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ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

September 11, 2019

SEP 13 2019

**RECEIVED**

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

**Re: Notice of Intention to Designate  
9388 Cedar Hedge Line, Community of Chatham Township  
Municipality of Chatham-Kent**

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Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent at its meeting on June 10, 2019 approved the Intention to Designate the property known as 9388 Cedar Hedge Line, Community of Chatham Township, Chatham-Kent, legally described as LT 7 CON 9 CHATHAM W OF PRINCE ALBERT SIDEROAD EXCEPT D1247 AND CH12981; T/W 202750 & 202752; CHATHAM-KENT, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, for its cultural heritage value or interest, as defined by one or more of the Criteria under *Ontario Regulation 9/06*.

If no notice of objection is served within the 30-day period, Council shall pass a by-law designating the property or shall withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property by causing a notice of withdrawal.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (519) 352-8401 Ext. 3050.

Sincerely,

Anthony Jas  
Planner I

In the Matter of the Ontario Heritage Act

**Notice of Intent to Designate**

The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O., 1990, Chapter 0.18 as amended, provides that the Municipal Council may pass a by-law designating property within the boundaries of the municipality to be of cultural heritage value and interest. The Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent hereby gives Notice of Intent to designate the following:

Description of Property:

The property is located at 9388 Cedar Hedge Line, Community of Chatham Township, Chatham-Kent, legally described as LT 7 CON 9 CHATHAM W OF PRINCE ALBERT SIDEROAD EXCEPT D1247 AND CH12981; T/W 202750 & 202752; CHATHAM-KENT.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest:

**Historical/Associative (OHA Reg. 9/06):**

The Prince Albert Baptist Church is an important surviving structure associated with the pre-Civil War Chatham Township Black settlement. While people are generally familiar with four early Black communities in Chatham-Kent (Buxton/Elgin Settlement, Dawn/Dresden, Chatham and, later, Shrewsbury), the significant early settlement of Black farmers in Chatham Township is largely unknown or combined with Dresden. In fact, this was a separate and significant community.

This settlement developed in the central area of Chatham Township flanking the Prince Albert Road. A comprehensive research paper on the development of Chatham Township 1792-1851 by Darren Bruhlman identifies this area of the Township as quite marshy, poorly drained, and largely passed over by earlier settlers. His report does not identify any Black settlers in the area so it is likely that the immigration occurred after 1851 following the Fugitive Slave Act in the United States. By accounts of several present day descendants still residing on family farms in the area, many of the original settlers were free Black farmers that emigrated from the United States preceding the Civil War. It is important to note that this agricultural settlement was distinct from the near-by Dawn Settlement (Dresden). Unlike Dawn, which was established by the British American Institute, Chatham Township was not a planned settlement.

The first church in this community was Union Baptist Church, established in 1885, that still stands at 10586 Union Line Road, Chatham Township. In 1894, the Second Union Baptist Church was built on the corner of Prince Albert Line and Cedar Hedge Line. The land was purchased the preceding year from Mrs. Sarah Ferguson, a banker in Thamesville (and wife of John Ferguson, builder of Tecumseh Hall/Westover). The current church structure bears a cornerstone that is dated 1915 and replaces the original that may have been destroyed by fire. It is one of only two remaining structures associated with this early Black settlement.

The Prince Albert Baptist Church property also has an historic association with Rev. Jennie Johnson, a champion for racial and gender equality. Johnson was born in Chatham Township in 1868. Her father and all of her grandparents had been slaves. She attended Wilberforce University, an African Methodist Episcopalian-run institution in Xenia Ohio, and she was ordained in 1909. She was the first Canadian-born ordained female minister to serve in Canada.

Johnson helped found the new Free Baptist Church, (a part of the Michigan Association of Freewill Baptists), the successor of the original Second Union Baptist Church on this site. She served as its minister from its founding in 1911 until 1913. She then moved to Flint, Mich. in 1926 to found a church and mission centre for the growing number of African-Americans then moving north to work in Michigan's booming auto plants.

As part of a Baptist fellowship with churches in both Michigan and Ontario, Johnson was frequently in Essex County and Chatham-Kent, but moved to Detroit when she retired from the Flint mission in the early 1950s. As late as 1964, when she was in her late 90s, Johnson attended an Ontario convention of Baptist leaders. She died in 1967, and her funeral was conducted in Chatham Township, with burial in the Dresden Cemetery.

**Design/Physical (OHA Reg. 9/06):**

The Prince Albert Baptist Church Property includes a good surviving example of a small early 20th century rural church. The brick structure has a medium pitched roof, simple Gothic-arched windows and a simple bell tower and few exterior decorative elements.

**Contextual (OHA Reg. 9/06):**

The church is in a highly visible location on the corner of Prince Albert Line and Cedar Hedge Line, surrounded by flat farmland, much of which is still owned by descendants of the original Chatham Township Black settlers.

**Any person may, within 30 days of the date of this Notice, serve on the Clerk, a Notice of Objection in writing, setting out the objection and all relevant facts. Where a Notice of Objection has been served, the Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent shall refer the matter to the Conservation Review Board for a hearing.**

Dated at the Municipality of Chatham-Kent this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2019.