

Updated: Church façade, towers to be demolished



By Brock Weir

The landmark façade that has greeted generations of Aurorans at Aurora United Church (AUC) will now be consigned to the history books.

Demolition of the Yonge Street face of the shell of the ruined church is expected to begin as early as this week, completely removing the towers which have dominated the streetscape for nearly 140 years. Crews on site were removing items from the church on Friday and said they expected demolition to begin on Monday.



Stained glass was salvaged and removed from the façade on Thursday ahead of the impending demolition. Structural engineers deemed the landmark unsound and it was news which was greeted by the church council this week with ?heavy hearts.?

?From council's perspective, it is devastating,? said Rod Johnson, head of the AUC church council. ?It is more devastating news because we hoped we would be able to save the church facing Yonge Street. It is one of those things that when engineers tell us it is

not structurally sound, it just has to come down. We just have to accept the recommendation with heavy hearts.?

A decision, he said, is yet to be made on the future of the northern additions to the building.

Despite the April 11 blaze, the AUC congregation has risen from the ashes stronger than ever and steelier in their resolve to maintain business as usual no matter what the future holds.

?What is profoundly true is that each of us will carry the spirit of the AUC with us, our memories held in our hearts and minds for safekeeping until we re-emerge in some new form,? Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar told the congregation at Easter Sunday services held at Aurora High School. ?That is for always. That will never change, and no fire, no calamity, will ever take that away.?

This Sunday, Aurora United Church services will continue at the 11 a.m. service hosted by Trinity Anglican Church on Victoria Street at Church Street.

Stained glass, which has been a hallmark of the AUC façade for decades and remarkably escaped largely undamaged in the fire, were carefully removed and salvaged Thursday ahead of the upcoming demolition.