LISTER BUILDING
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

HERITAGE REPORT

23 September 2006

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1. INTRODUCTION
In the summer of 2006 a community working group was established in Hamilton, Ontario, to consider the future of the Lister Block. Two heritage conservation professionals were brought in to provide technical expertise and advice: Julian Smith, principal of Julian Smith & Associates, Architects, of Ottawa, ON, and Clinton Brown, president of Clinton Brown Company Architecture, of Buffalo, NY. This report summarizes their findings and recommendations.

The report reflects their professional assessment of the heritage value of the Lister Block and suggests appropriate conservation standards and guidelines for its rehabilitation. It also addresses the heritage values and conservation options for two adjacent properties which are owned by the same developer and which are key to the long-term development of the land assembly.

Their findings can be summarized as follows:
- The Lister Block is a strong and viable candidate for conservation.
- It is well suited for continuing office and retail use.
- Design and development should follow a rehabilitation approach, combining strong contemporary design with careful conservation of significant features.
- The result will be Class A office and retail space, providing above average standards of employee comfort and satisfaction and a strong urban image.
- The work can be done cost effectively and efficiently
2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
The six-storey retail/office building known as the Lister Block is located at the northeast corner of James Street North and King William Street. It is a pivotal building in the commercial history and environment of downtown Hamilton. When it was erected, in 1923-24, to the designs of Bernard H. Prack, architect, it demonstrated the most advanced retail marketing ideas of the time, and reflected the transition from smaller 19th Century retail establishments to the emerging 20th Century phenomenon of integrated department stores. Its ground floor and second floor L-shaped arcades, accessible from both James and King William, were remarkable innovations for their time and contributed to its success. Its key corner location, large double street frontage, six-storey height, and robust architectural design helped give it a dominant character within the James Street North urban streetscape. It originally stood in the heart of Hamilton’s civic core, directly across from City Hall (1888) and Market Square, and just south of the Federal Building (1856-1920).

Joseph Lister and his son, J.E. Lister, were both successful businessmen who demonstrated a confidence in, and commitment to, the economic life of Hamilton. The building remained largely occupied until the mid-1970s. Long-standing tenants included the Tait-Gibson Optical House, at 44 James, one of the first and last occupants; the former White Grill Restaurant, at 40 James, for over forty years; and the Anne Foster Music Shop, at 36 James from 1942 to 1995. The building closed in 1995.

Since 1995 the future of the building has been uncertain. In 1998, the City of Hamilton submitted the building for consideration by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, as a possible property of national historical and architectural significance. No decision was made because of uncertainty about the integrity of interior architectural features. In 2006, the building was listed by Heritage Canada as one of the ten most endangered heritage properties in Canada.

The Ontario Heritage Trust presented to the working group their analysis of the heritage attributes of the building. They emphasized the historical importance of its innovative mixed-use concepts and the survival of key heritage features including overall massing and composition, exterior Renaissance Revival design elements, and interior arcade arrangements.
3. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Site visits were carried out in July and early August, arranged by the building owner. Special thanks are due to Shawn Marr of Hi-Rise Group, John Mokrycke of John Mokrycke Architect, Richard Dabrus of Wong Gregersen Dabrus Architects, and other personnel of LIUNA and Hi-Rise for their input and perspective. Julian Smith and Clinton Brown were able to view the basement and all six floors, the roof, the exterior from grade, the exteriors and some of the interiors of the adjacent properties, and the general urban context. They were also able to involve some colleagues with particular expertise in the rehabilitation of historic properties. These included Noel Noyes-Brown, of Ottawa, a mechanical engineer, and Craig Sims, of Kingston, a window specialist.

From the site assessment, the following are observations about the strengths and weakness of the existing building and its adjacent structures.

Overall, the building is well built and structurally sound. The reinforced concrete structure shows no signs of settlement, deflection, or damage. The flat roof over the main building has remained largely intact, meaning that there is relatively little water damage through the main floors. Broken windows have allowed snow and rain onto the perimeter floor services, and the linoleum floor coverings are detached. However, the major structural systems have not been affected. The only serious water infiltration has been in the one-wing ground floor extension, where extensive water infiltration around the skylights has heavily damaged the finishes of the ground floor arcade, and allowed water into the basement. However, the structural systems in these areas appear to be intact.

The reinforced concrete construction means that floors are flat and solid, acoustical separation between floors is good, and the building when refurbished will have essentially the same feel as high quality new construction. Fire resistance and deflection characteristics meet or exceed contemporary code requirements. These 20th Century construction techniques were a significant advance over the wood joist construction and tongue-and-groove wood flooring of many late 19th Century buildings.

The ground floor L-shaped arcade is still in place. It has survived relatively intact in the area of the James Street entrance, where it was protected by the upper floors. There is also a portion of the ceiling under the King William Street wing that is in moderately good condition. The marble floor seems to be intact and in relatively good condition throughout. The rest of the arcade walls and ceilings, including decorative plaster, wood
and glass elements, have been heavily damaged by water and vandalism. Original skylight openings have survived but the skylights themselves and the related trim have deteriorated.

The second floor arcade, in the reverse L-shaped design, is in good condition. It has an impressive marble mosaic and terrazzo floor, and the decorative wood elements of the storefronts are in reasonable condition, able to be repaired and retained. However, all glass elements have been destroyed by vandalism, so that the full storefront effect has been lost.

The other floors are simple bay designs on both sides of an L-shaped corridor similar to the second floor. The central elevator core and end staircases reflect contemporary standards for access and egress. The relatively narrow width of the floor plates results in good natural light throughout. There is little internal detail of architectural interest. The floor-to-floor heights are lower than would be found in new construction, and the introduction of contemporary HVAC systems is further complicated by the transverse concrete beams. Contemporary services would require more vertical runs and smaller zones.

The basement is currently suffering from water infiltration, due in part to broken water pipes, and it has undergone many alterations over the years. It is of no particular architectural or functional interest. However, it appears to be structurally sound and it has comfortable ceiling heights for retrofit purposes.

The exterior retains its original composition and architectural features. The lower two storeys and the cornice are marked by decorative white terracotta, with fluted pilasters, medallions and cartouches, projecting cornices, and special detailing at the arcade entrances. There are significant areas of deterioration, including loss of anchoring, cracked and damaged elements, and spalling, crazing and discolouring of finishes. The structural issues of the hidden support system will require further investigation, including partial dismantling of a representative sample. The cosmetic issues of surface damage are more easily catalogued and can be dealt with by selective repair and replacement.

Only one of the original storefronts survives. It is marked by copper and bronze detailing, decorative steel grilles, and leaded transoms. The second level retail glazing is partially intact, although there is damage to many of the copper elements and breakage of the glass.

The intermediate storeys retain their wood double-hung window sash with copper-alloy transom panels, and dark red rug-finish brick on the pilasters. The wood window frames are in reasonable condition, but many of the sills are badly deteriorated, and in general the wood sash is in bad condition. Many of the meeting rails have failed, through decay of the corner joints. The damage has accelerated because of the broken window glass.

The rear facades maintain their simple brick finishes.
From a contextual point of view, the building retains its prominent downtown corner location. It is still a dominant visual point of reference on the James Street streetscape, and it relates in scale and detail to both the historic properties along James and King William, and the more contemporary developments across James. Its innovative and transitional design gives it a special place in its surrounding mixed use environment.

The analysis of the building’s history and current conditions is supported by a relatively good set of original construction plans, elevations and details and a related set of construction photos.

4. KEY HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES
The property combines historical, architectural, and contextual significance. It is this combination of factors that gives the building its importance, as much as any one factor in isolation.

In terms of historical significance, the building is important in a national and international context because it marks a key transition in the development of major retail and mixed use facilities in downtown areas. Although it still provided small individual retail and professional office leases, it grouped these around internal arcades as well as along the sidewalk perimeter. The result was an opportunity for small-scale merchants to compete downtown with the emerging dominance of large department stores. Its location in the centre of downtown Hamilton reflects the importance of the city in the economic history and evolution of southern Ontario in particular, and of Canada more generally.

Architecturally, the building reflects its unique mixed-use design intentions. The latest construction technology was used to provide up-to-date qualities of fire resistance, ventilation, and natural light. Unlike the more common pattern of a glazed ground level retail façade with more traditional office facades above, the Lister Block has a double storey base with large retail glazing on both levels. This base is further emphasized by the use of decorative white terracotta, reflecting the eight bays on James Street, the six bays on King William, and the one diagonal bay at the corner. The terracotta detailing includes special treatment of the two arcade entrances. The one original storefront that remains, with its copper and bronze detailing, decorative steel grilles, and leaded transoms, is an important surviving element of the building’s early design intentions.
The other glazing still retains the geometry of the tripartite division of the bays and the use of transom sash at both the ground floor and second floor levels.

The office floors are reflected by a more subdued dark brick finish, with copper spandrel panels in the vertical window bays. The simple wood double-hung windows are in poor condition but suggest the simple treatment of these upper storeys.

The elaborate white terracotta cornice above the sixth floor balances the terracotta base and provides a classical resolution of the façade into base, shaft, and capital.

Internally, the two key elements of heritage interest are the first floor and second floor arcades. In the case of the first floor arcade, the character-defining elements include the marble floor, the rhythm of openings defined by the columns, the arched ceiling with its decorative plasterwork, and the presence of some wood trim elements suggesting the original storefronts. The skylights contribute to its street-like quality. In the case of the second floor arcade, the character-defining elements include the terrazzo and marble mosaic floor, the rhythm of openings defined by the columns, and the wood framing elements of the original storefronts. The portion of this arcade that extends east past the south stair to the original freight elevator is not significant.

Also of interest on the interior are the commodious north and south staircases, with their steel stringers, newels, and balusters, oak handrails, and terrazzo treads and landings.

Contextually, the building retains its position as an urban landmark by virtue of its mass, its prominent corner location, its quality of design, and its relatively intact architectural form and detailing. It also remains part of people’s sense of the cultural landscape and cultural identity of downtown Hamilton, as indicated by the intensity of the current debate about its future. This reflects its past success as a destination point for arcade shopping and related office activity.
5. RECOMMENDED OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

At the outset of the involvement by Julian Smith and Clinton Brown, it became clear that there were substantial differences between the development proposals favoured on the one hand by the local municipal heritage committee, the Hamilton LACAC, and on the other hand by the property owners and developers, LIUNA and Hi-Rise Group.

Although this is an oversimplification of the debate, it seemed that the LACAC position favoured retention and restoration of the building and its major interior and exterior features, whereas LIUNA and Hi-Rise favoured demolition of the existing building and design of a replica building providing a similar exterior appearance but adjusting floor levels to contemporary standards.

Both approaches would have been marked by extensive replication of missing or damaged elements, although partial in the LACAC case and complete in the LIUNA/Hi-Rise case. The LACAC position can be loosely labeled ‘restoration’ and the LIUNA/Hi-Rise position loosely labeled ‘reconstruction’.

The approach recommended here is to move away from either of these approaches, and instead adopt a ‘rehabilitation’ approach. In such an approach, the important historical features of the building that have survived in reasonable condition are retained, and the ones that are insignificant or badly damaged are removed and replaced with new work of compatible but contemporary design. The intention of this approach is to combine the old and the new in an imaginative way, to accept and celebrate the fact that a new building is being created within an old building.

There are two reasons for doing this. One is that it distinguishes between true history and false history, by emphasizing the repair of genuine surviving elements and making new work more legible as being of our own time. For the most part, new elements would not be made to replicate old elements, unless they were part of a repair process. The other reason is that this approach is more likely to bring some certainty to the project requirements and make the development financially feasible. It is critical to the future of the Lister Block to find an appropriate ongoing use, and this will only happen if a proposed development is economically viable.

This kind of ‘rehabilitation’ or adaptive reuse approach is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, the newly issued federal/provincial/municipal guidelines for conservation work in Canada. These standards define ‘restoration’ and ‘rehabilitation’ as follows:

‘Restoration’ is the action or process of accurately revealing, recovering, or representing the state of a historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value. Restoration includes the removal of features from other periods in its history and the reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. Restoration must be based on clear evidence and detailed knowledge.
‘Rehabilitation’ is the action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible use of a historic place or of an individual component, through repair, alterations, and/or additions, while protecting its heritage value. Rehabilitation can include replacing missing historic features. The replacement may be an accurate replica of the missing feature or it may be a new design that is compatible with the style, era, and character of the historic place.

In the case of the Lister Block, the rehabilitation approach involves retaining the key historical, architectural, and contextual values of the building through a combination of good conservation and good contemporary design. Such an approach is fully consistent with local and national standards for a more ecological and sustainable approach to building design and urban development.

The following are more detailed recommendations for the treatment of individual components.

Exterior:

5.1 Overall form and massing
The building should retain its existing form and massing, as a key element of the James and King William streetscapes. Any new rooftop elements should be kept away from the perimeter so that the silhouette defined by the elaborate terracotta cornice is not affected.

5.2 Terracotta
Our recommendation is to carry out selective repair and replacement of the existing terracotta finishes on the James and King William facades. As with many of the other materials and building components, appropriate experts should be identified to carry out
the analysis and the implementation. There are also technical Preservation Briefs and other references that can be consulted.

There are two separate issues to be addressed – one is structural stability, the other is cosmetic appearance. In terms of structural stability, representative samples at the intermediate cornice and the roof cornice should be removed to examine the design and condition of the support system. This will determine if extensive removal and replacement is required. Our impression is that only the major projecting elements would be of concern. Once the structural problems have been addressed, it is recommended that a lead flashing be added at both the upper and lower cornices, with a suitable reglet into the brickwork, to stop further water infiltration and reduce the possibility of future damage.

In terms of cosmetic appearance, our recommendation is that the terracotta elements with only localized surface damage, such as crazing, pinholes, slight discolourations, and small surface nicks, be retained. They are a natural part of the aging of terracotta and reflect the true history of the building. More extensively damaged and broken or missing elements require replacement. Our recommendation is to use genuine terracotta for replacement, and we suggest working with Boston Valley Terracotta Company to design a detailed cataloguing of existing conditions and a program for replacement. All the existing terracotta should be cleaned with a mild non-abrasive cleanser, to remove the more obvious surface deposits and discolourations.

If the structural problems are so extensive and serious as to require complete removal and replacement, and the cost of a full new terracotta finish is prohibitive, consideration could be given to replacement in kind with a substitute material with equal life expectancy, such as a high-quality glazed precast system. However, the detailing should carefully match the original, including the special treatment of the arcade entrances. It is our sense that this approach would be neither as cost effective nor as aesthetically satisfying as a repair of the existing. The patina of the existing terracotta will make a welcome contrast with the contemporary glazing and other modern design elements that will be part of the overall project.

5.3 Brick
The existing dark rug-finish brickwork on the upper storeys appears to be in very good condition. Other than a requirement for localized repointing, no significant intervention is required. New mortar should match the existing in mix, colour and profile. Test patches should be used to aid in selection and control.

The brick on the rear facades shows some areas of spalling, and there will be a requirement for some localized replacement and repointing. Changes to the central core area may result in some existing brick being made available for repairs elsewhere.

If new additions are required, such as a rooftop enclosure for the new elevator, or extended enclosures for the existing elevators, these do not need to be done in matching
brick. They can be clad in a compatible metal finish or other material that is sympathetic although contemporary in design.

5.4 Copper spandrels
The spandrel panels were not available for close inspection. They may be a copper alloy. They seem to have acquired a natural and reasonable stable patina. They should be lightly cleaned with water and possibly a non-ionic cleanser, and left as is. Test patches should be used in finalizing any cleaning procedures.

5.5 Original storefront
The surviving original storefront should be retained and repaired in situ. The steel grillework requires cleaning and refinishing. If light abrasive cleaning methods are used, adjacent copper surfaces should be carefully protected. The process of cleaning will reveal the earlier colour schemes and these can be used as a guide for repainting. The copper work should be lightly cleaned with non-ionic cleansers and left as is, as should the glazing. The leaded transoms are not of consistent design, and may reflect some evolution over time. However, the existing condition can be retained as a reflection of the building’s history. The ceramic tile flooring should also be retained. The store interior can be redone in a sympathetic but contemporary fashion.

5.6 Other retail glazing
The rest of the ground floor and second floor glazing can be replaced with contemporary glazing. However, the new glazing should reflect the tripartite divisions and the use of transom panels evident in the existing glazing patterns. The ground level storefronts may be redone without the deep door recess of the original storefront, and the location of door openings will reflect the contemporary space planning of the interior. The muntin bars should be dark in colour, so that the visual emphasis is focused on the decorative terracotta surrounds.

The glazing itself, as on the office floors above, should be designed to contribute to the energy efficiency of the building envelope. Some consideration could be given to a light tinting, both here and in the office glazing above, but this should be in a neutral colour and of minimal impact.

For both the retail and office glazing, sample windows should be fabricated and installed as part of the design development and approval process, and as reference for bidders.

5.7 Office glazing
The existing double hung sash and the wooden sills are not in sufficiently good condition to warrant conservation. It is recommended that the existing wood frames, which are set into the masonry and anchored by the interior plasterwork, be left in place. The divider bars and window weights can be removed and the cavities filled with insulation. The new windows can be wood, aluminum-clad wood, or aluminum, and should be designed to match the daylight opening dimensions and patterns of the existing windows. There should be an intermediate horizontal rail at the height of the current meeting rails, and the rail profile should be similar in depth and width. It is assumed that the windows will be
fixed, which should not be a problem once the new HVAC systems are in place. It is therefore reasonable to have the glass in a single plane rather than in the double plane of the existing double-hung units. The colour of the cladding should be the same as that for the retail glazing below, so that the windows continue to be a secondary element in the overall composition of the façade.

The rear windows are similar in dimension and detail, and can be treated in the same fashion.

Interior:

5.9 Ground floor arcade
Certain surviving elements of the original façade should be left in place and repaired in situ. This will ensure their historical accuracy and should reduce the costs of repair. However, they must be well protected during clean out and selective demolition. These elements include the marble floor throughout, and the plaster columns, decorative plaster ceilings, and wood storefront elements in the protected parts of the arcade, i.e. at the James Street and King William Street entrances. These are the areas where the upper floors have protected against water infiltration.

In the exposed areas of the arcade, where water infiltration has caused major damage to the plasterwork, the surviving elements should be carefully recorded through rectified photographs and drawings. Decorative elements can be retained as models for replacement. The plaster ceiling and columns, and the related wood trim elements, should be recreated or restored to match the existing.
The wood components of the original storefronts have suffered considerably from a combination of alterations over the years, vandalism, and water damage. None of the original glazing remains intact. In these bays, framing elements in good condition, particular at the James Street entrance, should be retained and repaired to demonstrate the original condition. Elsewhere, enough of a sympathetic wood framing should be installed to repeat the rhythm and dimensions of the original storefronts. This would include a series of vertical elements, set along the edge of the marble floor, reflecting the relative proportions of the door and window openings and the use of transom panels throughout. However, the base details may be omitted if it is desired to create more continuous movement between the arcade space and the adjacent retail or office space. These replacement wood elements can be a careful reproduction of the original dimensions, profiles, and detailing, or a sympathetic contemporary reinterpretation of these details. The material in any case should be a dark stained wood to contrast as intended with the decorative plaster columns and ceiling.

Skylights should be reinstated if the central portion of the arcade remains a single-storey space. Modern skylight domes could be used above the restored or reconstructed opening. If a second floor is added, the skylight features can be reinterpreted with back-lighting or valence lighting in an appropriate contemporary design.

5.10 Second floor arcade

The primary surviving components of the second floor arcade should also be retained and repaired in place, and carefully protected throughout the development process. These include the terrazzo and mosaic floor and the original wooden frameworks of the original
storefronts. Most of these have survived in good condition, and require only localized repair. The original stained finishes can be retained or restored.

As with the ground floor arcade, the primary framing members and pattern of openings should be retained. Some base elements may be removed if desired for circulation and interconnection of floor spaces. However, the storefronts, complete with reinstalled glazing, may provide welcome opportunities for enclosed offices, waiting rooms, or other privacy requirements.

The arcade should be protected in its primary L-shaped configuration from the south stair to the north stair, with a branch connection to the elevator core. The further extension of the arcade from the south stair east to the original freight elevator is not in good condition and does not need to be retained. This elevator will likely be decommissioned.

5.11 Staircases
The north and south staircases should be retained. They are of non-combustible construction, of adequate width to meet code requirements for egress, and in good condition. Details such as the distance to door swings, the height of railings, and the details of handrails another features, are protected under Part 11 of the Ontario Building Code and considered adequate for public safety. Minor repairs are needed to the oak handrails and to some of the steel elements. The configuration of the north stair at the second floor may be altered to provide separate egress from the upper floors down through the northernmost store area directly onto James Street. However, this should not alter the second floor lobby. There is sufficient space within the stairwells to consider discreet vertical services chases against some of the endwalls if required.

5.12 Access and circulation
The James and King William street arcade entrances should continue to provide natural access points to the interior of the building. There are many options for tenant arrangements to take advantage of these natural entrances and the subsequent control of movement both into the interior of the ground floor space and to the upper floors through the north or south staircases and the elevator core.

As indicated above, an emergency egress may be required at the northern extremity of the building, leading from the north stairwell directly out onto James.

There is an option to create a separate public entry to the elevator core from King William, should the tenant decide to use the arcade as an internal circulation route. Both arcade entrances should continue to be marked by their recessed doors. One option is to consider the James Street arcade entrance as a primary public entrance, and the King William Street arcade entrance as a primary staff entrance.

It is recommended that some active retail frontage be retained along James Street and King William Street, taking advantage of the open architectural character of these facades. This retail use would both reflect the historical significance of the building as a retail/commercial complex, and help revitalize this stretch of James Street North.
5.13 Accommodation criteria
The present study has examined the building in terms of potential use by City of Hamilton staff and public service agencies. There are many advantages to such a use, including the semi-retail nature of some of these activities which are easily incorporated within the unique design of the building. Both the ground floor and second floor provide opportunities for many layers of screening and privacy, given the natural flow provided by the arcade and the north stair. There are also many options for waiting rooms, interview rooms, treatment rooms, and other facilities within the arcade configurations of these lower floors. These are the levels most easily accessible, physically and psychologically, to the visiting public.

It is recommended that some retail be provided along portions of the James Street and King William Street frontages. Such use is not only important in revitalizing the downtown streetscape, but also in reflecting the unique history and cultural significance of the original building. Together with some form of public or semi-public access to the arcades, such uses would allow public appreciation of the special character of the building.

Consideration can be given to expanding the second floor space to fill in the interior northeast court. This area could have larger spans and higher ceilings, to provide more flexibility for programming. It would build on the natural access and circulation patterns.

The third, fourth, fifth and sixth floors provide open office environments in a basic L-shaped arrangement about a central core. Schematic designs have been prepared which show a logical use of the empty space between the existing elevator core and the south wing to create an expanded core area. This area can provide space for vertical circulation.
or service chases. This arrangement allows complete security for all office areas and the
option of using the north and south stairs for internal, secure staff circulation.

One of the advantages of this building is that the L-shaped configuration guarantees that
everyone is within 25 feet of a window, as opposed to the more normal 50 foot standard
in new construction. This proximity to natural lighting is a measurable advantage for
productivity and workplace satisfaction.

The basement will be used for servicing the building complex. However, there will be
additional space available for such facilities as secure storage or health and exercise room
use. This basement was originally designed to house a bowling alley and a billiard
parlour, and has reasonably high ceilings and a simple layout. It provides fully usable
space at low cost.

5.14 Building envelope
The building already has the advantage of significant thermal mass in the existing wall
system. The heavy masonry construction reduces both heating and air conditioning loads
and reduces cyclical temperature changes.

It is recommended that the exterior wall system be left as is, including retaining the
existing plaster finishes on the exterior walls. Removal of the plaster would be costly and
damaging to the terracotta block structural units. The plaster also helps anchor and
reinforce the window frames.

Along with the new window glazing, the building will provide an effective thermal
environment for office and retail use, meeting or exceeding standards for new
construction.

The existing roof finishes will require replacement. Consideration could be given to a
green roof installation on either or both of the ground floor and sixth floor roof decks.
The ground floor deck will serve as a courtyard feature for both the upper floors of the
existing building and the upper floors of any eventual midblock development.

5.15 HVAC and electrical
Detailed attention has been given to the design of a fully functional HVAC system, to
meet contemporary office requirements within the height and bay size configuration of
the current reinforced concrete structure. The current proposal calls for ceiling-mounted
fan-coil units with flexible distribution systems within the bays. Fresh air would be
provided by a central transverse duct system. Perimeter base heating would supplement
this system. Because the bay size is on approximately 15 foot centres, rather than the
more common 30 foot centres of new construction, the HVAC system is quieter and has
more zone controls. The system can be exposed, to give the visual advantage of the full
underslab ceiling heights, or enclosed with typical acoustical hung ceiling configurations
to further control system noise. Overall acoustical performance will depend on a
combination of the HVAC configuration and the specification of floor and wall
coverings, office furniture materials, and related tenant fit-up choices.
The primary distribution for power, voice, and data can be along ceiling-suspended cable trays parallel with the fresh air ducts at the centre of each floor. Such trays are easily accessible for maintenance and upgrading. From here, the distribution can follow the beam and column arrangements. One of the advantages of more closely-spaced columns is the ease of electrical distribution without reverting to temporary pole arrangements.

Project management:

5.16 Interim protection
An immediate requirement is interim protection of the building to prevent any further deterioration from vandalism or water infiltration. In addition to security systems or arrangements, it is recommended that all openings be clad with a temporary weather-
protection such as Coroplast or similar, in a dark colour to simulate glazing. Sidewalk level openings would require a more resistant painted plywood or similar. Back facades should have venting at regular intervals to ensure air movement. Water infiltration in the basement should be corrected by fixing leaking pipes or shutting down water supply. In addition to preventing physical deterioration, these measures could reduce the invitation to vandalism and create momentum for the rehabilitation project. Appropriate project signage would add further momentum.

5.17 Site clean-out and selective demolition
A contractor used to the clean-out of existing buildings should be brought on-site to begin the stripping out of the building interior. However, the first step would be identification and protection of all elements to be preserved – these include many components of the first and second floor arcades, and the north and south staircases. The cleaning out of the interior would not only reduce the chance for mold or other future problems, but would also make final assessment and design development proceed more quickly and more accurately. It would enhance worker and visitor safety and create a more attractive environment for walk-throughs.

5.18 Pilot investigations and mock-ups
Once the building is secured and cleaned, there can be pilot investigations, test patches, and mock-ups to advance certain elements of the design and construction process. These would include selective investigation of the exterior terracotta, in areas of existing damage; trial installation of replacement window assemblies; mock-ups of HVAC systems; and possible tenant fit-up alternatives. Test patches can be used for cleaning, repointing, and other surface treatments. These patches and mock-ups will make bidding more competitive and will also allow the tenant to be more specific about fit-up requirements.

5.19 Code analysis
As a designated heritage structure, the Lister Block falls under Part 11 of the Ontario Building Code. This part of the Code allows a systematic application of code requirements to existing building conditions. It provides important mechanisms for achieving both substantial cost savings and architectural quality in a rehabilitation project.

Fire and life safety standards are the same as for new construction, but this section of the code follows more of a performance model rather than a prescriptive model.

Examples of Part 11 compliance alternatives include the following:
1. Separation ratings between major occupancies can be reduced.
2. Many existing components, such as millwork, flooring elements, interior finishes, combustible components of stairs, glazing, skylights, storefronts, etc, can be maintained as part of an overall non-combustible definition, and matching materials can be added to the existing without affecting the ratings.
3. References such as HUD’s Archaic Materials ratings can be applied to existing wall, floor and roof assemblies.
4. Many existing closures, transoms, sidelights, wired glass assemblies and other components can be retained even where certain fire separations are required.

5. Egress routes are more flexible in terms of widths, headrooms, reductions, access to exit arrangements, guards, railing heights and designs, stair rise and run dimensions, landing dimensions, and travel distances.

6. Seismic upgrade requirements do not apply.

A code analysis would form a necessary and useful part of the detailed design development.

5.20 Design development and contract administration

A rehabilitated Lister Block will combine new and old in an honest acknowledgement of the building’s ongoing evolution. Imagination is required in both base building design and tenant fitup, to take advantage of the building’s unique qualities rather than fighting against them. Working with the existing forms, materials, proportions, and building systems will protect existing heritage features, reduce project costs, and produce a more satisfying result.

There will be changes to the heritage character of the building, and this is a normal and expected part of good rehabilitation projects. These changes should be confident and well-designed, in the spirit of the original building. Even the exterior, which has survived with many of its original architectural features intact, should express aspects of the transformation within.

Final contract documents can be prepared in parallel with the building clean-out and pilot projects. This simultaneity of scheduling allows overall time savings on the project. Quality control can be enhanced by pre-bid walk-throughs and requirements for pre-qualification of key trades and personnel. Cost control will depend on the accuracy and exactness of the drawings and specifications, and these can be well detailed as the building is opened up and brought back to bare bones. The protection of heritage features, right from the outset, will reduce the requirements for repair and again help with the control of costs. Allowances and unit costs may be required for certain components.

The rehabilitation of the Lister Block will create, in our opinion, a model for cost-effective and creative adaptive reuse. This project has the potential to create considerable spinoff and raise the profile of downtown Hamilton not only within the city itself but further afield.
APPENDIX

ADJACENT PROPERTIES

1. 15-21 King William Street
The adjacent four-storey retail and commercial building on King William Street is a late nineteenth century building that has undergone considerable alteration. The original symmetrical, three-storey façade is now an asymmetrical, four-storey façade with three different periods of brickwork and window detailing. The original portion has large retail openings at the sidewalk level, and an Italianate style upper façade with arch-top and square windows marked by decorative stone sills, lintels, and window hoods. The fourth storey is a more Edwardian or later pattern of simple tripartite windows not aligned with the openings below. The eastern bay is a simple brick infill structure with unadorned window openings, built as infill after the original bay collapsed during construction of the Lister Block.

The building interior is marked by internal brick bearing walls and a wooden joist system. The building has continued to have structural problems, evidenced by major cracks in the internal brick walls running up from the basement through several storeys. The cracking of the plaster indicates that these problems are continuing.

After viewing both the exterior and interior conditions, it is our feeling that this building is not an appropriate candidate for preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation. It is not known whether it has any important historical associations, but these would have to be overwhelming to justify the costs for restoration. As a candidate for rehabilitation, it would need to be in much better structural condition to be economically viable.

We agree with the proposal to demolish this building and to build a new building to the same vertical plane, possibly incorporating elements of the existing façade. It is our recommendation that the decorative stone elements be carefully removed and retained, and that consideration be given to reconstructing a portion of the original three-storey Italianate façade as part of a building of otherwise contemporary design. The precedent has already been established, with the infill bay, of creating a separation between this original façade and the Lister Block. Such a separation could be repeated in a more contemporary design. We do not recommend salvaging and reusing the brick. Because of the way brick façades discolour over time, reused brick becomes a false patchwork unless the bricks are replaced in exactly their original locations. This is not feasible in a façade of this scale, nor is it warranted given the three stages of brickwork already used on the building. A consistent new brick for the reconstructed Italianate portion would be more in keeping with the original design intentions.

An alternative approach would be to brace and retain the original three-storey portion of the façade, demolishing the rest of the building and attaching this façade element to a new building. This would have to be examined for cost-feasibility.
Another alternative would be a fully contemporary façade, with reuse of the decorative stone elements as a lobby element or other feature. Whatever the direction, the new building would have to respect the existing rhythm, scale and articulation of the King William streetscape. The primary plane of the façade should be at the sidewalk edge, and the ground floor should be open as retail and/or entrance space.

2. 46-53 James Street North
This adjacent property presents a complicated preservation problem. Designed by William Thomas and erected in 1855-56, it has both architectural significance because of its association with one of Upper Canada’s more celebrated architects, and historical significance because of its age as the oldest surviving building on this block. The exterior of this building was examined but not the interior.

Despite its historical interest, its value and its viability have been compromised by several interventions and alterations. It is assumed that the ground floor facades in the original construction were divided into smaller bays to carry the weight of the ashlar masonry above. It is assumed that the current storefronts bear little resemblance to the original appearance, with the possibility of major steel beams spanning the openings to allow 20th Century retail facades.

On the upper storeys, the most significant change has been the removal of all the projecting cornices, window pediments, sills, and other stone decorative elements, in the middle and north bays of the primary façade. It appears that this destruction of architectural character was carried out for the sole purpose of installing a flat, three-storey high, metal cladding to create a ‘modern’ aesthetic. This reflects an unfortunate and fairly widespread trend across Canada in the 1950s and 1960s, although not usually accompanied by such intricate and selective demolition.

The one surviving bay that does retain its original features on the upper storeys shows considerable structural movement in the façade. This deformation suggests structural instability that may have been caused by changes at the retail storefront level.

All three bays have lost their crowning stone cornice, as visible in historic images.

There are a number of options for the treatment of this building.

The first would be preservation of the existing façade, removing the metal cladding and accepting the evolution of the façade with the ground floor changes. This would respect the surviving evidence of William Thomas’ design, but would be aesthetically unsatisfying because of the desecration of the ashlar masonry in the 60s and the loss of the cornice.

A second option would be restoration. This would involve stabilizing the cut stone cornice, both at the base of the façade and at the intermediate storeys. More detailed investigation would be required to analyze the source of these problems and design a solution. A full height steel structure might be required to tie back the stone blocks. The
trimmed back masonry features at all the window openings on the southern bays could be removed and replaced with new limestone blocks carved to match the surviving evidence on the north bay. The stone cornice could also be rebuilt using historic photographs for evidence. The interior of the building could be retained in full, or the internal bearing walls between each bay could be preserved back 20 feet or so to provide buttresses for the primary façade. The rest of the building could be dismantled and the restored façade could act as an entry to an internal atrium between this surviving remnant and some contemporary midblock development. The problem with the restoration option would likely be the economic viability of this approach. Many of the more intact works of William Thomas have been preserved and restored, but usually with more of their original features intact and with their structural condition more secure.

The third option would be an adaptive reuse project involving dismantling the present façade and incorporating all or part of it into a contemporary building. Unlike brick, cut stone in an ashlar façade such as this can be numbered, dismantled, and reassembled with relatively little loss of character or appearance. The advantage of this approach would be that the structural problems of the building would no longer be an issue. The rebuilt stone façade would become part of an entirely new structure. The question of whether to rebuild the whole façade or only one bay would depend on the condition of the remaining stonework currently hidden behind the metal façade, and the cost of restoration. It is impossible to tell how minimal or extensive the damage is in these other bays. It would not be worth recreating a William Thomas façade in new stone to imitate the old, since this would give a false sense of the history of the building. It is very possible that recreating the one intact bay in an otherwise contemporary façade would draw more attention to the true surviving evidence of Thomas’ handiwork, and at the same time acknowledge the ongoing evolution of this part of the commercial streetscape of James Street North.