

# EXISTING BUILDINGS SAFE FOR OCCUPANCY, SAYS COUNCILLOR

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do? I love what I do and I can't move anywhere else. I'm too old."

Wynhofen, who moved to Stoney Creek with late husband Bill in 1953 after emigrating from Holland, said she's seen many changes since then, both to her once "lovely, lovely little town" and her business.

Customers now favour black frames over gilded ones, while the market for watercolour paintings and limited-edition prints has dried up, even if she doesn't lament the latter, preferring originals to copies.

But Wynhofen said the 2015 reconstruction of King Street was the downtown's biggest blow, albeit not so much for her shop.

"For most people, it was a struggle after that. I already had my clientele and it didn't matter; they could come in the back door," she said. "But actually, it didn't even matter to me. I just wanted to be here. I love being here. This is my whole life."

While Wynhofen has already put notices in her shop's window thanking customers for their patronage, two doors down the street Tina Fougere is in a fighting mood.

The volunteer president and founder of the Canadian National Autism Foundation said she believes the short eviction notice violates the rights of residen-



Richard Leitner/Metroland

A redevelopment plan submitted to the city by the new owners of the block of buildings sold by Britannia Cleaners when it closed in 2018 seeks to exceed a maximum building height of 22 metres by 5.4 metres.

tial tenants in the buildings, even if shops are legally out of luck.

Fougere moved the foundation's upstairs office to the current storefront location in January

2021 after the former McGee's Landing gift shop closed.

Her lease is month to month, so only requires a month's notice, but she's upset tenants haven't been

told why there's a rush to clear the buildings, which makes her suspect there's a plan to find new tenants at higher rents.

Fougere also objects to the plan for an eight-storey

building, which she said is out of place with the area.

It also ignores the heritage value of the existing buildings, she said, including the one at the corner of Mountain Avenue North

popularly known as the Millen store, believed to have been built in the early 1790s.

"Even if we get evicted, I'm OK with that. But don't tear it down. Fix it up. But nobody wants to listen, nobody cares," she said, blaming the city as much as the owner.

"Hamilton's known as the teardown place."

Asked for comment, Nick Goomber of owner KSE Holdings Inc. said via email he will "prepare a response this coming week."

Ward 5 Coun. Russ Powers, who represents the area, said he is trying to get in touch with KSE because the redevelopment proposal, which exceeds a maximum building height of 22 metres by 5.4 metres, has yet to go through a required public process.

"It's a way off, in my opinion," he said, adding the existing buildings are safe for occupancy and can't be demolished until any redevelopment is approved.

"You can see why (tenants) are upset about being displaced from a location that a number of them have been for quite a long time, including the residents."

*STORY BEHIND THE STORY: We interviewed Joanne Wynhofen about the pending closure of her shop and found out there was much more to the story.*

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