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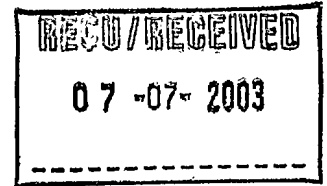


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Municipality of Chatham-Kent
In the Matter of the Ontario Heritage Act



Notice of Intent to Designate

The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O., 1990, Chapter 0.18 as amended, provides that the Municipal Council may pass a by-law designating property within the boundaries of the municipality to be of cultural heritage value and interest.

The Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent hereby gives Notice of Intent to designate the following property: /

81 Stanley Avenue, Community of Chatham as a property of cultural heritage value and interest. The Kent County Courthouse is one of only four remaining buildings in Chatham that predates 1860. The Courthouse was instrumental in forming and cementing the future of Chatham-Kent. The building and property became the cornerstone of the community and surrounding landscape; visually, socially and economically. The structure remains in its original site and the general character of the structure and site has remained virtually unchanged.

The report on the designation of this property, which was adopted by Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, is available upon request from the Strategic Development Services Department, Civic Centre, 315 King Street West, P.O. Box 640, Chatham, Ontario N7M 5K8.

Any person may, within 30 days of the date of this Notice, serve on the Clerk, a Notice of Objection in writing, setting out the objection and all relevant facts. Where a Notice of Objection has been served, the Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent shall refer the matter to the Conservation Review Board for a hearing.

Dated at the Municipality of Chatham-Kent this 2nd day of July, 2003.

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Property Designation Report

Heritage Chatham-Kent (Municipal Heritage Committee, formerly LACAC)

Date of Submission: May 21, 2003

Subject: The Property known as 81 Stanley Avenue, Chatham, Ontario.

Section 1: Purpose and General Description

The purpose of the proposed designation would be limited to the portion of the property utilized as the Kent County Courthouse and The Chatham-Kent Jail and more specifically, the original 1849 buildings and would be limited to those elements and structures as described in the "Reasons for Designation". (see *Section 2 of this document*).

Part A: Historical Significance

The Kent County Courthouse and Jail is one of only four remaining buildings in Chatham that predates 1860.

In 1847, with the passing of the Provisional District Act which separated Kent from Essex and Lambton counties, a District Council was elected and the District of Kent was formed. As the new district could not be considered official until it had a place to house its lawbreakers, the council members formed a building committee to take on the task. Plans submitted by the prominent 19th century Canadian Architect William Thomas of Toronto were approved. With no money in the treasury to pay for them, building supervisor George Young, the District Councilor from Harwich Township, and four other council members put up \$20.00 each towards purchasing them. On August 17, 1848 a ground breaking ceremony was held on the site at 81 Stanley Street, between Seventh and Eighth Streets. Edwin Larwell, the building committee chairman, presided over the ceremony and with great fanfare, the land was officially dedicated for the Jail and County offices. The building contract was awarded to the construction company Brown & Baxter.

During the construction of the structure, *"a young Scotsman by the name of Alexander Mackenzie, came to town looking for work. The talented stone worker was given the task of working on the rear wall of the courthouse. He then went on to work on the courthouses in Sarnia and Windsor. Of course, much later, he became Canada's second Prime Minister"*. (Lisa and Jim Gilbert, Chatham Daily News, March 29, 2003).

Under the provisions of the Municipal Act of 1849, the district system was abolished and the County of Kent was created. The first Council of the County of Kent officially received the courthouse from the contractor on February 27, 1851; however, the District Council's first meeting was held in the partially completed building on August 26, 1850.

The original plans showed the exterior of the building to be made of brick; however, the building committee decided on white limestone instead. The stones were bought at the Anderson Quarries in Malden by George Young, cut to their specific sizes, and then transported by ship via the Thames River. Landing on the river bank, the stones were hauled to the site using horses and oxen.

The original structure consisted of the large courtroom, offices for the Sheriff, County Clerk, Registrar, and Treasurer behind the courtroom on the second and third floors. The Judge's chambers and the Jury Room are located at the front of the building on the second and third floors. On the east side of the structure were three separate enclosed areas. Two of these were used as exercise yards, the male prisoners in one and the female and young offenders in the other. The third was for deliveries made through a large door built into its wall facing Eighth Street. On the west side sat the execution yard used only once throughout its 152 years in existence.

In the 1950's a newer, modern County building and Courthouse was built directly behind the structure to add more courtrooms and offices. This left only the Superior Courtroom and jail in the original building. With an increase in the need for more jail space, the second floor office space was converted to accommodate more jail cells. The third floor remained unaltered except for the construction of an enclosed catwalk that connected to the new courthouse. The rooms on this upper level are now in use for Crown witnesses and a Law Library. The Superior Courtroom, a large area with a high ceiling, has had significant changes made over the years. The cupola was eventually sealed off as it lost most of its initial usefulness. A stained glass window was set in the opening with artificial lighting to illuminate the room. Though most of the furniture and interior was replaced in this immense hall, the judge's chair, first occupied by Mr. Justice Sullivan on May 29, 1851, still remains today. The front entranceway, renovated in 1978 to house the electric panel box, contains the original staircases leading to the second and third floors. (*Chatham Daily News, June 20, 1978*). These grand staircases wind their way up, virtually untouched throughout time. Little has changed to the exterior of the building. The original windows deteriorated over time and were replaced with energy efficient tinted glass. Other minor changes for security and safety reasons have not affected the appearance of the building.

The property also contains a small one and a half storey house located at the front of the building used as the offices for the Ministry of Corrections.

Part B: Architectural Significance

The architect was William Thomas, a prominent Ontario architect from Toronto. Born in Suffolk England in 1799, he apprenticed as a carpenter and joiner and then established an architectural practice in England. Thomas immigrated to Canada in 1843. He soon gained widespread recognition for his public and ecclesiastical buildings and his numerous commercial and residential buildings as well. He received important commissions in other Upper Canada communities including Hamilton, Guelph, London, and Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The well proportioned white limestone and brick structure is designed in the Neo-Classical style common to many contemporary public buildings. The distinguishing features are; (a) the balustraded Roman-Doric balcony above the entranceway, (b) the bracketed cornice, (c) the prominent pediment, (d) the crowning cupola with Tuscan pilasters, (e) the quoins decorating the outside corners of the structure, and on the front of the building, (f) the voussoirs that mark the arches on the first floor windows, (g) the entablature style lintels above the second floor windows, and (h) the limestone label work above the third floor windows. The tall windows of the courtroom (i) are semi-circular with flat and moulded trim and keystones.

The floor plan employed is a T-style plan. The public stair to the second floor courtroom was originally in the entrance corridor. Additionally, the staircases led to the judge's chambers and the third floor jury rooms. The administrative offices were originally arranged on either side of the long central corridor, beyond which lay the jail.

Part C: Contextual Significance

The Kent County Courthouse and Chatham-Kent Jail was instrumental in forming and cementing the future of Chatham-Kent. With its inception, Kent County, and ultimately, Chatham-Kent, came into existence. The building and property became the cornerstone of the community and surrounding landscape; visually, socially and economically. The structure today serves as an important visual object that has acquired for the community a special and sentimental value as well as its usefulness in teaching local history and the promotion of tourism. The structure remains in its original site and the general character of the structure and site to be designated has remained virtually unchanged.

Of additional note is the fountain that sits on the southwest corner of the site. Early photographs indicate that this fountain has been located in this spot since the early 1900's.

Section 2: Reasons For Designation

Exterior (see also Section 1, Part B Architectural Significance and Appendix B: Images for details on the external elements of interest)

- The exterior of the structure in its entirety; includes (but not limited to) the various facades and their trims, windows and their trims, doors and their trims, columns, the cupola, pediments, the balcony, the semi circular enclosures (the exercise and hanging enclosures)
 - (a) the balustraded Roman-Doric balcony above the entranceway
 - (b) the bracketed cornice
 - (c) the prominent pediment
 - (d) the crowning cupola with Tuscan pilasters
 - (e) the quoins decorating the outside corners of the structure and on the front of the building
 - (f) the voussoirs that mark the arches on the first floor windows
 - (g) the entablature style lintels above the second floor windows
 - (h) the limestone label work above the third floor windows
 - (i) the tall semi-circular windows of the courtroom; with flat and molded trim and keystones.
 - (j) white limestone brick façade
 - (k) all window placements and sizes.
 - (l) the guard house located between the two exercise yards on the north east side of the jail.
- The water fountain located on the southwest side of the building.

Interior

- The grand staircases located in the front entranceway corridor in their entirety.
- All cove moldings throughout the building.
- All original interior doors and hardware, and mouldings.
- The stained glass window insert in the Superior courtroom ceiling.
- All woodwork intact in its original position on the interior of the Superior courtroom, excluding wainscoting on the northeast and southwest walls of this courtroom; that is the side walls.
- The judges chair.
- All original Superior Courtroom furnishings.

Section 3: Recommendations

1. That the elements listed in *Section 2: Reasons for Designation* be designated for their architectural and historical significance.

