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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

Provincial Heritage Registrar

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

August 22, 2024

RECEIVED
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Ontario Heritage Trust

RE: **Notice of Intention to Designate Nine (9) Properties within the Town of Essex
under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act**

At their regular meeting on Monday August 12, the Council for the Corporation of the Town of Essex issued a Notice of Intention to Designate nine (9) properties under section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The following is a list of those properties:

1. 21 King Street East (Harrow)
2. 22 King Street West (Harrow)
3. 94 Talbot Street South (Essex Centre)
4. 98 Talbot Street South (Essex Centre)
5. 102 Talbot Street South (Essex Centre)
6. 314 Queen Street (Harrow)
7. 400 County Road 13 (Colchester)
8. Ferriss Cemetery (0 Ferriss Road, Harrow)
9. Gilgal Cemetery (0 County Road 11, Harrow)

Statements of Cultural Heritage Value and Interest for each property has been attached.

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 **September 30, 2024**. The Notice of Objection must set out the reasons for the objection and all relevant facts.

Yours truly,

Rita Jabbour

Rita Jabbour, RPP

Manager, Planning Services

rjabbour@essex.ca

519.776.7336 ext. 1112

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

jmalandrucolo@essex.ca

519.776.7336 ext. 1132

APPENDIX A

The Gilgal Cemetery

Municipal Address

0 County Road 11, Essex

Legal Description

CON 5 PT LOT 7

General Description of Property

The Gilgal Cemetery is located at 0 County Road 11, on the east side of County Road 11 between the 5th Concession and the 6th Concession. The cemetery is visible from the road and is accessed from County Road 11 from the roadside. It is comprised of the Gilgal Cemetery: a small historically Black cemetery that dates back to the early 19th century and houses a few headstones.

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 and 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 11 retains significant historical value because it has direct associations with significant people, such as Alexander Kersey, William Kersey and Delos R. Davis and the Village of Gilgal, a historically Black settlement that was settled by individuals who had come to Canada via the Underground Railroad. The Gilgal Cemetery is the only remaining part of the Gilgal Settlement.

Gilgal was a small, predominantly Black community that was established by African American Freedom Seekers who arrived in Canada in the early 19th century, via the Underground Railroad. The first settlers arrived in the area in the 1840's, as Freedom Seekers who had arrived in Amherstburg travelled along the Pike Road, along the edge

of a historic marsh. In 1852, settlers built a small British Methodist Episcopal Church on land donated to the community by Nasa McCurdy, mostly through the efforts of Alexander and William Kersey. The Kersey family was a free Black family living in Indiana, prior to the start of the American Civil War. Due to the political and social situations at the time, the Kersey family migrated north and arrived in the area in the mid-1850s. Alexander Kersey and his wife, Amanda Watterford-Kersey, settled in the Colchester South Township, north of Harrow. He was a well-known minister and preached at the Gilgal British Methodist Episcopal Church (B.M.E.), later the Gilgal African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.), and Bulter's Chapel A.M.E. in New Canaan. He and his son, William Kersey, would build the Gilgal Church in 1852. William Kersey would later help build the small school in Gilgal and a Black school and church in the community of Pleasant Valley.

A small school was established in the community in the late nineteenth-century through the church. One of the first teachers at the school was Delos R. Davis, the first Freedom Seeker to become a lawyer in Canada and the first Black man to make King's Counsel in the British Empire. He taught at the school in the early 1870's, shortly before he became a lawyer. In 1897, the community would build a small brick schoolhouse with funds donated by Hiram Walker. The Gilgal Schoolhouse, Section C, was originally designated as a Black school by Colchester authorities, however, this would change in the early 1900's as the community's population gradually became more diverse.

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 11 retains significant historical or associative value because it has the potential to yield information about the Village of Gilgal and the area's earliest families and their lives. The property provides evidence to the Village of Gilgal by some of the earliest Freedom Seekers and can help showcase the community's development and eventual decline.

Alongside this, the property is significant because of its associations with numerous influential Black families from across Windsor and Essex County, including the Grayer, Hurst, and Powell families, which can all be seen in burial records.

Contextual

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

0 County Road 11 retains contextual value because it is physically and historically linked to its surroundings due to it being the only remaining part of the Village of Gilgal.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The key heritage attributes that contribute to the historical/associative value of 0 County Road 11 includes:

- Its location on the east side of County Road 11 in the former Village of Gilgal,
- All existing burials and headstones.

The key heritage attributes that contribute to the contextual value of 0 County Road 11 includes:

- Its location on the east side of County Road 11 in the former Village of Gilgal.