

Christopher J. Tanzola
Partner
Direct 416-730-0645
Cell 416-428-7493
ctanzola@overlandllp.ca

Overland LLP
5255 Yonge St, Suite 1101
Toronto, ON M2N 6P4
Tel 416-730-0337
overlandllp.ca

October 26, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Mayor Dan Carter and Members of City Council
City of Oshawa
50 Centre Street South
Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z7

Your Worship and Members of City Council:

**RE: Item ED-23-196 – Update on Impacts of Bill 23 on the City of Oshawa Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (Wards 3 and 4)
149 Harmony Road South**

We are the lawyers for Colony Real Estate Development Ltd. ("**Colony**"), the owner of the property municipally known as 149 Harmony Road South (the "**Property**") in the City of Oshawa (the "**City**").

Colony acquired the Property from the Durham District School Board in April 2016, and is in the process of preparing applications for a zoning by-law amendment and site plan approval to redevelop the property with residential uses (the "**Applications**"). The development proposal would see the Property intensified with a townhouse form of development. There have been preliminary discussions with City Staff regarding the development proposal and a pre-consultation meeting request and concept site plan were submitted to the City's Planning Department on October 19, 2023.

The Property is located on the east side of Harmony Road South, opposite Hoskin Avenue and one block south of King Street East. The Property has limited frontage along Harmony Road South, a regional road under the jurisdiction of the Region of Durham (the "**Region**") and is currently occupied by the former Harmony Public School.

Due to the location of the Property on the regional road network, the intersection with Hoskin Avenue, and the current location of the Harmony Public School building, a heritage designation that requires the school building to remain in-situ would seriously impact the ability to achieve an appropriate form and scale of revitalization for the Property.

Our client does not support the designation of the Property under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, as amended (the "**OHA**"). Consequently, we are asking Council not to proceed with the designation process for this Property at this time.

STAFF REPORT

We have reviewed the report *ED-23-196 - Update on Impacts of Bill 23 on the City of Oshawa Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest* (the “**Staff Report**”) dated October 11, 2023 and the related *Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest Report* prepared by Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. (ARA) on September 19, 2023 (the “**CHVI Report**”) in respect of the Property and the former Harmony Public School.

In our view, the cultural heritage value attributed to the Property through the CHVI Report does not seem to be tied primarily to the physical attributes of the former Harmony Public School, but rather its associative value as a historical educational institute. For example, the CHVI Report notes the following:

- *149 Harmony Road South is a well-built structure but does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic value. The materials and ornamentation designs are typical of Beaux-Arts public buildings.*
- *149 Harmony Road South is historically linked to its surroundings as one of last vestiges of Village of Harmony, which has largely disappeared into the City of Oshawa.*
- *149 Harmony Road South does not clearly yield or have the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture.*
- *Although 149 Harmony Road South served the surrounding community, the influence of the school property on the character of the surrounding area has not been demonstrated.*
- *149 Harmony Road South does not reflect the ideas of an architect, builder, designer, or theorist. Research did not reveal a notable builder or architect of the building. Research also did not find that that the design of the school generates new or key ideas in the field of architecture.*

THIRD ATTEMPT AT DESIGNATION – PREVIOUS EFFORTS FAILED

We understand that the Property had been the subject of two previous recommendations for designation in September 2015 and in September 2019, respectively, on the basis of its cultural heritage value or interest. On both occasions, City Council refused to approve the designation, with the latter resulting in the Property being listed on the City’s Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (the “**Heritage Register**”).

Substantively, neither the CHVI Report nor the Staff Report provide persuasive new reasons in support of the designation of the former Harmony Public School that would not have been taken into account on these previous occasions. In fact, the Staff Report is clear that this third attempt at designation is being done merely as a procedural reaction to a change in the legislative framework.

As addressed below, and in any event, the existing listing on the Heritage Register does afford the Property a measure of protection until December 31, 2024 without any further action by Council at this time.

Despite Council's previous decisions not to designate the Property, on October 16, 2023, the Economic and Development Services Committee adopted Staff's recommendation to initiate the process of designating the Property under Part IV of the OHA. As a result, Colony finds itself once more having to oppose the designation in order to maintain the ability to move forward with its development intentions.

SITE ACCESS ISSUE

Colony is concerned that the potential designation of the Property will restrict site access and will in turn severely limit the planned redevelopment of the Property.

As noted above, the Property has limited frontage along Harmony Road South, a regional road under the jurisdiction of the Region. The former Harmony Public School is located along this frontage and directly opposite Hoskin Avenue. As identified in the letter from D.G. Biddle & Associates Limited, our client's planning consultant, dated September 29, 2023 (attached as **Appendix A**), opportunities for access to the property are limited and could conflict with full retention of the former Harmony Public School on the property due to its location opposite to Hoskin Avenue. We note that this concern was also raised with the Economic and Development Services Committee in 2019 when the prior recommendation for designation of the Property was brought forward by Staff. This was specifically noted by Councillor Kerr at the October 16, 2023 meeting of the Economic and Development Services Committee – i.e., the site access issue had been raised previously and formed part of the justification for not proceeding with the designation of the Property in 2019.

ALTERNATIVES TO DESIGNATION

As noted above (and in the Staff Report), in accordance with the changes to the OHA made through the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, the City has at least until **December 31, 2024** to make a decision as to whether the Property should be designated if no applications for the Property are submitted. If the Applications are made before December 31, 2024, then because the Property is already listed on the Heritage Register, the City can consider the heritage status in response to the Applications in accordance with timelines set out in the OHA.

Given that the Applications are expected to be submitted to the City for review in short order, proceeding with the designation of the Property without the benefit of the context of the intended redevelopment, could have the effect of sterilizing the Property to development by virtue of the identified site access issue. A recommendation to designate the Property despite this access issue will necessitate our client's formal objection and probable appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal to protect for the intended redevelopment of the Property.

Instead the City could defer this matter to a later date in 2024 and revisit the issue of designation once the Applications have been submitted.¹

For these reasons, our client requests that City Council not adopt the recommendation to initiate the designation process, or in the alternative, defer this item until the submission of the impending Applications and that staff be given direction to continue discussions with our client through the planning process for the Property. A deferral will allow for further consultation between Staff and our client's consultants with respect to the treatment of the former Harmony Public School building and a consistent assessment of the Property with all the relevant supporting documentation.

Please send notice of any decision in respect of this matter and all required notices under the OHA to both Colony as the owner of the Property and to the undersigned and Justine Reyes (jreyes@overlandllp.ca).

Yours truly,
Overland LLP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. J. Tanzola', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Per: Christopher J. Tanzola
Partner

Encl.

¹ If for some reason the Applications are not forthcoming, the City would still have over a year to address this matter.

APPENDIX “A”

Letter from D.G. Biddle & Associates Limited, dated September 29, 2023



D. G. Biddle & Associates Limited

consulting engineers and planners

96 KING ST. E., OSHAWA, ONTARIO L1H 1B6 PHONE (905) 576-8500 FAX (905) 576-9730
e-mail: info@dgbiddle.com

September 29, 2023

Planning Department
City of Oshawa
50 Centre Street South
Oshawa ON L1H 3Z7

Attention: Connor Leherbauer

RE: 149 Harmony Road South, Harmony Public School Building
Heritage Research Report
Our File: 115175

Dear Mr. Leherbauer:

D.G. Biddle and Associates Limited has been retained by the owner, Colony Real Estate Development Inc., to provide professional land use planning consulting services in support of development applications for the property at 149 Harmony Road South in the City of Oshawa, the Harmony Road Public School.

We are in receipt of Evaluation of 149 Harmony Road South - Harmony Public School report prepared by Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. for the City of Oshawa (September 19, 2023).

On September 9, 2019, the Oshawa Heritage Committee brought forward a proposal to the Development Services Committee to designate 149 Harmony Road South as a heritage property. The Development Services Committee recommended to Council that the property not be designated, but instead to list the property on the City of Oshawa's Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The recommendation to not designate was approved by City Council on September 23, 2019.

The owner purchased the property from the Durham District School Board with the intent to redevelop the property under the permissions of the Region of Durham and City of Oshawa Official Plans.

Harmony Road South and the properties fronting onto Harmony are designated as **Regional Corridor** in the Region of Durham Official Plan, with an underlying **Living Areas** land use designation. The Regional Corridor designation is intended to allow for higher density residential, commercial, and mixed-use development with

minimum residential density requirements of 60 units per hectare. The Living Areas land use designation does not specify a minimum or maximum density permission, but instead defers to the local official plan.

The City of Oshawa Official Plan designates the property for **Residential** land uses. Location criteria found in Table 2 of the Oshawa Official Plan would generally allow for **Medium Density I Residential** land use and density permissions due to its location on an arterial road and at the periphery of a residential neighbourhood. The Medium Density I Residential land use designation permits densities of 30 to 60 units per hectare.

Harmony Road South is a Regional Road under the jurisdiction of the Region of Durham. The Region's intersection spacing protocol will require any new driveway into the property to line up opposite Hoskin Avenue. Site access is restricted along Harmony Road South due to the site's limited frontage and proximity to Hoskin Avenue. No other site access location is feasible due to restrictions of turning movements into and out of the site and due to potential conflicting turning movements on Harmony. A site access opposite Hoskin Avenue is the only feasible option.

Unfortunately, the Harmony Road Public School is located at the intersection of Harmony Road with Hoskin Avenue. The location of the existing building does not permit feasible site access in line with the Region's site access protocol.

As such, the designation of the Harmony Road Public School would severely limit access to the site, which in turn will severely limit any future development potential of the site. For this reason, the owner is opposed to the designation of the Harmony Road Public School under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Yours Truly,
D.G. BIDDLE & ASSOCIATES LIMITED

Ashlee Prescott

Ashlee Prescott
Junior Planner

Cc. Monica Chen, Colony Real Estate Development Inc. (via email)

From: Jennifer Taylor <M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec 14(1)>
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 11:12 AM
To: clerks <clerks@oshawa.ca>
Subject: Street Name Change

Good morning,

I live on Ortono Avenue in Oshawa and there is a meeting on October 30, 2023 @ 9:30 am regarding changing the name of our street from Ortono Avenue to Ortona Avenue my concerns with this is that we will have to have the address changed on our title to our house, licenses, anything with our address on it with some things there will be a charge for doing so who is going to cover the costs if the change happens?

Thank you,
Jennifer Taylor
<M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec 14(1)> Ortono Avenue
Oshawa, ON
<M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec 14(1)>
<M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec 14(1)>