

Trustee Board
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto, ON M

June 14, 2024

Laura Loney
Manager of Heritage Planning, Planning and Development
The Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills
1 Halton Hills Drive
Halton Hills, ON L7G 5G2

To whom it may concern:

I write regarding the potential designation of 499 Guelph Street, Norval as a Heritage building. I write to express our concern about such a designation.

As the notice regarding the possible Heritage designation reads, the site has “significant value” due “to its associations...with the growth of Presbyterian congregations within the Township of Esquesing.”

That association with the growth of Presbyterian congregations has been an evolving one over the history of the building since it was built in 1878. In fact, the building itself has evolved – signage has changed, windows in the basement have been changed, an elevator was added all of those are part of a congregational building evolving in the community in which it exists.

Part of the Heritage of a church building is that it has evolved as the community has evolved. A church building becomes a testimony to the evolution of community and culture. To impose a heritage designation on the building is to block that evolution in the future. Heritage designation forces the community of faith in the church building to live in a previous time, not in the present time with the changes of the present moment. In so doing Heritage designation prevents the building from bearing witness to future generations of the ways in which buildings evolve over time. Part of the historic beauty of an older church building is understanding how it has evolved and changed and why those changes took place. Heritage designation prevents the building from being a living presence in the community.

Part of the evolution of church in Canada in the present moment is that historic church denominations are selling buildings to newly arrived in Canada expressions of Christianity. Expressions of Christianity that have long and deep history in other parts of

the world, even while they seem new to Canadians. Just as Presbyterians arrived in the Norval area and settled down to have a presence in the community, including the building at 499 Guelph Street, St Gregorious (Indian) Orthodox Church is choosing to settle down in Norval in the same building but bringing its own expression and worship. This change is something that future generations will point to as the living history of the building.

If the reports in the Halton Hills News of April 16, 2024

<https://www.haltonhillstoday.ca/local-news/town-forging-ahead-with-heritage-designation-process-for-norval-church-despite-objection-8608489> are correct, the fears expressed by town councillors about the new owners of the church building, St. Gregorious (Indian) Orthodox Church, raise questions about how welcoming Halton Hills is to new arrivals who wish to join the community. Hopefully the council will warmly welcome this new Christian community into Halton Hills.

The request is that the Council would not designate the building rather choosing to trust that the new church will be able to help the building to evolve just as Norval evolves.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Bush, BA, MA, MTS, MDiv, DD
Convenor, Trustee Board
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Presbytery of Brampton

3370 Dwiggin Avenue, Mississauga, Ontario, L4T 3J2

June 13, 2024

Attention: Laura Loney,
Manager of Heritage Planning
Planning and Development
The Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills
1 Halton Hills Drive
Halton Hills, ON L7G 5G2

RE: Notice Of Intention to Designate Under the Ontario Heritage Act of 499 Guelph Street, Regional Municipality of Halton, and known as the Norval Presbyterian Church.

Dear Ms. Loney,

I am writing on behalf of the Presbytery of Brampton, of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, in regard to the proposed Heritage Designation of Norval Presbyterian Church.

While the congregation has been dissolved, that has not lessened the Presbytery's concern for the former professing members, who are understandably apprehensive of there being any impediment for the church building continuing to serve as a place of worship. As you are aware, the building is in the process of being sold for use as a Christian place of worship. The proposed Heritage Designation has been most upsetting to the professing members, has served as an unnecessary distraction, and created additional work, for the former leadership of Norval Presbyterian Church - in an already busy and very difficult time of transition.

Those same members, and the Presbytery, were disappointed that communication on this matter was not sent directly to the church, and that this process was well underway when the leadership of Norval Presbyterian Church became aware, unofficially, of the Town's intent. These actions, and the lack of communication, exacerbated an already difficult and sorrowful time for the professing members of the congregation.

It is more than unfortunate that communication with the impacted property owners did not take place, as required by legislation. It appears that the proper process was not followed in this instance, which resulted in needless stress for the professing members of Norval, in an already stressful time.

The Presbytery of Brampton is in agreement with the deputation made to Council on April 15 by Robert McClure, elder and former trustee of the church, and especially concurs with his concerns in regard to difficulties such as obtaining insurance, with a Heritage Designation.

Dianne M. Douglas
Clerk, Presbytery of Brampton

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The Presbytery also shares his puzzlement at the curious manner in which the building known as Norval Presbyterian Church was so drastically prioritized from 768th on the list to being in the position of 200th on the list.

There has never been a possibility of the church building known as Norval Presbyterian Church being altered in any substantial way, redeveloped, or demolished.

For all the reasons outlined by Mr. McClure, and those highlighted here, the Presbytery of Brampton objects strenuously to a Heritage Designation of the property at 499 Guelph Street and known as Norval Presbyterian Church.

Sincerely



Dianne M. Douglas
Clerk, Presbytery of Brampton

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