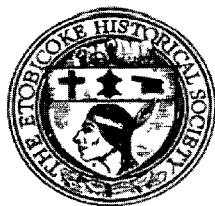


ETOBICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 c/o Montgomery's Inn  
 4709 Dundas Street West  
 Etobicoke, Ontario M9A 1A8



Founded: 1958 Incorporated: 1962  
[www.etobicokehistorical.com](http://www.etobicokehistorical.com)  
 GST Reg. Number: BN 129748547-RR0001  
 Affiliated with *Ontario Historical Society*

October 15, 2013

To All Members of the Etobicoke-York Community Council: Councillor and Chair Vincent Crisanti; Councillor Frank Di Giorgio; Councillor Sarah Doucette; Councillor Doug Ford; Councillor Mark Grimes; Councillor Peter Leon; Councillor Gloria Lindsay Luby; Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti; Councillor Peter Milczyn; Councillor Frances Nunziata; and Councillor Cesar Palacio

Re: Application to Designate Wesley Mimico United Church, 2 Station Road

I am writing on behalf of the Etobicoke Historical Society (EHS) to support the designation of Wesley Mimico United Church. Additionally, we support this church's plans for redevelopment.

The Etobicoke Historical Society first became involved with the congregation of Wesley Mimico United Church almost two years ago. I and other members of our board of directors have attended numerous meetings at the church. We've seen the church members – with significant community involvement - explore multiple options for redeveloping the church in a way that will allow them to financially ensure the continuance of their congregation while restoring their aging, inaccessible building.

We have reviewed the church's final redevelopment plans in great detail. We fully acknowledge that preservation of the entire exterior with all of its heritage attributes is the ideal. But we also believe there are mitigating factors to consider here.

The fact is that we all live, work and play inside "places", and that these places evolve over time. The values we attach to any given location are not constant, but rather change in relation to time and space and society. The congregation of Wesley Mimico United Church has in fact been in an evolving relationship with its facilities from the very beginning when it first held services in someone's home, to its small frame church on Church Street in 1863, to the current brick church in 1922, and then its addition in 1954. Now we're at a new stage in the constant evolution of this church.

At the start of our relationship with this church, it was difficult for EHS to see a way we could support the church's proposed development if it meant compromising any of the building's heritage attributes. But we soon came to realize that sometimes - just sometimes - heritage preservation may not solely be about preserving every element of a building, because the value of that building may rest not only in the tangible (i.e. the structure,) but also in an assortment of intangible concepts that

need to be weighed in the balance. What is the church's cultural context? How is the physical structure connected to its wider social milieu? This is a more holistic approach to the situation, and the difficult part, of course, is to properly weigh that balance between the tangible and the intangible elements.

This church's redevelopment proposal should be viewed in the light of its continually evolving story. Simply put, if the congregation cannot implement a plan that will generate income, the congregation will close, and ultimately the church building will be sold. We can't know what a new owner might want to do with the building, but we do know that – like so many other churches in our City – Wesley Mimico and its congregation would be gone. This is a church with a social history going back over 160 years, and always one of their primary goals has been to serve the needs of the community. If Wesley Mimico closes, its role as a local institution, its historical context, its stabilizing influence, and its societal support systems, will be lost to the Mimico neighbourhood forever.

We feel that the social cost of this loss would be too high a price to pay when there is an alternative. We believe that the current church redevelopment plan strikes an acceptable balance between architectural and social heritage. It balances the congregation's need to make changes in order to continue to exist with the need to respect the building's physical heritage. The new architectural design preserves most of the physical heritage attributes, and we believe that the scale of the proposed changes is appropriate for the site.

For these reasons, the Etobicoke Historical Society supports both the designation of Wesley Mimico United Church and its redevelopment plan. We recommend that a compromise be reached so that both can occur in a timely fashion.

Denise Harris  
Heritage Officer  
Etobicoke Historical Society  
416-621-6006