

Township of Woolwich Special Heritage Committee Minutes

June 17, 2022
Virtual – Zoom Meeting
From 5:02 to 5:29 p.m.

Meeting Chair: Councillor Patrick Merlihan (Chair)

Attended: Bonnie Bryant (Co-Chair)
Colleen Willard-Holt
Hans Pottkamper*
Kim Hodgson*

Staff Present: David Gundrum, Planner

Regrets: Marg Drexler
Pat Stortz

CALL TO ORDER at 5:02 P.M.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Patrick Merlihan summarized a land acknowledgement.

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

None.

NEW BUSINESS

58 Glasgow St. N. (Ebel House) Demolition Permit

David Gundrum, Planner, provided the Committee with an overview of the site visit conducted by members of Committee at 58 Glasgow Street North at 10AM on June 17, 2022 where Members Bonnie Bryant, Colleen Willard-Holt, Hans Pottkamper, Kim Hodgson and staff David Gundrum were in attendance to tour the property with the owner's father.

Chair Patrick Merlihan thanked staff member Gundrum for the overview and opened the floor to members of Committee to share and discuss their thoughts and opinions on the property in response to the site visit and other information known to the Committee about the site.

** H. Pottkamper disconnected via phone and joined via videoconference to the meeting.*

Member Colleen Willard-Holt expressed hope that the house could be preserved and in response to the site visit, was of the opinion that the house appeared to be in a relatively good state of repair and was not falling down or ready to be demolished on account of physical condition. In view of the historical associative value and contextual value of the property, Colleen expressed that the existing house and property as it currently exists is too rich of a resource for the community to risk being lost.

Co-Chair Bonnie Bryant agreed with Colleen's statements and that based on the site visit of June 17th, was also of opinion that the house was not falling down or in a physical state warranting demolition and that overall, it is actually in decent condition. Bonnie noted that some work may be required on the interior of the house from a maintenance and upkeep perspective and

commented that the detached smokehouse on the property is important and should be maintained from a heritage perspective. Bonnie also noted the contextual value of the site and grounds certainly has value as well which includes a number of old mature trees that ring the property. Bonnie agreed that the property does possess significant associative value related to the builders and early inhabitants of the dwelling (19th century Conestogo flax mill owner William Perine and later mill operators the Ebel family) and that demolishing the house would be an absolute loss for the Township.

Chair Merlihan then asked if Member Hans Pottkamper wished to provide comments and feedback as well. Hans responded that in his opinion, the property has been neglected from a care and maintenance perspective with respect to the interior, noting that the existing kitchen likely dates to the 1940s, upstairs bathroom appears to have elements from the 1950s and that overall, the interior of the house has been subject to a number of low-cost fixes. Hans was of the opinion that any exterior wear or deficiencies to the house have likely come about due to neglect and that the house may have been heading towards demolition purely by neglect.

Hans agreed with earlier comments by Bonnie that the house is actually in decent condition and noted that based on the June 17th site visit that the windows, outside walls, roof and foundation all appear to be in a good state of repair noting that the house has a stone rubble foundation. Hans noted that the basement is not useable by modern standards and speculated that the basement may be subject to dampness and possible water penetration. While the basement was not directly viewed during the site visit, it is understood that a collection of interior support columns are present to assist with supporting the main floor and that these supports are likely present due to past neglect regarding care and maintenance. Hans then asked staff member David Gundrum for his opinion on the property following the site visit.

** K. Hodgson joined the meeting via phone.*

David responded to question by Hans that from his perspective, the value and significance of the property relates primarily to the associative value of the home with respect to historical persons of interest who resided there in the past (William Perine and the Ebel family) based on existing documentation retrieved from the records of the former Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) for Woolwich and also from Regional staff through recent information requests. Speaking to the potential significance of the site, David noted for the Committee that to date no professional assessment of the heritage value of the property has been undertaken more specifically to determine whether the house itself possesses any design value or physical value at this point. Beyond the known associative value which could inform consideration for designation, it is unknown at this point in time whether there are any other features or characteristics of the property that could warrant designation under the Heritage Act in terms of either design/physical value or contextual value.

David agreed with prior statements by Colleen, Bonnie and Hans that house was not in a visible state of repair to warrant immediate demolition specifically on the basis of what was observed during the property tour.

Chair Pat Merlihan stated that he had recent discussions with Roger Miller being a longtime member of the Elmira Historical Society, who conducted extensive interviews with the property owners in the past and that Mr. Miller made known to Pat that the Ebel House is a significant property in the context of the local history of Woolwich Township due to its association with the former flax mill in Conestogo.

Pat made note of a previous motion passed at the June 8th Heritage Committee meeting concerning direction that a professional heritage assessment be completed for 58 Glasgow Street

North and asked if the Committee still wished to pursue that assessment. The Committee responded yes to re-affirming that direction. Pat then asked if anything further was required in that regard.

Staff member David Gundrum replied stating that as per Section 27(9) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the property owners are required to provide Council with at least 60 days written notice of intent to demolish or remove the existing house due to its listed (non-designated) status. With respect to the Act, David noted that on May 27, 2022 the owners did provide the Township with written notice of intent to demolish and remove the house via a demolition permit submitted to and received by the Township Building Department.

In terms of process at this point, David noted for the Committee that it is up to Township Council to decide whether or not to pursue an intention to designate under the Act through a motion of Council on the advice of the Committee and that a confirmed intention to designate would prompt the need for further review and assessment of the property to determine whether designation is warranted or not. David also noted for Committee that should Council pursue an intent to designate, that this would also make available the opportunity for the owners to appeal the intent to designate to the Ontario Land Tribunal within 30 days of the published Notice of Intention to Designate.

Chair Pat Merlihan asked for clarification of staff from the previous Committee meeting on June 8th whether it would be incumbent upon the property owners to provide the necessary background study and cover associated costs of the study in the case that Council chooses to pursue an intent to designate the property under the Heritage Act. Staff member David Gundrum responded that if Council pursues an intent to designate then the associated time and costs for any background study would be borne by and the responsibility of the Township. Pat asked what the potential cost of a background study could be if conducted by a professional third party with David responding that as a rough estimate, such study could range from a few thousand dollars up to as much as ten thousand dollars potentially, but costs would be dependent almost entirely on the amount of time required to research and write the report. Responding further, Pat indicated that he would follow-up further with Mr. Roger Miller who has already done extensive research on the property and has assisted with past property designations to see if Roger could assist the Township with the designation process if Council does pursue an intent to designate.

Action: Chair Pat Merlihan to follow-up with Roger Miller concerning designation background work for 58 Glasgow Street North and report back to Committee over email.

Chair Pat Merlihan asked if Committee members would like to put forth a motion concerning 58 Glasgow Street North to be forwarded to Township Council for their consideration.

The Committee passed the following resolution:

That Township of Woolwich Heritage Committee recommend to Township of Woolwich Council that as per the Ontario Heritage Act, Council proceed with filing an intention to designate property municipally addressed as 58 Glasgow Street North, Conestogo.

Moved by Co-Chair B. Bryant

Seconded by H. Pottkamper

...Carried.

Staff member David Gundrum confirmed that staff will prepare a recommendation report for Township Council for their upcoming meeting on June 27, 2022 containing copy of the resolution concerning 58 Glasgow Street North for consideration. Should Committee members have

anything further they wish to see added as supporting material to the report, that those materials be forwarded to David no later than end of day Monday, June 20th.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by H. Pottkamper
Seconded by C. Willard-Holt

That the Committee be adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

...Carried.