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April 13, 2010

**REGISTERED MAIL**

Mr. Richard Moorhouse  
Executive Director  
Ontario Heritage Trust  
10 Adelaide Street, East  
Toronto, ON M5C 1J3

Dear Mr. Moorhouse:

**Re: Notice of Passing of By-law - Earl A. Thomas House  
6320 Pine Grove Avenue, Niagara Falls, Ontario**

The Council of the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls has passed a by-law which designates the above-noted land and building as property of cultural value and interest under the terms of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990.

Enclosed is a copy of By-law 2009-191 which includes the reasons for the designation. A public notice advising of the passing of this by-law is being published in the local newspaper in accordance with the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact me.

Yours truly,

Peggy Boyle  
Assistant Planner

PB:mb  
Attach.

c. Dean Iorfida, City Clerk  
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*Working Together to Serve Our Community*

Community Services Department  
Planning & Development  
Ext 4334 Fax 905-356-2354  
pboyle@niagarafalls.ca



## NOTICE OF DESIGNATION

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990**, and in the matter of the property known as the Earl A. Thomas House, 6320 Pine Grove Avenue, described as Lots 132, 133, 134 and 135, Plan 315, in the former Village of Niagara Falls, now known as the City of Niagara Falls, Regional Municipality of Niagara being all of the lands in PIN 64353-0147 (LT).

TAKE NOTICE that on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of November 2009, the Council of the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls passed By-law No. 2009-191, to designate the above property to be of cultural heritage value and interest under s. 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990 Chapter 0.18.

### **REASONS FOR DESIGNATION:**

The Earl A Thomas House built c. 1929, is an excellent example of Tudor Revival style architecture which saw a resurgence during the 1920's through to the end of World War II. The exterior of the house retains much of its original appearance and holds a prominent position on a slight rise at the corner of Pine Grove Avenue and Murray Street. It is of cultural heritage value and interest for its historical association with Earl A. Thomas, a prominent figure in the wine industry both locally and nationally. Its physical/design value is found in the building's architecture and in the property's overall landscaping.

Additional information, including a full description of the reasons for designation is available upon request from Peggy Boyle, Assistant Planner, Planning and Development Division, 905 356-7521 ext 4334.

Dated at the City of Niagara Falls this 13<sup>TH</sup> day of April 2010  
Dean Iorfida, City Clerk, City of Niagara Falls

I, the undersigned, Deputy Clerk of The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls, hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of... By-law 2009-191... dated November 30, 2009... Given under my hand and the seal of the said Corporation this 13th day of April, 2010.  
..... Deputy Clerk

## CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS

### **By-law No. 2009-191**

A by-law to designate the property known as 6320 Pine Grove Avenue (Earl A. Thomas House), being PIN 64353-0147 (LT) within the City of Niagara Falls, to be of cultural heritage value and interest.

**WHEREAS** the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Part IV, section 29, authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and/or structures thereon, within the municipality, to be of cultural heritage value or interest;

**AND WHEREAS** The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls has caused to be served upon the owner(s) of the property, as described in Schedule "A" hereto, and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, notice of intention to designate the property on December 5, 2008 and has caused such notice of intention to designate to be published in The Niagara Falls Review, a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality, on December 6, 2008;

**AND WHEREAS** the reasons for designation are set out as Schedule "B" hereto;

**AND WHEREAS** an objection to Council's Notice of Intention to Designate was served on the City Clerk (January 6, 2009);

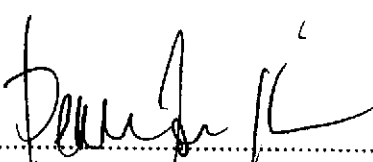
**AND WHEREAS** the Conservation Review Board held a public hearing on October 5, 2009;

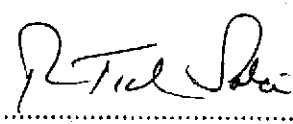
**AND WHEREAS** the Conservation Review Board has found the property to be of Cultural Heritage value or interest (report dated October 9, 2009);

### **THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The property, more particularly described in Schedule "A" hereto, known as 6320 Pine Grove Avenue (Earl A. Thomas House), is hereby designated to be of cultural heritage value and interest.
2. The City Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner(s) of the property and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Niagara Falls.

Passed this thirtieth day of November, 2009.

  
.....  
DEAN IORFIDA, CITY CLERK

  
.....  
R. T. (TED) SALCI, MAYOR

First Reading	November 30, 2009
Second Reading	November 30, 2009
Third Reading	November 30, 2009

# **SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW No. 2009-191**

Lots 132, 133, 134 & 135 Plan 315, Village of Niagara Falls, in the City of Niagara Falls, Regional Municipality of Niagara being all of the lands in PIN 64353-0147 (LT).



# **SCHEDULE "B" TO BY-LAW No. 2009-191**

## **REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**

### **Description of Historic Place**

6320 Pine Grove Avenue is located at the corner of Pine Grove Avenue and Murray Street, the house sits on a slight rise in a prominent position. The parcel of land is comprised of 4 residential lots all of which contain large mature trees. The two storey Tudor Revival style dwelling is situated on the east side of Pine Grove Avenue and straddles the lot lines of three of the four lots which provide the landscaped setting for this building. The residence on these lots was constructed for Earl A. Thomas, a prominent member of the community for his work with Brights Wines, now Vincor Wines.

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

The property at 6320 Pine Grove Avenue is recommended for designation pursuant to s. 29, Part IV, of the Ontario Heritage Act, based on its historical associative value and its design value.

### **Historical Associative Value**

The lands are part of Registered Plan 315 (originally Plan 17) which was registered in 1913 as part of the outward growth of the Drummondville area of Niagara Falls. In the summer of 1928, Earl A. Thomas purchased 3 lots at the corner of Pine Grove Avenue and Murray Street for his new home. In the spring of 1929, Mr. Thomas purchased 2 abutting lots creating a sizeable property on which to showcase his newly designed house (drawings dated April 1929). In total, Mr. Thomas paid \$4650 for the land, a sizeable amount of money for vacant land at the time. The property stayed intact until 2003 when Lot 131 fronting on Murray Street was sold. The property continues to be composed of 4 of the original 5 lots held by Mr. Thomas. While this is the largest property in the immediate area occupied by a single detached dwelling, it helps create the general character and context of the area as several other single family properties consist of 2 or 3 lots, each from the original plan.

The property at 6320 Pine Grove Avenue is significant for its association with the original owner, Earl A. Thomas, a very prominent figure in the wine industry, both locally and nationally. The house was designed for Earl A. Thomas and his wife, Doris Rosalind Thomas. Mr. Thomas was born in Stamford township in 1894 and began working at T.G. Bright's Wines (now known as Vincor Wines) in 1916 at the age of 22 and rose to become President of the Company, a position he held until his retirement in 1959. Mr. Thomas was, at one time, President of the Canadian Wine Institute and was acknowledged as the 'dean' of the Canadian Wine Industry. Aside from his business accomplishments, Mr. Thomas was a very active member of the local community as seen by his volunteer work as the Chairman of the Niagara Falls and Suburban Area Planning Board from its inception in 1948 to the time of his death in 1966. He was also the co-chair of the Hospital building campaign and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. The Thomas's owned the property for 37 years. Subsequent to the Thomas family, Charles and Ruth Dunnett owned the house for the next 27 years. The Dunnett family owned and operated a chain of 4-5 grocery stores in the community known as Niagara Farms Markets. (Sherman Zavitz, City Historian)

From original building plans found in City files, it is known that the house was designed by architects

Findlay and Foulis and built c. 1929. The architectural firm built many significant buildings within the City and other parts of the Province of Ontario. Claude Findlay and James Foulis relocated their office to Niagara Falls from Sault St. Marie after winning a design competition for Table Rock House in 1925. The architects went on to build a number of significant buildings in Niagara Falls which are considered to be local landmark structures. These include the Refectory and Administration Building, both in Queen Victoria Park, General Brock Hotel, and Oak Hall, a residential building for Sir Harry Oakes. This firm also designed a chateau for Sir Harry Oakes in Kirkland Lake Ontario, which is now owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust. From the Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, Findlay and Foulis are credited with the majority of their work in Niagara Falls during the period between 1925 and 1930. James Foulis died suddenly in 1932 and Claude Findlay went on to become the president of Welland Securities Ltd. which managed the properties acquired by Sir Harry Oakes. Mr. Foulis died in 1965. The architects are considered to be prominent twentieth century architects both locally and provincially.

### **Design Value**

The design value of the Earl A. Thomas house lies in it being one of the City's best examples of Tudor Revival style architecture, which saw a resurgence during the 1920's through to the end of World War II. Many of the typical Tudor style characteristics are evidenced in this house such as:

- a steeply pitched hip roof made of asphalt shingle with flat deck;
- multiple prominent gables: gable ends are finished with brick, half timbering or wood plank in various locations, which adds to the asymmetrical qualities of the house;
- a large dominant chimney, in a central location on the front of the house, which steps in at a flared brick apron just above the level of the eaves. The chimney top is detailed with courses of stepped brick as the terminus;
- windows containing small multi-pane sash.

The exterior of the house retains much of its original appearance with red brick on the first storey laid in stretcher bond. The first course above the foundation is laid in a soldier course. Light coloured stucco trimmed with dark coloured half timbering on the second storey. At the south end of the house, the lower walls of the sunroom have brick laid in a herringbone pattern in two different arrangements adding to the decorative qualities. The front entrance is created by a projecting brick vestibule with bell cast roof and corbelled brick at the eaves; the gable features a decorative treatment of two bricks laid vertically with a brick laid in a dog tooth arrangement to give the impression of a niche.

Window openings in the brick portion of the house have brick sills laid with the headers facing outward. The openings have a flat arch with soldier course. Vinyl windows have largely replaced the original window sash. The original 10 pane casement windows exist on the southerly sunporch. A modern pair of french doors has been added to the north wall and access a now enclosed terrace. The original plans do not show a doorway in this location. A plank door to the east of the modern french doors, appears to be an original element of the house, but the proximity to the milk box, unfinished appearance of the milk box sill and lighter coloured mortar on the west side of the door opening suggest this doorway may have been altered from its original construction.

Because of the grade of the lot, the basement is exposed along the southeast and east sides. The original garage was located under the kitchen area, in the basement level, and is accessed by a driveway from Orchard Avenue.

A one-storey brick addition, with shed roof, on the north side of the kitchen replaced the original porch shown on the architects' drawings. The colour and texture of the brick is very close to the balance of

the brick work which suggests it may have been an early alteration by the Thomas family after they had moved into the house.

The round headed front entrance has two courses of header brick. The front door which consists of vertical planks having a 4 paned window and antiqued brass metal hardware. The house defines the historic character of the neighbourhood as one of refined living and quality in the first half of the twentieth century. The original floor plans note the presence of a maid's room, above the kitchen, with a back staircase, indicating the gracious life style of the original occupants.

A number of specimen trees were planted on the property, including a European Beech, (north of the house), 2 Red Oaks (south & southeast of the house) and a Shagbark Hickory (south of the house). Other trees noted on the property are silver maples, older spruce trees and a number of eastern hemlocks.

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key exterior features that embody the heritage value and are important to the preservation of 6320 Pine Grove Avenue include the following heritage attributes:

- large property consisting of four lots creates a significant setting
- the Tudor Revival House exhibits a full range of architectural detail associated with the style
- steeply pitched roof with prominent gables
- original window openings with brick sills laid with headers facing outward, flat arch with soldier course
- round headed front door made of vertical planks with black metal hardware enclosed in a projecting brick vestibule with bellcast roof and corbelled brick at the eaves
- red brick on first storey
- dark half timber and light stucco exterior cladding on second storey
- large dominant chimney, in a central location on the front of the house
- exterior of sunroom is red brick laid in a herringbone pattern
- several significant mature specimen trees planted on the property.