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IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT,
R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS

259 - 261 PARK ROW

IN THE CITY OF WOODSTOCK,
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

RECEIVED
2026/01/19
(YYYY/MM/DD)
Ontario Heritage Trust

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: Ontario Heritage Trust
The Ontario Heritage Centre
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, ON M5C 1J3
registrar@heritagetrust.on.ca
Attention: Provincial Heritage Register

Notice of Intention to Designate: 259 - 261 Park Row

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Woodstock intends to designate 259 – 261 Park Row as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18, As Amended.

Description of the Property

The legal description of the of the subject property is PIN 00102-0043 (LT) described as PT LOT 1, N/S PARK ROW, PLAN 55, AS IN 460982; S/T A16861; CITY OF WOODSTOCK.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* because it meets six of the nine prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22. The heritage and cultural attributes of 259 – 261 Park Row display historical/ associative and contextual value.

Historical/ Associative Value

The subject property meets Criterion 4 because it has direct associations with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church and the establishment of the British Methodist Episcopal (BME) church.

The church is named after the Right Reverend Walter Hawkins, the first minister of the church and an important figure in establishing the BMEC church in Canada and its connections with the anti-slavery movement in British United Canada including the Underground Railway and the Quaker abolitionist movement.

The subject property meets Criterion 5 because of its historical associative value and contribution to the “Ward” neighbourhood of the early Black community in Woodstock and in Oxford County, including prominent Black families such as the Smith family, the Andersons, and George Washington Jones.

The subject property meets Criterion 6 as it reflects the ideology and teachings of the Black preachers and members of the BME congregations, many of which were former slaves and free Blacks, and the significant contribution the church made to the Black community in Woodstock and Oxford County.

Contextual Value

The subject property meets Criterion 7 because it is physically, functionally and historically linked to the visual and historic character of Park Row. The street pattern and lotting fabric along Park Row remains largely unchanged from the original historic survey Plan 55 laid out in 1833. The church would have benefitted from its prominent location at the corner of Park Row and Mill Street. Its proximity to the railroad permitted the property to function as a destination and/ or place of refuge. Between 1900 and 1925 the WTV&IER “Estelle” streetcar travelled directly past the church along Park Row on its way from Mill Street to Ingersoll Road then to Beachville and the Ingersoll Inn. Even the name **Park Row** was so named because it led past one of the oldest parks in the City. The County records identify these “park lots” which are shown on Plan 55 as having been designated in 1833.

The property meets Criterion 8 because the property’s two buildings maintain their original configuration and are functionally, visually and historically linked. The buildings are well over 135-years old and both the church (259 Park Row) and the adjacent manse (261 Park Row) have maintained the same building form and footprint and remain located on the same legal lot.

The property and the buildings meet Criterion 9 because of its identity as a well-known local landmark. The property and the buildings (the BMEC church and the manse) are recognized for their historic significance in the Black community and playing a crucial role in integrating escaped or emancipated slaves into the local community. The BMEC church became a landmark for social activity, racial integration and expression for almost 100-years. The property had strong socio-cultural ties through its early role as a community meeting place and consequently helped to establish the Black community in Woodstock. The buildings are examples of the structures which existed at the early formation of the community and which were constructed by former slaves and free Blacks.

The property has had at least three different names, which emphasizes the constant, but changing contribution the church had for more than a century at this location. In fact, the church is also known colloquially as the **Black Chapel**, although this name does not appear in any of the “official” history books.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The following elements of the subject property at 259 – 261 Park Row should be considered as heritage attributes in a designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*:

Building form, including:

- example of early Black church/ manse construction (by former slaves);
- two-buildings which maintain their original configuration and are physically and functionally linked;
- two-storey small wood frame structure;
- original building footprint – auditory-hall form, typical of early AME/BMEC churches;
- gabled roof;
- central entry door on one gable end (street front) set between two windows;
- originally three taller spaced windows were located on each side of the church; however, only one window remains and the rest have been removed/ covered. The remaining window is located on the east exterior side elevation and the opening made smaller and the window replaced with a single glass window;
- wood construction materials, wood cladding, wood trim;
- the original white horizontal cladding can be seen underneath the metal siding at the peak of the gable roof;
- stone foundation and high basement; and,
- The current owner has indicated that the original church signs may be underneath the metal siding.

For the purposes of clarity, the current interior and exterior of the former BMEC church and the adjacent manse are not considered to be heritage attributes. It is intended that with the designation of the property, the protection of the property would prevent the demolition and removal of the structures. It is intended that non-original features may be returned to documented earlier designs or to their documented original without requiring City Council permission for an alteration of the design.

A more detailed account of the property’s cultural heritage value can be found in the Special Committee and Advisory Task Force Report to the Mayor and Members of City Council, prepared by the Woodstock Heritage Advisory Committee. This report is included in the Council Meeting Agenda Package for January 15, 2026, which is available online at www.woodstock.ca.

Notice of Objection

Any person may send a notice of objection to this proposed designation, before 4:30 p.m. on February 16, 2026. This notice must be sent by registered mail or delivered to the City Clerk of the Corporation of the City of Woodstock and must set out the reason for the objection and all relevant facts. If a notice of objection is received, the Council of the Corporation of the City of Woodstock shall consider the objection and make a decision whether or not to withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property within 90 days after the end of the 30-day objection period. If Council decides not to withdraw its intention to designate, a heritage designation by-law must be passed within 120 days after the publication of the notice of intention to designate. Council must publish a notice of passing of the designation by-law which is followed by a 30-day appeal period when appeals of the by-law may be given to the Ontario Land Tribunal for a hearing and decision.

Amelia Humphries, City Clerk
Corporation of the City of Woodstock
City Hall, Main Floor
500 Street, Woodstock ON
N4S 1C4

For more information

Karen Houston, Manager of Culture/ Museum Curator
Woodstock Heritage Advisory Committee (WHAC)
519-537-8411 Ext. 2900
khouston@woodstock.ca

Notice Date: Friday, January 16, 2026