

# Memo

**To:** Lesley Collins, City of Ottawa Planning Department  
**From:** Carl Bray, Bray Heritage  
**Date:** Friday, June 6, 2014  
**RE:** 173 Huntmar Road: heritage component

Dear Lesley,

Thank you for your comments on the development plans for this property as they have evolved since we met last Fall. This memo is intended to accompany the applicant's submissions to the City for a Plan of Subdivision and Zoning By-law Amendment regarding the subject property. The intent of the memo is to address concerns the City may have as to the ways in which the existing building is being secured as well as integrated within the proposed development.

## *Summary of Heritage Significance*

The draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value prepared by the City for this property (September 9, 2013) identified the property's cultural heritage value as being manifest in its architecture and in its association with a local pioneering family. It was described as a good example of a Gothic Revival farmhouse built on land owned by the Boyd family from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Heritage attributes included exterior architectural features. No interior elements or outbuildings were included in the Statement.

The Heritage Survey and Evaluation form prepared by the City that same month noted that the context of the subject property was being altered from agricultural lands under cultivation to mixed-use urban development. As a result, the house is no longer able to be seen in its original agricultural context.

## *Stabilization Measures*

Following recommendations made by me and by you, it is my understanding that the client has undertaken the following actions to stabilize the existing building pending development of the property:

- Sealed all openings (doors and windows) on the exterior
- Chimneys have been capped to prevent infiltration by the elements as well as animals, insects and birds (especially chimney swifts).

Based on previous experience, in the absence of 24 hour security being available to patrol the site, I would also recommend adding barrier fencing around the perimeter of the building.

## *Proposed Development*

The existing building is shown as being severed from the rest of the development and located on a separate lot, with surface parking provided adjacent to the west wing on the north side. The proportions of the proposed lot appear to allow retention of some of the mature trees that currently surround the building and which the tree inventory prepared for the project indicate are worth keeping. Of particular importance are the existing trees to the east of the house, atop and east of the rise upon which the house is located. The

proposed north-south access road ROW parallels the east edge of the building lot. My understanding from conversations with the project planner is that the ROW can be moved eastwards slightly, if necessary, to ensure that there is an adequate buffer between the façade of the building and the new road.

In terms of the relationship of the existing house to the proposed development, I suggest that it would be advantageous to use this new lot as the core of an urban square in the western section of the development and to have new development face onto the square, as a way of highlighting the former farmhouse. The current site plan partially addresses this opportunity by showing the proposed townhouses west of the house and the apartments to the south as both having entrances facing the house. Further refinement of the design at the Site Plan stage will go further in accomplishing this goal.

Although they have not been identified as heritage attributes of the property, the mature coniferous trees bordering the north property line, as well as the mature specimens found in the hedgerows along the west and south boundaries, should be considered for retention. The northerly coniferous windbreak is not only a special visual feature, it can also function as a screen between the proposed residential development on this lot and whatever development is proposed for the lands to the north. Site grading for the adjacent development to the south should be designed so as to return to existing grades outside the root systems of the coniferous trees in order to ensure their retention.

#### *Impact of Proposed Development on Heritage Resources*

The proposed site plan largely accomplishes the recommendations suggested above and addresses the heritage attributes of the property, as described in the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value prepared by the City (9 September, 2013) and accompanying Heritage Survey and Evaluation Form (September, 2013).

In terms of the house itself, no interventions in the physical fabric of the house are proposed, so there is no negative impact on its heritage attributes. Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century additions to the original house envelope may be considered for removal without negatively impacting the property's heritage attributes. Adaptive re-use for commercial uses such as professional offices will also support conservation and enhancement of identified heritage attributes and any interior features.

In terms of its immediate context, providing the house with its own lot, upon which it appears can be retained much of the mature vegetation, allows full visual access to the house from all sides. The proposed new north-south and east-west access streets are also aligned to feature views of the house. In terms of the house lot, the parking location is acceptable and could also be accommodated behind the house, on the west side of its proposed lot. Accessibility can be easily handled from either parking location without having a negative impact on the building's heritage attributes, since there is sufficient space in which to locate an access ramp that would lead to the existing entrance on the north side of the house.

As for the remainder of the proposed site plan, the location of the proposed entrance drive off Huntmar Road, as well as the situation of the four apartment blocks, appears to allow retention of the coniferous windbreak along the north property line, east of the proposed north-south access road. Mature specimen trees along the south property line may be able to be retained within the right-of-way of the future north-south arterial road.

#### *Conclusions and recommendations*

The proposed development conserves the existing building and its immediate landscape. It ensures long-term conservation via adaptive re-use of the former farmhouse and by locating compatible development around it. Although the building will no longer be part of an agricultural landscape, elements of that landscape, such as mature vegetation, can be conserved to indicate the succession of land uses. Interpretation of the site's history, both of its building and of the Boyd family, can be accomplished on the house lot in a variety of media (to be discussed at the Site Plan review stage).

I conclude that the proposed site plan adequately conserves the identified heritage attributes of the built heritage resource as well as providing opportunities to retain elements of the former agricultural landscape and facilitate interpretation of the site's history.

CB