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April 30, 2014

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

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Notice of Intention to Designate - Octagonal Barn  
14226 Talbot Trail, Community of Orford  
Municipality of Chatham-Kent**

At the Council Meeting held April 28, 2014 Chatham-Kent Council approved administration's recommendation for the Intention to Designate the property known as the Octagonal Barn, located at 14226 Talbot Trail, Community of Orford, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, for its cultural heritage value or interest, as defined by one or more of the Criteria under *Ontario Regulation 9/06*.

The cultural heritage value or interest of the subject property is explained in detail below:

Design Value or Physical Value - Ontario Regulation 9/06, Section 1(2)1

The Palmyra "Crazy 8 Barn" is an excellent and rare example of a late 19th century octagonal livestock barn with the key design feature, the wooden frame, preserved. The framing is composed of eight original five-sided adze-hewn pillars around the perimeter connected with beams. Another two sets of eight pillars with horizontal beams extend from the perimeter inwards like spokes of a wheel to support the 2nd floor.

Historical Value or Associative Value - Ontario Regulation 9/06, Section 1(2)2

The property has been associated with the centre of commerce in the village of Palmyra since the mid-19th century and is typical of the modest business districts that evolved at intermittent cross roads along the Talbot Trail during the early settlement period and evolved into communities. It is recorded that L. Banghart had a general store at this



location in the late 1800s but that it was destroyed by fire some time before 1900. A new substantial two storey brick commercial block replaced this earlier structure around 1900 and was operated as a general store by several entrepreneurs; the best remembered being Edward Burgess and, later, his widow Elda. They ran the business from 1947 to the late 1980s. The brick structure was torn down in the 1990s and the site lay vacant for about twenty years until the present structure was erected on the site in 2012-13.

The structure was originally built by Herbert and Charlotte Baker on Queens Line, Aldborough Township, Elgin County in 1890 to house livestock. The Baker's had, for a period, homesteaded in the Dakotas and upon returning, constructed a barn in the style that was popular in the American mid-west.

The structure has direct associations to the "round barn movement" that was popular, particularly in Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Dakotas, between 1880 and 1920. Barns of eight, twelve, and even sixteen sides were built during this period although the octagonal barns were primarily built between 1880 and 1900.

"Round barns" can be traced back in the United States to Virginia in the 1790s although the main association is to the Shaker movement in Hancock Mass. beginning in 1826. The designs were popularized in the 1880's when several American agricultural colleges began to espouse these designs as more agriculturally efficient. Indeed, the round design (a general description that includes 8, 12, and 16 sided barns) did provide a greater volume to surface ratio than a traditional rectangular barn. It also required less material and had greater structural stability which was felt to be an advantage in the mid-west that was exposed to prairie thunderstorms and other extreme weather. It was also considered a labour saving design as farmers could work in a continuous direction. The standard design (which the Baker barn follows) had a manger on the ground floor, wagon space for unloading food for the livestock on the second floor, and a central interior silo.

Some attribute the round barns popularity to Orson Fowler and his 1848 publication *Home for All: Of the Gravel Wall and Octagonal Mode of Building*. Fowler's designs were influential in residential design between 1850 and the end of the Civil War, however, the Shaker barn designs pre-date Fowler's publication (it has been speculated that, in fact, Fowler's residential designs were influenced by the Shaker barns). As well, the round barn popularity did not begin until fifteen years after Fowler's residential designs had fallen out of favour.

A more likely influence was the movement towards the scientific approach to production that began in the 1880s and was espoused by Frederick Taylor, an American management scientist, in the 1890s and turn of the century. "Taylorism" revolutionized

industrial production and the quest for production efficiencies and labour saving designs was also embraced in the agricultural sector. Unfortunately, it was revealed that the efficiencies of the round barn design were largely overstated.

The Baker barn, despite being re-located, is an important link to this movement. It is the only such structure in Chatham-Kent (and in the region) and is one of very few surviving in Ontario.

#### Contextual Value - Ontario Regulation 9/06, Section 1(2)3

The barn, in its new use, perpetuates the historic tradition of the site as the commercial centre of Palmyra and has quickly become a new landmark along the heavily travelled Talbot Trail.

#### Description of Heritage Attributes

The following heritage attributes have been identified on the subject property. These attributes were determined through the review of the above noted cultural heritage value or interest and completion of a site evaluation for the subject property

- Exterior
  - Roofline
  - Wooden beam frame
  - Post & beam construction
  - Rafters/roof joists
- Contextual
  - Key elements of the “Crazy 8 Barn” that support its contextual significance are:
    - Closeness to the road
    - Location on a corner lot
    - High level of visibility along a major historical highway

The cultural heritage value or interest and heritage attributes of the subject property have been incorporated into the Designation Report prepared for the subject property, which will be included as part of the designation by-law, to be considered by Council at a future meeting.

The Notice of Intention to Designate was placed on the Chatham-Kent home webpage on April 30, 2014.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this Notice of Intention to Designate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Brian Nagata". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Brian Nagata, Junior Planner  
Planning Services

C: Municipal Heritage Committee