Identifying secondary suites in Hamilton, Ontario.

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Research Context

- Few purpose-built apartment buildings created since the 1970s;

- Lack of funding for social housing;

- Increasing income polarization;

- Rapidly rising real estate prices in urban areas;

- Secondary market offers greatest range in rental cost, and unit layout.

Context Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

The Secondary Market

- Secondary rental market includes all buildings with six or fewer rental units including purpose-built units.

- This study focuses on secondary units in single-family homes.

- The term 'informal housing' is used as these units tend to skirt regulatory mechanisms such as zoning by-laws, building code and/or fire regulations, or to evade taxation.

- In Hamilton, estimates in the media put the number of informal secondary units between 8,000 – 23,000.

- Threatened by gentrification and de-conversion activities.

Context Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Research Questions

- What are the external (street-level) visual characteristics of secondary units?

- Can a visual survey tool be used to enumerate informal secondary units?

- What is the prevalence of this type of housing?

- How is this type of housing distributed across space at the neighbourhood level?

Context **Questions** Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Study Areas
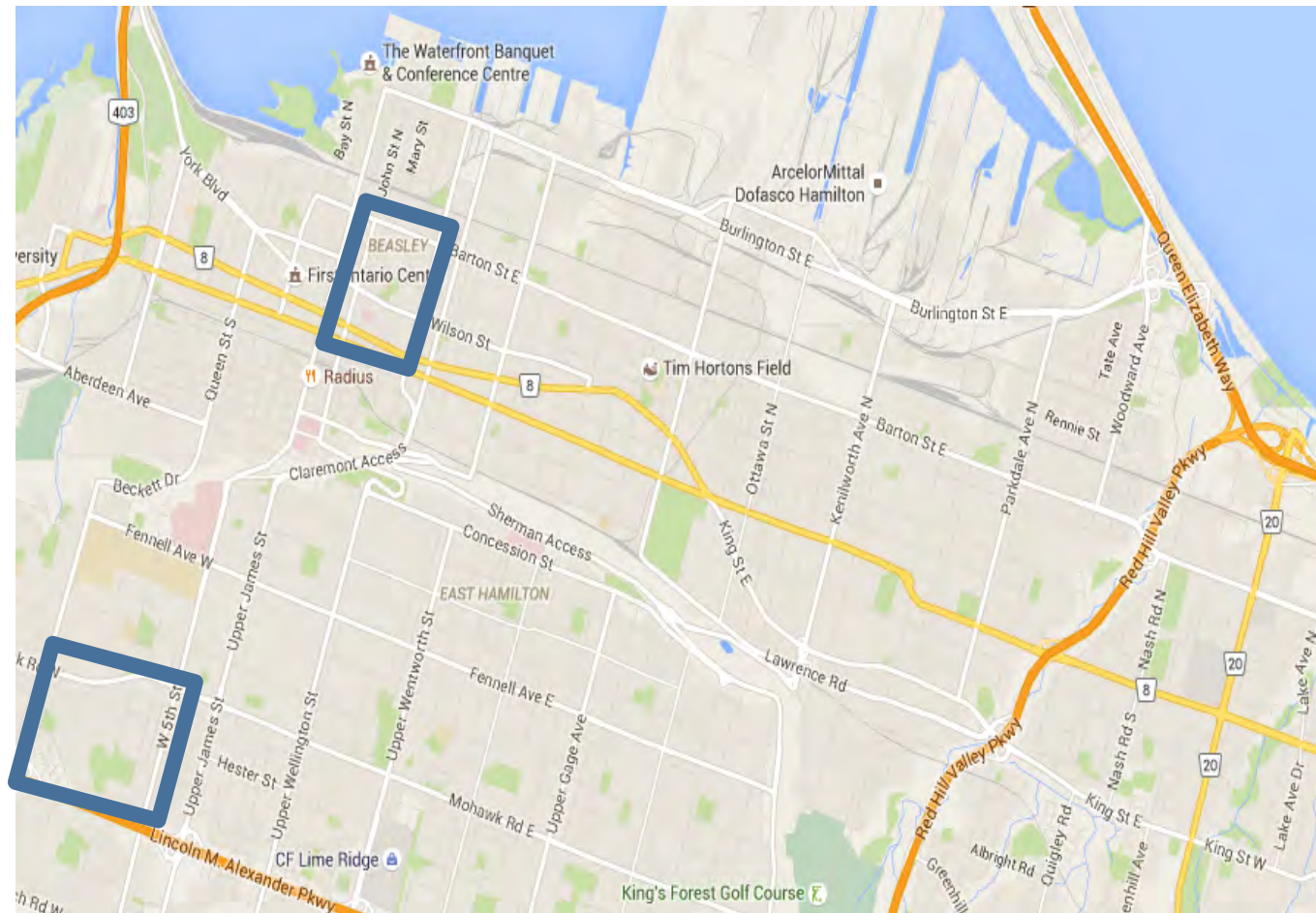
Context Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Beasley Streetscape

- Residential stock is largely dominated by single family homes built between the 1870s – 1930s

- Sporadic redevelopment and infill has occurred since the late 1940s onwards.

Context Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Rolston Streetscape

- Housing stock primarily built between the 1950s – 1990s

- Large stock of single-family homes

- Outer boundaries of the neighbourhood contain an abundance of large social housing in high-rise apartment buildings and townhomes

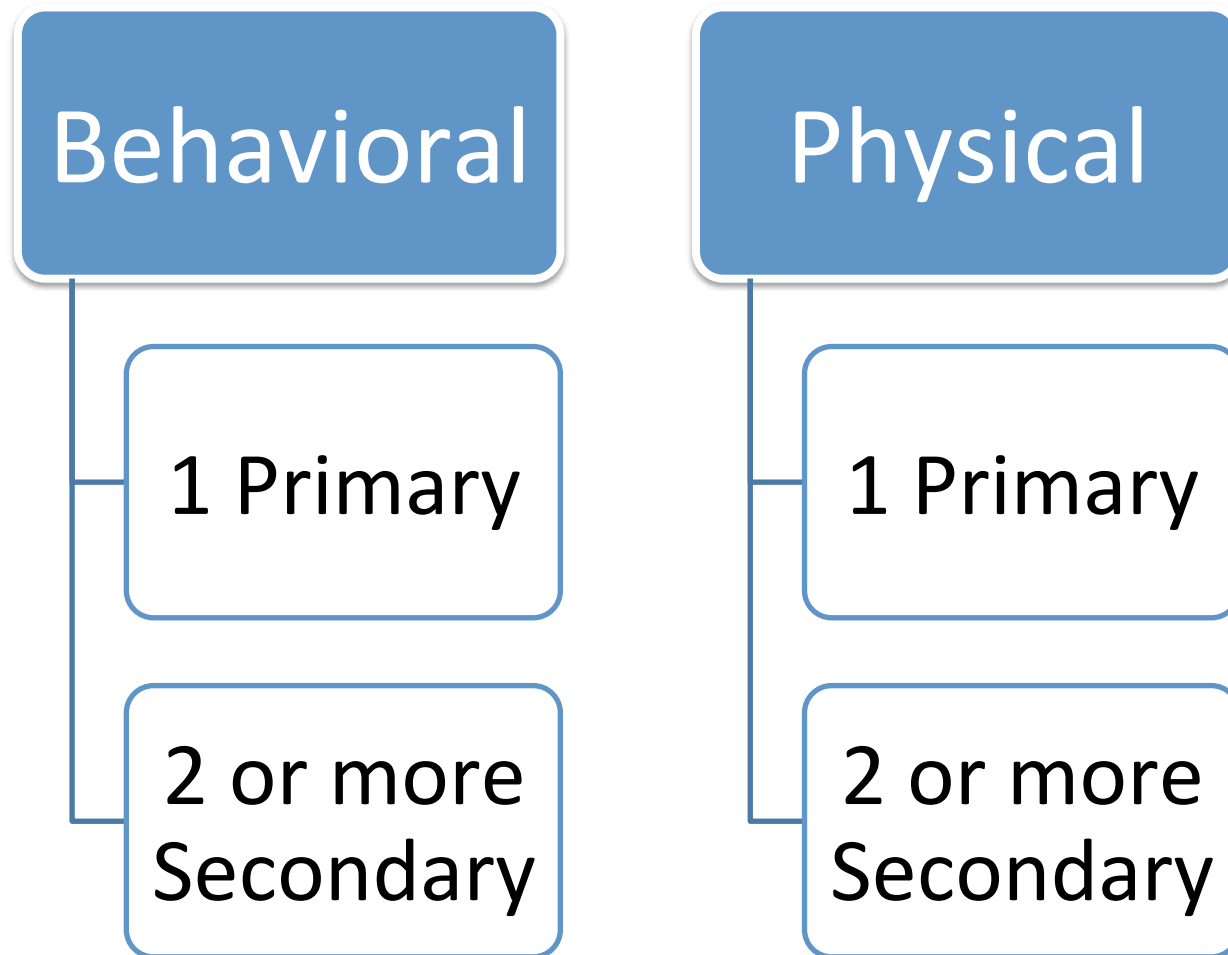**Context** Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

The Method

- A list of 18 visual indicators of secondary units was compiled through the review of relevant literature, and observation.

- A field tool was created to ensure that records of visual data collection were consistent and complete.

- A systematic visual field census of two pre-selected neighbourhoods was conducted between August 2015-November 2015.

- The field census was comprised of all single family homes in the two neighbourhoods including semi-detached, row houses, and townhouses.

Context Questions **Method** Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Method Cont.

Behavioral	Physical
1 Primary	1 Primary
2 or more Secondary	2 or more Secondary

Context Questions **Method** Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Method Cont.

Primary Behavioural Indicators

- Multiple mailboxes
- Presence of rental signs
- Unit numbers (ABCD, 1234)

Primary Modification Indicators

- More than one hydro meter
- More than one water meter
- Fire escape(s)
- Converted lawns
- Accessory building for habitation

Secondary Behavioural Indicators

- 3 or more recycling bins
- More than three vehicles
- Multiple satellite dishes
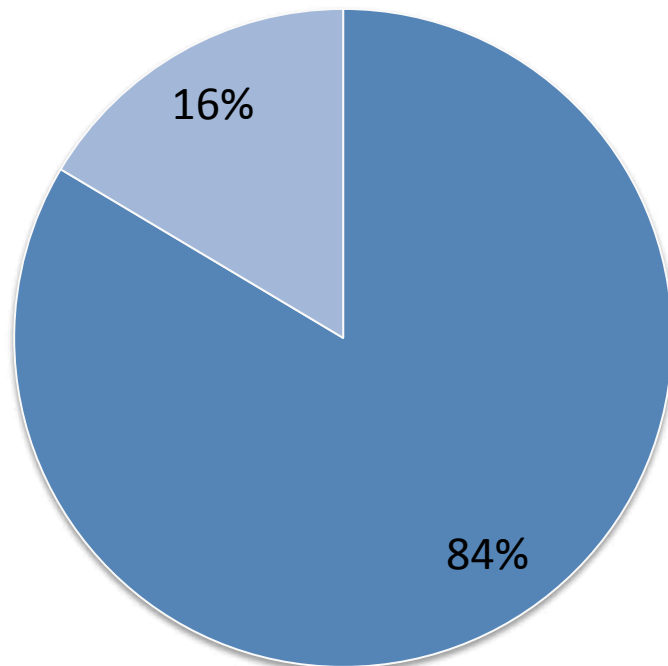
Secondary Modification Indicators

- Multiple front entrances
- Side entrance
- Back entrance
- Basement entrance
- Addition to primary dwelling
- Increase to building height

Context Questions **Method** Results Discussion Limitations Further Research
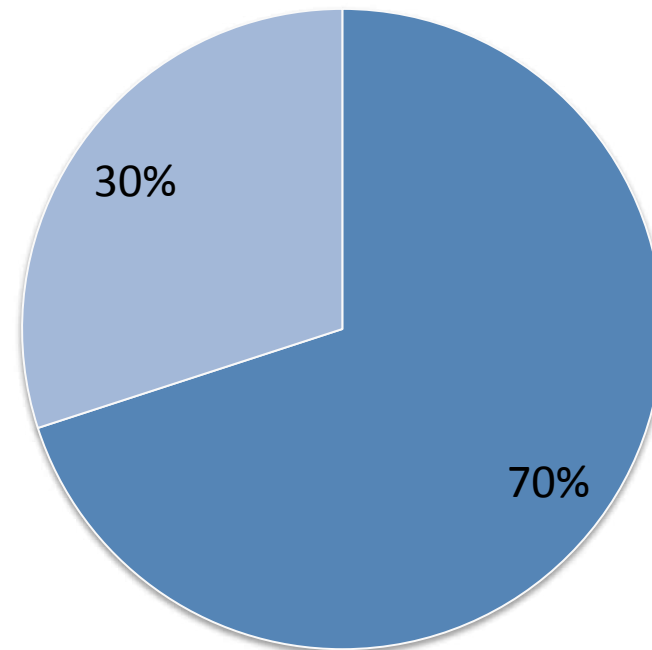
Preliminary Results: Beasley

Total Number of Dwellings in Beasley

■ Without indicators　■ With indicators

16%

84%

Secondary Units as a Proportion of all Housing Units in Beasley

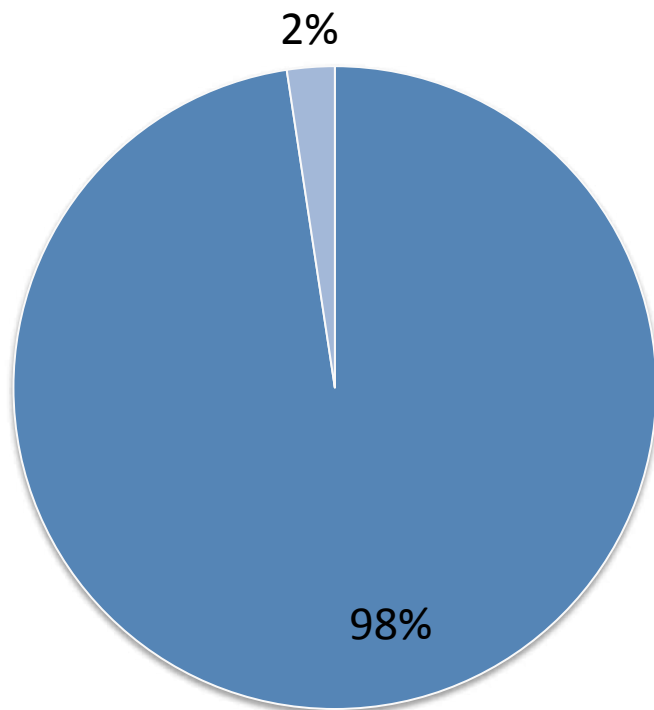■ Total # housing units

■ Total # observed secondary units

30%

70%

Context　Questions　Method　**Results**　Discussion　Limitations　Further Research

Preliminary Results: Rolston

Total Number of Dwellings

Secondary Units as a Proportion of all Housing Units in Rolston

■ Without indicators   ■ With indicators

2%

98%

■ Total # of housing units
■ Total # observed secondary units

5%

95%

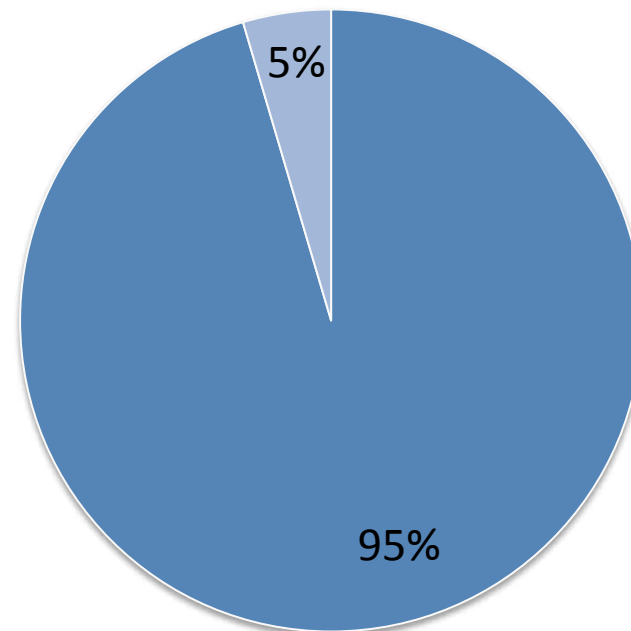Context Questions Method **Results** Discussion Limitations Further Research

Significant Indicators: Beasley

Most observed indicators:

Indicator	Count	Percentage
Multiple mailboxes	83	54%
Visible unit numbers	70	46%
Multiple electric meters	65	42%
Converted lawns	49	32%
Side entrance	41	27%

Least observed indicators:

Indicator	Count	Percentage
More than one water meter	7	5%
Visible back entrance	5	3%
Rental sign(s)	3	2%
Increase to building height	1	1%
Accessory building for habitation	0	0

Context Questions Method **Results** Discussion Limitations Further Research

Significant Indicators: Rolston

Most observed indicators:

Indicator	Count	Percentage of Total
Multiple satellite dishes	10	42%
More than one front entrance	6	25%
More than one doorbell	4	17%
Three or more recycling bins	4	17%
Rental sign(s)	4	17%

Least observed indicators:

Indicator	Count	Percentage of Total
Visible fire escape(s)	0	0
Addition to building footprint	0	0
Visible unit numbers	0	0
Increase to building height	0	0
Accessory building for habitation	0	0

Context Questions Method **Results** Discussion Limitations Further Research

Distribution of Secondary Units

Beasley:

- Main retail and commercial areas are void of these units due to the absence of single-family homes.

- A striking number of the remaining delivery units contain secondary dwellings.

- Highest density of secondary units observed in north western corner of the neighbourhood, and the central east side close to the boundary of the neighbourhood.

Rolston:

- Single-family homes on the interior streets of the neighbourhood did not express indicators of secondary units.

- Very few local delivery units contain secondary dwellings.

- Homes with secondary units were observed on the edges of the neighbourhood boundaries, on major roads, close to commercial spaces, and on bus routes.
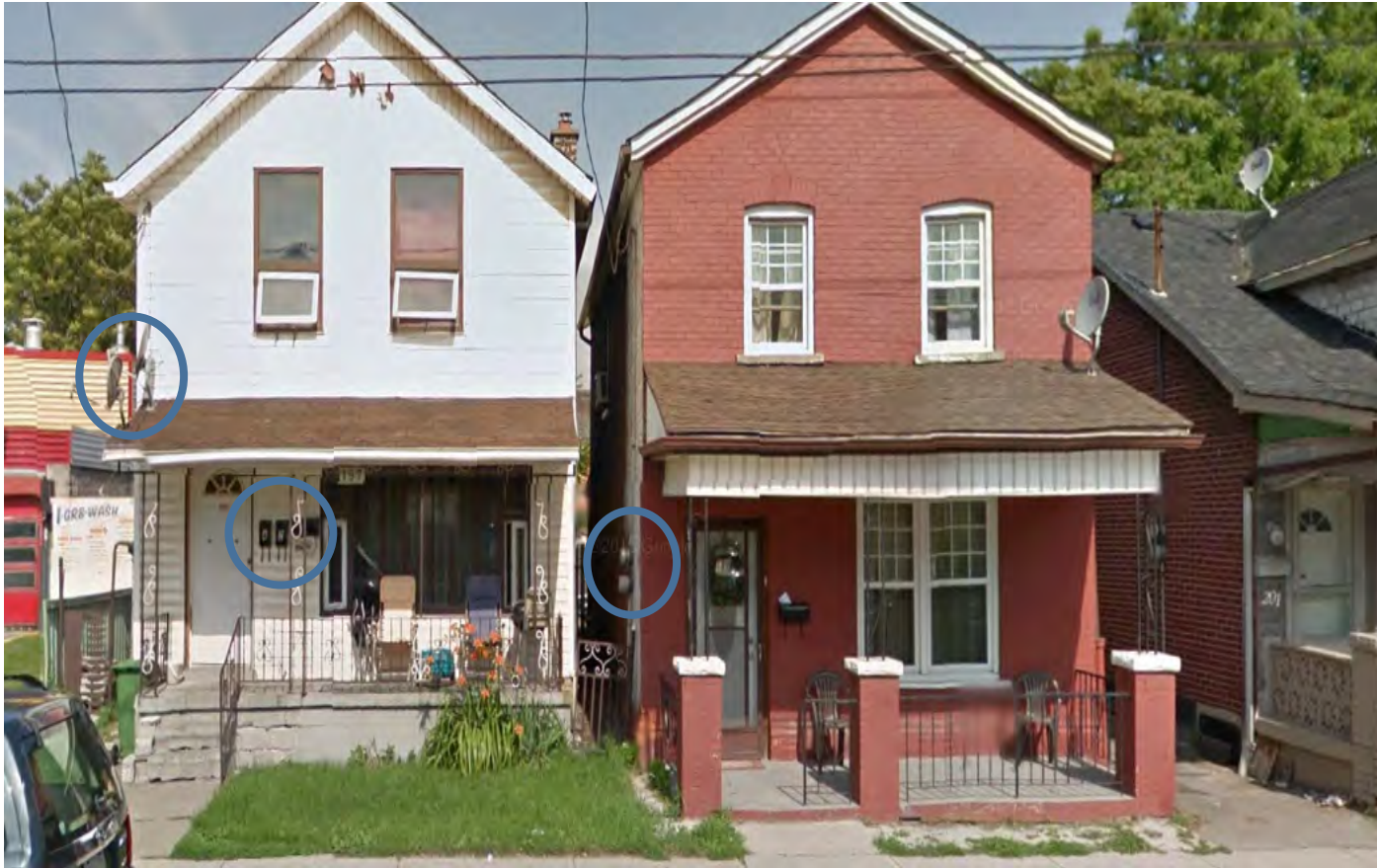
Context Questions Method **Results** Discussion Limitations Further Research

Visual Indicators: Urban

Context Questions Method **Results** Discussion Limitations Further Research

Visual Indicators: Urban

Context Questions Method **Results** Discussion Limitations Further Research

Visual Indicators: Suburban

Context Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations Further Research

Preliminary Discussion

- None of the primary or secondary indicators emerged as being of equal importance for identifying informal housing in both Beasley and Rolston.

- Indicators that proved to be of less importance included accessory dwellings, and additions to building height.

- The relevance of secondary indicators needs to be further explored.

- Characteristics of housing stock, location, and threshold for entry into homeownership may impact the prevalence of secondary units.

Context Questions Method Results **Discussion** Limitations Further Research

Further Research

- The next steps in the research project are:

  – to explore the relevance of primary and secondary indicators across neighbourhoods;

  – to compare results to property assessment;

  – to compare results to Multiple Listing Service data;

  – to expand the field survey to observe socio-spatial patterns across the wider study area.

Context Questions Method Results Discussion Limitations **Further Research**

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and

The Neighbourhood Change Research Project, University of Toronto

Questions?

Real estate listings and secondary units

██████ - ARRAY OF POTENTIAL. GREAT FOR 3 FAMILIES. 50FT X 200 FT LOT, APPROX. 6000 SQ. FT. INCLUDING BASEMENT LEVEL. OVER 4200 SQ. FT. ABOVE GROUND. 3 KITCHENS, MAIN FLOOR KITCHEN WITH GRANITE COUNTER. OUTSTANDING OPEN CONCEPT DESIGN, 12 FT. VAULTED CATHEDRAL CEILINGS ON TOP FLOOR, CERAMIC FLOORS. POSSIBILITY OF 3 DINING ROOMS, 7 BEDROOMS, 4.5 BATHROOMS, WALK-OUT TO BACKYARD DECKS FROM BOTH LEVELS. HUGE FENCED-IN LOT, VERY PRIVATE YARD. NEAR MOHAWK COLLEGE AND NEW HOSP ITAL, JUST MINUTES AWAY FROM SHOPPING & BUS SERVICES. GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE RIGHT PERSON OR PERSONS. SO MANY CUSTOM FEATURES. A SUCESSFUL APPLICATION TO THE CITY OF HAMILTON COULD POTENTIALLY MAKE THIS HOME A TRIPLEX. RSA.

Property Details

ID: H3170567	Style: Other	Beds: 7
Baths: 5 (Full: 4 3/4: 0 1/2: 1 Other: 0)	Status: Active	Total Rooms: 20
	Parking Type Description:	New Construction: No