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CITY OF
ST. CATHARINES

Planning and Building Services

Planning Services
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May 24, 2018

REGISTERED MAIL

Ontario Heritage Trust
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto ON M5C 1J3

ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

MAY 25 2018

RECEIVED

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Notice of Intention to Designate 109 St. Paul Crescent (Rodman Hall)
Under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act
File No.: 10.64.187

Please be advised that City Council at its regular meeting of May 23, 2018 resolved its intention to designate the above noted lands under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In giving notice pursuant to the provision of the Ontario Heritage Act, I am enclosing a copy of a notice which is to be published in The St. Catharines Standard on June 7, 2018, as well as the Description of the Heritage Attributes of 109 St. Paul Crescent. Subsequent to the 30 day appeal period required by the Ontario Heritage Act, provided no appeals are filed, the City Council will enact a by-law designating the property as being of cultural heritage value or interest.

Please contact me at 688-5600, extension 1710 if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

K.W. Blozowski

Kevin Blozowski, MCIP, RPP
Heritage Planner

Attach.

c.c Heather Salter, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Clerks Services
Bonnie Nistico-Dunk, City Clerk

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of the Corporation of the City of St. Catharines intends to designate property to be of cultural heritage value or interest under the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18, as follows:

109 St. Paul Crescent (Rodman Hall)

Located on a block of land on the east side of St. Paul Crescent, north of Rodman Hall Crescent, and west of the Twelve Mile Creek Valley, the lands are described as Part Lot 2150, CP PL 2 Grantham as in RO815029; St. Catharines.

The following is a short statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property:

Rodman Hall, located at 109 St. Paul Crescent, is one of the most significant 19th century structures in the city of St. Catharines.

The land upon which the building stands was first granted in the 1790s to the Clendennan and Hainer families. Both men had served in Butler's Rangers and were among the first settlers in Grantham Township. The Rodman Hall property, which originally comprised about 35 acres, was purchased by Thomas Rodman Merritt (1821-1906), the son of William Hamilton Merritt, in the mid-19th century. Thomas was a wealthy merchant, miller and banker.

This property was first laid out by Merritt as a large park-like garden, and used by the family as a quiet retreat where they entertained friends. The formally landscaped grounds are known to have been in existence by 1852. Merritt resided with his family on Yates Street during the construction of Rodman Hall, which was carried out in two phases. Between ca. 1857 and 1860, the original or west wing of the house was built. Following the death of Merritt's older brother in 1860, building materials intended for a large house in Montebello Park were transported to the Rodman Hall site and used in the east wing of the building which was completed in 1863.

The architect responsible for the house is not known with certainty. It has been suggested that the design may be attributable either to Kivas Tully or William Thomas. This is based upon a comparison of the architectural style of Rodman Hall with other known examples of work by Tully and Thomas. .

In 1960, the property was sold to the St. Catharines and District Arts Council. The building has been open to the public and used as an art gallery since that time. New exhibit space was added in 1960 and 1975, but these expansions were constructed in such a way that there was minimal impact upon the 19th century fabric of the original house.

Rodman Hall has not had any extensive exterior renovations. With the exception of new concrete front steps, the removal of exterior window shutters, and the removal of the wrap-around porch on the east side of the building in 1960, the house still stands today looking nearly identical to what it did during the Victorian era. Similarly, the majority of the interior features have been retained in all of the rooms

The gardens form part of an evolving cultural landscape, and have served as a private and as a public retreat since the 19th century. Today the Walker Botanical Gardens contain many specimen examples of native trees, shrubs and plants, some of which are Carolinian, while other non-native varieties have been introduced to the site. These plants thrive in the sheltered micro-climate of the Twelve Mile Creek valley.

Rodman Hall is worthy of both interior and exterior designation, based upon its strong architectural merits and historical associations to the community. The grounds are worthy of designation as the "remnant" of an evolved cultural heritage landscape.

More detailed Reasons for Designation can be obtained from the Planning and Building Services Department.

Notice of Objection to the designation may be served on the Clerk of the City of St. Catharines within thirty (30) days after the date of publication of this Notice of Intention in a newspaper having general circulation in the Municipality.

For further details about the proposed designation, please contact Kevin Blozowski, at 905-688-5601, Extension 1710.

Dated this 7th day of June, 2018.



Bonnie Nistico-Dunk
City Clerk

DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES OF 109 ST. PAUL CRESCENT (RODMAN HALL)

This document is intended to comprise an executive summary, outlining in brief the heritage attributes of Rodman Hall located at 109 St. Paul Crescent. A more detailed version of the research compiled by members of the St. Catharines Heritage Advisory Committee, is also available.

Rodman Hall, located at 109 St. Paul Crescent, is one of the most significant 19th century structures in the City of St. Catharines.

The land upon which the building stands was first granted in the 1790s to the Clendennan and Hainer families. Both men had served in Butler's Rangers and were among the first settlers in Grantham Township. One part of the property was bought by Robert Hamilton, a Queenston merchant, whose wife Catharine is believed to have been the namesake for the city. The Rodman Hall property, which originally comprised about 35 acres, was purchased by Thomas Rodman Merritt (1821-1906), the son of William Hamilton Merritt, in the mid-19th century. Thomas was a wealthy merchant, miller and banker.

This property was first laid out by Merritt as a large park-like garden, and used by the family as a quiet retreat where they entertained friends. The formally landscaped grounds are known to have been in existence by 1852. Merritt resided with his family on Yates Street during the construction of Rodman Hall, which was carried out in two phases. Between ca. 1857 and 1860, the original or west wing of the house was built. Following the death of Merritt's older brother in 1860, building materials intended for a large house in Montebello Park were transported to the Rodman Hall site and used in the east wing of the building which was completed in 1863. Minor renovations were made to the building during the 1870s, when a pedimental sculpture was removed and additional dormer windows were added. The large stained glass windows on the central staircase were installed during the 1880s.

The architect responsible for the house is not known with certainty. It has been suggested that the design may be attributable either to Kivas Tully or William Thomas. This is based upon a comparison of the architectural style of Rodman Hall with other known examples of work by Tully and Thomas. Both men were prominent Toronto architects, who had been commissioned to design other buildings for the Merritt family. The stone construction work on the house may have been executed by William Barron, who built the old Lincoln County Court House at King and James Streets. The interior woodwork is similar in style to that done by Thomas McIntyre, who was one of the local cabinet makers and an early undertaker in the town. The ornamental plaster cornices and ceiling medallions may have been the handiwork of Francis Begy. All three were well-known, skilled workmen in 19th century St. Catharines.

This house witnessed many family gatherings and social events, and remained in the possession of the Merritt family for more than a century. It was temporarily used as a private school and was divided into several apartment units during the mid-20th century. In 1960, the property was sold to the St. Catharines and District Arts Council. The

building has been open to the public and used as an art gallery since that time. New exhibit space was added in 1960 and 1975, but these expansions were constructed in such a way that there was minimal impact upon the 19th century fabric of the original house. Rodman Hall was handed over to Brock University in 2003, and it has continued to function as an art gallery since that time. The building but also houses some administrative offices as well as a limited number of private studio spaces.

Rodman Hall has not had any extensive exterior renovations. With the exception of new concrete front steps, the removal of exterior window shutters, and the removal of the wrap-around porch on the east side of the building in 1960, the house still stands today looking nearly identical to what it did during the Victorian era. Similarly, the majority of the interior features have been retained in all of the rooms. The floors, doors, windows, hardware, trim, paneling, ceiling cornices and ornamental plaster work, brick and marble fireplaces, and stained glass, are all original to the house. Small items such as servant's bell-pulls and at least one gas light fixture appear to be original. The inside of the main entrance to the house contains two large mirrors, which may be attributed on stylistic grounds to the firm of Jacques and Hays of Toronto, which was one of the best furniture manufacturing firms in Ontario during the 19th century. The original chandeliers and gas lights have unfortunately been removed from the house, and their present location is not known.

The gardens form part of an evolving cultural landscape, and have served as a private and as a public retreat since the 19th century. The grounds mirrored a similarly landscaped private garden on the slope of the hill below "Oak Hill" (CKTB); both provided an extended, landscaped vista on either side of the old Welland Canal, which was enjoyed by residents and visitors to St. Catharines alike. Today the Walker Botanical Gardens contain many specimen examples of native trees, shrubs and plants, some of which are Carolinian, while other non-native varieties have been introduced to the site. These plants thrive in the sheltered micro-climate of the Twelve Mile Creek valley.

Rodman Hall is worthy of both interior and exterior designation, based upon its strong architectural merits and historical associations to the community. The grounds are worthy of designation as the "remnant" of an evolved cultural heritage landscape.

The heritage attributes of the property at 109 St. Paul Crescent (Rodman Hall) include:

The grounds surrounding the house contain a terraced, landscaped garden which has been known since the 1980s as the Walker Botanical Garden. The gardens contain specimen examples of native trees and plants (some of which are Carolinian), as well as examples of exotic, non-native trees (such as the Golden Rain tree, Royal Paulownia, &c) which flourish in the micro-climate of the Twelve Mile Creek valley. The gardens are enjoyed by the public as a tranquil retreat, and as a recreational venue (walking paths and trails, Laura Secord Trail &c.) The gardens have been an evolving focal point on the landscape since the late 1840s; although part of the estate land was

sold for residential development during the 20th century, efforts should be made to retain as much of the existing garden as possible as a “remnant” landscape.

The heritage attributes of the building at 109 St. Paul Crescent (Rodman Hall) include:

Rodman Hall exhibits many original, 19th century exterior features and design elements integral to its design. They include:

- exterior walls of smooth ashlar (limestone) construction with corner quoins, which envelopes a red brick interior core structure, and a belted masonry course marking the floors. The masonry work may have been executed by William Baron, a stone cutter and tombstone carver who executed the stone work on the old court house;

- an asymmetrical, four bay façade on the east (1860s) wing; three bay (late 1850s?) west wing; and a detached “gate” house. The asymmetrical placement of the main entrance and windows of varying sizes is nevertheless aesthetically and visually pleasing.

Other important design elements and features include:

- slate roof;

- 1870s dormer windows in the upper storey;

- panelled shaft chimney stacks;

- original, unaltered window openings;

- Victorian era hardware for exterior window shutters;

- a false, shuttered “window” or deceit at the 2nd storey north-east corner of the house, intended to balance the appearance or distribution of the fenestration;

- “Dutch” style gables;

- original main entrance, with Victorian era door and hardware, brass knob, and mail slot;

- carved stone pediment over the front door, including a keystone incorporating a human face;

- etched, clear glass sidelights and transom, incorporating the Merritt family arms;

- Gothic style dormers on the “west” or original wing of the house;

- decorative carved “millstone” in the central dormer of the west wing, denoting Merritt's primary occupation as a merchant-miller;

- rough hewn stone blocks in the west wing;

-connecting archway between the main house and the gate house with the date stone "1863;"

-remnants of the bell-cast exterior veranda at the rear of the house;

-rubble stone foundation;

-original brick and stone chimneys.

The interior of the house retains nearly all of its mid-Victorian decorative features and finishes intact. Some of the principal millwork and trim may have been executed by Thomas McIntyre, and the plaster work by Francis Begy. The interior finishes include:

-original parquet flooring;

-wide baseboards and paneling;

-door and window casings and trim;

-interior louvered shutters;

-"Cross and Bible" doors with original hardware;

-one rare "Dutch" style door in the main floor opening between the east and west wings of the house;

-original door and window trim, including several "window seats;"

- twelve Italian marble fireplaces with cast iron inserts and one with brass highlights;

-twin (back-to-back) brick hearths in the basement of the original wing, and brick fireplaces with classical style surrounds and mantelpieces in the rest of the west wing;

-decorative cast iron radiators, at least two of which are dated 1877;

-decorative ceiling medallions;

-decorative plaster cornices and trim;

- ornate central staircase, with Gothic style newel posts on the 1st and 2nd floor;

-ornate main entrance, including stained glass with the Merritt arms, and the initials of Thomas Rodman and Mary Benson Merritt;

-stained glass transom over the ground floor door between the two wings of the house;

-large 1880s era stained glass windows on the central stair landing, depicting "Flora" and "Pomona;"

-staircases in the original (west) wing of the house;

-French doors at the back of the house leading onto the rear bell-cast porch;

-built-in furniture (Jacques and Haye mirrors flanking the interior of the main entrance), book or display cabinets in the 1st floor and glass-fronted storage cabinets on the 2nd and 3rd floors;

Efforts should be taken to preserve all of these period, character defining elements.