Coordinating Committee (LBHCC) to inform you that we are opposed to demolishing the building at 275 Thames Street. In fact, we are surprised and disappointed that an application to demolish 275 Thames Street has been submitted. This building is of great historical significance to London and Canada as a whole. By destroying it, we will be destroying part of our heritage and a piece of our history about which we, as Canadians, must be very proud.


The building that stands at the aforementioned address was formerly the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or the "Fugitive Slave Chapel" as it was commonly called. It was the Black community's first church in London, and it doubled as the site at which the community could congregate to organize efforts to end slavery. As some might already know, London was one of the places where escaped slaves from the United States sought refuge. Our small city provided hope, freedom, and opportunities for many, and the building at 275 Thames Street is a testament of that.

As such, the London Public Library designated the building an historic site on August 11, 1986. The library installed a plaque at the site, but that plaque mysteriously disappeared in 2002. Several years ago, the City of London designated the building a "priority one" heritage building. On March 13, 2013, Aboutown sent a letter to the London Advisory Committee on Heritage to demolish the building and two others.

This building is a significant part of this city's history, and by demolishing it, we will be demolishing pieces of who we are as Londoners, and possibly some important artefacts, too. The LBHCC is dismayed that its demolition is being considered.

If you have any questions, please contact me at

Sincerely,

  
Shamara Baidoobonso

Chair  
London Black History Coordinating Committee