



REPORT TO

CORPORATE SERVICES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

SENATOR O'CONNOR ESTATE BUILDING UPDATE

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
John 13:34-35 NIV

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
February 21, 2020	March 12, 2020	Click here to enter a date.
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INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the April 11, 2019 Corporate Services Committee meeting, the Board directed staff to reach out to representatives of the O'Connor Irish Heritage House (OCHH) to determine what kind of partnership would be feasible going forward for their use of the Senator O'Connor Estate Building located at Senator O'Connor College School.

The Board recognizes that OCHH was a valued partner in the restoration of the Senator O'Connor Estate Buildings. While the former OCHH Chair is a firm believer in the preservation of the legacy of Frank O'Connor, given that the organization has formally dissolved as a not for profit organization, this former organization has no interest in taking an active role in coordinating programs for the space. Any future endeavours would be the sole responsibility of the TCDSB.

TCDSB will continue to maintain the facility and address any outstanding issues going forward, and staff will continue to explore partnership opportunities for the appropriate utilization of the space.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 6 hours

B. BACKGROUND

1. ***TCDSB investigated several options for the Senator O'Connor Estate Buildings.*** In 2004, the TCDSB investigated alternatives for the Senator O'Connor Estate Buildings, located on the grounds of Senator O'Connor College School, including demolition. In 2005, a group of Irish-affiliated organizations approached the Board and requested time to establish a proposal to renovate the Estate Buildings, garner community support and initiate fund raising efforts.
2. ***The TCDSB entered into a lease with OCHH for the Estate Buildings.*** This culminated in the Board executing a lease with the O'Connor Irish Heritage House Inc. (OCHH) dated June 16, 2010, for the entire Estate Building. The intent of the Lease was that it would be completely carefree to the TCDSB as the Landlord. There were two subsequent Lease Amending Agreements.

3. ***The two parties entered into a Letter Operating Agreement Plan in 2015, which included the removal of the \$2.65 million OCHH capital repayment.*** On July 8, 2015, the Board and OCHH entered into a Letter Agreement Operating Plan, which reflected the June 5, 2014 Board resolution that OCHH was no longer obligated for the \$2.65 million capital repayment as per the Lease Agreement. TCDSB did not seek any payments from OCHH for periods when they did not occupy the facility.
4. ***The Estate House was closed due to water infiltration issues beyond the TCDSB's control for two periods with no access for safety reasons.*** Since taking occupancy, OCHH had limited access to its exclusive space due to issues beyond the Board's control. As a result of extensive water infiltration, the Estate House was closed for repair/reconstruction, with no access for safety reasons for two periods: September 20, 2016 to February 6, 2017, and August 2017 to June 18, 2018.
5. ***OCHH informed the Board that it was dissolving the Corporation.*** On January 14, 2019, the TCDSB received communication from the OCHH Board advising that, due to financial difficulties, it was dissolving the Corporation and its charitable status, and as such, not pursuing renewal of their agreement with the Board upon its expiry on January 31, 2019.
6. ***At the April 11, 2019 Corporate Services Committee meeting, the Board directed staff to reach out to OCHH to discuss what kind of partnership would be feasible going forward for their use of the Senator O'Connor Estate building.***

C. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. ***As per the Board direction, staff engaged in discussions with the former OCHH Chair to discuss a potential renewed partnership with the organization that would be beneficial to both parties.*** Staff were seeking to gather interest in the re-activation of the Senator O'Connor Estate Buildings through OCHH charity initiatives whereby TCDSB would provide support where possible.

2. ***Many suggestions were offered for the activation of the Senator O'Connor Estate Buildings.*** These included Doors Open Toronto, cultural community events, town halls, community rate payer's meetings and Senator O'Connor Alumni group gatherings were recommendations that came up from the brainstorm discussion with the former OCHH Chair.
3. ***Staff have expressed a desire to work with OCHH to support the organization's objectives, however any future endeavours related to preserving the legacy would be the responsibility of the TCDSB.*** The Board recognizes that OCHH was a valued partner in the restoration of the Senator O'Connor Estate Buildings. While the former OCHH Chair is a firm believer in the preservation of the legacy of Frank O'Connor, given that the organization has formally dissolved as a not for profit organization, the former organization has no interest in taking an active role in coordinating programs for the space and indicated that the TCDSB would be solely responsible for this endeavour.
4. ***The Senator O'Connor Estate buildings have undergone extensive repairs and renovations since 2016.*** The following are some of the issues which have been addressed:

Coach House

- restored cupola and new cedar roof shingles
- new front entrance
- conversion of the first floor into two separate classrooms with a removable partition

Estate House

- Mould remediation
- Repairs completed to deteriorated masonry
- Roof replacement
- New main entrance
- Exterior portico restored and columns rebuilt
- Renovated classrooms on the first floor
- New functional kitchen installed
- Enclosed lift with three stops
- Attic has been insulated and a mechanical room created
- Basement has received new waterproofing treatment
- Downspouts have been extended to pull water away from the foundation wall by 6-8 feet

5. ***TCDSB will continue to maintain the facility and address any outstanding issues going forward.*** Portions of the Estate/Coach House have been used by the school as classroom space, have been subject to continued maintenance work by the Board and been kept in good condition, The Board will continue the ongoing maintenance of the buildings to ensure that they remain in compliance with appropriate educational safety and heritage standards. Items that have been flagged as high priority include the following:
- Repair/replacement of badly deteriorated column
 - Exterior wood trim in need of painting
 - Several locations where masonry still requires repair
 - Copper gutters to be re-fastened to the structure
 - Balcony to be repaired
 - Some interior walls to be replaced/repared as a result of water damage
 - Ongoing monitoring of water infiltration
6. ***TCDSB will continue to explore partnership opportunities for the appropriate utilization of the space.*** Staff will attempt to utilize the O'Connor Estate Heritage buildings by providing permits through the Community Use of Schools department as well as making the facilities available through the Community Partnerships and Planning Policy.

D. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.