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12-02-2004

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS
"FERNDELL", 25 MITCHELL STREET
IN THE CITY OF GUELPH,
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: Ontario Heritage Foundation
The Ontario Heritage Centre
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 1J3

AND: [REDACTED]
25 Mitchell Street
Guelph, Ontario
N1E 4J2

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HERITAGE & LIBRARIES BRANCH

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of the Corporation of the City of Guelph intends to designate 25 Mitchell Street as a property of cultural heritage value and interest under Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

WHY THE PROPERTY IS BEING DESIGNATED:

- Built by a prominent local industrialist and public person
- The house is an excellent example of a Guelph stone residential architecture
- The house is in an excellent state of preservation

This limestone house, owned and built by foundry man Adam Robertson, Sr. in the late 1850s, represents two important themes in early Guelph history - foundries as the beginnings of local industry, and the close connection between Guelph and the surrounding agricultural community.

Adam Robertson built the two and a half storey house of local limestone, probably quarried from the site, on the Mitchell Block, land he had purchased for his foundry in 1852. The foundry was constructed in 1852 (this is now a small apartment building). The house itself was constructed several years later of similar stone. It is shown clearly on the Cooper map of 1862, when it and the foundry were the only buildings on the block bounded by Mitchell, Eramosa, King and Norwich Streets. The foundry was the third that Robertson constructed in Guelph, having arrived in Canada from Scotland in the 1830s, with previous stops in the Brantford area and Paris before coming to Guelph in 1847. In this foundry, known as the Guelph Foundry, Robertson and his employees produced agricultural implements for the local farmers. During the American Civil War Robertson also made armaments for the Confederacy, especially cannon destined for an ill-fated attempt to free Confederate officers from a prison on Johnson Island in Ohio.

Adam Robertson was a long-standing Town Councillor, sitting in public service in periods from the mid-1850s to the early 1880s. Mr. Robertson was Mayor in 1873.

The house was built about one hundred yards from the foundry and is typical of what is generally known as "the Ontario House," popular primarily in rural Ontario, with some characteristics typical of the Scottish background of its builder. Robertson and the local newspapers always referred to the house as "Ferndell", perhaps because the hillside behind the house may have been covered with wild ferns. Ferndell has the classical symmetry of the early 19th century styles, with a central hall plan, and a kitchen added to the back to form a T shape. And it also has a gothic gable and window over the front entrance, popular in the later 19th century. Typical of the Scottish tradition, the house has a stone wall at the front property line, a feature rare in Guelph.

As in the Canadian and Scottish traditions, the houses's public areas are much fancier than those areas used only by the family. On the exterior, the front wall is cut stone, while the side and rear walls, and the adjoining kitchen are built of rubble stone. This pattern carries over into the interior where the windows of the parlour, to the right of the front hall, and the front bedroom upstairs, are elaborately panelled while windows throughout the rest of the house are more simply framed..

The Edwardian front porch was added in the early 20th century, when Robertson's son, Adam Jr. lived in it and was the proprietor of the foundry.

The exterior of the house is remarkably similar to the original building, never having been added to as was often the case with older homes in Guelph.

WHAT IS TO BE PROTECTED BY DESIGNATION:

Exterior:

- All of the exterior walls;
- The exterior windows, doors and related trim;
- The front stone garden wall;
- The front porch;
- The size and shape of the louvered wood shutters on the front façade.

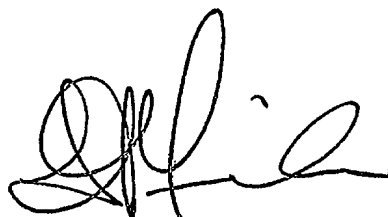
Interior:

- All the interior baseboards, window and door frames, and the doors;
- The staircase and handrail;
- The two fireplaces on the ground floor;
- The John Carpenter locks on the upstairs bedroom doors.

It is intended that any non-original features may be returned to their documented original form without requiring City Council permission for an alteration to the designation.

Any person may, before the 3rd day of March, 2004, send by registered mail or deliver to the Clerk of the City of Guelph, notice of objection to this proposed designation, together with a statement of reasons for the objection and all relevant factors. If a notice of objection is received, the Council of the City of Guelph shall refer the matter to the Conservation Review Board for a hearing.

DATED at Guelph, Ontario, this 3rd day of February, 2004.



Lois Giles, City Clerk
City Hall, 59 Carden Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1