

St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday, August 22, 2019

Burgoyne Woods Room at 4:30pm

Attendance:

Dr. John Bacher (SCHPAC)
Gail Benjafield (SCHAC)
David Bergen (SCHPAC)
Peter Connolly (SCHPAC)
John Crawley (SCHPAC)
Lorraine Giroux (SCHAC)
Mark Hoerdts (SCHAC)
Andrew Humeniuk (SCHPAC and SCHAC)
Brian Narhi (SCHPAC and SCHAC)
Justin Nicholls (SCHAC)
Robert Speck (SCHAC)
Holly Washuta (SCHPAC)

Regrets:

Robert De Wolfe (SCHPAC)
David Donnelly (SCHAC)
Peter Wing (SCHAC)

Staff Liaison:

Chloe Richer, Heritage Planner, Planning and Building Services
Amanda Knutson, Planner II, Planning and Building Services
Tami Kitay, Director, Planning and Building Services

Council:

Councillor Carlos Garcia

Public:

Shea Gallagher, superkül (Project Manager)
Brandon Kashin, Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Associates Limited (Intermediate Planner)
Donald Loucks, Metropolitan Design Ltd. (Heritage Consultant)

1. Call meeting to order (Chair)

Brian Narhi called the meeting to order at 4:31pm

2. Recognition of Traditional Territories

3. Additions / Deletions to the Agenda

None.

4. Motion to approve the agenda

Moved by: David Bergen (SCHPAC) and Lorraine Giroux (SCHAC)

“That the Agenda for the meeting of August 22, 2019, be approved.”

CARRIED

5. Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting

Moved by: David Bergen

“That the Minutes from the SCHPAC meeting of July 25, 2019, be approved.”

CARRIED

6. Presentations (invited guests)

Presentations were delivered during Agenda Item 8.1:

Shea Gallagher, superkül (Project Manager)

Brandon Kashin, Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Associates Limited (Intermediate Planner)

Donald Loucks, Metropolitan Design Ltd. (Heritage Consultant)

7. Business arising from the minutes

None.

8. Business

8.1 17 Welland Avenue (Queen Street Heritage Conservation District)

Owner: AAM Welland Inc.

Agent: WND Associates

File No.: 60.35.1046

Application has been made for a Zoning By-law Amendment to facilitate the proposed redevelopment of the former Memorial Public School site for residential use. The proposal consists of a 6-storey apartment building and townhouse dwellings, with a total of 143 residential units.

The proposed redevelopment would maintain the existing front façade of the school and would include the 6-storey apartment building to the rear. Townhomes are proposed to be located to the rear of the lot with the addition of a private road. The demolition of a large portion of the school structure is proposed to support the redevelopment. The small portion of the original structure to be retained would be used as common space. The apartment building is proposed to be set back approximately four to six metres from the front wall of the former school structure.

The school structure is located within the Queen Street Heritage Conservation District, a mature residential area with a very rich surrounding streetscape. The school structure provides an important termination of views north along Queen Street as identified in the Queen Street Heritage Conservation District Study Background Report. In 2016, due to declining enrollment at Memorial Public School, the building was sold and closed.

Shea Gallagher, Brandon Kashin and Donald Loucks conducted a joint presentation. Mr. Kashin began the presentation with information on the neighbourhood and site context, and provided an overview of revisions to the original proposal. He confirmed that 4.8m to 6.2m of the former school structure would be retained (from the new build's front walls to the former school's front walls). Revisions to the condominium building design include the loading area's location change and having the at-grade units in set from the original wall of the school. Mr. Kashin advised that public concerns had been expressed regarding loading, amenity space, parking, etc. The most significant change to the proposal is to the central area, with traditional townhouses and an amenity area (back-to-back townhouses were removed), and moving from 53 townhouses down to only 40. The Committee noted that the new site plan seems less cluttered.

Mr. Kashin acknowledged that there were concerns regarding colours and materials at the previous joint meeting on February 28th, 2019. He reminded the Committee members that the proposal is currently at the Zoning By-law Amendment stage regarding use and performance standards. The detailed design work is to come later with the site plan process. Requests from Committee motion in February included:

- 1) *Retaining more of original building;*
- 2) *Using a memorial scroll as a commemorative element; and*
- 3) *Architectural features of the new building to tie into the Arts and Crafts style of the former school structure.*

1) Retaining more of original building

Mr. Loucks does not think more of the building can be incorporated due to the proposed location of the below-grade parking. He advised there would be an intangible reference to the school design with outdoor access from some of the ground floor units. He has requested additional design details from the architect and has not received answers regarding specific materiality. Mr. Loucks sees the condominium building being set in and back as significant.

The Committees expressed that the front doors and gymnasium/layout are very unique. Mr. Gallagher explained the need to excavate beneath the school for the parking garage, and stated they cannot retain the gymnasium and floor plan for this reason. Mr. Kashin agreed and reiterated Mr. Loucks' comment that the relationship between the ground floor units and the outdoors respects the original floor layout. He advised the Committees that there is the need for a "front of house" and "back of house" in any building. Mr. Kashin advised there are less environmental issues with parking located underneath (in consideration of factors such as storm water run-off).

The Committees advised that façadism is not a best practice and asked what is purpose of keeping the area behind the front façade. Mr. Gallagher advised it will be used as amenity/common space for the condominium residents. A Committee member agreed that would be an acceptable use of the space.

The Committees asked again if the gymnasium could be retained as a fitness centre, meeting room, or for another use. It was reiterated that the existing building cannot be retained past the 4.8m to 6.2m portion. It would have to be stabilized while excavating beneath for parking, which was described by the proponent as a "huge engineering feat." The proponent reviewed the floor plan regarding the location of the ramp to the parking garage, loading bay for garbage, move-in area, etc.

The Committees asked whether the depth of one classroom could be retained. It was confirmed that the plan proposes to retain 4.8m to 6.2m, not the depth of a classroom. The Committees asked whether materials such as the floor of the school could be retained. It was confirmed that the main entrance and door of the former school structure will be used as the main entrance of the condominium building.

2) Using a memorial scroll as a commemorative element

Mr. Kashin confirmed that if the scroll is found, it would be retained. Amanda suggested contacting the school District School Board of Niagara (DSBN). A Committee member confirmed that they work for DSBN and can reach out. Chloe

advised that relevant heritage reports the City typically requires include Documentation & Salvage Reports and Commemoration Plans.

The Committees confirmed their interest in other archival elements, such as pictures that have been retained, and wanted to know where other such items are being kept. A Committee member advised that there is an archivist working for the DSBN. Mr. Kashin agreed that vintage photographs displayed in common areas would be beneficial. The Committees noted that when facing the front façade, the portion to the left of the existing structure was the school library and the portion to the right was the principal's office; this could factor into the interior commemoration plan.

The Committee suggested creating planters, retaining walls, and other features using bricks salvaged from the existing structure, and wanted to know why an inventory of historic building materials has not been provided by yet. Chloe advised it is typically the applicant's responsibility to provide a Documentation and Salvage Report, which would be required as part of the heritage permit application submission.

3) *Architectural features of the new building to tie into the Arts and Crafts style of the former school structure*

The Committee feels that the proposed design of the new building takes away from the historic school façade; as such, they recommended at least one additional further step back or terracing. The Committees understand this would result in the loss of units. Mr. Kashin advised that the design team could consider this suggestion, however, the applicant would lose a significant portion of the GFA. Mr. Gallagher discussed the balance of feasible development versus value and advised the design is currently broken up into thirds vertically. In his opinion, further step backs would make the structure appear top-heavy.

Chloe asked what design techniques could be used to offset the sense that the proposed new building overwhelms the former school structure. Mr. Gallagher advised the proposal is designed for wood frame construction and it would be difficult to use brick. Lightweight cladding will be proposed, such as metal, aluminum, cement board finish, etc. He wants to see a contrast of the new construction materials with the historic brick. A contemporarily designed building using contemporary materials will be proposed.

The Committee asked if horizontal banding, an arch and other relevant design elements could be used in the new build to reference architectural elements of the former school structure. Greenery was also suggested to break up the façade. Mr. Loucks noted it is the cornice that completes the former school building. The

Committee suggested using insets to draw eyes to these details rather than to the existing “great big monolithic mass,” and reiterated the desire to see features from the existing front façade and sides to areas of the new structure that are visible from public realm.

Other relevant questions and comments that were discussed included:

- Councillor Garcia shared questions regarding the building height and 1-to-1 versus 1-to-1.25 parking spaces. Chloe read a section from the Queen Street Heritage Conservation District Study - District Plan regarding height and Amanda mentioned a Zoning By-law Amendment application was submitted regarding parking.
- The Committees requested information on the height of a mechanical rooftop unit. Mr. Gallagher advised they are typically four metres in height.
- Councillor Garcia wanted to confirm whether there would be additional parking beyond the proposed 1-to-1 rate? Mr. Gallagher advised that visitor parking spots are proposed. Amanda confirmed that the visitor parking spots meet the intent of the by-law. Mr. Kashin indicated that parking is impossible to forecast. Bicycle parking is also proposed and the proponent is considering factors such as cycling routes, transit, etc.
- Councillor Garcia asked to confirm the height of the nearby York Street apartment building. Mr. Kashin advised that it is 4 storeys and that there is tension with the as-of-right building permissions that currently allow a 6-storey building on site. He reiterated that the proposed condominium building would be set back from the existing front façade and also set back from the lot lines. Mr. Loucks advised that cities change over time and that he sees the proposal as having an overall positive approach, adding layers to the story of St. Catharines.
- The Committees asked whether due to a clear conflict with the District Plan’s guidelines, should the property be formally removed from the Heritage Conservation District (de-designated)? Mr. Loucks noted this is an interesting question and advised that the sightline is key.
- The Committee asked the proponents to confirm whether the building would be a condominium building or apartments/rental. Mr. Gallagher advised they assumed it will be a condominium, though there may be two separate condominium corporations. There would not be any freehold properties on site.
- The Committee asked whether there would be community space on site open to the public. Mr. Kashin advised it depends on what the owners think of marketability, though this is a possibility.
- The Committee asked how the proposal will retain the heavily treed feel of the street. Mr. Gallagher advised that the team in attendance at the meeting did not include a landscape architect but advised there are many trees as part of the plan and that with changes to the site plan, additional trees are being retained and new trees will be provided. Amanda advised that trees on the perimeter of the property will be

maintained as well as the two front linden trees, and that there is a Tree Protection Plan in place. A plan for the former crab apple trees has not been found.

- The Committee feels that the highest quality work should be completed with regards to the landscape, due to the proposed height. Brandon advised that the two large linden trees in front of the former school structure will overpower the view, though they add to aesthetics of the front yard. Storm water management will not affect these two trees.
- The Committee requested information on how residents will access the small driveway and noted there are only four access routes across Twelve Mile Creek. Mr. Kashin advised that a traffic engineer reviewed whether a traffic upgrade needs to occur. The proponent received a review from a consulting engineer that found the existing infrastructure can accommodate the increase in traffic, and it has been submitted to the City.

Moved by: John Bacher (SHPAC) and Robert Speck (SCHAC)

“That St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee and the St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee support the redevelopment of the former Memorial Public School at 17 Welland Avenue and the related application for zoning by-law amendment. The Committees also request that should a scroll still exist, it be incorporated into the design of the building and/or site as a commemorative element. The Committees suggest that the design of the new building should include architectural features that tie into the Arts and Crafts style of the school building. High quality new construction materials that are compatible with the historic building materials (e.g., in colour) should be incorporated as part of the new design, along with architectural features such as horizontal banding, articulating the façade and vegetative screening on top of the school. The Committee requests that the salvaged bricks from the former school structure be reused throughout the site where possible. The Committee requests the following cultural heritage reports be completed as part of the heritage permitting process: Urban Design Brief, Commemoration Brief, Documentation and Salvage Report and Conservation Plan.”

SHPAC: 5 members in favor of, 0 against

SCHAC: 7 members in favor of, 0 against

CARRIED

- 8.2** Designing a New Addition to a Heritage Building
Chloe Richer, Heritage Planner (Staff Liaison)
- Presentation on the design elements of compatible additions to heritage buildings.

Chloe's presentation on Designing a New Addition to a Heritage Building summarized local, provincial and national policy and best practices on new additions to heritage buildings, as well as key design principles. Case studies of compatible and incompatible additions were reviewed. The Committee members shared their thoughts on the case studies examined.

9. Information/Correspondence

- Supporting information for 17 Welland Avenue can be found online at stcatharines.ca/development (for both SCHPAC and SCHAC)
- [Heritage Conservation Districts, pre- and post-2005, part one](#) (Ontario Heritage Act and More article)

10. Date of next meeting

Thursday, August 29, 2019 (SCHPAC)

11. Motion to Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:31pm

Committee Members should advise Chloe Richer (905-688-5601 ext. 1710) or cricher@stcatharines.ca if they are unable to attend the meeting or did not receive the item(s) noted in the agenda.