

Main St. property to become parking lot Home not a heritage property

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Staff Writer

The Main St. house to be demolished to make way for a parking lot in downtown Georgetown is a not a heritage property.

Councillor Moya Johnson, council's rep on the Halton Hills Heritage Advisory Committee, assured Councillor Mike Davis, who questioned whether the house should come down at a recent meeting. He said he was told it used to be a school.

"I just want to make sure we're not making a mistake by tearing it down," he said.

The home, beside Yong's Restaurant, will be torn down to make way for a 20-space lot to provide more downtown parking. It will be done in conjunction with the 2007 reconstruction of Main St.

"That building is not on a heritage list," said Johnson. Any building up for demolition— even if it's a year old— is automatically referred to the heritage committee for investigation, she said. A committee member will study not only the building, but its history as well.

"If it's inevitable that it has to be taken down, it's photographed from many different angles and that's kept in an archive," said Johnson, adding that the heritage value of the Main St. home has not been identified at this point. She invited Davis to bring forward to the committee the information he received about the school as soon as possible.

Davis claimed it was second-hand information he received from a heritage committee member.

Mayor Rick Bonnette pointed out the site was researched before it the Town purchased it.

In mid-June, the Ontario legislation amended the Ontario Heritage Act, which now requires the clerk of each municipality to keep a registry of properties that are of cultural heritage value or interest.

Johnson said the committee is currently working on compiling a list of heritage properties— about 80— in Halton Hills. The list may include a property that is not designated under the Act, but that the municipal council believes to be of value.

"The list is different than designation. Designation is the final step in the process," explained Johnson. "This list is just an identification of those properties or elements in the town that are of interest for heritage reasons. It doesn't necessarily even mean that the building is old, it could be something like 'George Washington slept here'. Something may have happened there or someone may have lived there that is a historical figure or gained some prominence in the community."

An owner of a listed property must now give a municipality at least 60 days notice of their intent to demolish or remove a building or structure on the property.

She said the owner does not have to give permission to the Town for their property to be on the list, but at the same time it's incumbent upon council to inform the public what it means if their property is listed. She expects that a report will come to council in the fall with a short list of about 25, with the remainder to come later.

The heritage committee also plans to hold a public information meeting on the Act and the list.

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