



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**To: Members of Committee of the Whole**

**From: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services**

**Meeting Date: February 27, 2017**

**Subject: Report CSD17-005  
Potential Land Disposition to King George School**

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## **Purpose**

A report to seek Council approval for the disposition of a portion of City-owned land at the Peterborough Museum and Archives, adjacent to King George School, to the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board for the construction of a new school; and to determine the City's role in assisting the Board to preserve the existing King George school for adaptive re-use.

## **Recommendations**

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSD17-005 dated February 27, 2017 of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That Council authorize staff to complete negotiations with the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board for the transfer of a parcel of land, approximately 1.75 acres in size, and located south and west of the Peterborough Museum and Archives' Curatorial Centre, identified as Parcel B on the Concept East City School Site Layout Plan in Appendix A, and report back to Council on the terms and conditions for the transfer;
- b) That, in exchange, the School Board work collaboratively with the City/ Museum in securing much needed improvements to Museum Drive and the museum site such as replacement of the existing watermain, construction of a sidewalk, and other intersection improvements as required; and

- c) That staff be directed to also collaborate with the School Board on the future disposition and adaptive re-use of the King George School and associated property, identified as the King George School Parcel in Appendix A.

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

The preliminary estimate on the cost of replacing the watermain to the museum as a stand alone project is approximately \$200,000, but no formal overall City capital budget has been developed or approved at this time.

There could be savings or at the very least synergies if this and the construction of a sidewalk to the Museum could be aligned with the construction of the new school and access road off Museum Drive.

## **Background**

### **A New School at King George Site**

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, (the Board), recently announced that King George and Armour Heights Public Schools located in East City/ Ashburnham, will be closing and that a replacement JK to grade 8 school will be built on the existing property of King George School. The unique natural environment adjacent to the school represents an opportunity to build an innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century concept school consisting of indoor and outdoor learning environments, support spaces, daycare amenity spaces and natural playground.

The Ministry of Education has provided approval in principle for the project. The new school will have a Ministry Rated Capacity of 674 pupil spaces and a maximum gross floor area of approximately 70,000 square feet. The proposed school will also include provision for a new three room Child Care facility and includes an expectation to incorporate the natural landscape of the property and green concepts into the design and learning environment of the school. The new school will be constructed while maintaining the current school and before/after school care operations.

The Board is in the process of selecting the Prime Architect for the project. Construction is expected to begin in the late spring of 2018 with the intent of opening the new school in September of 2019. See Appendix B for preliminary design concept on proposed location of School, parking lot, and access driveway.

## **Request for Additional Land**

The Board has requested that the City consider transferring land from the adjacent property to the east, attached to the Peterborough Museum and Archives. They propose to acquire an irregularly shaped parcel to the south and west of the Museum's new Curatorial Centre, with a 40' set back along the southern wall and 60' setback along the western wall of the Centre. This parcel represents approximately 1.75 acres of the 4 acres deeded for museum use in the 1960's.

This additional property would allow the Board to construct the new school on flatter land along the brow of Armour Hill to the northeast of King George. It would also allow for the construction of a driveway off Museum Drive to access the proposed parking lot at the southeast corner of the existing school property.

## **History of King George School**

The City's Heritage Preservation Office has provided the following history of the school and its architecture. King George School opened on December 5, 1913 on land expropriated for the East Ward school from the Armour Estate. According to the Contract and Engineering Record of February 21, 1912, the architect for the project was Fred Bartlett. Originally from Napanee, he relocated to Peterborough in 1891. He is known mostly for his church and school architecture, but did several commissions in Peterborough. The Biography of Architects in Canada, however, lists William Blackwell as the architect.

Its sister school, Queen Mary, opened the same day. According to the Examiner "With the completion of these two schools, the City of Peterborough is not surpassed for school accommodation by any other city of its size in the Province of Ontario."

Both schools were sited on high land and on very large lots of about five acres to allow for an 'abundance of pure air.' Both were built of Hamilton brick and Indiana limestone, the standard for the "City Beautiful" buildings of the time.

In both case, the staircases are very wide and designed to enable the children to evacuate the building rapidly in the event of fire. This feature and the wide hallways were a direct result in changes to school design following the Collingwood Ohio fire of 1908 in which 172 children burned to death. The School Board of the day claimed that King George and Queen Mary could be cleared in less than one minute.

Both schools were considered state of the art in their day. They employed very early versions of Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning systems with forced air passing over radiators heated by flue gases and changing the air in the school four times an hour. Both also had complete indoor plumbing.

In 1916, the King George school was damaged by the Quaker explosion when many of the windows on the west elevation were broken. The school was immediately evacuated. Although no students were reported to have been injured, a number of them lost family members in the explosion.

### **Preservation of King George School**

King George is one of three of the remaining “Royal” schools in Peterborough, along with Queen Mary and Prince of Wales. The fourth “Royal” school, King Edward, was demolished in 2005 to make space for the new YMCA building and parking lot. Like all active schools owned by the Board, King George is structurally sound and has been well maintained. With its large classrooms, high ceilings, and wide hallways, it is well suited for adaptive re-use. (See Floor Plans Appendix C)

With the exception of Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational School, it has been the City’s practice with the School Boards and the University not to designate public buildings until after they have been declared surplus. Given its architecture, history, and prominent location, King George School should be designated or included on the City’s Register of Heritage Buildings. The Board has expressed interest in finding a creative solution to preserve the school and avoid the backlash over the demolition of King Edward over a decade ago. (Appendix D Photograph of King George School)

### **Museum Interest**

City staff has discussed this project with the Peterborough Museum and Archives (Museum). The Museum expressed support for the preservation of the King George building, but indicated that it does not have a use for the building at this time. Some concern was identified about the potential loss of lands to the south and west of the new Curatorial Centre, especially relating to the need for an appropriate buffer around the museum buildings. It was recognized, however, that there could be some opportunities for collaboration on improvements to the intersection of Museum Drive and Hunter Street, on the replacement of the watermain to the Museum, and the possible construction of a sidewalk along Museum drive. Some funds have been allocated for preliminary planning for the watermain replacement, but no capital budget has been established.

### **City Role**

There is a range of ways in which the City can respond to the Board’s request for assistance on the disposition and adaptive re-use of the Board, including:

- i) playing a supportive role as the Board works through its formal disposition process by assisting with zoning processes, liaising with developers, assisting with procurement processes, and advising of tax relief and other financial incentives;

- ii) designating the building under the Provisions of the Heritage Act with the support of the Board, which identifies heritage and cultural features to be preserved, and is mandatory for admission to the City's Heritage Property Tax Relief program;
- iii) designating the building under the Provisions of the Heritage Act without the support of the Board, which could constrain the Board as it attempts to secure a developer;
- iv) adding the building to the City's Heritage Register, which provides a 60 day buffer against demolition while the City considers its options;
- v) undertaking a feasibility process to determine the building's condition and reconstruction needs;
- vi) exploring City or community uses of the facility; or
- vii) initiating a procurement process to secure an appropriate private sector development opportunity;

Recommendation c) illustrates the City's supportive and collaborative role as detailed in bullets i) and ii).

## Summary

With the approval of the recommendations, the City will be supporting the School Board's plans to construct a new school at the King George site by transferring some land from the Museum site as requested. More importantly, the City will also playing a role in helping ensure the preservation and adaptive re-use of King George School, one of East City's prominent landmarks.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A - Concept East City School Site Layout Plan

Appendix B - Preliminary Design Concept

Appendix C - King George Floor Plans

Appendix D - Photograph of King George School