

May 16, 2025

Subject: Objections to Proposed Heritage Designation of 56 Paisley Street

Dear City Council

As a young and growing family, we are deeply invested in making the 56 Paisley Street our forever home. We are writing to formally object to the proposed heritage designation of this property. While we appreciate the city's efforts to preserve historical structures, we respectfully submit that this designation would impose significant financial and practical burdens, restrict our ability to meet our family's needs, and overlook our proven dedication to preserving the property's character, informed by my professional expertise as a stonemason. Furthermore, we are disappointed that our previous attempts to engage with the city on this matter have gone unanswered.

1. **Affordability Concerns:** A heritage designation would likely mandate costly maintenance and repair standards, such as specialized materials or certified contractors, which would strain our finances as a young family. We already maintain the house diligently, but these additional expenses could make it unaffordable to continue living in and caring for our home, threatening our ability to remain not only in the home but in the neighbourhood of downtown Guelph.
2. **Restriction on Necessary Additions:** Our growing family requires additional living space to accommodate our current and future needs. We have planned an addition to the house, designed to harmonize with its historic character. A heritage designation would likely prohibit or severely limit such modifications, effectively forcing us out of our home. Without the flexibility to adapt the property, we may have no choice but to relocate and could not afford to remain in downtown Guelph, causing significant emotional and financial hardship.
3. **Responsible Stewardship and Professional Expertise:** For many years, I have worked as a stonemason, including several years with a restoration company specializing in historic stone structures of the local Guelph and Elora area. This professional experience has equipped me with extensive knowledge of preserving stone houses. My family and I have invested significant time and resources in maintaining our home's original features, ensuring its structural integrity, and preserving its historical value. Our proactive care, guided by my expertise, demonstrates that a heritage designation is unnecessary, as we are already committed to protecting the property without restrictive regulations.

We previously raised these concerns via email to two city council members, outlining our objections to the heritage designation. Regrettably, we received no response to either communication, which was deeply disappointing. This lack of acknowledgment has heightened our concern about the process and motivated us to reiterate our position through this formal objection. We hope the city will engage with us meaningfully moving forward.

In light of these concerns, we urge the city to reconsider the heritage designation of the property. This designation would impose undue financial burdens on our young family, prevent us from adapting our home to our growing needs, and disregard our demonstrated commitment to preservation. We are open to discussing alternative approaches that respect both its heritage and our practical needs as homeowners.

Thank you for considering our objection. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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