



MEMORANDUM



TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Regan Hutcheson, Manager-Heritage Planning

DATE: October 9, 2024

SUBJECT: **Demolition Permit Application**
10 Ruggles Avenue, Thornhill (Langstaff) - Munshaw House
Fire Damage

FILE: 24 179349 DP

Property/Building Description: 1 ½ storey, frame dwelling, c. 1854

Use: Vacant building

Heritage Status: Munshaw House is individually designated pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 2014-20)

Application:

- A demolition permit application has been submitted in response to fire damage.

Background

- The City has been working to ensure the protection and the conservation of the Munshaw House for many years finally achieving its designation in 2014 and later its incorporation into the phased redevelopment of Langstaff.

Development Approvals

- On May 31, 2023, the City approved an application to expand a previously approved plan of subdivision for several properties in the Langstaff community east of Yonge Street and south of Hwy 407. The new boundaries included the Munshaw House. Approval included changes to the conditions of draft approval to address the Munshaw House.
- The Plan of Subdivision included expanding the boundary to include the full park Block B (which includes the existing location of the Munshaw House).
- As part of the approval, Council indicated no objection to the partial demolition of the non-heritage components and foundation of the Munshaw House to facilitate its relocation to a temporary storage location pending determination of its final location.
- The Conditions of Draft Approval for the Plan of Subdivision as approved by Council contain heritage conditions to ensure the protection and conservation of the Munshaw House including the requirement for a financial security in the amount of \$250,000.
- In January 2024, Heritage Markham indicated no objection to the proposed strategy to address the conservation and incorporation of the Munshaw House through a Major Heritage Permit application as part of the future development at the School/Mixed Use

Development Site located east of Romeo Park (Phase 6). Work within this Phase is anticipated to commence in 2035 to 2040).

- The owner has not yet entered into a Subdivision Agreement.

Relocation to a Secure Site

- Preparations were underway to relocate the Munshaw House to its temporary storage location on Cedar Avenue.
- Staff were contacted on June 20, 2024 by a descendant of the Munshaw family from Thunder Bay who visited the property during the first week of June. He indicated by email the following:

“The house was completely unsecured. I was not only able to drive all the way up to it in the construction site, but windows were broken and unboarded, and the front door was ajar and unlocked. Anyone off the street could easily walk in at any time. I was there with my wife, and commented to her at the time that the house is very likely to burn down due to its location and lack of security. I am a firefighter by profession, I see this kind of thing all the time. Anyway, as it happens I took a recording on video approaching the site and showing the horrible condition of the home as it sat only a few weeks ago. I took the video to share with my family who lives all over the country, not in particular to document anything going on with the house”.

Structural Fire

- On June 15, 2024, the Munshaw House was extensively damaged by fire.
- The building is still standing but has extensive fire, smoke and water damage. The Fire Department is investigating the cause of the fire.

Unsafe Building Order/ Demolition Application

- The Building Department issued an Unsafe Building Order and in response the owner has fenced the property and undertaken three structural condition assessments. See Appendix “D” for the reports.
- In response to the first structural investigation, the owner applied for a demolition permit through the Building Department as this was one of the remedies offered by the City to address the condition of the building.
- Given that the Munshaw is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, this demolition request is required to be considered by Heritage Markham for review/recommendation in advance of consideration by the Development Service Committee and Council.

Heritage Markham Committee

- The Committee discussed this matter on July 10, 2024 and an extract from the meeting is attached as Appendix “E”. The Committee recommended that all options be explored by the owner to conserve and repair the Munshaw House in lieu of its demolition.

Summary of Condition Assessments

- The complete reports are found in Appendix “D”. A summary of key findings is provided below:

- LMS Engineering Inc (June 19, 2024). The following recommendation was provided:

Conclusions and Recommendations

After a visual review of the fire damaged dwelling house, the existing structural frame is in very poor condition and unsafe. The wood frame & roof deck/floor deck are at a very high risk of collapse. The wood frame can no longer maintain its structural integrity. The perimeter area around the dwelling is blocked to prevent any access due to the hazard. The fire damaged dwelling structure will require a complete demolition from the immediate potential cave-in hazard arising as result of the floor, roof, and wall collapse.

- Jewell Engineering (July 12, 2024). The consulting engineer provided the following summary:

“Based on the foregoing, it is our opinion that the appropriate course of action would be to demolish the building, for the following reasons:

1. The building has significant fire damage as well as likely having water damage and mold. The condition of the building is unsafe to enter and may experience a partial collapse at any time.
2. The entire building needs to be brought up to current standards for structural safety and other considerations such as fire protection, moisture protection, and thermal efficiency. This would require extensive removals and replacement of the majority of the building elements.”

- Facet Group Inc. (September 18, 2024). The following recommendations were provided:

“Recommendations and Methodologies:

We believe, due to the extent of damage sustained during the fire and the risk of collapse executing the work that would be required to stabilize and reconstruct, that the Munshaw House should be catalogued and demolished.

Reconstruction of the existing building requires stabilization and retention of the perimeter façades to facilitate the removal and replacement of all framing and attributes that have sustained moderate to severe damage. The roof structure and attic framing, although severely compromised, are providing lateral support.

We believe it unsafe to install a perimeter retention system prior to the removal of the roof framing. We also believe the vibration and forces that would be applied to the façades during sequenced demolition of the roof and attic poses undue risk if completed by hand; we recommend the roof and attic framing be removed by machine with an adequate drop and protection zone to prevent injury in the event of collapse. It is expected that the floor assembly and façade framing members and connections will be further affected during the work and their demolition may also be required to be completed by machine.

The remaining sound attributes, specifically the original douglas fir ground floor joists from the west portion of the building, may be salvaged during the demolition and cleanup. The original front doorframe and multi-paned sidelights may be able to be salvaged once the roof and second floor framing are removed.

Areas of the clapboard siding or representative samples should be able to be salvaged. The foundation and plinth stone can be salvaged.”

Heritage Staff Comment

- Heritage Planning Staff has visited the property to see the damage and has met with the owner to discuss the condition of the building. The focus of discussion has been whether the building can be repaired and relocated to the storage property on Cedar Ave as originally planned.
- In response to the first structural assessment report, Staff requested a peer review of the structural assessment or a second assessment to be undertaken by a firm known to be familiar with damaged heritage structures. The second assessment was undertaken by a firm not known to be familiar with heritage structures, so a third assessment was requested and undertaken by Facet Group Inc. who have indicated they are one of Canada's leading engineering and project management firms, renowned for creating unique designs that preserve and restore heritage structures. The company’s services include Façade retention and building relocation, Envelope inspections, Restoration and masonry (specialist), Project management, and Planning and cost consulting.
- In general, all three structural assessments found that the building would need extensive structural intervention to make it safe to undertake any stabilization and restorative work and recommended demolition as the most appropriate course of action. It would appear that many original structural elements are no longer viable and if retention was to be pursued, the scope of intervention and attempted introduction of new material may trigger building collapse.
- Given the existing condition of the building, discussion has occurred between the owner and Staff as to whether the building could be rehabilitated and how much original material would remain versus demolition being pursued and under what conditions.
- Staff acknowledge that due to the alterations over the years and the fire-damaged state of the building, it is likely that an extensive amount of the building (interior and exterior) would have to be replicated as opposed to being retained and restored. Markham has not traditionally supported replication of its historic resources as a conservation strategy – it is either restoration if there is enough original material remaining or demolition with the resource commemorated through an interpretive plaque. However, in certain circumstances, replication has been an acceptable form of commemoration.
- Options that could be considered in this case and the pros and cons of each include:

Option	Pros	Cons	Comment
1. Leave Heritage House requirements intact - owner would have to “restore” the existing building. Likely cost \$400,000-\$600,000 - Majority of interior and exterior elements and	- some version of the heritage house is rebuilt by developer -interpretive plaque tells the story of the Munshaw House	- risk of building collapse - majority of the building would be new construction, diluting its architectural and historical value	No further approvals from Council (other than denying the demo request).

Option	Pros	Cons	Comment
features will be entirely replicated.			
2. Allow a complete replication of the heritage house - heritage house would be demolished and be reproduced based on measured drawings	- new house form interprets the Munshaw House	- reduced value in a replica (not best practice in heritage conservation) A replica does not have the same heritage value as the original	Need to revise the Subdivision Agreement for the House (replication vs restoration) Need measured drawings prior to demolition to ensure accurate replica.
3. Support Demolition Subject to Conditions - allow the heritage building to be demolished in exchange for a contribution to Heritage Fund and enhanced interpretive plaques.	- money for heritage fund to be used on other heritage projects in the City - interpretive plaques tells the story of the House - developer no longer has relocation and restoration costs of \$400-600K)	- loss of heritage resource and incorporation of historical feature in the new development.	Would require Council approval as building would be demolished. Would require some changes to planning approval (subdivision agreement) and reduction in LC amount (for plaques only)

- Given the current state of the building and the lesser value of replicating the Munshaw House , the Committee may wish to support the proposed demolition subject to the City securing compensation from the owner (Option #3) as well as still requiring the additional provision for two enhanced interpretative baked enamel plaques to be designed according to the specifications of the "Markham Remembered" program to commemorate 1) the Munshaw House and 2) the history of the Langstaff community.
- It is recommended that if this option is pursued, the financial contribution secured from the owner be deposited in the City's Heritage Preservation Account (087 2800 115) commonly referred to as the 'Heritage Fund'. The Fund was created by Council in 1991 as a repository for cashed heritage letters of credit so that the funds could be used on other heritage related projects. Monies collected in the Fund are to be used to provide funding in four general program areas:
 - Municipal restoration projects;
 - Municipal acquisition of heritage buildings;
 - Municipal projects of a heritage communicative nature such as historic plaques and signage; and
 - Heritage studies such as heritage conservation district studies.

The Fund Guidelines as approved by Council state that all projects being considered for financial assistance under this program shall be forwarded to the municipal heritage committee (Heritage Markham) for review followed by a report to Council. All expenditures from the Fund must be approved by Council.

- In January 2021, Heritage Markham and Council supported a somewhat similar strategy when considering the future of the William Clarry House at 9900 Markham Road which, due to lack of maintenance and vandalism over many years, had resulted in a case of demolition by neglect. In the case of the Clarry House, it was to be retained in a Plan of Subdivision secured through conditions of approval and a subdivision agreement. The work was secured via a Letter of Credit of \$120,000 and was subject to a Site Plan Agreement which included a complete restoration plan. However, a detailed assessment of the building found that most of it would have to be replaced with new materials due to the advanced state of deterioration. The owner acknowledged their accountability and indicated a preference to not replicate the house. Instead, they agreed to a financial contribution of \$200,000 to the City's Heritage Fund. This was in addition to the provision of an interpretive plaque and the offer of a parkette on the heritage house lot, designed and constructed to the City's specifications.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

THAT due to the extensive fire damage which occurred at the Munshaw House, the current structural condition of the building, the amount of new construction that would be needed to stabilize and "restore" the building, and the reduced value of a replica building, Heritage Markham Committee reluctantly recommends that Council support the demolition subject to the owner providing the following:

- Compensation for the loss in the form of a contribution to the City's Heritage Preservation Account (087 2800 115) so that the financial contribution can be used on other municipal heritage projects in the community; and
- Provision and installation of two historical interpretive plaques as previously required by Council in the Conditions of Draft Subdivision Approval to commemorate 1) the Munshaw House and 2) the Langstaff community.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A'	Location Map
Appendix 'B'	Aerial Photograph
Appendix 'C'	Photographs
Appendix 'D'	Structural Condition Assessments
	D1 Facet Group Inc. (September 18, 2024)
	D2 Jewell Engineering (July 12, 2024)
	D3 LMS Engineering Inc Letter (June 19, 2024)
Appendix 'E'	Heritage Markham Extract

Appendix 'A' – Location Map



(10 Ruggles Ave highlighted in yellow)

Appendix 'B' - Aerial Photograph





AERIAL PHOTO (2022)

APPLICANTS: RDG Gateway Tower One and Condor Properties Ltd.
Draft Plan of Subdivision 19TM-18006

FILE No.'s [SPC 22 247842 & PLAN 22 264894](#)

Q:\Geomatics\New Operations\2022 Agenda\SPC\SPC22_247842\Report Figures.mxd

 SUBDIVISION LANDS
 BLOCK A LANDS

DATE: 24/04/2023

Aerial Image of the subject lands with the Part-IV designated property at 10 Ruggles Avenue

Appendix 'C' - Photographs



Prior to the removal of the newer addition



After the removal of the newer addition



During the fire

Appendix 'D' – Structural Reports

D1 Facet Group Inc. (September 18, 2024)

Facet Group Inc.

716 – 228 Queens Quay West
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2X1
T 416-409-0772 | F 647-349-2453
www.facetgroup.ca

September 18, 2024

Markham Gateway Development Inc.
c/o Condor Properties
Alex Beduz
1500 Highway 7
Concord, ON L4K 5Y4

**Re: 10 Ruggles Avenue (Munshaw House), Thornhill – Structural Condition Assessment
Facet Group Inc. project no. 202418**

Dear Alex,

We have been retained by Markham Gateway Development Inc. to provide professional services related to the structural preservation of the Munshaw House heritage attributes. An exterior review was completed from grade. Interior inspections were completed at grade and level 2; the basement was not reviewed.

Due to the as found conditions, we believe the structure is unsafe and should not be entered or worked on unless directed and under the supervision of an experienced structural consultant.

As part of our review, we have relied upon the following supporting documents:

- Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by LHC Heritage Planning & Archaeology Inc., dated 23Aug2023

See below our findings and recommendations.

10 Ruggles Ave, circa 1854, is a one-and-a-half storey timber framed and clad residential building.

The building was subject to a major structural fire on June 15, 2024. The fire appears to have been concentrated in the east half of the building, and the second floor and attic. A later east addition was found to have been removed, a timber framed shear wall was constructed to enclose the gable end.

Areas of the ground floor sheathing were found to have been missing or lost to the fire, specifically in the east half; visible douglas fir floor joists were found to have sustained moderate to severe damage. Areas of original lathe and plaster at the north elevation and the north south interior demised wall were found to have been lost to the fire; the douglas fir stud framing members, including the bottom and top plates were found to have sustained severe damage and areas of total loss.

The ceiling finishes were found to have let go and were destroyed by the fire; the second floor framing members generally appeared to have sustained moderate fire damage with select members in the east portion sustaining severe damage.

The second floor and attic framing were found to have sustained moderate to severe damage. The original rafters were found to have been constructed using 50 x 100 douglas fir timber spaced at +/- 600mm and sheathed with 25mm barn boards; the roof was constructed without a ridge beam. The rafters and sheathing, sill plates, rafter tails, and the soffit framing were found to have sustained severe damage including areas of total loss.

The original front doorframe and multi-paned sidelights were found to be clad with plywood protection, they appear to have only suffered minor damage, further investigation is required. The condition of the clapboard siding below the existing finishes is unknown, further investigation is also required.

Refer to Facet Group appendix A: Existing condition site photos

Recommendations and Methodologies:

We believe, due to the extent of damage sustained during the fire and the risk of collapse executing the work that would be required to stabilize and reconstruct, that the Munshaw House should be catalogued and demolished.

Reconstruction of the existing building requires stabilization and retention of the perimeter façades to facilitate the removal and replacement of all framing and attributes that have sustained moderate to severe damage. The roof structure and attic framing, although severely compromised, are providing lateral support.

We believe it unsafe to install a perimeter retention system prior to the removal of the roof framing. We also believe the vibration and forces that would be applied to the façades during sequenced demolition of the roof and attic poses undue risk if completed by hand; we recommend the roof and attic framing be removed by machine with an adequate drop and protection zone to prevent injury in the event of collapse. It is expected that the floor assembly and façade framing members and connections will be further affected during the work and their demolition may also be required to be completed by machine.

The remaining sound attributes, specifically the original douglas fir ground floor joists from the west portion of the building, may be salvaged during the demolition and cleanup. The original front doorframe and multi-paned sidelights may be able to be salvaged once the roof and second floor framing are removed. Areas of the clapboard siding or representative samples should be able to be salvaged. The foundation and plinth stone can be salvaged.

We are available to meet to further discuss our findings and recommendations for 10 Ruggles Avenue, Thornhill, Ontario.

Best regards,



Neil Puype,
Principal



FACET GROUP – APPENDIX A: EXISTING CONDITION SITE PHOTOS:



GROUND FL LOOKING NORTH EAST



GROUND FL JOISTS AND SHEATHING



GROUND FL DEMISED WALL



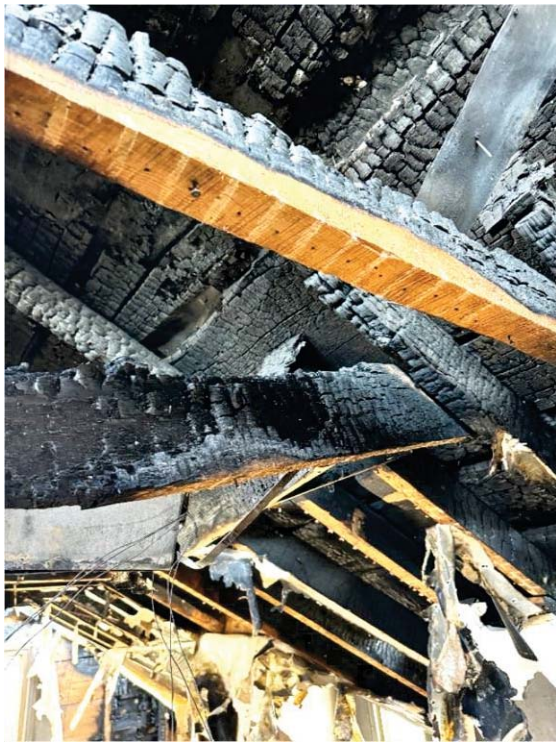
SECOND FL FRAMING



SECOND FL AND CEILING FRAMING



ROOF FRAMING 1



ROOF FRAMING 2



RAFTER TAIL AND SOFFIT FRAMING

D2 Jewell Engineering (July 12, 2024)

25 Langstaff Road East Development Inc.
1500 Highway 7
Concord ON L4K 5Y4

July 12, 2024

Attention: Pat Perciasepe

Re: Assessment of 10 Ruggles Avenue
Langstaff Gateway Development
Our File No. 240-2213

Dear Sir:

As Mr. Pat Perciasepe of 25 Langstaff Road East Development Inc. requested, Mr. K. Bartusevicius, P. Eng. of Jewell Engineering Inc. visited the subject property on July 12, 2024, to assess the structural condition of the subject house after it had endured a fire.

For safety reasons, the assessment performed by Mr. Bartusevicius is based on visual observations made through the main entrance doorway and through the adjacent broken windows.

Based on the observations, the existing house has a main floor and appears to have a partial second floor. It is constructed of wood frame construction, has plaster or drywall on interior surfaces and appears to be clad with a metal siding on the exterior.

Visible damage from the fire includes the following:

- Smoke and fire damage around the exterior of upper and lower floor windows and some areas of the roof.
- Significant charring of wall studs.
- Significant charring of joists above the main floor.
- Loss of the flooring structure on the main floor and significant charring of the underlying floor joists.
- Interior finished have been destroyed or smoke damaged.

As well as the above, due to the condition of the roof and broken windows as well as efforts to contain the fire, it can be surmised that there is significant water damage to the interior and mold would likely be present throughout the building.

Refer to photos included with this letter showing the condition of the house.

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Based on the foregoing, it is our opinion that the appropriate course of action would be to demolish the building, for the following reasons.

1. The building has significant fire damage as well as likely having water damage and mold. The condition of the building is unsafe to enter and may experience a partial collapse at any time.
2. The entire building needs to be brought up to current standards for structural safety and other considerations such as fire protection, moisture protection, and thermal efficiency. This would require extensive removals and replacement of the majority of the building elements.

We trust the above is satisfactory for your purposes, should you require any further information, please contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,

Jewell Engineering Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. F. Bartusevicius", written over a horizontal line.

Kasey Bartusevicius, P. Eng.





Photo 1 – View of South Elevation



Photo 2 – View of West Elevation



Photo 3 – View of North Elevation



Photo 4 – View of West Elevation



Photo 5 – Interior View Showing Significantly Charred Wall Studs



Photo 6 – Interior View Showing Damage to Floor Structure Above and Below Main Floor



Photo 7 – View of Significantly Charred Joists Above Main Floor

D3 LMS Engineering Inc. (June 19, 2024)

June 19, 2024

25 Langstaff Rd. East Development Inc.
1500 Highway 7
Concord, ON L4K 5Y4

Attention: Mr. Pat Perciasepe

Re: Building Structural Review for fire damaged Dwelling Structure
- 10 Ruggles Ave, Thornhill, ON
Our Project Number: S24-115

LMS Engineering Inc. was retained to assess the condition of a dwelling structure damaged by fire, smoke, and water. LMS Engineering Inc. visited the above noted site on June 18, 2024 to review the dwelling structure after fire damage for the above noted location. The purpose of this review is to determine if the fire occurrence would have a negative impact on the structure components of the building.

The site review of the dwelling structure condition is based on direct visible observation at the time of the review. Any structural elements which were inaccessible or covered by finishes were not reviewed and are not included in this structural review as no destructive testing was undertaken. We have enclosed photographs within this report to illustrate existing site condition.

Brief Description of Building & Observations

The subject dwelling structure is a detached two-storey house located on 10 Ruggles Ave in Thornhill, Ontario. The dwelling floor frame was constructed of conventional sawn wood framing. The exterior wall were constructed with conventional wood stud with siding finish. The roof frame was constructed with convention wood roof rafter and timber collar tie, bearing on exterior wall at each end of roof rafter.

A major fire occurred June 15th, 2024 within the East end of the building causing extensive damage to the ground floor, 2nd floor & roof. The wall stud, floor joists & roof rafter were burned off indicating that the charred wood was subject to heat from the fire. The existing wood frame is a total loss and not suitable for any structural support as a result of the heat and water damage.

Conclusions and Recommendations

After a visual review of the fire damaged dwelling house, the existing structural frame is in very poor condition and unsafe. The wood frame & roof deck/floor deck are at a very high risk of collapse. The wood frame can no longer maintain its structural integrity. The perimeter area around the dwelling is blocked to prevent any access due to the hazard. The fire damaged dwelling structure will require a complete demolition from the immediate potential cave-in hazard arising as result of the floor, roof, and wall collapse.

Limiting Conditions

The assessment provided is based on visually observed defects at a limited number of locations and our experience with similar types of buildings. Deficiencies may exist at other areas not referenced in this report or that are not visually apparent given the level of evaluation. No responsibility is therefore assumed concerning these matters, or for failure to carry out technical or engineering techniques that would be required to discover any inherent or hidden conditions of the property, since such an investigation was not included in the scope of work.

We trust this report is satisfactory and self-explanatory, however, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

LMS ENGINEERING INC.



Haijun Li,
M.Sc. P.Eng. BDS, LEED AP.

APPENDIX A – PHOTOGRAPHS



North side elevation



South side elevation



Wood stud wall frame @ east side (from inside & ground floor level)



Ground floor level @ north east corner of building

APPENDIX A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Roof level @north west corner of building (from 2nd floor level)



Roof rafter & collar tie (from 2nd floor level)

APPENDIX A – PHOTOGRAPHS



Wood stud wall frame @ east side (from inside & 2nd floor level)



Roof deck @ south side of building

Appendix 'E' – Heritage Markham Extract

HERITAGE MARKHAM EXTRACT

Date: July 18, 2024

To: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM #6.1 OF THE SEVENTH HERITAGE MARKHAM
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON July 10, 2024

6. PART FOUR - REGULAR

6.1 DEMOLITION PERMIT APPLICATION

10 RUGGLES AVENUE, THORNHILL (LANGSTAFF) - MUNSHAW HOUSE FIRE DAMAGE (16.11)

File Number:

n/a

Regan Hutcheson introduced this item as related to a demolition permit application for 10 Ruggles Avenue (“Munshaw House”) which suffered fire damage on June 15, 2024. Following the fire, Mr. Hutcheson explained that the City of Markham issued an unsafe building order directing that the building be repaired or demolished within a certain timeframe. Mr. Hutcheson advised that as a condition of development approval, the Munshaw House is to be temporarily relocated off-site before its eventual incorporation into the new development within Langstaff, and noted that Staff have met with the developer of the site, Condor Properties, and with the structural engineer who was retained to analyze the building. Mr. Hutcheson confirmed that Staff have requested that Condor Properties undertake a second structural analysis, preferably utilizing an engineer with heritage building experience, which they appear to be agreeable to.

The Ward Councillor advised that he has spoken to the principals at Condor Properties who have agreed to conduct a peer review which is already underway and are seeking a consultant with specific heritage expertise.

Barry Nelson, deputant, representing the Thornhill Historical Society, expressed concerns with the potential demolition of the Munshaw House and supported a peer review of the structure by a firm with heritage expertise, to ensure that the possibility of repair and conservation is thoroughly explored.

Mr. Nelson emphasized the importance of the Munshaw House to the Langstaff community's heritage identity and encouraged the Committee to remain committed to its protection and restoration through the prioritization of the peer review.

Recommendations:

THAT Heritage Markham recommends that all options be explored by the owner to conserve and repair the Munshaw House as opposed to pursuing demolition of the structure;

AND THAT the written submissions from Valerie Burke, Tony and Angela Farr, Diane Berwick, Elena Cesaroni, and Barry Nelson on behalf of the Thornhill Historical Society be received;

AND THAT the deputation by Barry Nelson on behalf of the Thornhill Historical Society be received.

Carried