From: karenjudithwilkins

Subject: Ancasters need for Cultural Heritage Controls
Date: Sat, 15 Nov 2008 16:41:41 +0000
attn: Alexandra Rawlings
The Clerks Department ,
City of Hamilton.

Please direct this letter to the appropriate persons involved in these matters. As I understand this should include councillors voting on the Cultural Heritage Draft Plan being adopted into the Official Plan /and to members of the Economic Planning and Development Committee.

Re: Ancasters need for cultural heritage guidelines.

To whom it may concern,

Our farm community was the supplier and distributor of produce for the surrounding areas including Hamilton. Meat producers sold directly from their farms to the local community. Vegetables and tools were sold from the back of farmers' trucks at the livestock exchange on Fiddlers Green Road (note- local government put an end to that in the last 20 yrs.) Farmers supplied their own personal food needs. They traded and shared farm based services and goods. Farm based retail meant Ancaster historically had minimal retail facility in the village core. Business was conducted on the farm/end of the lane. The Livestock Exchange and Fair Grounds were major social/economic venues.

It is interesting that we have somewhat kept the same methods of food distribution today. Deansley's Meats, Wally Parr, Soldatt's meats, Bennets, Carluke Orchards, Lindleys, are our retail outlets. We now have new farm based suppliers adding to the mix.

Our town's core retail facility; is largely made up of retrofitted residential buildings, mixed with already replaced/rebuilt retail outlets. Big box development was enough to see the demise of our already minimal essential goods and services in our town's core retail built facility. Ancaster retail core, butcher baker, hardware now gone. Modern needs for retail based on community demands have now changed the core into a boutique retail and personal service area. Our community is historically very different than (say) Dundas. It is non the less something special and worth saving. Revamping old heritage makes for commercial/social venues of character. It makes charming attractive venues, stimulating to village core commerce. We are presently developing our commercial core built facility needs.

Over the years we have lost some beautiful stone heritage buildings in Ancaster, i.e. Marshel house removed to build a grocery store /presently Fortinos. Smith house became a park. We have seen other heritage communities/districts use very creative means to preserve the old while adding for/ new development and/commercial growth or/public social venues. We are interested in seeing controls that would ensure that built heritage will be saved and incorporated into the development of our community not destroyed and replaced. Markham planners attribute detailed Cultural Heritage guidelines, to giving them the basis of ensuring the protection /creation of their attractive functional heritage community.

Our goal is to preserve what heritage facility /theme we have in the core of Ancaster
while at the same time, for economic common sense reasons, we must be able to suit them to modern uses/needs. Here in lies the problem. How can we have the controls we need, but the flexibility to be commercially viable. This is why the cultural heritage draft document is so important. It gives the community control over what we value as heritage. To determines what is worth saving and it gives us the ability to adapt built facility to the productive commercial/social uses needed the grow as a community. Heritage controls used to date are crippling. Case in point Rouseau House was not allowed to put in an elevator. If these heritage policies were applied to Wynnstay, a recognized good use for the Old Mount Mary School as a nursing home would not be viable. We need the ability to save important features, minimize any change to facade look, encourage true heritage style and materials in construction, but we would need an elevator. 

We need a functional approach to heritage controls. We do not see that to date in Ancaster. Controls seem to be cripplingly strict or nothing at all. As we understand, Heritage Designation in its present format would cripple our ability to refit village core built structures. The balance seen in the Cultural Heritage Draft Plan is crucial to saving our built facility. If we don’t have the freedom to make our heritage buildings functional they are not economically viable and this in itself contributes to their demise.

Ancaster would like to support the implementation of a healthy balance, that will see our heritage buildings saved. New facility built in historical character. While at the same time allow for a reasonable appropriate growth and change of use. We would surely request the designation of Wynnstay as a heritage building if we knew this would not destroy our ability to keep the building constructively used, complimentary to Ancaster Community needs. The sisters might designate it themselves if they were assured this were the case. Bottom line it must be protected, this is significant and rare built heritage.

If we had a National Heritage Trust in Canada? We could possibly afford to be more decadent with our preservation of built heritage and less concerned that our built heritage is economically viable. The need to avoid creating dead space by taking heritage buildings out of community use will always be an issue in places like Ancster; that have little built facility.

The other difficulty we are facing is in designation against an owners will. There are a lot of negative repercussions to an individual/group/city requesting this. Neither SAVE ourselves or our councilor want to be involved in that distasteful process. This makes the need to protect properties a personal issue of conflict. We need to adopt Cultural Heritage Guidelines that are balanced enough the allowance designation to be an asset not a threat. If this were the case there would be much less objection. If you add to the mix some financial incentives to building with heritage style and quality we have something people can positively embrace and look forward to enforcing. In the event of eminent destruction of assessed significant built heritage we the city needs the ability and means to force designation/protection.

Likewise there are some building that should have strictly preserved heritage aspects. The Cultural Heritage Draft Plan gives qualified people the option needed to do this.

At this time we are hoping Cultural Heritage control guidelines as outlined in the
Cultural Heritage Draft Plan will be put in place. This Cultural Heritage Draft Plan outlines an approach that allows controls to be **protective and progressive at the same time**.

**Lack of controls is a serious threat to Ancaster development.**

If Cultural Heritage Guidelines are not put in place prior to rezoning of the Mount Mary lands should interim by-laws/controls not be considered. They may be unpopular, **with developers** but not with the community they are trying to protect. We really need the city to protect us (hopefully) only until we have the New Official Plan and Secondary Plans in place.

With no heritage controls on /developers or /city development. Ancaster projects (such as roads) can and have destroyed much of what we value in our small heritage community/ (case in point /road work conducted on Sulphur Springs Road over the summer /retaining wall in front of Fieldcote,..)

Please see attachment.

We feel the attitude and amazing guidelines in the Cultural Heritage Draft Plan are the answer to the problems we are facing. Ancaster residents support your efforts in putting these policies in place.

Regards

Karen Wilkins
Ancaster Resident