

FRIENDS OF THE BRADLEY-CRAIG FARM

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF BRADLEY-CRAIG FARMSTEAD ON HAZELDEAN ROAD

A BRIEF FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE • JANUARY 26, 2016



Photo by Barry Gray

A LETTER FROM GEORGE DARK

Having grown up in rural southern Ontario I see the very special architectural character of this early barn. It is so much larger and complex than a standard farm barn. The originators must have been very successful in their time.

Can they be adaptively reused? Of course, the examples are many and you have some excellent ones in the brief. Adaptively reused heritage buildings become special moments in an urban environment.

As Chairman of the Evergreen Foundation our Brickworks project turned an abandoned condemned brick factory into one of North America's leading environmental community activity centres and event venue. Today it holds a special place with Torontonians, a large role in tourism and the economy of the city. Celebrating rural life can be very successful commercially; look at the St. Jacobs Farmers' Market.

Generally suburban commercial developments obliterate their context, replacing it with car-centric single purpose land use based on retail. This has long been recognized as their terminal flaw, one they pass on to their communities, "The Geography of Nowhere" as the famous book describes.

To me, not trying to capitalize on this as *a resource*, rather than a problem, is a miss.

George F Dark

FCSLA FASLA OALA

Managing Partner Urban Strategies Inc

Chairman Emeritus Evergreen Foundation Canada

"Adaptively reused heritage buildings become special moments in an urban environment."

INTRODUCTION

It is inappropriate for Planning Committee and City Council to allow demolition and relocation of the Bradley-Craig barn. We are asking councillors to reject the demolition proposal and encourage the proponent to:

- work to identify a suitable and feasible adaptive re-use that keeps the landmark Bradley-Craig Farmstead — including the barn and farmhouse — intact on Hazeldean Road;
- take advantage of the community's offer to assist in this task if desired.

In December 2015, Ottawa's Built Heritage Sub-Committee (BHSC) considered a proposal from Richcraft to dismantle the Bradley-Craig barn and move it from Hazeldean Road in Stittsville to Saunders Farm in Munster.

At the BHSC meeting, the committee heard from City staff that under Ottawa's Official Plan, demolition of a heritage building can only be allowed if the proponent can "*demonstrate that the rehabilitation and reuse of the property is not viable*".

City staff stated in their report: "*The application does not demonstrate that demolition and relocation is the only viable option for this building. At the time of designation, heritage staff conducted research on the adaptive reuse of large dairy barns to show that this was a realistic alternative and provided this research to the applicant to assist in the reuse of this barn. There is no evidence that the applicant has seriously explored other options.*"

This lack of due diligence to explore other options was made clear at the BHSC meeting. Committee members repeatedly asked the proponent to explain why adaptive re-use is not a viable option.

When the Bradley-Craig barn received heritage designation in 2010, Council based that decision in large part for the barn's contextual value which is expressed through its "*location and association with the farmhouse.*" City staff have concluded that: "*Moving the barn to a farm-inspired tourist attraction will neither improve its heritage value, nor allow its history within the context of Goulbourn Township to be fully understood.*"

"I do think it's fair to ask landowners of designated buildings to think hard and creatively. To raise the bar on how we're going to manage a very important priority for us in recognizing the extremely important rural history of this area."

—Councillor Tobi Nussbaum, Chair, Built Heritage Sub-Committee



Photo by Barry Gray

WHO WE ARE

We are taxpayers, voters, residents and neighbours who are working to keep the heritage Bradley-Craig Farmstead intact on Hazeldean Road. We have support from local organizations including:

- Stittsville Village Association
- Heritage Ottawa
- Ottawa Farmers' Market
- Federation of Community Associations
- Fairwinds Community Association
- Goulbourn Historical Society

Participants include people from a variety of wards, including a descendant of the Bradley family. We have sought advice from architects, planning professionals and heritage experts. We have engaged **MTBA Associates Inc. Architecture Urbanism Conservation.**

The principal, Mark Brandt, has reviewed and advised us on this document.

OUR VISION

Since 1873, the Bradley-Craig barn and farmhouse have been important landmarks along Hazeldean Road in what's now known as Stittsville.

Our basic vision is to keep the landmark Bradley-Craig Farmstead — including both the farmhouse and barn — intact at the current location on Hazeldean Road. We hope to see the heritage buildings adapted for modern re-use as an autonomous, self-sufficient or partnered commercial and/or community facility. The buildings would be a vibrant and integral enhancement to the mixed used development planned for the Fernbank lands, an anchor for the new growing community, and a benefit to surrounding commercial development.

The farmstead is a beacon, both figuratively and literally. The barn presents a magnetic opportunity to establish a “sense of place” for the emerging Fernbank Community as well as the broader area including Stittsville, Kanata and Ottawa. This will in turn benefit the commercial interests developing in the surrounding lands. The buildings connect the rural past to the present, and can look ahead to the future.

We believe that the proponent has the responsibility and resources to take on this project themselves, but as a community we are willing to step up and provide assistance to identify and evaluate viable commercial and/or community uses for the barn (and the farmhouse if appropriate).

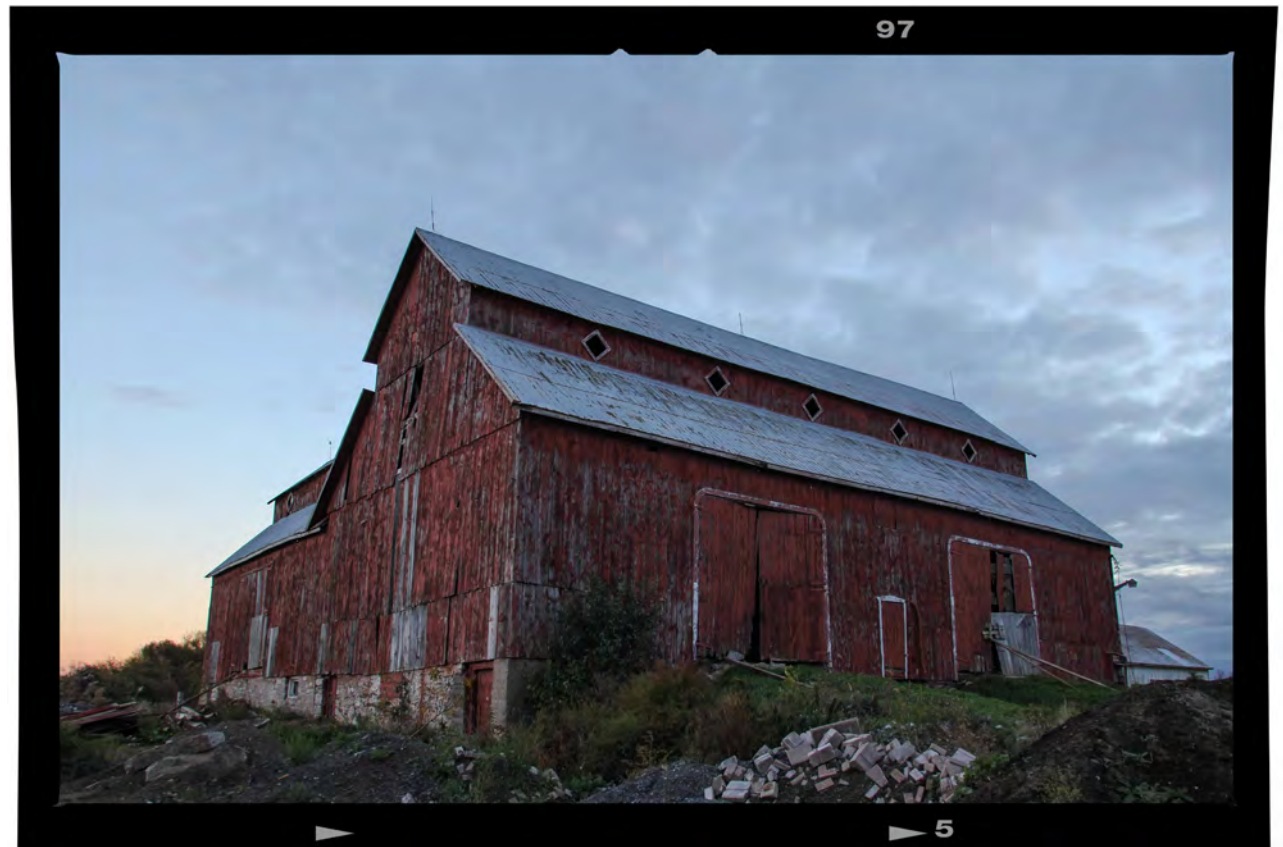


Photo by Barry Gray

POTENTIAL ADAPTIVE USES

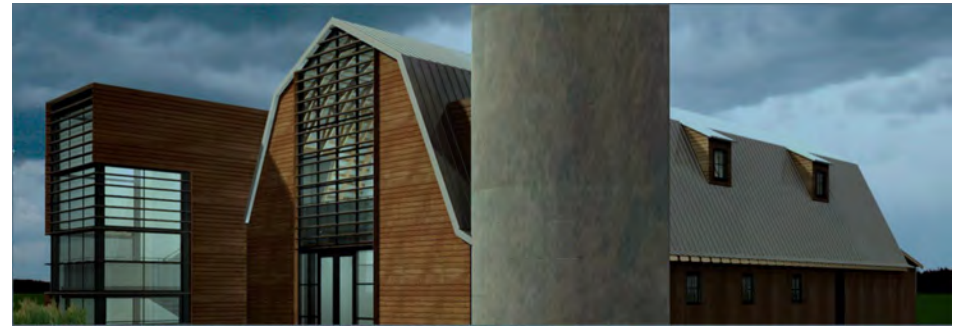
Despite some deterioration to the outer wood siding on the barn, the structural components are in very good condition. This is significant because the healthy structural integrity will reduce the cost and allow for more flexibility in adaptive re-use options.

What would it cost to renovate? According to experts, it depends on the design. A simple adaptation that keeps the barn basically intact “as is” with basic cosmetic fixes and servicing could be in the range of \$1-million, depending on features. A more extensive modern renovation could be up to \$10-million, depending on features. It’s important to put that number into context; the cost to dismantle, ship and re-assemble the barn in Munster would easily be \$1-million or more, and the cost to erect a new commercial building of similar size would be in the millions.

What kind of businesses would be interested? We have already heard from several organizations who would be interested in the farmstead, including the Ottawa Farmers’ Market and various entrepreneurs, such as restaurateurs and event planners. It’s easy to imagine a modern adaptation that would be extremely attractive for a range of retail and professional uses. In other communities, adapted buildings have become hubs for creative businesses, becoming the “soul” of a community, and anchors of the local business scene.



Rempel Development Group, a company based in Abbotsford, B.C., has converted the historic Bose Farm, built in 1936 into a community centre, the centrepiece of a townhouse project.



Loudoun Country Day School (Leesburg, Virginia). This concept design converts a former dairy barn into a 156-seat performance hall for school and community cultural, theatrical, and musical events. The design intent preserves the basic structure of the original barn without the environmental waste of demolition and new construction.



Sheila Johnson Design Centre (Morrisville, New York). The silhouette of the former dairy barn is now framed in steel and glass to capture the ideal northern light. Green features have been incorporated throughout.



This historic gambrel barn in Connecticut was re-designed with polished concrete floors, exposed maple framing, and custom woodwork. Used as a living space, it’s easy to see this idea adapted for a modern professional building.



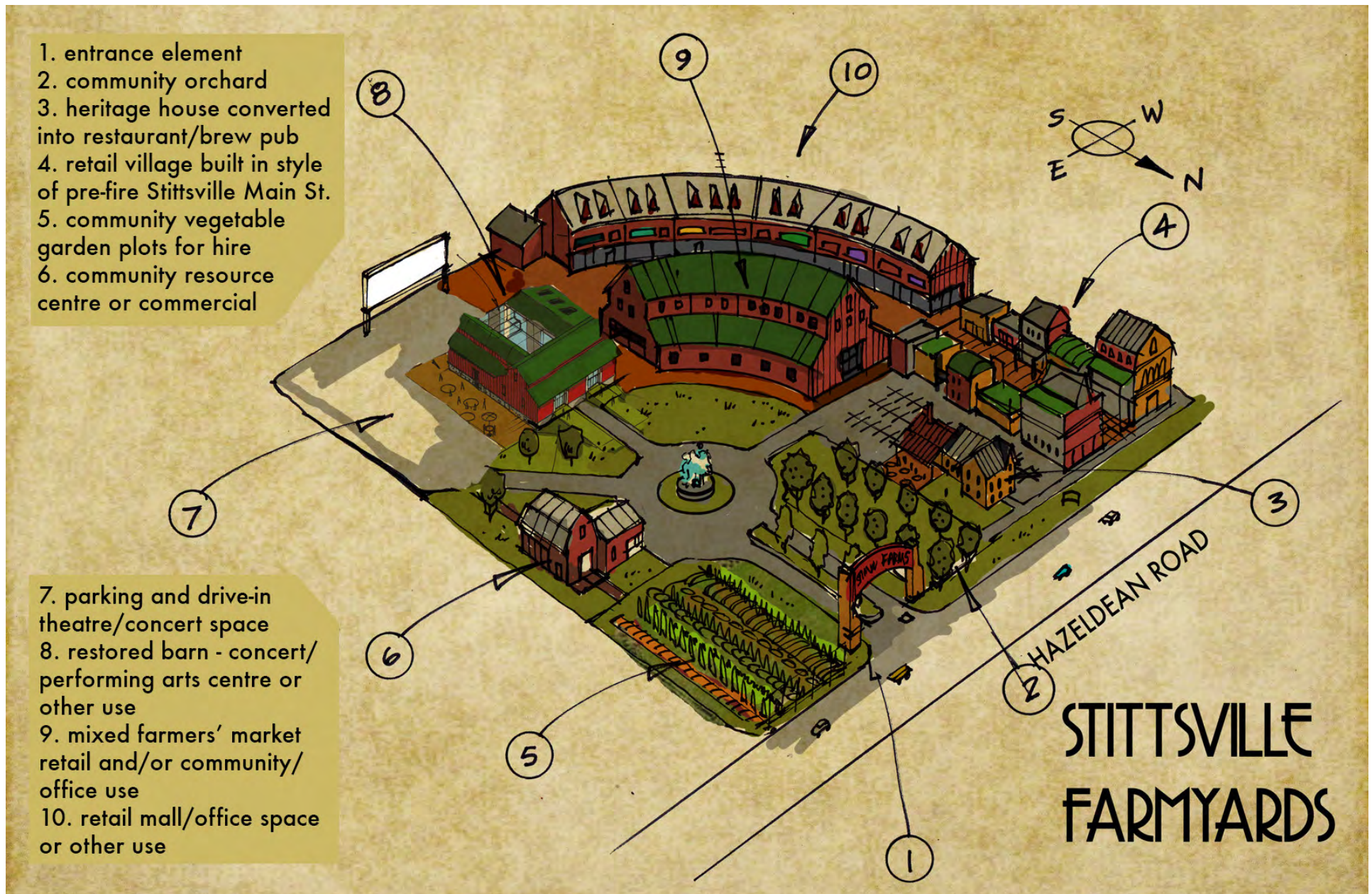
Garvey Farm (Michigan) is an award-winning adaptation of a late 19th century barn, used as a wedding and event venue.



The Barn at Fallingwater (Pennsylvania) is an adaptive reuse of a 19th century barn. It includes a meeting centre and office space, and is the gateway to a conservation area.



Closson Chase Vineyards (Prince Edward County, Ontario). This century barn was renovated in 2002 into a new winery with a barrel room, tasting room, and staff facilities. It's one of many examples of adaptive uses of barns for agriculture and tourism in the area.



Ottawa artist **Andrew King** contributed this reimagining of the farmstead. "All too often a suburban space is developed without much respect for the history of the land," he writes. "A bit Utopian but I figure dream big first then go from there... Maybe the community can harness their rural roots with a unique space everyone can enjoy and appreciate." The subject barn is #8 in the illustration. Overall, this is just one of many possible inspirational ideas about how to develop the barn and larger property for profit and community gain. A unique and character "destination" model for the property and barn will also add to the value of surrounding commercial and residential development.

The wide range of potential tenants and uses needs to be explored and evaluated to better understand the range of appropriate and viable design options. There are numerous examples of successful adaptive re-use projects involving barns and similar structures throughout Canada.

Creative funding models: As one of Ottawa's largest developers, we believe that the proponent should have the resources to undertake an adaptive re-use project on their own. There are grants available at the federal, provincial and municipal levels that would offset some of the renovation costs. If appropriate or desired, the community is open to establishing a partnership, which could open the door for additional funding sources not available to a private corporation alone.

Q&A / DISCUSSION

Q. What condition is the barn in now?

A. By all accounts, the barn is in good shape structurally, which is one of the most important factors in successful adaptive re-use. The most recent formal inspection that we are aware of was done in 2010 by a professional structural engineer and found no major concerns. The owner has implemented an ongoing maintenance program since that inspection. (*Commonwealth Cultural Heritage Impact Statement, 2015.*)

In January 2015, Councillor Qadri told the Goulbourn Historical Society: "It is solid. The outside boards are deteriorating but the inside structure is very solid." (*StittsvilleCentral.ca, January 24, 2015.*)

Since the barn has heritage designation, it's incumbent upon the owner to continue to maintain it. Ottawa's Property Standards By-Law requires that the owners of heritage buildings maintain the building, including heritage features like doors or windows, as well as structural elements like the roof, foundation, and support beams.

The very fact that Saunders Farm is confident the barn can be broken down, moved and re-built in Munster suggests that the structure and materials are in good shape!

Q. Other heritage buildings have been relocated, like the March House in Kanata. How is this any different?

A. The March House was moved just a few metres from its original location to facilitate road widening. In this case, the proposal is to move Bradley-Craig barn 20 kilometres away to a different community in a separate ward. It is never desirable to relocate heritage buildings, and the City's heritage staff has clearly outlined that the proponent in this case has not met the minimum requirements that would allow relocation. **Moving of the March House (or any other heritage building) cannot be considered a "precedent" for allowing a relocation of the Bradley-Craig barn.**

Q. In its location on Hazeldean Road, isn't the barn in danger of vandalism or damage from construction activity?

A. It's been a decade since the barn has been used for agriculture, but we are not aware of any vandalism incidents during that time. Vandalism is often a problem at buildings that are secluded, but that's not the case in this highly visible location on Hazeldean Road. If vandalism and trespassing are concerns, then it's the responsibility of the owner to take appropriate measures as required under City by-laws. We don't believe vandalism is a sufficient concern to warrant relocation.

As for construction activity, it is the owner's responsibility to protect the farm from damage. There are plenty of examples where sensitive heritage structures have been protected during construction and renovations.

Q. Wouldn't it be better off at Saunders Farm?

A. There is no doubt that the Saunders family would be good stewards of the building, but moving it to Munster would be an immense loss for Stittsville. What's more, it's highly unlikely that the barn would be eligible for heritage protection at Saunders Farm, since the location of the barn on the Bradley-Craig Farmstead on Hazeldean Road is integral to its historic value and heritage designation. It's also unclear if the Bradley-Craig farmhouse would continue to qualify for heritage protection if the barn is removed.

Q. Heritage designation was added to the farmstead after Richcraft bought the property. How is that fair to the owner?

A. Richcraft should have been well aware of the potential of heritage designation. The property was on the former City of Kanata's heritage registry prior to 2000. Richcraft bought the land in 2005. There have been no appeals of the designation since it was approved by Ottawa City Council in 2010. The proponent has stated several times since designation that they are committed to including the farmstead in their Fernbank subdivision plans.

Q. Isn't it going to cost taxpayers a lot of money to upgrade the barn?

A. No, not a cent, because it's the owner's responsibility to care for the barn. The only taxpayer money involved would be to enforce the Property Standards By-Law, if required, or as part of the existing municipal heritage grants program.

Q. Was relocation of the farm contemplated as part of the Fernbank Community Design Plan Process?

A. The Fernbank Community Design plan, approved by City Council in 2009, always included the historic Bradley-Craig Farmstead as part of the new Fernbank community. The Fernbank CDP does state: *"The existing heritage structure should be incorporated into the development or relocated within the community."* During discussions on the Fernbank CDP, the relocation being considered was to a central community park within the Fernbank lands. "Community" in this case clearly means the Fernbank community, not the broader Ottawa community. (Also, any discussion on relocation within the Fernbank community occurred before the Bradley-Craig Farm received heritage designation in 2010.)

In January 2015, Richcraft's Kevin Yemm was quoted as saying that "We hope to find a way to integrate the buildings into the planned mixed use function as outlined in the Fernbank CDP." (*StittsvilleCentral.ca*, January 24, 2015.)

Q. Wouldn't a heritage barn be out of place in a modern commercial mixed-used development?

A. Definitely not! The examples we've highlighted above show the range of adaptive re-uses that are possible. Saying that a heritage building would be out of place within a commercial development ignores the benefit that heritage buildings provide to the character of our city. The Keg House Manor in Westboro or the Aberdeen Pavilion at Lansdowne Park could be considered "out of place" next to modern buildings, but in fact in both cases they elevate the value of the neighbourhoods around them. The same is possible with the Bradley-Craig Farmstead, with just a little motivation, creativity and locally available expertise.

Instead of *"how can the barn fit into the new retail development"*, councillors should be asking *"how can the new development fit in with the barn"*?



Photo by Liz Hall

SUMMARY

Does suburban development always have to be about erasing history, bulldozing everything, and starting from scratch?

It's true that no-one can "force" the developer to find an adaptive re-use for the Bradley-Craig farm. However, councillors certainly do have the ability to negotiate, cajole, encourage and otherwise ensure that heritage designation is respected, and to raise the bar on suburban development in our city. More importantly, there are many precedents showing that the added value of a large, solid historic barn to the overall surrounding commercial or community development value provides the justification for its rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Richcraft is a good corporate citizen in Ottawa and has contributed to community infrastructure and causes. We would hope that they see this as an opportunity to further enhance life in our city.

The farm has been a landmark on Hazeldean Road for nearly 150 years. Rejecting the demolition proposal will allow this heritage and architectural treasure to remain an asset for years to come.



*Bradley-Craig farmhouse, circa 1900.
Courtesy of the Goulbourn Historical Society Archives*

THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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