

Locals up in arms over potential loss of Wildfield heritage home

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Residents of Brampton and parts of Caledon are frowning at the thought of one of the last remaining heritage properties in the Wingfield area being torn down.

The heritage house located at 11962 the Gore Road in Wildfield was built in the 1870's. If this heritage property is be demolished, St. Patrick's Church will be the last standing heritage building in the Wildfield area.

A proposal to demolish the building has been presented to Council. The land will be used to expand The Gore Road at the intersection of Mayfield Road and The Gore Road.

Wildfield resident, Dan O'Reilly, attended the Peel Regional Council meeting on Dec. 12 to voice the concerns of the community.

"Judging by a number of postings on social media, there is considerable anger and heartbreak by current and former Wildfield residents and indeed by many people throughout Brampton over the potential loss of this house, which once was the site of a blacksmith shop," explained O'Reilly in his presentation. "I share those sentiments."

A Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment was conducted on the property due to possible intersection improvements of Mayfield Road and The Gore Road. That study concluded that the property meets the criteria for possible relocation, although that option has not been considered at this time. The main issue is, that relocating the residence goes against TRCA and City of Brampton zoning bylaws.

The proposal indicated, "the residence located at 11962 The Gore Road should be relocated to an appropriate and sympathetic site to ensure that the heritage value of the resource is retained," stated in the assessment.

O'Reilly was presenting alternative solutions to keeping the heritage house standing by relocating it, and asking the Region to take into consideration the cost of relocation other than demolishing. The Region was sympathetic to O'Reilly's presentation, but he isn't convinced a change is in the works.

"From the comments of the Chairman it looks like they're not interested in that. If the Region would be willing to pay the transportation costs, I'm sure it would entice a custom home building, or developer to go and buy a lot," says O'Reilly. "Before my delegation, they had their budget discussion, and it was quite obvious that they have some hard-financial choices in front of them."

O'Reilly reached out to consultancy firm Candevcon Limited Consulting Engineers and Planning to obtain more information on the solution he presented to the Region.

"From the feedback the consultant has received, the developers would require market value for a lot and that another party would be responsible for the relocation and upgrading costs. There would be other conditions as well. This is, admittedly, all very tentative. There is no firm commitment. But I believe it is an option the Region should pursue and Candevcon is willing to set up a meeting with the developers," said O'Reilly in his presentation.

On Oct 21, Brampton's Planning and Development Committee approved a notice submitted by the Region to demolish the residence.

The Brampton Heritage Board confirmed that all efforts were taken in trying to save the residence from demolition, but no solutions were available. The Board subsequently approved the demolition of 11962 The Gore Road.

Dan O'Reilly had to try one more time, to speak with local and regional councillors to convey his message on the importance of

keeping the little bit of history alive.

?There used to be a number of heritage buildings in Wildfield, if this goes, it's only the church that's left. So, I'm trying to preserve as much as possible of the history, so it doesn't get totally obliterated by urban sprawl,? comments O'Reilly.

He added, ?The aggravating thing is they've had that building for an almost a decade, and it's only been this past summer they tried to put initiative for someone to take it away. Why didn't they do that five years ago??

?Move This Home' signs have been posted on the lawn of the property, and boards cover the windows. The region purchased and boarded up the building years ago, when plans to expand The Gore Road first came to fruition. That, eventually, led to the signs being posted up on the property, and the land being put up for sale.

Dan O'Reilly refuses to give up. He will continue to advocate the significance 11692 The Gore Road has for the community, and the importance to keep it standing.

?There are a lot people upset about it, but I'm the person trying to do something about it,? says O'Reilly.