# REPORT NO. 1 of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE

of its meeting held June 1, 2011

Present:

Councillor Dilkens, Chair

Councillor Sleiman Councillor Valentinis

Absent:

Councillor Marra

**Councillor Payne** 

That the following recommendation of the Economic Development Standing Committee **BE APPROVED** as follows:

Moved by Councillor Valentinis, seconded by Councillor Sleiman
That the report from the Heritage Planner entitled "Proposed Demolition, Ernest
Wilby House, 1567 Ouellette Avenue" dated May 4, 2011 BE FORWARDED TO
COUNCIL FOR DECISION.

Carried.

<u>Clerk's Note</u>: The Report from the Heritage Planner entitled Proposed Demolition, Ernest Wilby House, 1567 Ouellette Avenue' dated May 4, 2011 is **attached** for information.

CHAIRPERSØN

DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Notification		
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Economic Development	1	
Standing Committee		
G. Koski		
G. Katz		
N. Becker	•	

#### Item No.

# THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR

# **Planning Department**



#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

"The City of Windsor, with the involvement of its citizens, will deliver effective and responsive municipal services, and will mobilize innovative community partnerships"

LiveLink REPORT #:	Report Date: May 4, 2011
Author's Name: John R. Calhoun	Date to WHC: May 11, 2011
Author's Phone: 519 255-6543 x 6179	Classification #:
Author's Email: jcalhoun@city.windsor.on.ca	

To:

Windsor Heritage Committee

Subject:

**Proposed Demolition** 

Ernest Wilby House, 1567 Ouellette Avenue

PD#

City Wide:

Ward(s): 3

# 1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Committee make one of the following recommendations:

I That there is NO OBJECTION to the proposed demolition of the Ernest Wilby House,

1567 Ouellette Avenue (Plan 358 Block 10, Lot 27 & Lot 28), which is listed in the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register under provisions of Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, because the property does not have sufficient cultural heritage interest or value to warrant designation, therefore a demolition permit may be issued upon Council decision.

II That there is **OBJECTION** to the proposed demolition of the Ernest Wilby House, 1567 Ouellette Avenue (Plan 358 Block 10, Lot 27 & Lot 28), which is listed in the Windsor



Municipal Heritage Register under provisions of Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; however, there is **NO OBJECTION** to demolition of some or all of the additions of the building west and south of the original footprint of the house; provided that the east, south, and north walls of the original house are retained, that stability of the remaining structure is assured during the partial demolition, and that the design of the areas to be exposed after demolition is satisfactory to the City Planner and the Chief Building Official; and provided that the property remains on the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register.

III That **NO ACTION** should be taken in response to the proposed demolition of the Ernest Wilby House, 1567 Ouellette Avenue (Plan358 Block 10, Lot 27 & Lot 28), which is listed in the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register under provisions of Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

IV That the Ernest Wilby House, 1567 Ouellette Avenue (Plan 358 Block 10, Lot 27 & Lot 28), which is listed in the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register under provisions of Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, should **BE DESIGNATED** for the reasons attached.

# 2. BACKGROUND:

On November 5, 2010, Mr. Mel Muroff and others, mortgagees-in-possession, contacted the Heritage Planner to request to demolish the house. He has stated his intent to file for a permit, and is willing to wait for a Council decision in January. No permit was filed for then.

In September 2010, Council added this property (and others) to the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register, under provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Mr. Muroff had been in contact with the heritage planner since early November 2010. On November 23, 2010, his representatives met onsite with the Heritage Planner, a Building Inspector and Fire Prevention Officer. The officer and inspector determined that while there were building deficiencies, those were not sufficient to require an emergency demolition.

On December 8, 2010, the Windsor Heritage Committee deferred a decision on the proposed demolition.

On December 22, 2010, three members of the Windsor Heritage Committee, including architect Simon Chamely, met on-site at the invitation of Mr. Muroff.



On January 12, 2011, the Committee recommended to City Council that the property remain on the Register, but permit the demolition of the additions (option II of the recommendations above). On March 7, 2011, Council "noted and filed" the Committee report, since no action was required before a demolition permit was applied for.

On April 8, 2011, the demolition contractor made a formal request to the Building Department to demolish the entire property. Issuance of a permit was withheld because the property is listed on the Municipal Heritage Register.

On April 13, 2011, the Committee deferred a decision on the request, after the delegation representing the mortgagees-in-possession submitted a drawing from 1964 additions which showed the footprint more than doubled in size from the original. Committee members also raised legal and procedural questions.



# **DISCUSSION:**

# **Property Description:**

The location is on the west side of Ouellette Avenue, in a long block between Shepherd Street and Hanna Street. The property extends through the short block to Pelissier Street. To the north is the former St. Paul's Anglican Church, now an architect's office. To the south are large residential buildings converted to offices.

The house at 1567 Ouellette Avenue was built in 1930. It is two-storey, in an asymmetrical Tudor Revival style, with dark red brick on the first floor and stucco on the second, and a hipped roof that is slightly flared. On the left side wall is a chimney against a gable, flanked by arched casement windows on the first floor. The shed roof of the centred porch continues over a first-storey room. (elevation photos this and first page from

The original house was L-shaped, two-and-one-half storeys, with a high east-west ridge intersecting a slightly lower north-south ridge that stopped at a chimney on the south wall. This shape is shown on the 1937 Fire Insurance Map (below), and matches interior observations of the basement and attic.

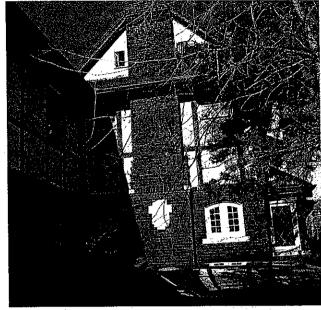
internationalmetropolis. com.)

Additions have tripled the size of this building: Drawings were obtained from the municipal archives at the Windsor Public Library for the 1964 addition for the James H. Sutton Funeral Home designed by architect W.J. Carter; the site plan submitted by the delegation on April 13 is from a different copy of the same set.

The current building is essentially the same as the 1964 changes: The rear wall was removed and extended west. The high east-west ridge was extended west, and a new hip

installed over a two-storey extension. From that extension, another north-south ridge provided for a large two-storey addition almost the width of the property. Two flat-roof, one-storey additions were added to the rear; one of these was a garage on the northwest corner. The additions continued most of the original brick patterns and the second-floor stucco.

Changes to the original house were the doors and windows and stucco: The new doors and first-floor windows have diamond panes. The second storey is indicated "install new half timber into existing stucco finish". The only other exterior changes to the original building were new front steps and a small exhaust vent on the north side.



A later addition to the west is vinyl-sided, located between the two rear additions of 1964. Also the two garage doors of the northwest addition were filled in with siding.

# Proposal:

The request is to demolish the entire house.

The mortgagees-in-possession state that they bought the property in 1989; since then they have sold it and leased it, and now have retaken possession. The property has been vacant three or more years, has dead animals inside and water leaks, it is costing money to keep it secured, it is a liability and the mortgagees-in-possession do not want to invest additional funds. There is no stated proposal for new construction.

# Legal provisions:

Demolition of a property that is listed on the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register, but not designated, requires the owner to file a notice of intent at least 60 days prior to the work, under provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act. During that time, City Council, after consulting with the Heritage Committee, may initiate designation of the property, which stops demolition through the process and/or through appeals including the Ontario Conservation Review Board. The Council could decide that there is no objection to demolition, or take no action (which would allow demolition 60 days after application).

A notice of intent to designate must include a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property. "Cultural heritage value or interest" is to be considered according to Ontario Regulation

9/06, prescribed for the purposes of clause 29 (1) (a) of the Ontario Heritage Act, Part IV [underlines for emphasis]:

- "A property may be designated under section 29 of the Act if it meets <u>one</u> or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest:
  - 1. The property has design value or physical value because it,
    - i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
    - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
    - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
  - 2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,
    - i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
    - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
    - iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
  - 3. The property has contextual value because it,
    - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
    - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
    - iii. is a landmark."

The "heritage attributes of the property" are those features that are considered important to retain if any alterations to the property are proposed after designation.

If the Committee would like to pursue designation, the cultural heritage value and the heritage attributes need to be included in the statement about the designation in the recommendation for Council's decision. Designation would identify those parts of the building important to retain. A draft "Statement of Significance" for designation is attached.

The City's Legal Department notes that a contractor may be issued a permit, including demolition, without regard to ownership. (Windsor's Building Department reviews the capacity of the contractor to perform demolition safely and completely, and checks property characteristics such as heritage or demolition-control.) Also (from the Ontario Court of Appeal), "Generally a mortgagee taking possession of the mortgaged property assumes a heavy burden to act as a prudent owner, however, there is no liability on the part of the mortgagee-in-possession to fund the maintenance and upkeep of the property beyond the income receipts to the property."

#### **Architectural Considerations:**

The house at 1567 Ouellette Avenue is a good example of the Tudor Revival style, built in 1930 with an unusual shed roof porch. Many other examples of the popular style are in Windsor, including several on the Windsor Municipal Heritage Register on Victoria Avenue and in Walkerville.

The original house may be readily differentiated from the additions shown in the attached drawings. The large two-storey addition repeated much of the styling elements of the

original, including brick dentils and stucco. The one-storey additions kept the brick (except for the later "lean-to storage" with vinyl siding), but have few windows. Although the (now) well-documented additions are 47 years old, there is no assertion that they are of heritage significance. Removal of some or all the additions would challenge a designer to use appropriate materials for newly exposed rear walls, but would minimally affect the Ouellette Avenue view of the original house.

The attached engineer's report identifies building deficiencies, and recommends demolition. However, there is no estimate of costs for possible rehabilitation, given the statement that "the base structure of the building is sound". There is no consideration of demolition of some or all the additions and enclosing the remaining building.

The heritage planner visited the interior of the property in November 2010, and observed some evidence of water damage, mostly blistered wallboard in the additions, but minimal in the original house. The flat roofs had ponds from the previous day's rain, and it was dripping through a hole left by a detached vent. Otherwise, the structure, primarily the two-storey parts, appeared level, plumb, and essentially sound. The basement under the original house was almost dry. Though there was water intrusion, there was no visible hole in roofing materials. The municipal Fire Prevention Officer and Building Inspector who also attended the November 23, 2010 site visit identified building deficiencies, but determined that they were not sufficient to require an emergency demolition.

Windsor Heritage Committee member (and architect) Simon Chamely's observations from December are attached. His summary begins "The overall structure of the original house and addition are in excellent shape with very little damage to the interior and exterior."

#### **Other Considerations:**

Committee member Andrew Foot's website internationalmetropolis.com included this information about the property: "Ernest Wilby was born in England in 1869, moving to Toronto at age 4, and retuning to England for college. He graduated college there in 1885, and came back to Canada in 1887. He worked for various firms in the Toronto area, moving to Buffalo, NY in 1895. In February, 1902 he made an important decision and moved to Detroit, MI where he met Albert Kahn. He joined Albert Kahn's office, and quickly became the Chief Designer for Albert Kahn, a position he held from 1903 – 1918. He helped design and supervise many big projects, including the Ford Factory in Highland Park and the Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. He joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1922, where he remained active as a member of the faculty of the School of Architecture until 1943. According to an article in the Windsor Star from February 20, 1946, Professor Ernest Wilby was awarded an honorary fellowship in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. The article credits Wilby as the "originator of the concrete pier and steel sash type of industrial building". The article also said that Wilby had lived in Windsor since 1930, although he is listed in the 1923 directory as well. Wilby's obituary from December, 1957, stated he died at his home at the age of 89. It also credits him with designing and building his house on Ouellette Ave. in 1930. The funeral took place beside his house at St. Paul's Anglican Church (now home to J.P. Thomson, architects), and Wilby is buried in St. Mary's Church Graveyard in Walkerville, a building he personally supervised the construction of. As part of his legacy, there is an Ernest Wilby Memorial Scholarship that has been awarded every year since 1966. Next time you drive past the old place on Ouellette, give a thought about the man who designed it, built it and died in it, and how his designs while working at Albert Kahn's helped revolutionize how industrial buildings were made."

Albert Kahn, of Detroit, was the designer of many residential and commercial buildings in Walkerville, including Willistead.

The location is on a block of Ouellette Avenue with a mix of styles, ages, types of buildings, and vacant lots and parking lots. The house at 1567 is a remnant of a street once lined with houses, although this house is more visible from the north because of the large front lawn of the former church to the north. Overall, the contextual value is modest.

If this property were to be designated, the emphasis would be on the basis of historical or associative value, for its designer and long-time resident, architect Ernest Wilby.

### Official Plan Policy:

The Windsor Official Plan includes "Council will manage heritage resources by: ... providing support and encouragement to organizations and individuals who undertake the conservation of heritage resources by private means" (9.3.6.1.e)

"Council will integrate heritage conservation into the development and infrastructure approval process by: ... utilizing the demolition control provisions of the Planning Act and the Heritage Act to assist in the protection of heritage buildings and structures" (9.3.7.1.e)

The Plan sets out criteria for designation (9.3.3.2.). In the case of the Ernest Wilby House, the following criteria are most relevant:

- "(a) the property will have been associated with the life of a person or group of persons of local, provincial, national or international importance ...;
- "(f) the property will exhibit sufficient features of architectural and/or historical value to merit designation in its present condition ..."

# 4. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Removal of the building, unless replaced, would result in lower municipal property tax revenue.

# 5. **CONSULTATIONS**:

Mr. Mel Muroff, representing the mortgagees-in-possession, has been in ongoing email contact with the Heritage Planner. Mr. Gary W. Turko, another mortgagee, met on-site with the planner, Fire Prevention Officer, and Building Inspector, with the demolition contractor, observing the physical condition of the property. Windsor Heritage Committee member (and architect) Simon Chamely visited the property and provided comments.

# 6. <u>CONCLUSION</u>:

For the property at 1567 Ouellette Avenue, the Ernest Wilby House, determine the Committee's recommendation for demolition or designation, as provided for listed heritage properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

John R. Calhoun, AICP Heritage Planner Thom Hunt, MCIP, RPP

**City Planner** 

APPENDICES: Engineering report, Valdez Engineering Ltd.

Contractor estimates, submitted by applicant

Observations by Committee member Simon Chamely

Presentation by N.K. (Norm) Becker, P.Eng.

1964 addition drawings

Possible designation Appendix A - Reasons for Designation/Statement of Significance

#### DEPARTMENTS/OTHERS CONSULTED:

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Name: Mark Mantha, Building Inspector

**Phone #:** (519) 255-6611 x 6559

Name: Wira H.D. Vendrasco, Senior Legal Counsel

**Phone #:** (519) 255-6100 x 6375

Name: Lee Anne Doyle, Chief Building Official

Phone #: (519) 255-6267 x 6444

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# VALDEZ ENGINEERING LTD.

consulting engineers 2397 walker road, windsor, ontario N8W 3P7 telephone: 519 254 2551 fax: 519 254 4823 email: valdezengineering@primus.ca

#### **MEMO**

To:

Gary Turko, Freed's of Windsor

From:

Tim Averill

Date:

October 12, 2010

Subject:

1567 OUELLETTE AVE.- CONDITION SURVEY

Project No.:

10072

INTRODUCTION Valdez Engineering Ltd. was requested to complete a condition survey and report on the existing building at 1567 Ouellette Ave., Windsor, Ontario. A visual survey was undertaken on October 7, 2010. The building is approximately 5200 square feet building area, 2 ½ storey wood framed with brick and plaster exterior walls. Originally constructed in 1930, the building has undergone numerous additions and renovations. Previous uses include residential, a funeral home, (building addition in 1964), a restaurant (1994) and a call center. The building has been unoccupied and unheated/cooled for approximately 4 years. Various components of the building will be rated to the following scale:

-excellent, -good, -fair, -poor, - extremely poor

STRUCTURAL The sloped roof wood framing was accessed from the 3rd storey attic and consisted of 2" x 6" rafters, 1" x 6" sheathing with shake roofing exposed through the sheathing. The wood rafters and hip beams were in good condition. Various flat roofs consist of wood sheathing on wood framing and where accessible were found to be in good condition. The 2 main flat roofs were solid under foot traffic. The small lean-to addition at the south-west corner of the building housing a freezer was found to be in extremely poor condition.

Exterior walls were framed with wood stud and where accessible, found to be in good condition. The original building basement foundation walls consisted of brick masonry and were found to be in good condition. The foundation walls of the south additions were not accessible, although there were no signs of distress or settlement on the exterior walls.

BUILDING ENVELOPE The sloped shingle roof was found to be in fair condition. The flat roof sections consisting of built-up asphalt and gravel roofing were found to be in fair condition. The roof over the south-west lean-to addition was found to be in extremely poor condition. The lower level masonry of the original building was found to be in poor condition with mortar deterioration and some cracked brickwork. The newer sections of exterior masonry were found to be in good condition. The upper level plaster walls of the original building were found to be in fair condition. The upper level plaster walls of the newer sections of the building were found to be in poor condition. Where accessible, exterior walls were found to consist of exterior plaster on wood or gypsum lath, insulation between wood studs and interior plaster on wood or gypsum lath. The wood windows were found to be in poor condition. The wood exterior doors were found to be in poor condition.

# 1567 OUELLETTE AVE.- CONDITION SURVEY

October 12, 2010

**EXTERIOR FINISHES** The exterior finishes varied from fair to poor condition throughout the building.

<u>INTERIOR FINISHES</u> Interior finishes throughout the building were found to have considerable water damage and mould. The interior finishes are in poor condition.

## MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL

Numerous mechanical/electrical systems have been installed in the building through the various uses. No effort was taken to ascertain the condition of the mechanical/electrical systems.

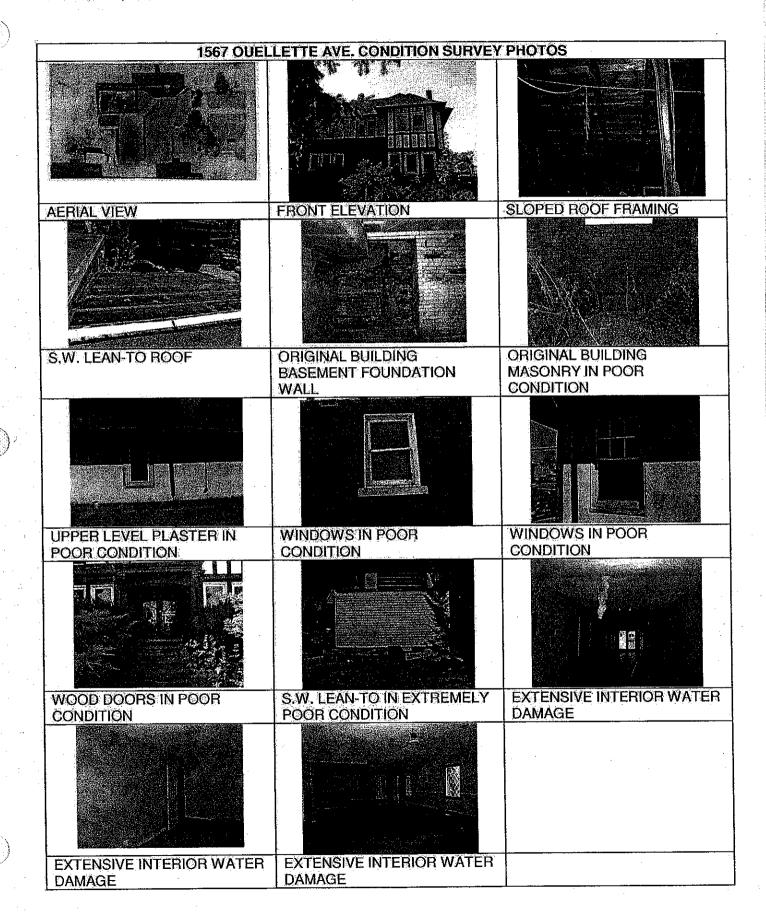
CONCLUSION While the base structure of the building is sound, the poor condition of some exterior elements and the poor condition of most interior finishes would deem the building suitable for demolition. The inclusion of the building on the City of Windsor Heritage Register requires a submission to Council and a 60 day grace period prior to issuance of a demolition permit.

VALDEZ ENGINEEERING LTD.

per H.R. Valdez, P.Eng.

# 1567 OUELLETTE AVE.- CONDITION SURVEY

October 12, 2010





Phone (519) 818-4697 Fax (519) 972-7359

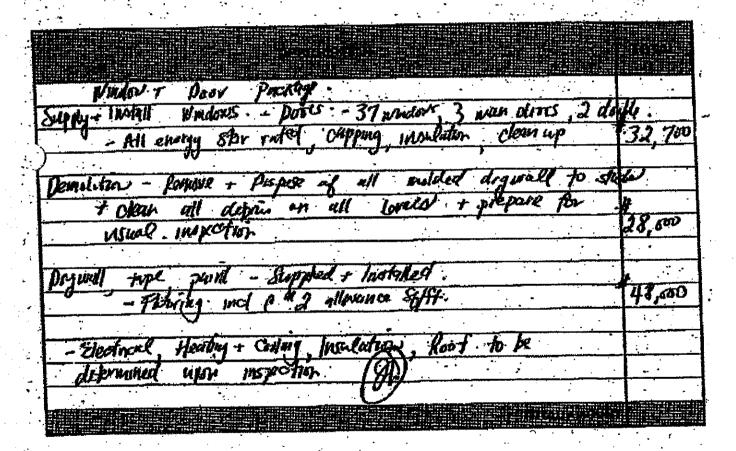
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(S Services Group Inc.

Northway Avenue x, Ortanio N98 3L9 J/1-7519 Fex 519-971-9938

3 T#854199932 Bill To:

1567 Ouelette Avenue



Number E130

Date: January 12, 2011

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Report by Simon Chamely:

# Visual Report on 1567 Quellette

The following are observations made on December 22<sup>st</sup> of 1567 Ouellette. Robin Easterbrook and Andrew Foot were also present: Emailed Photos were provided by Andrew.

Foundation: The block foundation was in very good condition with no visual cracks and no leaking. The ground water on the exterior all graded away from building and no evidence of block deterioration was found.

Framing and Brick work: The framing was excellent with no bowing of exterior walls. The internal floors appeared to be all level and in very good condition in both the original house and the addition. The brick work was again straight with no appearance of step cracking and no de-lamination of the face of the brick. Some areas needed attention with respect to re-pointing, in particular, areas where down spouts were missing or not properly attached. All of the windows appear to be original to the house and were in very good condition. No signs of interior leaking or wood rot were observed.

Roof: The main section of the roof was again in excellent condition with perfectly straight framing. Some attention needed to be paid to valleys where the two main sections of the roof join. An addition to the hip roof was observed with a slight step in the shingles at the joint. This is normal and requires no attention. The shingles were in fair condition and may last another five to ten years. The flat roof on the addition was built up roofing and difficult to see (snow covered). A section in what appeared to be an enclosed garage was leaking. The larger section of flat roof showed no signs of leaking, and seemed to be in OK condition. An estimate for the total replacement of the roof would be approximately \$20,000-\$25,000 for the shingled portion of the roof and \$35,000 - \$40.000 for the flat roof.

Interior drywall, flooring and cellings: Most of the original house had hardwood floors in fairly good condition. The addition had commercial finishing with some ceramic and some carpeting. Carpeting was worn and stained in areas and probably should be replaced. Ceramic was in good condition with no signs of cracking.

Several holes were found in the drywall throughout the house. These holes appear to be made by someone trying to investigate the structure of the wall (possibly for demolition purposes).

Most of the ceilings were commercial grade suspended 2 x 4 tiles. Some were damaged and an animal got into the upstairs bathroom and destroyed a few tiles. Quite a few of the other tiles need to be replaced. Most of the original house had plastered ceilings with some lowered with suspended ceilings. Again some tile needed to be replaced.

In summary, the interior was in fair condition and needed some attention. With ceiling tile replaced and some insulation reinstalled in areas damaged by leaking and animal damage, the interior would be ready for commercial tenancy.

My general understanding of commercial tenancy is that the tenant pays for upgrades to the interior.

Mechanical and Electrical: Power, water and Gas were turned off in the building and was difficult to assess. My history with utilities are such that when these are turned off for extended periods of time, there will always be issues when they are turned back on.

The internal furnaces (three in total) looked to be no older than ten years, and a visual inspection of these looked good, however there is no knowing if they work or not. The units on the flat roof again (possibly two) are unknown.

The plumbing in the washrooms were all copper and seemed to be in good shape. However when plumbing is turned on leaking may occur. All the bathrooms were stacked and isolated to one section of the house.

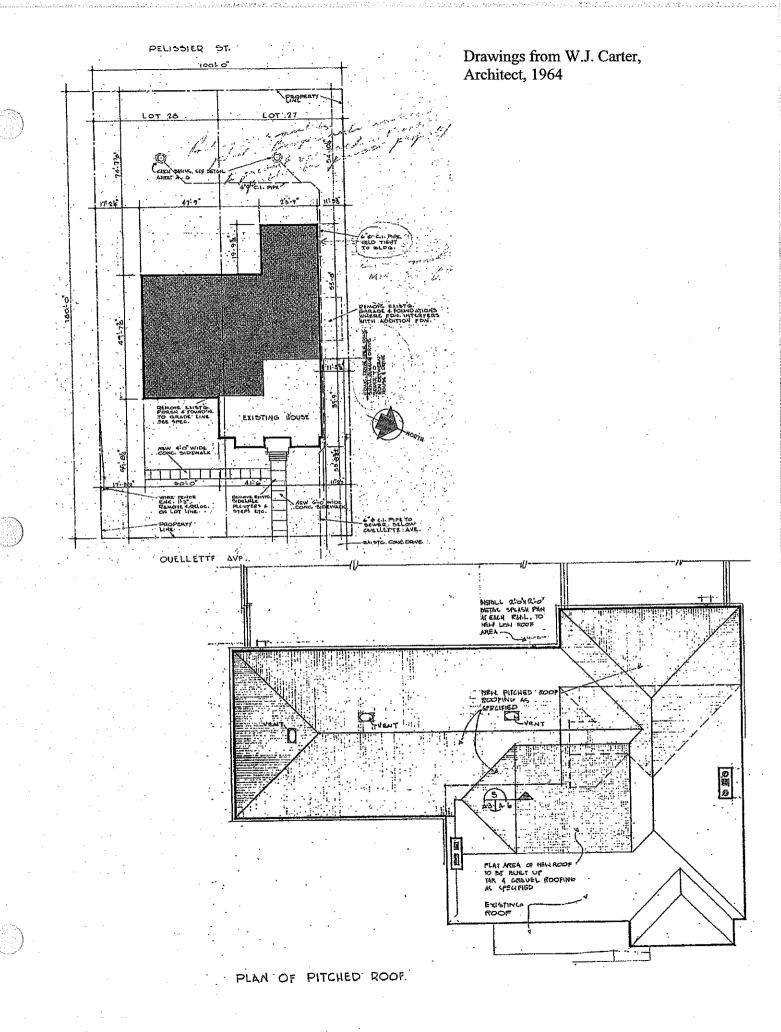
The electrical was all upgraded in the usable sections of the whole building. Some Knob and Tube wiring was found in the attic of the original structure.

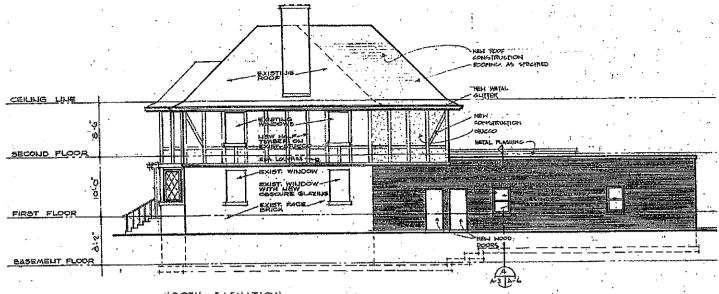
Summary: The overall structure of the original house and addition are in excellent shape with very little damage to the interior and exterior. With a proper assessment of the flat roof from a qualified roof consultant, may show that total replacement will be required or simple patching of one section is all that is needed (unknown). The mechanical will need servicing and some replacement may be required. An estimate of roughly \$10,000 - \$15,000 per unit replacement cost will give a good idea (if required). Plumbing is unknown, but seemed to be in good condition.

With the total replacement of both roofs and some spot pointing of the brick, this building can be secured for at least another twenty to thirty years. The cost of the roof replacement is approximated at \$60,000 - \$70,000.

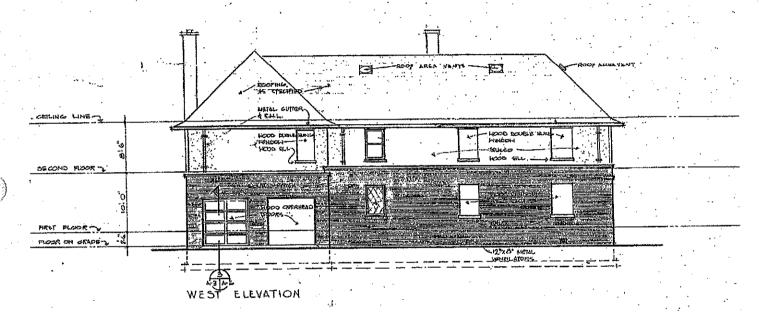
The only question is, "What do you do with the building?"

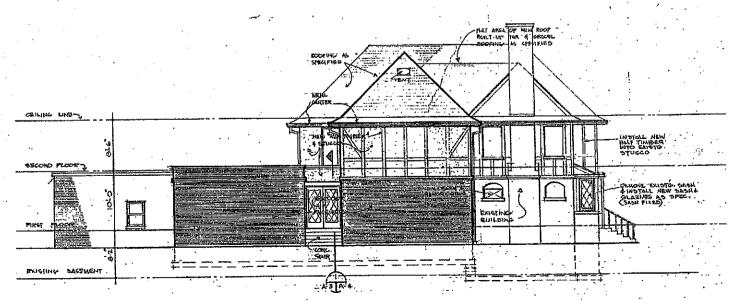
Simon Chamely



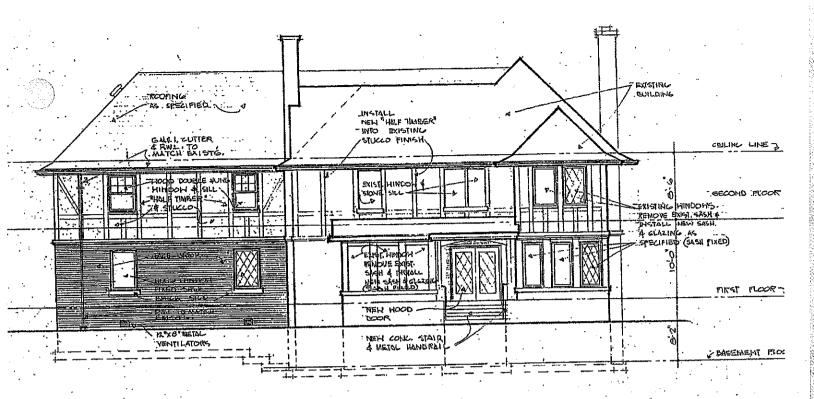


NORTH ELEVATION





SOUTH ELEVATION



"EAST ELEVATION (OUELLETTE AVE.)

# Appendix A

# Reasons for Designation / Statement of Significance Ernest Wilby House 1567 Ouellette Avenue (Plan 358 Block 10, Lot 27 & Lot 28)

# **Description of Historic Place**

The Ernest Wilby House is on the west side of Ouellette Avenue, in the middle of the block between Shepherd Street West and Hanna Street West. It is immediately south of the front lawn of the former St. Paul's Anglican Church.

# Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

#### Design or Physical Value:

The Ernest Wilby House, constructed in 1930, is a good representation of the Tudor Revival style that was popular for large and small houses in the 1920s, and well-developed by 1930. It has two-and-one-half storeys, asymmetrical, with stucco on the second floor and dark red brick on the first, with articulated brickwork on the separating band on the sides. The hipped roof is slightly flared, with exposed rafter tails under the eaves. On the left side wall is a chimney against a gable, flanked by arched casement windows on the first floor. The shed roof of the centred porch continues left over a first-storey room. Windows have cast-stone sills. The original house was L-shaped; the east, north and south walls remain visible after non-significant 1964 additions to the west and south.

#### Historical or Associative Value:

The Ernest Wilby House is associated with its designer and long-time resident, architect Ernest Wilby (1869-1957), whose industrial designs for Albert Kahn were used for large Ford and Packard automobile factories in the Detroit region. He also participated with Kahn in the design of Walkerville properties, including the "Foxley" house, and with Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson for St. Mary's Church.

Ernest Wilby was born in England in 1869, moving to Toronto at age 4 and returning to England for college. He graduated college there in 1885, and came back to Canada in 1887. He worked for various firms in the Toronto area, moving to Buffalo, NY in 1895. In February 1902 he moved to Detroit where he met Albert Kahn. He joined Albert Kahn's office, and quickly became the Chief Designer for Albert Kahn, a position he held from 1903 to 1918. He helped design and supervise many big projects, including the Ford Factory in Highland Park and the Hill Auditorium in Ann Arbor. He joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1922, where he remained active as a member of the faculty of the School of Architecture until 1943. According to an article in the Windsor Star from February 20, 1946, Professor Ernest Wilby was awarded an honorary fellowship in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. The article credits Wilby as the "originator of the concrete pier and steel sash type of industrial building". The article also said that Wilby had lived in Windsor since 1930, although he is listed in the 1923 directory as well. Wilby's obituary from December, 1957, stated he died at his home, and credits him with designing and building his house on Ouellette Avenue in 1930. The funeral took place

beside his house at St. Paul's Anglican Church (now J.P. Thomson, architects), and Wilby is buried in the graveyard at St. Mary's Church in Walkerville, a building he personally supervised the construction of.

# **Character Defining Elements**

Exterior features that contribute to the design or physical value of the Ernest Wilby House:

- o Tudor Revival style, asymmetrical.
- o Two and one-half storeys.
- o Dark red brick on the first floor, and stucco on the second.
- o Centred porch with large timber posts, and shed roof extending to the left.
- o Cast-stone window sills first-floor.
- Hipped roof with slight flare, except for gable on south side, with exposed rafters under the eaves.
- o Tall brick chimney on the south side, flanked by arched windows.
- L-shaped footprint of the original house.

#### Feature that contributes to the historical value of the Ernest Wilby House:

 Association with the architect Ernest Wilby (1869-1957), chief designer for industrial and residential architect Albert Kahn, who designed the house for himself.