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Resident seeks to turn heritage home into business

By Angela Gismondi

Property owner and long-time King resident Catherine Wellesley is looking to transform a heritage home in the King City core into a commercial property, while maintaining the existing heritage character of the home.

The property is located on west side of Keele Street, just south of King Road and is known as 12974 Keele Street. It currently houses a residential dwelling known as Crawford and Maud Wells House, which has been designated as a Heritage Site under the Ontario Heritage Act.

A public meeting was held at the Feb. 25 council meeting to discuss the matter.

Wellesley has submitted an application to amend the Township's zoning bylaw to permit commercial uses on full municipal services, within the existing historically designated structure on the subject property. The application seeks to preserve and celebrate the existing heritage building, maintaining the heritage characteristics of the structure, while proposing minimal site alterations.

Guy Bonney, agent for the applicant, said the owner is proposing to operate a commercial business with a restaurant cafe and retail shop on the ground floor of the existing one-and-a-half-storey building. The first floor will consist of a kitchen area, a seating and eating area, a retail area and a washroom. The second floor is proposed to be used for storage.

The application does not propose any additions to the structure of the building. The applicant is proposing the existing driveway entrance from Keele Street would be maintained and the driveway would be extended westward to provide for two additional parking spaces. The parking spaces are proposed to be constructed with a similar gavel material as the existing driveway.

?It is important that the building to remain a historical part of King Township,? said Bonney, adding the property has been in the family for three generations and the house itself was built in 1900. ?The owner hopes to provide a welcoming and comfortable place in a location where people can drop in for a relaxing breakfast, lunch, dinner, afternoon tea, dessert or take out. She has received many positive comments from people in King and the surrounding community.?

He added the applicant will work with staff to come up with appropriate signage for the business, which will be complementary to the community.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti said he is pleased with the proposed adaptive reuse of the property.

?This is exactly the kind of thing we want to see happen more in King City, Nobleton and Schomberg,? said Mortelliti. ?This is a very exciting further development of what seems to be happening on Keele Street.?

Councillor Debbie Schaefer echoed Mortellit's comments.

?This is a great thing to transform a heritage home into,? said Schaefer. ?I know there really is a demand for this.?

It was recommended that the application be received and referred back to staff, together with comments, for a further report. Staff will bring the report to a future committee of the whole meeting for council's consideration.