



MEMORANDUM

To: Burlington Development Review Board

From: David G. White

Date: February 28, 2021

Re: 8 Browns Court - demolition criteria

Champlain College comes before you requesting to demolish the building located at 8 Browns Court and replace it with a pocket park. 8 Browns Court is a contributing building in Battery Street-King Street Historic District, identified as building #206, constructed circa 1900. The existing 2-unit building was damaged by fire in August 2018. Subsequent analysis indicates that in its present condition it is structurally unsound and economically unfeasible for renovation.

This narrative responds to the criteria contained in Burlington's Comprehensive Development Ordinance, Section 5.4.8 (d) "Demolition of Historic Buildings".

- I) Application requirements
 - a. Report from licensed engineer or architect.
 - i. A report by Bob Neeld, President, Engineering Ventures, dated May 6, 2019 is provided.
 - b. Statement addressing applicable review standards.
 - i. This memo. See section II of this narrative, below.
 - c. Economic hardship feasibility report.
 - i. Report by David G. White, President, White + Burke Real Estate Advisors, revised February 28, 2021 is provided.
 - d. Redevelopment plan.

- i. This application includes site and landscaping plans with details for a pocket park proposed to replace the building.
- e. Other materials required for application.
 - i. The COA Level II checklist has been followed and all materials provided, except for building elevations, wall cross sections and a perspective drawing, because there will be no building.

II) Standards for review of demolition

The standards for review of demolition require that the applicant meet *one* of the following three criteria. We believe the building meets all three, as follows:

- a. The structure is structurally unsound despite ongoing efforts by the owner to properly maintain the structure.
 - i. Bob Neeld, President of Engineering Ventures, inspected the building following the fire. His report, dated May 6, 2019, concludes on the final page, “The building is not currently structurally sound due to noted roof and foundation issues”.
 - ii. Prior to the fire, Champlain College regularly maintained the building. Its condition is due to a fire, not any failure to maintain.
- b. OR –The structure cannot be reused as part of economically beneficial use of property or moved.
 - i. I personally undertook an assessment of the economic feasibility of renovating the property. In my report revised February 28, 2021, I concluded that after renovation the property would be worth a maximum of approximately \$295,000. An experienced contractor, HP Cummings, estimated (dated 1/8/20) that renovations would cost \$406,879, which is approximately 38% higher than the post-renovation value. Consequently, it is not economically feasible to renovate the property.
 - ii. With respect to moving the building, that would substantially increase the cost to renovate without adding any value.
- c. OR – The proposed redevelopment provides substantial community-wide benefit
 - i. The fire greatly diminished the value of the existing building to the community. We believe the proposed pocket park in one of the highest density areas of the City will have greater community benefit.

The standards for review of demolition require the applicant meet *all* the following criteria:

- d. The proposal mitigates to greatest extent practical impact to historic importance of adjacent properties.
 - i. Champlain proposes to replace the fire-damaged building with a pocket park. It will complement the abutting buildings and provide open space in an otherwise very dense few blocks of the City that has little open space.
- e. The applicant will document all historically important features.
 - i. Champlain College agrees to photograph all architecturally important features of the building prior to demolition.
- f. The applicant agrees to redevelop the site after demolition, with an approved plan which is:
 - i. Compatible with historic integrity, enhances architectural character of immediate area
 - 1. Champlain believes the proposed pocket park is compatible with the historic properties and enhances the character of the area.
 - ii. The proposal must include an acceptable timeframe and guarantees.
 - 1. Champlain proposes to commence construction of the pocket park immediately upon completion of the demolition, subject only to the schedules of what will likely be two different contractors (one for demo, the other for construction of the park) and winter weather which could delay construction of the pocket park until spring.
 - iii. Commencement not more than 6 months after demo
 - 1. Champlain's intent is to commence construction of the park immediately following completion of the demolition and agrees that in no event will it be delayed longer than 6 months.

III) Deconstruction: salvage and reuse of historic materials

Champlain will offer an opportunity for salvage of materials in the building to ReSource.

Let me know if you have any questions or need further information.