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# The Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND PREMISES KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS **289 RICARDO STREET, KING'S LANDING** (Plan M18, Lot 5 Part 30R 6729), IN THE TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

## NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: THE ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST, 10 ADELAIDE STREET EAST,  
TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5C 1J3

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake intends to designate the property, including the lands and building known municipally as **289 RICARDO STREET, KING'S LANDING** as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter 0.18.

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

King's Landing's cultural heritage value consists of the fact that it was constructed on land that was once part of the Navy Hall complex and that it occupies a prominent position on the Niagara River. The site for the house was part of the holdings of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company, a large shipbuilding and repair enterprise. It was purchased by Walter Meneilley from the Honourable John Galt, in 1870 and remained in the Meneilley family as a vacant parcel until it was purchased by John Joseph Wright of Toronto in 1903. Wright constructed the little summer house, which still exists on the site, in 1906 and commenced construction of the main house in 1908.

Although the designer of the house is not known, the building was constructed in the classic Tudor Revival style common in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Exterior features characteristic of this style include an asymmetrical design and layout, half timbering, steeply pitched gabled roofs, groupings of narrow windows, dramatically tall off centre stone chimneys. One feature of note is the large open stone porch at the rear of the house, overlooking the river. This expansive space, with its large stone pillars and bead board ceiling is indicative of the fact that the façade facing the river was more important than the façade facing Ricardo Street.

Over the years there have been minor alterations to the exterior of the building. The music room was added in 1910 and extended on the river side c.1915. Other alterations include the relocation of the Ricardo Street entrance, the construction of an enclosed gabled space where there was once a balcony above the rear porch, and the addition of a glass conservatory addition to the music room in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (to be removed).

A landscape plan by the Lorrie A. Dunnington-Grubb was completed for the property in 1923 when it was purchased by ██████████ Cleveland Ohio. The firm of Dunnington-Grubb provided a landscape and planting plan which is still extant. Although much of the original design, including the flower beds, has been destroyed over the years, the area that includes the pergola and wisteria in front of the house are surviving features of the original design. A small screened wooden summer house with a bell cast roof is an early and significant landscape feature. It was constructed before the house was built. During the time the house was being built, the Wright family lived in tents on the property and used the summer house for dining.

The main floor of the house retains much of its original Tudor Revival detail including dark wood trim around doors and windows, plate rails, a large cobblestone fireplace with mantel and brackets in the living room and a smaller stone fireplace in the music room. Although the original front entrance, which was located directly in front of the staircase, has been closed and relocated, the staircase with its heavy carved newel post, newel cap and balustrade, has survived.

King's Landing's cultural heritage value also includes its association with the a number of prominent owners and designers including John Joseph Wright; Harris Wheaton Price; L. and H. Dunnington-Grubb, landscape architects; and Tricia Romance, artist.

John Joseph Wright, who built the house, was one of the most significant pioneers in electrical development in North America. He assisted in the electrification of Washington, D.C. and built the first electrical trolley line in Toronto. He also opened Toronto's first commercial power station and was elected the first president of the Canadian Electrical Association. Wright's permanent residence was in Toronto. His choice of a lot on the Niagara River, somewhat removed from the other large summer homes in Niagara-on-the-Lake, allowed him to moor his steam yacht *Electra* on the river so that he could sail back and forth between his offices in Toronto and his summer home in Niagara.

When Wright died in 1922, the property was purchased by Harris Wheaton Price of Cleveland Ohio and remained in his family until 1982. It was Mr. Price who engaged Lorrie Alfreda Dunnington-Grubb to lay out the gardens. Dunnington-Grubb and her husband, Howard Burlingham Dunnington-Grubb were two of the first landscape architects to practice in Canada. She was the first woman to

practice the profession in Canada. Their work included the Rand Estate in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Oakes Gardens, the sunken gardens at McMaster University and Gage Park in Hamilton. The two founded Sheridan Nurseries to provide much needed nursery material for their many projects.

Tricia Romance, a well known artist, lived and painted in the house until just recently.

### **Description of Key Heritage Attributes**

Key exterior, structural and landscape attributes that reflect the value of the King's Landing as an excellent and relatively rare example of the Tudor Revival style in the Town and, as one of the large summer homes constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with close associations to both the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, include:

- The entire exterior of the house including the covered stone porch on the Niagara River façade of the building.
- The summer house, in its relocated position.
- The pergola and any remaining landscaping designed by the firm of Dunnington-Grubb.
- The original wall and stone entrance pillars.
- The interior trim on the ground floor including baseboards, door surrounds, plate rails and mantelpieces.
- Original hardwood floors on the ground floor.
- The two stone fireplaces.
- The staircase including the newel post and balustrade.

Dated at the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake the 7<sup>th</sup> day of March 2008.



Holly Dowd,

Clerk