

January 14th, 2024

Amanda Fusco, City Clerk
City of Kitchener 200 King Street West
P.O. Box 1118
Kitchener, ON N2G 4G7

Dear Ms. Fusco,

We have received the Notice of Intention to Designate my property at 70 Francis Street North dated December 15, 2023. Please accept this letter as notice of our objection to the proposed designation. We are opposed to the heritage designation for the following reasons.

1. **The building has been altered and does not possess the heritage value that the City's report states.** The building is now a commercial space on the main floor with 2 upper residential units and 1 unit in the basement. To accommodate this, the inside of the building has been significantly altered and an addition was put on the east side of the building, leaving little of the original characteristics intact.

Further, none of the doors are original, many windows have been replaced and/or modified and most windows have been retrofitted with storm covers that have damaged any remaining original windows and are not in keeping with the heritage attributes. The building does not possess any of the original siding, the chimney has been removed and the front porch is in disrepair and has been patched together over the years with uncharacteristic lumber and masonry to maintain safety of the tenants.

Thirdly, when we purchased the building a little over 2 years ago, I inherited an illegal basement apartment, which had both OBC and Fire Code issues. In order to rectify them, we were required to remove and board up some of the original windows and also replace one original window with a larger egress window, among other costly expenses. As a result, these original features of the building have been lost.

Therefore, the City's description of the heritage value of the house and the list of heritage attributes are largely overstated. Many of the attributes are common in many buildings across the City. As a result, we think the City's proposed designation is in error.

- 2. The costs and time delays of any future work and maintenance due to the heritage act requirements and approvals.** This building houses 3 families and a lawyer's office. When issues arise on the building, whether it be maintenance issues due to the age of the building or increasing vandalism (i.e. homeless encampment, St John's Kitchen), we are required as a responsible landlord to address these issues ASAP. We do not have the time to wait for approvals to go through the Heritage Committee to maintain a comfortable atmosphere for my tenants. We constantly have issues with trespassing, tenant harassment, and vandalism including rocks being thrown through windows. We believe a designation would hinder us from running the property the way it needs to be run and only exasperates an affordability issue. We would only be faced with increased costs (i.e higher insurance premiums, higher maintenance costs) which would directly impact rents and potentially make this building uncompetitive and unsustainable for us in the long run as a rental property.

When we purchased the property about two years ago, in the craziness of the house boom, it was done with the plan to convert the main floor commercial unit into 2 residential units when the current tenant retires, in an effort to improve our operating income and make the property more financially sustainable. The building has run extremely tight from a financial perspective and is only going to become more difficult with the pressures of rising interest rates and inflationary costs we have been experiencing. Adding units would provide rental housing for two additional families in the core, but there would have to be some adjustments made to the exterior of the building. We are concerned that the designation will result in unsustainable costs related to heritage approvals including costs due to delays, costs of retaining consultants or special contractors and potentially not allowing me to make the conversion altogether.

- 3. The resale value will certainly be impacted should the building have to be sold due to rising carrying costs.** We know the Guide to Heritage Designation says that a designation shouldn't affect property value, however I know as an investor myself, and after talking to many other investors, that few would want to invest in a multi-tenant heritage property. As discussed above, it only creates restriction, time delays and added maintenance costs, which are none of the qualities a landlord would be looking for.
- 4. Lastly, the house is no longer the grand home that it once was, and it never will be again.** We can understand the City's desire to ensure that the buildings important to our history are preserved and I also understand from the City's report that the house was once the home of an important family, which is mainly known for their success in the establishment of the Krug Furniture Co. That history is largely encapsulated in the Krug Furniture building itself, which still stands today, and therefore, the importance of the family home is less

significant, and, as discussed above, the property's status as a family home has long been removed. Further, most of Francis Street North's properties have been largely altered and/or converted to other uses and the nature of the street and its context to the ever-changing area is diminished. Due to land costs and the location in the downtown, this property will never revert back to the grand single family home that it once was.

At the same time, there is no threat that the house will be demolished. My wife and I purchased the property as long term income property that we hope to leave our children and plan to continue to run as such, provided we can continue to sustain the operating costs. We will maintain the property to ensure our tenants have a safe and comfortable place to live and work. However we feel given the amount of alterations that have been made to the street and the building, in our opinion this is not a good property for designation.

In conclusion, for the reasons stated above, we object to the proposed heritage designation of our property. We ask that you please consider our opinions and information provided above.

Sincerely,

Shane Stickel

Kassandra Stickel