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## **NOTICE OF DESIGNATION**

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of The Corporation of the Town of St. Marys has passed By-law 08-2024 to designate 285 Emily Street as a property of cultural heritage value or interest in accordance with Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.0.18, as amended.

### **Property Description**

The subject property is described as LOT 73 EAST SIDE WATER STREET PLAN 248 ST MARYS, BEING PT 3 44R-402 ; ST MARYS

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

- Site of residence, located on Emily Street on former Thamescrest Farm site.
- Saddleback style roof with large central gable on the west façade.
- L-shape design with central protrusion at west façade entrance.
- Two limestone chimneys, on the north and south ends of the Emily Street façade. The north chimney was fully rebuilt in 2023 using limestone to closely match the original.
- All exterior limestone masonry walls.

### **Notice of Objection**

Any person who objects to By-law 08-2024 may appeal to the Tribunal by giving the Tribunal and the clerk of the municipality, within 30 days after the date of publication, and no later than 4:30pm on Tuesday, February 20, a notice of appeal setting out the objection to the by-law and the reasons in support of the objection, accompanied by the fee charged by the Tribunal. Objections should be directed to the Town of St. Marys, Box 998, St. Marys, ON N4X 1B6, Attention: Jenna McCartney, Clerk, or by email to [clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:clerksoffice@town.stmarys.on.ca). A notice of objection must set out the reason(s) for the objection and all relevant facts.

## **BY-LAW 08-2024**

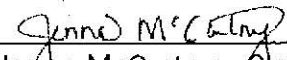
### **THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ST. MARYS**

Being a By-law to designate a property at 285 Emily Street, in the Town of St. Marys to be of heritage culture value or interest.

- WHEREAS:** Section 29(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O. 18, as amended, authorizes that a council of a municipality may, by by-law, designate a property within the municipality to be of cultural heritage value or interest;
- AND WHEREAS:** Section 29(2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as amended, requires where a council of a municipality has appointed a municipal heritage committee, the council shall, before giving notice of its intention to designate a property, consult with its municipal heritage committee;
- AND WHEREAS:** The Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee of the Corporation of the Town of St. Marys has reviewed the proposed designation and made recommendation to the Council of the Corporation of the Town of St. Marys in November 2023, to proceed with the designation of 100 Church Street South in the Town of St. Marys;
- AND WHEREAS:** The Council of the Corporation of the Town of St. Marys has caused to be served upon the owners of the aforesaid real property and on the Ontario Heritage Trust notice of intention to so designate this property and has caused such notice to intention to be published in local newspapers having general circulation in the municipality;
- AND WHEREAS:** No notice of objection to be proposed designation has been served on the Clerk of the municipality;
- NOW THEREFORE:** The Council of The Corporation of the Town of St. Marys hereby enacts as follows:
1. That the real property legally described in Schedule A to this By-law, is hereby designated to be of heritage culture value or interest under section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
  2. Enactment of this By-law shall be deemed to be authorized to the solicitor for the Town to register same in the appropriate Land Registry Office, without further written authorization.
  3. The Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served on the Ontario Heritage Trust and the owner of the property.
  4. The Clerk is hereby authorized to cause notice of the passing of this by-law to be published in local newspapers having general circulation in the municipality.
  5. The This by-law comes into force on the final passing thereof.

Read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2024.

  
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Al Stratthdee, Mayor

  
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Jenna McCartney, Clerk



## **STATEMENTS TO IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE A PROPERTY FOR DESIGNATION**

285 Emily Street, Lot 73 in the Town of St. Marys, Part of Concession 17, Lot 16, Blanshard  
Township, East Side of Water Street North

Prepared by Town Staff and the Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee  
for St. Marys Town Council  
December 2023

### **Identification of Property:**

The house at 285 Emily Street is a two-storey limestone house. The property of 285 Emily Street is a small part of Township of Blanshard Lot 16, Concession 17. Its legal description became more specific in 1858 when some properties lying at the limits of the Village of St. Marys were surveyed to create residential lots. A portion of Lot 16, Concession 17 was included in this survey and 285 Emily Street became Town Lot 73, east side Water Street North. (Note that the name Emily Street for this part of the street did not come into use until later)

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value:**

#### **Historic Value or Associative Value**

As outlined in the timeline below, the house at 285 Emily has a long and interesting history, with connections to the flax milling industry in St. Marys, the Knox Presbyterian Church, a family of Olympic runners, and Thamescrest Farms.

### **Timeline**

#### **Andrew Forrester**

In March 1847, Andrew Forrester, a 27-year-old farmer and carpenter who was born in Scotland, arrived in this area. He entered into an agreement with the Canada Company to purchase Lot 16, Concession 17 in the Township of Blanshard, within the northern limits of

the Town of St. Marys, just to the east of the Thames River. Having fulfilled all Canada Company requirements and paid all the installments on this purchase, Forrester received the deed August 18, 1853. About the same time, he also purchased the West Half of Lot 15, Concession 17, thus extending his holdings to the north. Forrester also leased Lot 2, East Thames Road Concession, Downie Township, in 1843 but he relinquished this property in 1855.

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The earliest census for this area was taken 1851 and in this census it is noted that the Forresters lived in a one-storey stone house – one of only a handful of stone houses in the area at a time when almost all families were still living in log homes. This one-storey stone home likely survives as 275 Emily Street, next door to 285 Emily on Lot 72.

By the 1861 census Andrew Forrester and his family's house was described as a one and a half storey stone building. The abstract from the Perth County Registry Office shows that Andrew Forrester split the property in 1858, selling the one-storey stone home to Alexander Cardno after building the larger house to the north on Lot 73.

Although Forrester arrived in St. Marys as a farmer and carpenter, by 1863 he had established a flax mill on the east side of the Thames River just north of the railroad overpass across the road from his home. As land was cleared in the surrounding countryside, flax became a viable crop, in the late 19th century grown both for its seed and for the fibre in its stalks.

Forrester sold his St. Marys mill a few years after it opened and built another flax mill in Mitchell. He sold his stone house in 1870 and moved with his family to live in Mitchell as well as to do business there.

In January 10, 1884, the Argus had this information: "Mr. Andrew Forrester formerly of this town but who has for several years carried on an extensive Flax Milling business in Mitchell has handed over his business to his son William and will soon return to St. Marys to end his days in his old home." However, his plans changed. Andrew Forrester never did move back to St Marys but died in Mitchell, June 6, 1900, aged 80 years.

His Water Street flax mill continued to operate for 40 years under a series of different owners. Today, it is difficult to find any evidence of this industry and very little documentation survives. An exception is a photograph in the Museum's collection, taken ca. 1890, looking north from the railway bridge over Emily Street. On the right or east side of the road are trees that unfortunately obscure the houses. On the left are several shed-like buildings containing the scales, processing, and storage areas for the flax mill.

### Alexander Robertson

Andrew Forrester sold his flax mill in St. Marys to Alexander Robertson in 1867. In 1870 Forrester decided to move his residence to Mitchell as well and on April 13, 1870 sold his stone house to Alexander Robertson.

In December 1868, the mill was destroyed by fire but immediately rebuilt so that the mill could operate for the 1869 season.

In June 1872, Alexander Robertson sold the mill and left St. Marys. The Argus reported a farewell party held in his honour. On May 21, 1878, Robertson died in Brantford, age 61. The obituary in the Argus, May 30, described him as "respected by all who knew him."

### John Elley Harding

John Harding purchased the house on Lot 73 from Alexander Robertson on February 14, 1872. The assessment records show three increases in the value of this property from 1876 to 1882. During that time the assessed value rose from \$2,000 to \$4,000. This indicates the dates of expansions to the house in three stages of construction with the change from 1881 to 1882 being the largest.

John Elley Harding was born in Ontario in 1840, according to the 1871 census. He married Mary Stevenson in 1866 in Sarnia. They moved to St. Marys and raised their two children, Robert and Catherine, in the Emily Street house. Harding was a barrister in partnership with his brother Edward W. Harding. John was mayor of St. Marys in 1870-71 and continued to serve on the council until 1876.

The Hardings left St. Marys as John pursued his legal career, eventually becoming a judge in Victoria County where he was still working in 1911. Mary died on November 25, 1905 in Lindsay, Ontario. John died in Hamilton on March 16, 1925 and is buried with his first wife, Mary, in Riverside Cemetery, Lindsay.

NOTE: When the Hardings purchased the stone house on Lot 73, Dr. David Howard Harrison purchased the mill from Alexander Robertson, varying his medical practice with flax production. The mill burned again in August 1872, was rebuilt and continued to operate but closed in the early 1890s.

### Trustees of Knox Presbyterian Church

The Knox Church acquired the stone house in August 1887 as a home for their minister, Alexander Grant, his wife Anna and their family. The Argus reported August 7, 1887: "The Knox congregation has purchased a large stone house on Emily Street to serve as a manse. The property is a good one and suitable for a large family." The official record indicates that the purchase was not finalized until May 28, 1890. There must have been an agreement to purchase while John Harding still owned the property but had moved from St. Marys.

Grant was Knox Church's second minister, replacing W. A. Wilson in 1885, and St. Marys was his second pastoral charge. Born in Bristol, Quebec in 1836, the son of Scottish settlers, he had attended the University of Toronto, graduating with a gold medal in science. He enrolled in Knox College and after ordination served in Oneida, Haldimand County, before accepting the call to St. Marys. On December 28, 1864, he married Anna Hudson whose family had come to Canada from Dublin, Ireland in 1857. By the time the Grants arrived in St. Marys there were six children, three boys and three girls, ranging from six to nineteen years of age. Grant continued as the highly popular minister of Knox Church from 1885 to 1907 and through those years, he and his family travelled across town – usually on foot and frequently



several times a day – from the Emily Street house to the Knox Presbyterian Church on Church Street South.

#### The Reverend Alexander Grant

Alexander Grant purchased the property for himself March 10, 1902, apparently planning to stay in St. Marys when he retired from active ministry. During their years in St. Marys and after they grew up and left town, all the Grants made their mark. They were a gifted and talented family. Both Alexander and his wife Anna were much loved by their congregation and were well-known in the wider community. One of the daughters, Julia was an accomplished artist. William Harvey, the oldest son became a missionary for the Presbyterian Church of Canada in Honan, China. The two younger sons, Richard and Alex, were well known in St. Marys for their athletic ability. They excelled at all sports but in particular, they were both great runners and competed at high levels, including the 1900 Paris Olympics.

The Reverend Alexander Grant died late Saturday evening May 17, 1907, and was mourned by the whole community. Anna and some of her family remained in the stone house for several more years but eventually moved to Toronto where she died April 8, 1916, aged 77 years.

#### Alexander McKay

On September 6, 1911, Alexander McKay, a retired miller, purchased the property from Anna Grant. When he died on Boxing Day, 1919, and his obituary provided this information.

*An aged and much esteemed resident of St. Marys passed away at his home on Water Street North on Friday December 26, 1919 in the person of Alexander McKay who was 75 years of age. He had resided in St. Marys the past five years in the house once owned and occupied by the late Reverend Mr. Grant.*

*He moved from Zorra, near Embro, about 40 years ago to Glengowan, where he ran the flour mills, previous to retiring to St. Marys. He was a Presbyterian in religion and a man of many sterling qualities. He was unmarried and leaves one brother Robert of Kincardine, two sisters at home, Catherine and Janet, and one sister, Mrs. Robert Murray of Niagara Falls, Ontario.*

*St. Marys Argus, January 1, 1920*

Following his death, his two unmarried sisters, Catherine and Janet, remained in the home until Catherine died on February 19, 1921 and Janet on July 28, 1925. The 1929 assessment record lists the property owner as the McKay Estate. The house appears to be vacant. The town seems to have taken it over for back taxes soon after this.

Glen Millson who grew up at 275 Emily Street remembers 285 Emily as abandoned. He and his friends used to play in it during that time. During the height of the depression, he recalls that a family did live there for a time but essentially, it was empty and his father used the back portion to store grain for his livestock.



### **Louis G. D'Ambrose**

The abstract shows that Louis D'Ambrose as the purchaser of this property September 26, 1938 from the Town of St. Marys. However, he never lived in it and the property continued to be listed as vacant during his ownership. It is possible that he had plans for it, but these could not be realized because of the depression.

### **The Hoopers**

Three Hooper brothers, Harold, Earl and Wilbert purchased the property December 16, 1944 from the Town of St. Marys for \$280 in back taxes. It was adjacent to the farm on Emily Street where they established their prosperous Thamescrest Farms, a Holstein cattle and mink operation that was well known throughout this region for decades.

In 1950, Harold Hooper married Dorothy Kastner. Eventually they assumed ownership of the stone house and restored it. The Hoopers rented the very spacious rear portion of 285 Emily and lived in the front portion. Harold died in 2002. Dorothy continued to live in the house until she died in 2008.

### **Christina Douthwaite and Reginald Clinton**

Christina Douthwaite and Reginald Clinton, both veterinarians, purchased the home in 2009 from the Hooper Estate. Over the next several years they undertook extensive renovations to the home, eventually returning the two apartments to one single-family living space. At the time of designation, they live in the home with their two children.

### **Design or Physical Value**

The plan for this house is to run east to west with the main entrance facing Emily Street and the longitudinal L shaped section runs this way. In architecture the building is known as compound plan with the latitudinal section facing Emily Street.

The roof is saddle back style with a single steep pitched centre cross gable, from the front of the house into the main ridge board running longitudinally north/south; as well as a lesser pitched roof running from the ridge board east to form the L shape part of the house. The two chimney stacks are double flues and ridge type, rising out of the north and south walls of the west section or bottom of the L shape, which faces Emily Street. The masonry of the chimney is limestone, square cut coursed ashlar. The material on the roof is asphalt tile, having replaced the original material which was wood shakes. The north/east roof covers the extension build on to the house later than the front section and has one limestone chimney stack rising out of the east wall at the rear of the house. It is patterned in cut course ashlar similar to the others. A second chimney was added in the mid-part of the century, which is a ridge type single flue, near the western joint of the cross gable made of brick masonry to support a modern gas furnace.

The roof edge has enclosed wood soffits with plain eaves and no decorative bargeboard (removed during an early renovation). The front of the house and longitudinal section to the

east are guttered with aluminum eave troughs and downspouts, as well as both sites of the north/east extension.

The front or west façade is limestone regular cut ashlar, with a central protrusion which contains the entrance and the second story window centred in the cross gable. Small windows are on each side of this section making the interior entrance bright with light during the daylight hours. Upper gable window is a double hung narrow paired Italianate style. All windows have aluminum shutters. The entrance structure on this fascia is a stoop style, with a bracketed solid pediment door surround covering the door, which is a fielded panel type. At time of designation, the owners plan to install a thermal wood and glass storm door and will add two panels of stained glass to the wooden door.

The north/east extension and southern walls are limestone, irregular coursed rubble. The rear wall or east extension has a field stone ground floor with a wood plinth separating it from the second level; which matches the other walls of the extension in limestone rubble. Extending from the field stone wall is a sided covered entryway.

There were two apartment entry doors with overhead canopies on the south wall which were taken down when the two apartments within the house were joined together into one. There is now one entrance on the south side and a wall was removed below the back north/east window to turn it into a doorway so that there is now an entrance from the driveway/north side of the home. The second apartment door was closed over with the stone from the other side that was removed to make a doorway on the driveway/north side.

The original part of the house was underpinned on the north half so there is a full basement under half of the original and the entire back/new addition. There are no window wells other than the two steel ones that the ventilation and electrical runs into the house through. All other basement windows were lost due to the foundation collapse and underpinning/dead wall that required pouring during renovations. There is also a basement walkout at the back.

### **Contextual Value**

The home at 285 Emily Street is located in the North Wards of St. Marys, on a street overlooking the Thames River. It is located on the former land of Thamescrest Farms, near the sites of several former mills that were powered by the Thames River.

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Character-defining elements that make this property worthy of designation include:

- Site of residence, located on Emily Street on former Thamescrest Farm site.
- Saddleback style roof with large central gable on the west façade.
- L-shape design with central protrusion at west façade entrance.
- Two limestone chimneys, on the north and south ends of the Emily Street façade. The north chimney was fully rebuilt in 2023 using limestone to closely match the original.
- All exterior limestone masonry walls.

### **Designated Features**

This designation includes all original exterior features described in the Description of Heritage Attributes section above.

**Background Documentation (Sources Consulted)**

- Municipal assessment rolls, St. Marys Museum.
- Abstracts of property transactions, Perth County Registry Office, on microfilm at the St. Marys Museum.
- Articles from the St. Marys Journal Argus and other early local newspapers in the R. Lorne Eedy Archives at the St. Marys Museum.
- Canadian census records, on microfilm at the St. Marys Museum.
- Cemetery records, prepared by the Ontario Genealogical Society, Perth County Branch.
- Additional support material in the R. Lorne Eedy Archives or available from on-line genealogical sources.
- L. W. Wilson and Larry R. Pfaff , Early St. Marys, 1980
- Architectural descriptions of Limestone Houses, William Kilborn, St. Marys Museum, 1999.
- Property history for 285 Emily Street, prepared by Ken Telfer and Mary Smith.
- Property history provided by owners, Reginald Clinton and Christina Douthwaite

More detailed information about this property and additional photographs are available in the archives and reference areas of the St. Marys Museum.