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CONSERVATION REVIEW
BOARD

P.O. Box 10
Angus, Ontario
L0M 1B0

TOWNSHIP OF ESSA

October 28, 1999

Ontario Heritage Foundation
3rd Floor, 10 Adelaide St. E.
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 1J3

Dear Sir/Madam:

Pursuant to Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, please find attached a "Notice of Intention to Designate" relative to Part Lot 30, Concession 7, in the Township.

Yours truly,

Brenda Sigouin
Clerk-Administrator

BS:bs
att.

Notice of Intention to Designate

Take Notice that the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Essa intends to designate the building and property located on Part Lot 30, Concession 7 in the Township of Essa known as the "Old Bell Mill" as a property of architectural and historical value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, RSO 1990, c.O.18.

Reasons for designation:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The original mill which was established in 1864 on Bear Creek in Utopia was burned to the ground in May 1903 and reopened on January 1, 1904. It had originally been operated by James Spink and later by Richard Bell as a grist and flour mill at night and a saw mill during the day. The scheduling of work night and day is an indication of how important water-run mills were in that era.

The Bell Mill provided an important service in Essa by producing flour and feed for the farmers which was distributed to many communities in the area. It also processed grain from the prairie provinces.

The mill operated successfully until the early 1940's when it was scaled down to one water turbine from two. As a result of Hurricane Hazel, the dam was damaged and the water receded from the mill. Eventually a diesel engine was installed to power the mill. The mill was finally closed in 1965, a victim of changing times.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Bell Mill is a unique vernacular water-run mill, forty feet square, built on Bear Creek, Utopia, at the turn of the century. Its local granite fieldstone foundation, two and a half feet thick, fifteen feet high, on a four and a half foot deep stone and concrete raft that withstood hurricane Hazel, is in excellent condition. The gambrel roofed, wood faced of heavy timber super structure, three stories high, is constructed of hand hewn framed timbers which were drawn from a nearby forest and skillfully cut and notched for a perfect barn-raising fit. The building stands fifty feet high from raceway level to roof ridge. Proportionate balanced twelve pane windows are at each floor on all elevations. The mill houses four floors of the original assembly of milling process machinery in excellent condition for easy restoration.

ITEMS PROPOSED FOR DESIGNATION

All parts of the building, both inside and out that are deemed to be original to the mill.

All components of the original assembly of milling process machinery.

Any person may, within thirty days of the first publication of this notice, send by registered mail or deliver to the Clerk-Administrator of the Township of Essa notice of objection to the proposed designation together with a statement of the reasons for the objection. If such a notice of objection is received, the Clerk-Administrator of the Corporation of the Township of Essa shall refer the matter to the Conservation Review Board for a hearing.

Dated at the Township of Essa this 25th day of October, 1999.

Brenda Sigouin, Clerk-Administrator
Township of Essa
Box 10, Angus, ON L0M 1B0