



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner, Community Services

Meeting Date: June 12, 2023

**Subject: Queen Alexandra Community Centre and Activity Haven,
Report CSD23-010**

Purpose

A report to seek direction on the redevelopment of the Queen Alexandra Community Center (QACC) located at 180 Barnardo Avenue and ongoing support for the programs and services offered by the Activity Haven Senior Centre (AH) located at the QACC.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSD23-010, dated June 12, 2023, of the Commissioner of Community Services as follows:

- a) That the QACC be included in community revitalization plans for the purpose of redevelopment to affordable housing and a seniors activity centre;
- b) That up to \$60,000 be drawn from the Community Development Program Reserve to finance the feasibility study for the redevelopment plan and that staff concurrently seek grant funding to potentially cover this cost;
- c) That the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC) provide input to Council on the heritage status of the QACC as part of the feasibility study;
- d) That the feasibility study includes other City approvals, such as site plan approvals, along with funding and finance options for the redevelopment;
- e) That staff undertake any additional studies and public consultation as part of the planning process;

- f) That staff work with Activity Haven to develop a transition plan to relocate their programs and services once redevelopment of the QACC starts or they are no longer able to occupy the building. This plan would also include steps for moving back into the new facility;
- g) That the City continue to maintain and undertake traditional repairs at the QACC to allow Activity Haven to deliver their programs until the building is redeveloped; and
- h) That any rejuvenation of Queen Alexandra Park be connected with the redevelopment of the QACC.

Budget and Financial Implications

Report CSD23-010 is recommending the redevelopment of the QACC into a multi-residential apartment building for seniors, along with a seniors activity centre located on the ground floor. The initial stage of the project involves hiring a consultant(s) to undertake a feasibility study. It is being recommended that up to \$60,000 from the Community Development Program Reserve be used to finance this cost, while other grant sources are being pursued. The Community Development Program Reserve has an uncommitted balance of \$228,489 and is a 50/50 cost share with Peterborough County.

The full budget and financial implications associated with redeveloping the QACC will be determined as part of the feasibility study. A report will be brought to Council at a future date when the opportunity to redevelop the QACC becomes possible with accurate costing. If the QACC is preserved, the capital improvements and repairs needed on the building is estimated to be \$2.4 million over then next 5 years to continue using it as a seniors activity centre.

Annual maintenance and repair budgets are currently in place for the ongoing upkeep of the Queen Alexandra Community Centre. Any minor costs to assist with developing or implementing a transition plan for Activity Haven will be covered by existing resources in the Community Development Program budget.

Background

Queen Alexandra Community Centre

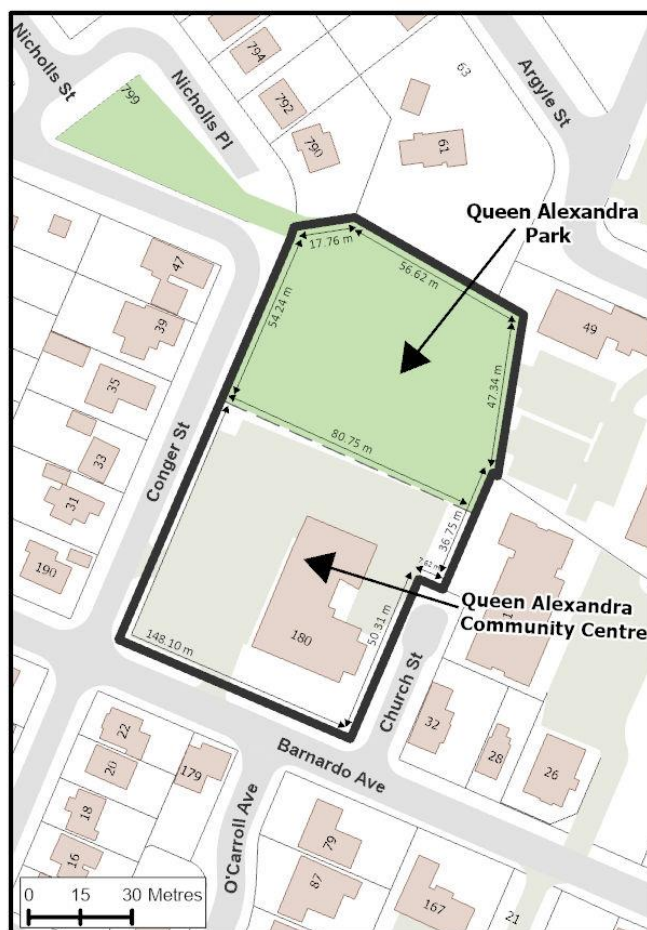
The QACC is located at 180 Barnardo Avenue. It was built as a school in 1890. Classes stopped being offered at the school in 1973. The building and property were purchased by the City from the public school board in 1976. Since 1990, the QACC has undergone additions and numerous upgrades.

The QACC is a 3-story brick building that is approximately 25,000 square feet. Each floor currently contains the following:

- The lower level is approximately 9,000 square feet and is mainly used for shuffleboard, billiards, and other activities.
- The main level is approximately 9,000 square feet and contains offices, commercial kitchen, and 5 activity rooms.
- The second level is approximately 7,000 square feet and contains offices and 5 activity rooms.

The QACC is in a residential neighbourhood bounded by Barnardo Avenue, Conger Street, Church Street, and Queen Alexandra Park. Single detached homes are found to the south and west of the property with a 3-story multi-residential building to the east. The park is north of the building on a shared lot with the AQCC. The entire lot is approximately 10,364 m² (111,572 ft²) with the park being approximately 4,601 m² (49,540 ft²) and the Activity Haven side being approximately 5,763 m² (62,032 ft²).

Figure 1: Queen Alexandra Property



There have not been substantive improvements made to the QACC in recent years and there is currently no capital funding allocated to this building for significant

improvements. The building is reaching the end of its viable lifecycle unless major investments in restorative work are planned. Major areas needing attention include:

- Foundation waterproofing
- Replacement of asphalt shingles
- Replacement of elevator
- Replacement of interior millwork and doors
- Replacement of rooftop HVAC equipment
- Flooring and subfloor repairs
- Electrical upgrades
- Type 3 removal of asbestos in walls and ceilings during renovations

Developing a plan to finance these and other renovations and repairs would require approximately \$2.4 million over the next 5 years to maintain the building's existing use as a senior activity centre. Ongoing utility costs will continue to be high at this facility as there is minimal insulation in the walls and ceiling. There is currently no approved budget for any of this work.

Activity Haven and the QACC

The Activity Haven Seniors Centre (AH) is the primary occupant of the QACC and provides a range of social, recreational, and educational programs, activities, and events for adults aged 50+. Prior to the pandemic, AH had approximately 1,200 members. They currently have approximately 950 members.

AH offers a wide variety of over 30 drop-in programs and approximately 20 instructional programs throughout the year. In general, these programs include:

- Yoga (many varieties and classes)
- Line Dancing
- Zumba
- Exercise and Fitness Class (bone building, strengthening, walking, etc.)
- Cardio Drumming
- Stretching
- Walking groups
- Art, crafts, and music (many varieties and classes)
- Pickle Ball (through external rental, not on-site)
- Shuffleboard
- Billiards

- Carpet Bowling
- Darts
- Woodcarving
- Cards (euchre, cribbage, bridge, Skip-Bo)
- Breakfast Club
- Health clinics (i.e. foot care)
- Special events, (bingo, card tournaments, holiday events, concerts, BBQs)
- Educational workshops

The membership structure at AH consists of an annual fee of \$30. An additional \$2 fee is charged for participation in each program. Additional fees are charged for structured classes, such as fitness classes and some art classes.

Agreements with Activity Haven

The City has three agreements with AH. The first agreement is for funding connected to the *Seniors Active Learning Centres Act*. AH is recognized by the Province of Ontario as a Seniors Active Learning Centre which qualifies them for annual provincial funding. This legislation also requires municipalities to provide funding based on a percentage of their operating expenses. The City funded AH \$86,352 in 2020. This amount has remained the same through to 2023 even though their operating costs were much lower during the pandemic.

The second agreement is for building maintenance. In 2001, the City agreed to provide financial support for AH to hire custodial staff to maintain and clean the interior of the building. The City has been providing \$90,000 for custodial services and \$15,000 for cleaning supplies annually for the past several years.

The third is a lease agreement. AH and the City enter a 1-year renewable lease each year. AH paid \$90,294 rent in 2022.

While the rent payments help offset the cost of the building maintenance, the City regularly operates a deficit in connection to this building. This deficit does not include amounts related to the funding of maintenance agreements mentioned above.

Brief History of Activity Haven

AH started as an informal organization by a group of seniors in the early 1970's. This group approached the City for assistance in starting organized recreation activities for older adults. The City agreed, with programs run by senior volunteers and space rented by the City at the Peterborough Lawn Bowling Club on McDonnell Street. As interest grew, the City hired staff to coordinate the activities and additional space was rented at Mount St. Joseph on Monaghan Road.

This partnership lasted for over 10 years. It was during this time, in 1976, that the City acquired the QACC. During the initial years of City ownership, the QACC was under utilized. AH was asked to move their programs to the QACC. At the time, AH reluctantly moved the programming from the PLBC into several rooms at the QACC, while maintaining programs at Mount St. Joseph. In the following years, all programming was moved to the QACC.

In April 1990, AH officially incorporated as a not-for-profit organization. Its membership had been growing steadily. AH approached the City to partner in the renovation and expansion of the QACC to accommodate their growing needs. The City was successful in receiving a \$450,000 infrastructure grant (Federal/Provincial/Municipal) to undertake internal renovations, add an elevator, and expansion of the parking lot. AH paid the local share of \$150,000 for the grant. The City contributed approximately \$100,000 in additional funding for the project.

As membership continued to grow, the need for more space also grew. Community Care Peterborough was the other major tenant in the building. In June 2013, Community Care Peterborough moved out of the QACC to their current location at 185 Hunter Street East. Since that time, AC has occupied the entire building, except for some smaller rentals.

There has been an ongoing connection between AH and the City through the Recreation Division, Community Development Program, and Age-friendly Peterborough.

Pandemic impacts

According to Statistics Canada, the pandemic had a disproportionate affect on seniors compared to other populations. Research shows that between the end of March 2020 and mid-May 2021, seniors aged 65 and over accounted for 64% of excess deaths and for 93% of the deaths attributed to COVID-19. Seniors were also more likely than younger Canadians to be concerned about their health and to take precautions as a result of the pandemic.

These facts had a significant impact on AH membership. As noted earlier, prior to the pandemic, AH had approximately 1,200 members. Given the heightened concern among seniors related to the ongoing pandemic, their membership has slowly been recovering to its current level of approximately 950 members. AH has a goal of returning to pre-pandemic membership levels by the end of 2023.

Need for seniors housing and programming

2021 Census shows that 24.2% of the City of Peterborough's population is over 65 years of age. This is well above the Ontario rate of 18.1% and the Canadian rate of 18.5%. For Peterborough, the senior population is projected to increase to 26.1% in 2025, 28.3% in 2030 and 29.1% in 2040.

If a senior living in Peterborough receives the maximum Old Age Security and Canadian Pension Plans payments, their income would be \$21,479.64. If they were living in a bachelor apartment that costs \$785 a month, this would represent 43.8% of their income. That same senior renting a one-bedroom apartment at \$942 per month would use 52.6% of their income on housing.

There are many factors and indicators that support and impact healthy aging. Social isolation and lack of physical activity have been shown to have significant negative impacts on the physical and mental health of older adults. There are many other factors such as diet, access to health care, income, alcohol consumption, being overweight, and smoking that also have a bearing on wellness. The programs at Activity Haven target two of the key factors, isolation, and physical activity, which also have a positive impact on some of the other factors. The need for activity and programs that target older adults in Peterborough is continually growing. Ongoing support for agencies such as AH is important for overall wellness of the Peterborough aging population.

Activity Haven strategic planning

AH has been in operation in the City for almost 50 years. They recently developed a four-year strategic plan. Regardless of the status of the QACC, AH is planning for future growth and improved services for seniors. AHs vision is to be:

“A centre that is proactive, progressive, accountable and innovative, providing recreational services to the 50+ population of Peterborough and surroundings.”

The mission of AH is:

“To encourage our members through intellectual, physical, creative and social engagement, to be active and involved, to develop friendships and to maintain an independent and healthy lifestyle.”

The strategic planning process identified four key priorities for their organization. The first priority is their facility. AH has been operating from the QACC for almost 40 years and its members, Board of Directors, and staff have a strong bond with the building. They consider it a “home”. The programming and services have evolved over time and now the QACC has become a community hub and gathering place for members. The location in this part of the City is important to AH.

While AH would favour the preservation of the QACC, they recognize the building needs significant repairs and renovation to be a usable facility into the future. They also acknowledge that there are competing pressures at the City, such as affordable housing, that make the QACC a valuable property for redevelopment. AH is prepared to work with the City in whatever direction is taken with the building.

The other three priorities coming from their strategic planning process are membership, quality of service, and their “voice”. Some of these key strategies associated with these priorities include:

- Build membership to pre-pandemic levels
- Expand programming to evenings and weekends
- Develop a marketing strategy
- Adapt and innovate to reflect changing demand for new programs and services
- Adjust staffing support to accommodate growth
- Grow and support volunteerism
- Advocate on behalf of members and the aging population
- Strengthen community partnerships

Proposed Demolition and New Development

It is being recommended that the property located at 180 Barnardo Avenue be scheduled for redevelopment. This would include the demolition of the QACC, development of a new mixed-use residential building, senior activity centre, and improvements to Queen Alexandra Park.

Initial discussions and review show the property potentially being redeveloped as follows:

- Construction of a 6-story mixed use residential building
- First floor dedicated to AH for program delivery
- Floors 2-6 containing approximately 60 affordable seniors housing units of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments.
- Approximate parking requirements would result in 30 spaces for residential use (0.5 per unit) and 80 spaces for AH.
- Building footprint of approximately 1,400 m² (15,000 sq.ft.) with approximately 3,200m² (34,500 sq.ft.) of paved area.
- Improvement made to Queen Alexandra Park to align with the age-friendly focus of the building. No part of the park would be lost due to building construction.
- Other property factors included close proximity to:
 - High Capacity Collector Road (Barnardo Avenue)
 - Medium Capacity Arterial Road (George Street)
 - Bike Trail

- Transit

These specifications are consistent with the City's 2021 Official Plan which allow for minor mixed-use densification. The property is currently zoned as Public Service District 2 (PS.2).

The Queen Alexandra Park has been included in this redevelopment recommendation as it is listed as one of the top 10 parks that should be prioritized for rejuvenation in the City's *Parks and Open Space Assessment Report*.

Impact on Activity Haven

The demolition of the QACC would have a significant short and medium-term impact on the operations of AH. The programs and services they deliver to older adults in the City must be preserved and supported.

The AH Board of Directors agrees that investing millions of dollars into the restoration of the QACC is not prudent. However, they are very concerned with the impact on their organization and their membership with the loss of the QACC. City staff share their concerns.

AH is prepared to work with City staff to develop a transition plan that would see their programs and services temporarily continue in an alternate location(s) during the demolition of the QACC and the construction of a new facility.

A transition plan for AH would include the following considerations:

- Square footage needed
- Number of rooms needed to continue programming
- Office space for staff
- Plan for volunteer tasks at different locations
- Relocation of equipment and supplies

It is unlikely that a single temporary location would be found that could accommodate the needs of AH. A combination of alternative location will likely be needed. Some preliminary options include McDonnell Street Activity Centre, Peterborough Naval Club, churches, and schools.

By entering into a 5-year lease with AH, they are committed to applying for capital funding to assist with facility enhancements and equipment needed in a new facility, i.e. commercial kitchen, fitness equipment, etc.

AH would be involved with the design of the first floor of the new facility to accommodate their program needs. AH recognizes they would have reduced square

footage in comparison to the current QACC. Once the property is redeveloped, AH would return and occupy the first floor of a new facility.

It is envisioned that the new facility and neighbouring park would represent a local model of healthy interactive living for older adults.

History and Heritage Considerations for the QACC

Understanding the historic and heritage significance of the QACC is an important aspect of evaluating any future plans of the building. The following information provides some background on heritage attributes of the building as initial background for review.

PACAC will be requested to provide an official evaluation of the heritage status of the building as part of the feasibility study process.

In 1888 the Peterborough school board purchased a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre site at the top of the hill on Barnardo Avenue for \$1,600 from Senator George A. Cox in preparation for the construction of a North Ward school. The area had only become part of the city in 1875 but development was rapidly expanding into the area. In June 1889 a \$5,000 contract for construction was awarded to Arthur Rutherford one of the largest contractors in the area at the time. The building was to be four rooms and was finished and ready for occupation by January 1890.

The building, designed in the Italianate style by noted Peterborough architect John Belcher, was built on a hilltop to emphasize its place as an important civic structure in the growing North Ward. Using red brick, it features key components of the style including a hipped roof, gable projections, decorative brickwork and a rounded entrance portico. It is notable for its use of polychromy in the stone courses, lintels, sills, and rusticated arches.

In 1908 the Peterborough Normal School (Teacher's College) was completed on nearby Benson Avenue. Its location was decided upon based on an agreement that the North Ward School would be made available as a model school for teachers in training. That agreement required that the school be expanded to ten classrooms and six rooms were added in 1907 by the Baptie Brothers of Lakefield. It was at this time that the name was changed to Queen Alexandra School to honour the wife of King Edward VII the reigning monarch and in whose honour the new South Ward School was dedicated in 1907. The name change eventually precipitated the tradition of naming schools built during the second phase of school building in the city during the first quarter of the 20th century in honour of royalty of the United Kingdom. The use of Queen Alex, as the school became commonly known, as an adjunct to the Teacher's College ended with its closure in 1973.

Decreasing enrollment in the Queen Alexandra School area led in 1967 to the splitting of grades between Queen Alex and nearby Queen Elizabeth School. By 1973 only three classrooms were still in use and that year the school closed as a teaching institution. The building remained in use by the school board administration until it too vacated to

the Teachers College which had been renovated into the school board's offices. In 1976, the school was sold to the City of Peterborough to become the QACC.

The QACC was added to the City's Heritage Register as a Listed property in February of 2019. Listed properties are not protected by the passage of a by-law as are fully designated buildings. There are no regulations requiring review of changes to the building, however, there is a 60-day notice period if the City intends to seek a permit to demolish the building. During this 60-day notice period, the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC) would prepare a report for Council to consider in connection with QACC. This report may result in a recommendation to fully protect the property under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA).

When adding properties to the City's Heritage Register staff make an initial review of the property against the OHA's criteria for determining cultural heritage value under regulation 9/06 of the Act. Under the regulations a property should have design, historical or contextual significance to be considered for Designation or Listing on the Heritage Register.

After an initial review of the QACC by the City's Heritage Preservation staff, it was found to meet multiple criteria making it worthy of consideration of both listing and designation:

- Queen Alex has design value as a representative example of the Queen Anne style of architecture used in institutional architecture.
- The property has historical and associative value for its direct associations with the development of modern teacher training in Ontario, its association with the development of the educational system and its administration in Peterborough, and as the work of a provincially recognized architect – John Belcher, the designer of many prominent buildings in town including the Market Hall.
- The property has contextual value because it helps in defining the character of the area known broadly as the Teacher's College neighbourhood, it is historically physically and visually linked to the area, and it is a local landmark.

Option to preserve and restore the QACC

The option to preserve and restore the QACC is not being recommended in this report. A future report from the City's Heritage Preservation staff will provide formal background and recommendations regarding the status of the building.

Advantages of preserving and restoring the QACC include:

- Preservation of a building with historic attributes
- Avoids the cost associated with demolition and construction of a new building

- Minor disruption to the operations of AH and services to seniors in comparison to demolition and reconstruction.
- AH is able to better implement their strategic plan in the short and medium term.

Disadvantages to keeping the building include:

- Significant capital costs, approximately \$2.4 million, will be added to the budget over the next 5 years
- Opportunity to increase the affordable housing stock for seniors is not realized
- Creation of a mixed-use age-friendly facility is not realized
- Annual operating cost to maintain the building will be higher than a new building

Feasibility Study

Undertaking the feasibility study is expected to cost up to \$60,000. These studies have often been covered through Seed Funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). However, this funding stream is now closed for 2023 due to overwhelming demand. This is not a common occurrence so staff will remain in contact with CMHC in the event funding becomes available in the near future. To avoid delays, it is being recommended that up to \$60,000 from the Community Development Program Reserve be used to cover this cost.

A consultant(s) will be hired to undertake a feasibility study which will include, but not limited to:

- Architectural concept plan, which could include considerations to preserve the façade, or other heritage aspects of the building
- Options for funding the construction of the building
- Pro forma analysis
- Land use planning services
- Creating a report and presentation for PACACs information and review

The initial stages of the feasibility study can be started in the short-term. Information from this study is needed for PACAC to prepare a heritage evaluation of the building for Councils consideration.

There is currently no timeline for the redevelopment of the property, beyond the feasibility study. If approved, this property will be included as a capital development consideration as overall development plans are evaluated, and funding opportunities become available.

Summary

The Queen Alexandra Community Centre has fulfilled many purposes since its construction in 1890, including its primary purpose as a school, but also as an administrative office, location for not-for-profits, and currently as home to Activity Haven. Over the past several years, the QACC has not received significant capital upgrades. The building will need roughly \$2.4 million in capital improvements over the next 5 years if it is to be preserved. The QACC is currently a Listed property in the Heritage Registry, and after a preliminary review may meet the criteria of full Designation. However, at this point in time, it is being recommended that the building be included in the City's community revitalization plans for the purpose of redevelopment to affordable housing and a seniors activity centre and that staff proceed with undertaking a feasibility study.

Submitted by,

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