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## Development Services

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**To:** Ontario Heritage Trust  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Angela Buonamici, Manager of Planning

**Date:** December 17, 2025

**RE:** Intention to Designate – 355B Morrison Point Road (McGrath/Vandusen/Kerr House), Ward of South Marysburgh

**RECEIVED**  
2025/12/17  
(YYYY/MM/DD)  
Ontario Heritage Trust

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This letter is to inform you of the intention to designate the property located at 355B Morrison Point Road (McGrath/Vandusen/Kerr House), in the Ward of South Marysburgh, in the County of Prince Edward. Please see the attached Statement of Cultural Heritage Value for the property, which includes a description of the property, statement explaining the cultural heritage value of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property.

Notice of Objection to the proposed designation(s) must be received no later than the **16<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026** by registered mail or delivered to the Municipality's Deputy Clerk, together with a statement of the reasons for the objection and relevant facts. When a Notice of Objection has been received, the Council of the County of Prince Edward will refer the matter to the Conservation Review Board for a hearing and report.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best Regards,

for Angela Buonamici, MCIP RPP  
Manager of Planning  
The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward  
AB/pt  
Encl

**July 14, 2025**

**Author: Ernie Margetson**

**Owner: [REDACTED]**

**McGrath/Vandusen/Kerr House c. 1835-1865  
Outbuildings and Limestones Fences/Walls  
355B Morrison Point Road, South Marysburgh**

**Designation Rationale for Cultural Heritage Landscape: House and Outbuilding Complex –  
Workshop, Sap Shanty, Smokehouse, Sheep Barn, and Dry Stone Wall Fences and Walls**

**INTRODUCTION**

The McGrath/Vandusen/Kerr House and various outbuildings occupy the west and north half of Lot 5, Concession 1 North of Black River, South Marysburgh Ward, Prince Edward County. The property is located north of the traveled Morrison Point Road, extending northerly to the shore of Smith(s) Bay. Registry records indicate the crown granted title of Lot 5 to Ann (McGrath) VanDusen and S. McGrath, March 19, 1832, although other settlement records indicate the land occupied by Garrett McGrath (father of A. and S. McGrath) as early as 1784. The house and outbuildings on the west side of Lot 5 are intended for Designation. The property is currently owned by [REDACTED], a descendant of Ann McGrath (daughter of Garrett McGrath). The farm has remained in the family descendants since the crown patent was issued.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

The oldest or rear portion of the Kerr House was thought to be built for S. McGrath and Benjamin Smith c. 1835, as the selected home site evolved from the early pioneer dwelling built on the shore of Prince Edward Bay. The initial or earliest farm dwelling was located near the water, as marked on the 1863 Tremaine map along with the c.1835 house that followed. This is consistent with the earliest dwellings situated close to waterways, as the principal means of transportation in pioneering times, gradually evolving as lands were cleared and infrastructure such as roads, water

wells were dug, and forest areas were cleared or reserved, and the use of the farm changed from pioneering to agriculture. The house is also depicted in the present location in the 1878 Belden atlas. All that remains of the early shoreline residence are parts of its stone foundation.

Outbuildings associated with the farm include the three-level work shed that had a blacksmith area in the basement, a carpenter's shop on the first level, and storage on the third. The carpenter's shop was used to build and repair boats, connecting the farm to the water-based activities of the area. There is also a limestone smoke house, a sheep barn, and a sap shanty all within close proximity to the farmhouse. Dry stone wall fences are found at the roadside property line and along the west property line north of the road. These fences are of particular interest in their function, but also their contribution to the aesthetics of the farmyard and history and culture of this area.

The large and dominant portion of the house as seen from the road today was constructed approximately 1865 according to oral history and correlating to an 1859 mortgage to John Vandusen (nephew of Benjamin Smith and S. McGrath) and discharged 1869. This construction timing coincides with the ultimate development of the farm to a mixed use and consistent with the emerging agricultural economy of Upper Canada in this period. Also, the farm had been split with two generations of Vandusen now occupying separately both east and west halves, as John Vandusen had assumed title from Smith.

The main house is a two-storey hipped roof massing with a projecting two-storey vestibule. This full height vestibule, prominent on the façade, is a particular trait of Prince Edward County homes. It is assumed that the full height projecting vestibule that is so familiar to County houses was the County's answer to the Italian taste – 'a fashionable Italianate tower that didn't actually go to the extreme of being a tower and that was carefully centered in a perfectly symmetrical three-bay front of British Classical derivation'.<sup>1</sup> Balancing the façade are twin verandahs that flank the vestibule, both accessible from side doors within the box entrance hall. Attention is given to the main center front entrance with double doors with an arched head and flanked by the original storm doors with shutters - the entire presentation considered unique. The entrance reveals are paneled, and the double doors that present paired round headed windows with bulls eye medallions hint of the Italianate influence, with a pedimented trim decorated with half acorn drops. Original lower windows on the main house were a 9 over 6 pane pattern while the uppers were 6 over 6, all with pedimented head with built up trim and complimented with half acorn drops in the center, a unique

and noteworthy detail. Brackets are found at the eave line, again featuring acorn drops, this decorative theme of the acorn pendants expressed throughout. The front door windows, flattish roof, and brackets under the eaves all suggest the Italian taste, as would the original styling of the twin verandahs (piazzas), now replaced with single columns.

The earlier rear portion of the house (c.1835) was built into the side hill with a limestone lower wall on three sides, most likely the original woodshed and/or food preservation area (a cellar was included in the large later house). The rear has been modified and adapted as times have changed, such as removal of the drive through woodshed doors and addition of the dormers. The rear portion is well maintained, and although changes were undertaken as needed, they were sympathetic to the composition as a whole.

The house is complimented with various outbuildings located in practical placement to function and proximity to the house. A multilevel workshop and storage shed is located at the road. The construction of a stone basement with ground level access is not common for work or drives sheds and this example is noteworthy. There is also a stone smokehouse near the rear of the house, a sap shanty to the rear adjacent to the sugar bush, with a collapsable roof vent to let steam escape, and a mid-sized timber framed sheep barn with hay loft. All buildings are considered worthy of noting within the farm building complex anchored by the house, as are the dry stone wall fences and retaining walls at the rear of the house and are included for designation.

## STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE/STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### **Design or physical value**

*CRITERIA: The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.*

The house is an early representative of the projecting vestibule hipped roof houses of Prince Edward County. This idiosyncratic style of building was rare in Ontario and represents the County response to the Italianate style popular in Ontario 1840-1870s, and this is a unique early example executed in frame with wood cladding. The three level work shed is also unique in providing a basement blacksmith shop and upper-level carpentry shop, both accessible from grade. The sap shanty is a fine example of a specific use building and is notable in its proximity to the house and the sugar bush located on the modest ridge to the rear of the house.

*CRITERIA: The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.*

The front entrance details, the trims throughout, and the repeated use of the decorative acorn drops on this farmhouse are of artistic merit when executed on a rural farmhouse. The craftsmanship of the dry limestone walls is noteworthy.

### **Historical or associative value**

*CRITERIA: The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.*

The property remains in the title of descendants of the original settler (McGrath) and further has a direct association with the emigration and settlement of the United Empire Loyalists as the Vandusens arrived with the VanAlstine's party of Loyalists in 1784 and the descendants settled in Prince Edward County, marrying into the McGrath family and contributed to the development of this Lot and associated buildings. The Vandusens, originally from the Netherlands and settling in New Amsterdam (New York) before it was taken by the British, remained loyal to the English Crown.

*CRITERIA: The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.*

The farm complex has historical and associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of settlement and development within 5<sup>th</sup> Town, later Marysburgh, later South Marysburgh, and Prince Edward County. The historical and associative value is reinforced by the continuous tenure of the farm property by one extended farming family since the crown patent was issued. The evolution of farm development through timing and construction of the successive dwelling locations and the accessory farm structures provides an understanding of agricultural development in the region.

### **Contextual value**

*CRITERIA: The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.*

The farm complex of evolved farmhouse, large workshop, several agricultural outbuildings, and limestone fences and walls have contextual value because it is important for defining, maintaining and supporting South Marysburgh's agricultural character and the character of Morrison Point Road, and because the complex demonstrates the evolution of a farm from first settlement to the present day.

*CRITERIA: The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*

The property is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to the settlement and development of Fifth Town, later South Marysburgh, and its surroundings. The proximity of the complex of buildings to the road is a visual reminder of the early settlement pattern of building on higher land with road access to replace the earlier dwelling close to a water source and water transportation. The outbuildings type and placement continue to serve present agricultural functions in maintaining the household and farming.

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES**

Key elements that contribute to the farm complex's cultural heritage value include:

- The location of the farmhouse, workshop, smoke house, sap shanty, sheep barn and stone fences including their relationship to the house and the function of the farm. Buildings to be retained.

### McGrath/Vandusen/Kerr House

- Location, orientation, massing and footprint of the farmhouse
- Horizontal wood siding
- Fenestration of the main house (all window opening locations and sizes to be respected)
- Low pitch hip roof to be respected
- All trim details including window and door trim, brackets, and acorn pendants to be retained
- Front entrance details including door (main and storm), decorative details to be maintained
- Twin verandah's hipped roof and roof pitch, ceiling, to be retained – arcading of porch support columns may be adjusted appropriately to the style if re-built (archival photograph in HASPE file)

### Outbuildings

- Workshop size, massing and fenestration to be maintained and respected
- Workshop interior stairs from central level to loft and basement blacksmith shop
- Sap shanty size and form, including roof vent to be maintained and respected
- Limestone smokehouse as is, to be maintained and respected
- Sheep barn form and appearance (wood siding) to be maintained and respected.
- Dry stone fences and rear stone retaining wall at house to be retained

## References:

- The Splendour of Prince Edward County, 1991, Roger C. Greig 1
- Prince Edward County Archives – land registry records
- Cruickshank, Tom, and Peter John Stokes, *The Settler's Dream*, Picton: Corporation of the County of Prince Edward, 1984
- Historical Architectural Survey of Prince Edward (HASPE)
- Illustrated Historical Atlas of the Counties of Hastings and Prince Edward, Ont., Toronto: H. Belden & Co., 1878
- Tremaine's Map of the County of Prince Edward, Upper Canada, Toronto, 1863
- Interview with [REDACTED], Owner
- Site Inspection, October 11, 2024
- Well Preserved – The Ontario Heritage Foundations Manual of Principles and Practice for Architectural Conservation, Revised addition 1992, Mark Fram
- Morrison Point Road Dry Stone Wall Project, [morrisonpointstonewall.ca](http://morrisonpointstonewall.ca)
- Inheritance: Ontario's Century Farms Past and Present, 1979, John and Monica Ladell