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Dear Mayor and City Council,

The Frontenac Heritage Foundation (FHF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the retention and conservation of heritage buildings in the Kingston area.

The St. Helen's Complex, currently for sale by the federal government, is a historic and significant collection of buildings. Of note is the main building (St Helen's), a two-storey, yellow stucco, picturesque regency-style building built in 1837 for the first mayor of Kingston (Thomas Kirkpatrick); and Stone Gables, a Tudor revival-style building constructed in 1924, recognized for its steep gable roof, prominent gable chimneys, hipped dormer windows, stonework, and (former) lake front setting. The historic value of Stone Gables is associated with the federal government's presence in Kingston. The property is also associated with Thomas Kirkpatrick and James Morton, both of whom were prominent figures in early history of Kingston and Canada. Other buildings on site include the Red Cross Lodge and the Grant House, both unique and worthy of celebration and retention.

The FHF strongly recommends that the government bodies dealing with the sale of St. Helen's Complex ensure that any purchase of sale agreement protect and retain the character-defining elements of all the heritage buildings on site, including the retention of landscape settings which further emphasize and add to the character of each structure. We note that the complex is covered by City by-laws under the Ontario Heritage Act, which will come into effect when the property changes hands. We strongly recommend that the by-laws be enforced.

The following character-defining elements of 1924 Stone Gables should be protected especially as it is prominent and a key landmark on King Street West:

- The two-and-a-half storey rectangular massing with a steeply pitched gable roof and hipped roof dormers;
- The prominent gable end chimneys;
- The exterior walls of irregularly coursed stonework;
- The arrangement of window groups and arched doorways.

With respect to St. Helen's (main building), it is one of the finest examples of picturesque regency architecture in Canada. This is reflected by its stuccoed surfaces, large centrally placed chimneys, and contrasting window sizes. The layout of the building exemplifies the residential planning trends popular in the regency period, including the building's symmetry and its relationship between public and private spaces. Respect should be given to retain the building's symmetry and its setting in the landscape of this complex.

Grant House, constructed in 1830, is a familiar site to those visiting the Isabel Bader and Tett Centre complex. This two-storey structure of well-dressed stone is in sad repair and it is a very good example of neoclassical vernacular architecture. It features a one-storey elevation on the front façade facing King Street West, and a two-storey height at the rear south-facing façade. This building is an example of an aesthetic that was used frequently in Ontario in the 19th century. Key elements of this style of building need to be retained and celebrated.

The Red Cross Lodge, built in 1838, is a simple, classically-inspired brick building with a hipped roof set into the grade of a hill fronting Lake Ontario. The building is distinguished by large round arched windows, pilasters, and tall chimneys. The building's location determines its worth and purpose.

The St Helen's Complex is a wonderful collection of historic and period-style buildings—each exemplary in their designs. These architectural gems, carefully set in their landscape settings, have made this complex a unique community entity since its origins. It is hoped that the overall value of the complex as a complete entity, with setting and structures, is respected.

The Frontenac Heritage Foundation supports the heritage value of this complex and its value to the Kingston community. We have read the letter submitted by the Sydenham District Association and support their comments and concerns.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by Kristine Hebert*

Kristine Hebert,  
President, Frontenac Heritage Foundation

Cc: Mark Gerretsen, MP