



To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Date: Monday September 29th, 2026

Re: Planning Committee, September 29, 2026 – Report PED26092(b) – 71 Claremont Drive
(Auchmar Gatehouse) – Support for Designation

Chair and Members of Planning Committee,

We write in support of staff's recommendations in Report PED26092(b) ("Report") to enact the designation by-law within the statutory deadline.

We have reviewed the written objections, as provided by the owner's counsel. The objection rests almost entirely on the building's condition and the cost of repair. Neither question is part of the heritage test. The property meets six of the nine criteria under O. Reg. 9/06. Particularly, the Report notes the Ontario Land Tribunal does not consider maintenance or repair costs as a basis for evaluating heritage value.

Whether the building is worth protecting has already been answered. What remains is how to protect it.

About the existing property condition, the City's own engineer, John G. Cook & Associates, is more measured than the suggestions made in the owner's objection:.

- No reason is found to suggest the building is structurally unstable in general or likely to collapse; in effect there is no time pressure to act. Moreover, no time pressure exists to act in stabilizing the structure.
- Demolition is an option, and not a recommendation of the engineer.
- Some fourteen years after 2012 and the date of the Sagittarius report declaring an "imminent" collapse of the east wall, remarkably it is still standing.
- Floor structure failure exists only in the later cinder-block washroom addition. Cooke had already documented that failure, and the proposed by-law expressly excludes that addition from the heritage attributes.

Overall, the engineer puts the in-situ preservation costs at \$500k to \$1.6M, a fraction to not more than half the cost to relocate the structure. Roof is relatively new and original lime-based mortar and parging have weathered favourably.

The objection also claims that relocation discussions undermine the property's contextual value. Staff have answered this directly: even if the building were moved, it would still meet enough criteria to warrant designation. Designation does not close off future options. It ensures that any change happens through a proper process rather than by default.

It is equally important to acknowledge designation opens the door to the City's heritage grant and loan programs, which is the most practical answer to the cost concern.

Those who advocate for heritage and restoration know well the frustrations with process the owners decry. Those experiences are inherent to the process and sometimes are exacerbated by decades of vacancy and the actions of the owners (impermeable paint applied to the east elevation – which the engineer notes accelerate masonry damage - and an appeal of 17 property standards violations. Frustration is not grounds to remove protection and consistent opposition to protection of heritage is a reason protection is needed.

As others, including the Friends of Auchmar (Angela Nolan, director, and Cameron Nolan, consultant to) and Heritage Hamilton Foundation request, we support Council directing staff to meet with both organizations and taking some immediate steps to limit further deterioration of the heritage qualities and structure of the gate house.

The Auchmar Gatehouse is "Auchmar in miniature" and one of the last built links to Isaac Buchanan's Clairmont Park. It has stood at the brow since 1855. Please give it the protection it needs to stand a while longer.

Regards?Cameron.and.Angela.Nolan