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CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF ESSEX

33 Talbot Street South, Essex, Ontario, N8M 1A8

p: 519.776.7336 f: 519.776.8811 | essex.ca

June 24, 2024

[REDACTED]
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RECEIVED
2024/06/26
(YYYY/MM/DD)
Ontario Heritage Trust

RE: African Methodist Episcopal/New Canaan Cemetery Located at 0 County Road 12, on the South Side of County Road 12, just West of the Hamlet of Gesto

Dear Town of Essex Property Owner.

At their regular meeting on Monday June 17, the Council for the Corporation of the Town of Essex issued a Notice of Intention to Designate your property at 0 County Road 12 under section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Why was my property selected?

Your property has been selected because it displays cultural heritage value and interest.

Attached is a Statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property.

Notice of objection

A Notice of Objection to the Notice of Intention to Designate may be served on the Clerk of the Town of Essex by **July 27, 2024**. The Notice of Objection must set out the reasons for the objection and all relevant facts.

Your cooperation with the preservation of our past is greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Rita Jabbour, RPP

Manager, Planning Services

rjabbour@essex.ca

519.776.7336 ext. 1112

Where you belong



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c.c. Joseph A. Malandruccolo, Director, Legal and Legislative Services/Clerk

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APPENDIX A

Municipal Address

0 County Road 12 – African Methodist Episcopal/New Canaan Cemetery

Legal Description

CON SMR N PT LOT 18

General Description of Property

The African Methodist Episcopal Cemetery, also referred to as the New Canaan Cemetery, is located at 0 County Road 12, on the south side of County Road 12, just west of the hamlet of Gesto. The cemetery is not visible from the street front and is accessed from County Road 12 through a 22-foot wide right-of-way. It is comprised of the A.M.E./New Canaan Cemetery: a small historically Black cemetery that dates back to the early 19th century and houses headstones on a cement pad.

Description of Property that has Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The area of the property that demonstrates cultural heritage value or interest is the area that includes the cemetery all existing marked and unmarked burials.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Historical/Associative

The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

0 County Road 12 retains significant historical value because it has direct associations with significant people, such as Delos R. Davis, and the New Canaan settlement, a historically Black settlement that was settled by individuals who had come to Canada via the Underground Railroad. The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E)/New Canaan Cemetery, also known as the Chavis Cemetery due to the number of Chavis' buried there, is the only remaining part of the New Canaan Settlement.



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New Canaan was a small, historically Black, settlement that was established by African American freedom seekers who arrived in Canada in the early 19th century, via the Underground Railroad. Families first began settling in Colchester North in the early 1830s, with the desire to own land and establish communities for themselves. The very first freedom seekers settled in New Canaan in the early 1830s and by 1840, it was a thriving community comprised of about 20 families living in and around the area. They acquired land through "Clergy Reserves" and the Canada Company, a private land development company that worked to aid in the colonization and settlement of land in Upper Canada. At the community's peak in 1900, it consisted of 2 churches, a cemetery, a school, and a small grocery store with a post office, and in 1909, the population reached approximately 60 people.

The cemetery is also the final resting place of Delos R. Davis, the first Freedom Seeker to become a lawyer in Canada, and the first Black man to make the King's Counsel in the British Empire. Davis would have a large impact on the community of New Canaan and nearby Black communities, like Harrow and Gilgal, as he advocated for the education of children. Before becoming a lawyer, he taught at the Gilgal A.M.E school in the early 1870s, until he resigned and began pursuing his career in law. He began to study law under attorney Charles Robert Horne and would become a Notary for the Province of Ontario on June 19, 1873. Due to his race, he was unable to complete his education, as the Law Society of Ontario required that all students work with an established lawyer, before writing their examinations for The Bar. No lawyer in the area would hire him and he was unable to complete his education until 1886, after a special act authorizing the Supreme Court of Judicature for Ontario to admit him as a solicitor. This act was pushed by M.P.P William Douglas Balfour and on Nov. 15, 1886, Delos R. Davis was admitted to The Bar.

The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

0 County Road 12 retains significant historical or associative value because it has the potential to yield information about the New Canaan Settlement and the area's earliest families and their lives. The property provides evidence to the settlement of New



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Canaan by some of the earliest freedom seekers and can help showcase the community's development and eventual fall.

Alongside this, the property is significant because of its associations with numerous influential Black families from across Windsor and Essex County, including the Chavis, Davis, and Nolan families.

Contextual

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

0 County Road 12 retains contextual value because it is physically and historically linked to its surroundings due to it being the only remaining part of the New Canaan Settlement.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The key heritage attributes that contribute to the historical/associative value of 0 County Road 12 includes:

- Its location on the south side of County Road 12 in the former settlement of New Canaan,
- All existing burials and headstones,
- The cement pad with inset headstones.

Key attributes that contribute to the contextual value of 0 County Road 12, includes:

- Its location on the south side of County Road 12 in the former settlement of New Canaan.