

Newswest
September 9, 2010

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On September 28, the Planning and Environment Committee is scheduled to consider Ashcroft's application for the redevelopment of the Soeur de la Visitation Convent site. While much has happened since Ashcroft first purchased this property last year, we still don't know what Council will approve for this site. The meeting is scheduled for 9:30am at the Champlain Room at City Hall.

Ashcroft submitted its development proposal to the City in March and comments were requested from the public. In early-Spring, the entire site received heritage designation. Ashcroft is appealing this decision to the Heritage Conservation Review Board. Ashcroft does not wish to see the entire site receive heritage designation as this could limit the amount of development allowed.

In May, the City struck a Design Review Committee composed of three outside experts. Ashcroft has modified their proposal based on the recommendations of this committee. Ashcroft is now proposing to build a nine storey building right across Richmond Road but with two entrances. The building previously abutting the south side of the convent is to be moved slightly, allowing for better site lines to the convent and its courtyard garden. That being said, Ashcroft has not substantially changed either the number of units or the height of the buildings being proposed. Due to the number of units they wish to build, Ashcroft continues to seek an access road through Bryon Park.

The Secondary Plan put together by the community and passed by Council, strongly endorses intensification for the Convent site, but said that heights along Richmond Road should be four to six stories and heights along the back of the property should be a maximum of four stories. There was no recommendation that public parkland be turned into an access road to allow for over intensification.

The only discussion that Ashcroft has had with the community since its last public meeting in March has been with respect to the adaptive use of the convent building. Ashcroft has not yet made any firm commitments nor have they indicated how much of their own funding that they are prepared to provide for the conversion.

While Councillor Leadman is not supportive of the level of density or heights being proposed, we do not know what recommendations City staff will be making or how the rest of council will vote.

It is important the community let the Planning Committee and Council know their views on the proposed development in writing and/or in person on September 28. More details on the development and the process can be found at our website www.hamptoniona.ca.