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In the Matter of the Ontario Heritage Act
R.S.O. 1990, Ch.O.18

And in the matter of lands and premises at the following municipal address in the Province of Ontario.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Cambridge intends to designate the following property for its cultural heritage value or interest under the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18, Part IV, Section 29.

171 GUELPH AVENUE ("FORBES ESTATE")

RECEIVED
2024/06/03
(YYYY/MM/DD)
Ontario Heritage Trust

Description of Historic Place

The subject property is located on the east side of Guelph Avenue, along Forbes Lane. The property is located north of downtown Hespeler and west of the Hespeler Mill Pond. The property contains a two-and-a-half brick dwelling with several additions. A historic stone wall fronts the property, along Guelph Avenue.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 171 Guelph Avenue, City of Cambridge retains physical/design, historical/associative, and contextual value.

The property at 171 Guelph Avenue, known as the Forbes Estate, includes a fine example of a Classical Revival home with Beaux-Arts details. The Forbes House displays high degrees of craftsmanship and artistic merit throughout including its expressive front façade that incorporates ornate Ionic columns, wooden railings, and robust cornice. The building has a prominent porte-cochère that incorporates stone elements and includes Beaux-Arts details such as lead windows and exterior light fixtures. The Forbes House was designed by Taylor and Taylor, a Brantford based architecture firm that designed numerous important buildings in Brantford including the Market Building, Temple Building, Masonic Hall, and Brantford City Hall. The firm also designed buildings in Ingersoll, Woodstock, London, along with the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hespeler. In addition to the Forbes House, the property formerly featured a stone tower used for agricultural purposes that will be relocated to Jacob's Landing at the Hespeler Mill Pond.

The Forbes Estate's location on the fringes of the Hespeler community adjacent to the Speed River is consistent with a historical approach to landscape and estate design that maintained that a rural setting and proximity to the natural environment were beneficial to health and wellness. The high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit of the Forbes House, the Forbes Estate's winding driveway and its articulation with a porte-cochère, extant rows of vegetation, remnant rubble stone wall, and the former orchard are consistent features of estate-like properties.

Historically, the property is associated with several prominent residents throughout its history, namely George Forbes, the first mayor of the Town of Hespeler, founder of the Dominion Woollens Textile Mill, and a prominent industrialist within the community. Forbes' assemblage of the property has created the large estate-like property. Forbes' son George Alexander Forbes also lived on the property and, like his father, was a prominent capitalist but was also known for his conservation work involving wood ducks. George Forbes's brother-in-law, Zachariah Hall, also lived in the Forbes House. Hall was a local manufacturer and notable inventor of the two-piece hockey stick. Additionally, the property is associated with early agricultural development in Hespeler and may be associated with Hespeler's original farm, associating the property with one of the community's earliest settlers, an important business person within the Hespeler community, and the namesake for the town.

Contextually, the Forbes Estate has historically been a defining feature north of the Speed River with the property comprising much of the land east of Guelph Avenue. Today, the Forbes Estate is much smaller but retains a distinctive setting on Guelph Avenue. Though partially obscured, the Forbes House is the visually predominant feature of the property and is one of three buildings on contiguous properties on the east side of Guelph Avenue with historic influences and similar setbacks from the street. The east side of Guelph Avenue is tree-lined and contributes to the streetscape and exemplifies the private character of the Forbes Estate.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Forbes House

- The location of the Forbes House, set back from Guelph Avenue;
- The winding driveway leading to the Forbes House;
- The materials including buff brick and stone plinths, lintels, sills, ornamentation, and wood detailing;
- The front facade including the entrance with its stone lintel, wooden doors, and sidelights; incorporating Beaux-Arts details, the ornate ionic columns, wooden railings, porch, and balcony;
- The rare porte-cochère on the south elevation which is supported by four square brick piers sitting on stone plinths with base mouldings. The roof of the porte-cochère has a cornice with dentils and decorative brackets;
- The Beaux-Arts details including lead windows and exterior light fixtures; and
- The slate mansard roof with flared eaves, identical dormers, and robust cornice including dentils and brackets on all elevations.
- Three brick external chimneys on the south, north and east elevations;
- The symmetrical principal (west) façade, that features ornate ionic columns with a stone base, a first-floor porch, and second storey balcony that spans the width of the front elevation, containing robust wooden railings;
- The overhanging roof, which contains a significant cornice with dentils and evenly spaced brackets;
- A projecting portion of the building on the north elevation that contains two stone band courses and an external chimney with stepped stone inset.

Other features

- The rubble wall, which contributes to the estate boundary along Guelph Avenue;
- The rows of vegetation on the property demarcating the boundary along Guelph Avenue and the internal boundary between the Forbes House and the original George Forbes House that was demolished in 1949.

For more information on the Statement or this designation, please contact Jeremy Parsons, Senior Planner-Heritage at parsonsje@cambridge.ca.

ANY PERSON MAY, within thirty days of the publication of this Notice, serve notice of their objection on the City Clerk in accordance with the Section 29(5) and 67 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18. The notice must set out the reason(s) for the objection and all relevant facts, in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act.

Dated at Cambridge this 21st day of March, 2024.

Danielle Manton, City Clerk

If you require information in an accessible format or accommodation to access municipal services please contact accessibility@cambridge.ca
General contact numbers: (519) 623-1340