



The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society

(Founded in 1996)

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Re. Pillars on Sanatorium Road

Dear Councillor Whitehead:

The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society was formed in 1996 with the objectives of increasing public awareness and appreciation of local heritage, collecting and preserving documentary evidence relating to the Mountain and advocating for the preservation of the built heritage of the Hamilton Mountain.

Recently a Mountain resident contacted the Society about the pillars on Sanatorium Road across from the now-vacant Sanatorium. He was concerned the state of disrepair the pillars were in and the possible loss of the landmarks if they were not tended to. He had made several attempts to contact the City with no results but his personal frustration. We are now taking up the cause, with thanks to him for bringing it to our attention.

I am attaching a document that contains an article about the pillars which was published in the latest edition of the Bailey's Bulletin, our Society's newsletter. Aptly named 'The Story of the Pillars', it explains the history of the pillars, has a recent photo of them and a map showing their location.

The Executive members of the HMHS have requested that I contact you, as councillor for Ward 8, to make you aware of the situation and to ask for guidance in moving forward with the ultimate goal being the restoration of the pillars.

Members of our executive would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and other interested parties to discuss the fate of the pillars.

Robin McKee,
President,
Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society

The Story of the Pillars

The Mountain Sanatorium was established on the mountain brow in 1906 under the direction of Dr. A.D. Unsworth. It occupied 98 acres of orchard land on William Macklem's farm at the edge of Ancaster Township. The following year, the Hamilton to Brantford Radial Electric Railway was opened. It ran directly below the hospital grounds. The ravine cut through the centre of the Macklem property where Sanatorium Road abuts the edge of the escarpment on the east side of the Holbrook Building. Family and friends visited patients being treated for tuberculosis at the San by taking the radial train from Hamilton or Brantford and ascending the stairs in the ravine. It was a very busy place, being the largest sanatorium in the British Empire with a bed capacity of 750. The stairs were in use as late as 1931 when the radial line closed down. (Mountain Memories, page 5).

Traces of these concrete steps and abutments at the top of the ravine and of concrete columns which supported the stairs can still be seen. The condition of the abutments was brought to the attention of the HMHS by a concerned resident of the west mountain, who noticed them while cycling. He has contacted the City several times over the past year.

A member of the HMHS Executive immediately visited the site and took photos. These photos have been shared with a colleague who studied Heritage Masonry at Algonquin College. His opinion, having seen only the photos, is that the stone wall does seem to be in good condition as do the stairs with the concrete newel posts and hand rail. The rubble stone and mortar pillar needs serious repair. He felt that the areas in need of repair are repairable. He then outlined some issues to be addressed: ownership, permissions, permits and, of course, cost.

The executive of the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society will be discussing these pillars and what, if any, involvement the HMHS can have with them. If you have expertise or ideas to share please contact the executive by e-mail at: hamiltonheritage1@gmail.com.



◀Photo of one of the pillars taken in April 2014.

Aerial view showing location of the pillars. ▶

