



To: Mayor Andrea Horwath, members of the Planning Committee and members of Hamilton City Council

Date: Sunday September 27th, 2026

Re: Request to deny the request for de-designation of the Auchmar Gate House Lodge

The Friends of Auchmar write to express our strong support for the designation of the Gatekeeper's Lodge at 81 Claremont Drive under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and to **deny the request for de-designation of the Auchmar Gate House Lodge also known as the Gatekeeper's Lodge, [81 Claremont Drive, Hamilton](#).**

We also wish to affirm our willingness to assist the City, the property owner, community stakeholders, and other partners in preserving this important structure as an integral component of the historic Auchmar estate and an enduring legacy for Hamilton residents and future generations.

Contextual Value and Relationship to the Estate

The importance of the Gatekeeper's Lodge cannot be separated from the larger Auchmar estate, historically known as Clairmont Park. The estate was intentionally designed as an integrated landscape where buildings, roads, gardens, orchards, and views formed a unified composition.

Positioned at the entrance to the estate on the mountain brow, the Lodge served both practical and symbolic functions. **It welcomed visitors to the estate while establishing a visual relationship with the manor house beyond. The Lodge is one of the few remaining built features connected to the original estate and remains an important component in understanding the broader cultural heritage landscape.**

Although the Gatekeeper's Lodge later became physically separated from the remaining estate lands, its historical and contextual relationship to Auchmar remains unchanged.

Longstanding Recognition and Municipal Awareness

Heritage Hamilton Foundation, founded in 1975 and still active today, offered to purchase the Gatekeeper's Lodge from a previous owner in an effort to secure its future preservation. The property was subsequently sold to the current owner, who at the time was understood to intend to use the building as an in-law suite.

Urgency and Risk of Irreversible Loss

In 2008, Dr Grant Head, founder and president of Heritage Hamilton Foundation, submitted a formal offer of purchase to the then owner Architect Howard Mark. Howard sold the property to his sister who subsequently sold the Auchmar Gate House to the current owner. At that time, we were informed that the new owner planned to restore the Auchmar Gate House into a Granny Suite.

When Isaac Buchanan owned the Auchmar Gate House Doung Embleton, son of the groomsman and grounds keepers at Auchmar, lived and grew up in the Auchmar Gate House along with his parents and siblings.

Since 2010, The prolonged vacancy and visible deterioration of the Auchmar Gate House raise significant concerns.

Continued deterioration increases the likelihood that conservation becomes more difficult, more expensive. Allowing further decline risks the permanent loss of an important component of Hamilton's built heritage.

Request

Accordingly, we respectfully request that Council direct staff to initiate the steps necessary to proceed with restoration.

- a) Set up a meeting with the board of Heritage Hamilton Foundation to discuss the purchase of the **Auchmar Gate House**.
- b) Set up a meeting with the board of the Friends of Auchmar to discuss fundraising initiatives to restore the Auchmar **Gate House**.

With the help of Heritage Hamilton Foundation, Hamilton has successfully protected significant heritage resources such as the Bank of Montreal, The Pigott Building, Sandyford Place, the Lister, the Unified Family Court, through collaboration among property owners, community organizations, heritage advocates, and governments. We remain hopeful that the same commitment can preserve the Gatekeeper's Lodge as part of Hamilton's shared history.

Respectfully submitted,

Friends of Auchmar

