



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**TO:** Members of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC)

**FROM:** Erik Hanson, Heritage Resources Coordinator

**MEETING DATE:** November 8, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Report PACAC11-025 – Request for Alteration to 475 George Street North YMCA

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## **PURPOSE**

A report to recommend that a presentation by Debbie Keay of Building Character regarding the redevelopment of the old YMCA property be received and the request for alteration to 475 George Street North, the Old YMCA, be considered.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Municipal Heritage Committee approves the recommendations outlined in Report PACAC11-025 dated November 8, 2011 of the Heritage Resources Coordinator as follows:

- a) That a presentation by Debbie Keay of Building Character regarding the redevelopment of the old YMCA and providing an update on the proposed design be received;
- b) That the request for alteration to 475 George Street North, known as the Old YMCA, and a property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, be approved;
- c) That the decision of the Committee be forwarded to Council for information.

## **BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budgetary or financial implications associated with the recommendation.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the spring of 2011 Kevin M. Duguay, Community Planning and Consulting Inc. acting as the agent for Dr. Jenny Ingram and 2126377 Ontario, Inc. made a rezoning application for 475 George Street in anticipation of the rehabilitation of the building as a multi-unit residential and mixed commercial use development. The plan presented at that time proposed the removal of several accretions to the original structure and 1932 addition. The redevelopment includes the erection of a seven storey tower to the southwest of the original building and a strong architectural presence on George and Murray Streets.

A presentation was made to the PACAC on April 12, 2011 by the architects for the project. At that time they indicated that because of issues surrounding the multiple floor level changes within the building they would be seeking to demolish the old gymnasium which extends west on Murray Street from the main block.

According to a published local history of the YMCA, the gym is original to the 1896 building however some documentary evidence suggests that it might have been built as late as 1911. It contains a suspended running track around a two and a half storey wood paneled open space. The three round-headed two storey windows in the north elevation have been replaced with aluminum framed, fixed glazing units. The original floor has been replaced with more recent parquet hardwood but the interior is otherwise intact. The exterior of the gymnasium is plain with few exterior architectural features. It is a simple gable roofed structure with its eaves to the street. Only the three elongated round headed windows bring architectural interest to the façade.

The significance of the gymnasium lies in its constant use as a gym from the date of construction to the time that the YMCA vacated the property. There is little on the exterior of the building that speaks to this use. As well, the gym, whether it is original to the 1895 structure or not, upsets the balance of the Murray Street elevation which is framed by the tower and a break front wall gable. If the gym were to be retained, the extent to which the space would have to be altered would be considerable. All original interior finishes and features that distinguish it as a gym would be removed. As well, The existing windows would span the new floor systems and a reconfiguration of their size and location would be required.

The proposed development brings a strong architectural presence to the Murray Street elevation and is designed to differentiate itself from the massing of the original building

in a way that the current gym does not. It also provides for a seamless flow of movement within the structure. This is especially important in a building geared to the lives of seniors. Therefore, staff recommends that the demolition of the original gymnasium be approved by the committee.

As with all such demolitions, staff recommends that the owner seeks to achieve maximum diversion of the demolition debris through salvage and recycling of building materials.

Submitted by,

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