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Application to Alter 175 Main Street, the Deschâtelets Building, a Property Designated under Part IV of The *Ontario Heritage Act*

ACS2020-PIE-RHU-0019

Capital (17)

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## Report recommendations

That Planning Committee recommend that Council:

1. **approve the application to alter the building at 175 Main Street, which includes the removal of the chapel wing and the construction of a temporary infill wall, according to plans submitted by Hobin Architecture, dated May 2020 and July 2020; conditional upon:**
  - a. **the approval of the Zoning By-law Amendment for 205 Scholastic Drive to permit the existing Deschâtelets Building to be converted to a school and that such amendment be in full force and effect;**
  - b. **the documentation of the building as described in Document 10 to be submitted to the City of Ottawa archives; and**
  - c. **the retention of as many of the stained-glass chapel windows as reasonably possible to be incorporated into future development or public art within Greystone Village;**
2. **delegate authority for minor design changes to the General Manager, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development; and**
3. **approve the issuance of the heritage permit with a three-year expiry date from the date of issuance unless otherwise extended by Council.**

The Built Heritage Sub-committee (BHSC) considered this report at its meeting on September 8, 2020. The Sub-committee received oral and written submissions, as noted in the Minutes of that meeting. The BHSC did not approve the report recommendations, as they were put to a vote and lost on a tie. The Sub-committee did

not approve any further recommendation to Planning Committee and Council on the matter.

At Planning Committee, the following staff of the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development department provided a presentation and responded to questions: Anne Fitzpatrick, Planner III; Saide Sayah, Manager, Development Review – Central.

Ward Councillor Shawn Menard was present and took part in discussion. He proposed to bring forward two motions, to the following effect:

- That Recommendation 1 of the report be modified to add an additional condition of approval, being the submission of a complete heritage permit application for alterations associated with the new school use or community centre, including the alterations to the front entrance and the bay on the east façade.
- That staff work with the owners to review opportunities for a display, in addition to a plaque, within the designated building at 175 Main Street, that would commemorate the chapel.

Planning Committee heard five delegations, as follows:

- Tom Scott<sup>1</sup> suggested this proposal breaks a promise to the Oblates Fathers to protect the heritage aspect of the scholasticate and he worried their voices have not been heard and that the current Covid 19 based process has no allowance for them. He was also dissatisfied that proper documentation of graves was not carried out when the Oblates cemetery was transferred. He noted there is a lack of information about history and heritage, about the most effective use of the space for social housing, about the school board's authority to build a podium, about any provincial requirements, including for play space for preschool kindergarten and elementary levels, and about what is intended to the immediate east of the building and why the chapel wing is such a hinderance. In the absence of such information, he suggested this request, and the concurrent request to approve a Zoning By-law amendment for 205 Scholastic Drive to permit the Deschâtelets Building to be converted to a school (agenda item 3 at this meeting), should be considered premature and put on hold. He also requested there be long term engagement with the Old Ottawa East Community Association.

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<sup>1</sup> Submission on file

- Ron Rose, Interim Chair, Planning Committee, Old Ottawa East Community Association<sup>2</sup> noted the importance of the Deschâtelets Building to the community, and that a number of people in the community firmly believe that the Chapel wing should be saved, that its structural integrity is still open for debate, and that the owners knew they were buying a heritage building and should pay whatever it costs to maintain that asset. However, as the community of Old Ottawa East is badly underserved for community services and lacks affordable housing, the community believes that the benefits that have been proposed - a new gym and community centre, a permanent school for the CECCE, and the possibility of affordable housing - outweigh the loss of the Chapel wing, and would support the proposal, but only if the proposed benefits materialize. The Community Association passed a motion in May of 2020 to that effect. He also indicated agreement with Councillor Menard's proposed motion and that the Community would be pleased if a space within the building could be dedicated to celebrate the history and significance of the Chapel wing.
- David Flemming, Chair, Heritage Ottawa Advocacy Committee<sup>3</sup> provided some history of building and spoke to Heritage Ottawa's wish for its preservation. He suggested the application is premature given the applicant has not submitted a firm proposal of adaptive reuse, which would normally accompany an application to demolish, nor a persuasive argument to justify the demolition of the chapel wing. He submitted that the preservation of the chapel should not be a deal breaker and recommended the chapel wing be stabilized if the school board has no requirement for it, while the City considers its options, including civic use, or the current owner tries to find another partner to enable them to live up to their commitment to preserve it. Further, that any decision to approve the demolition should at least be conditional upon the approval of a site plan application that would specify how the building will be used for educational, community and housing needs.
- Paul Goodkey<sup>4</sup> submitted that the application has been predicated on incorrect interpretations of the structural engineer's assessments of the chapel wing, that the public and Councillor's did not have vital documentation about its structural integrity, and that there are actually no major structural issues with the chapel wing. Accordingly, the chapel wing and the heritage protected interior of the

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<sup>2</sup> Submission on file

<sup>3</sup> Submission on file

<sup>4</sup> Submission on file

second-floor chapel should be repurposed, not demolished. He suggested the chapel wing is a perfect location for a community centre, recreational uses on levels one and two, and much needed affordable housing on the fourth and fifth floors. He recommended the application be put on hold for further review.

- Kelly Rhodenizer, Regional Group (applicant and property owner), indicated that all parties that have looked into reusing the chapel wing, prior to the current proposal, have had significant concerns with its structural integrity and reparations required to bring the building up to the current Building Code standards. The CECCE School Board, prior to entering into a conditional purchase and sales agreement, determined they don't require the chapel space for programming or for the school, nor could they find any suitable user to repurpose the chapel wing and associative spaces. The current proposal is to use half of the ground floor for a City community centre and the other half for the school, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors for the school, and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> for potential residential affordable housing. After speaking with the owners, Regional's position is that if chapel demolition was not permitted, they would not be in a position to complete the land sale with the City of Ottawa for the community centre, and the CECCE has verbally confirmed that they would not be willing to purchase the chapel wing if it were to remain. She also spoke to consultation with the Oblates Fathers, with the Community Association, and with the ward Councillor throughout the heritage and planning processes for the site. She also indicated no objection to Councillor Menard's proposed motion regarding the requirement for submission of a complete heritage permit application.

The following persons were also present in support and to answer questions if needed:

- Doug van den Ham, Hobin Architects
- John Stewart, CHRML
- Rick Cunliffe, Cunliffe & Associates
- Michael Polowin, Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP, for Greystone Village

In addition to correspondence previously noted and that provided to the Built Heritage Sub-committee, the following correspondence was provided to the committee coordinator between August 31 (the date the report was published to the City's website with the agenda) and the time the matter was considered on September 10, a copy of

which is held on file:

- Email dated September 9 from W.M Lyse Morisset
- Email dated September 9 from Faith Blacquiere

**Motion N° PLC 2020-29/4**

Moved by Councillor J. Leiper (on behalf of Councillor S. Menard)

**WHEREAS report ACS2020-PIE-RHU-0019 recommends approval of an application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to alter the existing building at 175 Main Street, which includes the removal of the chapel wing;**

**WHEREAS the proposed alterations are associated with the conversion of the primary portion of the Deschâtelets Building into a mixed-use facility which would include an elementary school (Conseil des Écoles Catholiques du Centre-Est, (CECCE)), a potential community centre (City of Ottawa) and potential residential uses; and**

**WHEREAS additional measures should be taken to ensure the long term adaptive reuse of the building;**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Planning Committee recommend to Council that:**

1. **Recommendation 1 be modified to add the following additional condition of approval as follows:**
  - a. **The submission of a complete heritage permit application for alterations associated with the new school use or community centre, including the alterations to the front entrance and the bay on the east façade.**

CARRIED

**Motion N° PLC 2020-29/5**

Moved by Councillor J. Leiper (on behalf of Councillor S. Menard)

**WHEREAS report ACS2020-PIE-RHU-0019 recommends approval of an application under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to alter the existing building at 175 Main Street, which includes the removal of the chapel wing; and**

**WHEREAS the proposed alterations are associated with the conversion of the primary portion of the Deschâtelets Building into a mixed-use facility which would include an elementary school (Conseil des Écoles Catholiques du Centre-Est, (CECCE)), a potential community centre (City of Ottawa) and potential residential uses; and**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Planning Committee recommend to Council to direct staff work with the owners to review opportunities for a display, in addition to a plaque, within the designated building at 175 Main Street, that would commemorate the chapel.**

CARRIED

The Committee Carried the report recommendations as amended by Motions 29/4 and 29/5.