

From: J.A. Clark <M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec 14(1)>
Sent: Thursday, January 25, 2024 5:47 PM
To: clerks <clerks@oshawa.ca>; * Council <council@oshawa.ca>
Cc: Harrison Whilsmith <HWhilsmith@oshawa.ca>; Tom Goodeve <TGoodeve@oshawa.ca>
Subject: Council agenda item ED-24-05 (Harmony Public School)

Good afternoon.

As a former member of Heritage Oshawa, I am familiar with the efforts of the Committee and citizens of Oshawa to preserve and protect Harmony Public School for future generations.

Another staff report has been requested on this item. I would like to point out a few things that should be considered in that report.

First, Council must stand up to developer pressure and vote to designate Harmony Public School. It is the sworn responsibility of the elected representatives of this community to protect its irreplaceable cultural heritage resources. Here is your opportunity to do so. A win-win resolution that permits infill development of the site WHILE PRESERVING THE HERITAGE PROPERTY *is possible*, without involving an appeal to the OLT.

As one of the very few extant remnants of the Village of Harmony, a key settlement in the development of the City, Harmony Public School is a landmark, providing a tangible, physical embodiment of the story of Harmony Village, one that any “commemoration” cannot hope to supply. This area recently lost another property fundamental to its history, the beautiful former home of the Farewell Family at 750 King St. East, a city founder who once owned and settled the land on which the School stands.

There is no reason for a new research report on Harmony Public School. Yes, there are new evaluation requirements, but the School has already been evaluated by ASI as *exceeding* the province’s new requirement of a minimum of two criteria for designation, the threshold for evaluation legislated by Bill 23. ASI found Harmony School meets ALL THREE evaluation criteria. Therefore, no additional research (or expenditure) is required.

I find it supremely ironic that one of the City’s landmark Centennial Properties, Harmony Public School, built in 1924, should be considered for demolition in the centennial year it shares with the City. What does this say about Oshawa’s pride in its past and the importance of the story of this City's growth?

More importantly, the School can have an ongoing role to play in the life of future residents through adaptive re-use. It takes only a little vision to see some of the many beneficial roles this heritage property could play in a new development, especially considering the recent intensification of the Donevan property just to the south. A

community hub with daycare or other services could be invaluable to the new residents in this area, while preserving the built heritage of the community.

It seems the developer's main concern with designating the School is the site access, which they say will "sterilize" the site re: development (and by this I assume they mean *sufficiently profitable* development). However, it is not unprecedented for the Region to adjust its site access requirements as necessary, and the City should stand firm and negotiate with the Region to achieve this.

We all know the probable outcome of maintaining the property's *status quo*. In relation to a "listed non-designated property" category, I would remind Council that a "listed non-designated property" on the City's Register provides ZERO protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This is particularly true in the current context of *Bill 23*, when ALL listed properties on the Register will be purged by the end of 2024 if they are not brought forward for designation. For this very reason, at the January 29 meeting, Council will be considering three designation by-laws.

As you are all aware, heritage conservation is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity and the promotion of healthy and equitable communities. The conservation of heritage resources is identified as being of Provincial interest in the *Planning Act* and is one of the Guiding Principles in *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)*. Heritage conservation polices are embedded in the *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*. Cultural heritage resources are considered **irreplaceable and valuable assets** that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth.

I would ask, therefore, that Council carefully consider their options and responsibilities as regards Harmony Public School, and *celebrate* its Centennial legacy, vs wiping it out.

Sincerely,

J.A. Clark