

Municipality of Chatham-Kent

Community Development

Planning Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Anthony Jas
Manager, Development, Planning Services

Date: November 29, 2021

Subject: Ontario Heritage Act – Amendment to Designation By-law 83-35
Ridge House Museum, 53 Erie Street South, Community of Ridgetown

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Designation Report prepared by the Municipal Heritage Committee for the municipally-owned property known as 53 Erie Street South (Ridge House Museum), described as Lot 5, Plan 68, Block N, in the Community of Ridgetown, be received.
2. The Designation Report, as received, for the municipally-owned property known as 53 Erie Street South (Ridge House Museum), described as Lot 5, Plan 68, Block N, in the Community of Ridgetown, be amended by removing from Description of Heritage Attributes / Character Defining Elements the following:
 - i. elements associated with the new office addition;
 - ii. picket fencing and gates; and,
 - iii. well pump.
3. By-law 83-35, a By-law to designate the property known as 53 Erie Street South (Ridge House Museum), described as Lot 5, Plan 68, Block N, in the Community of Ridgetown, as being of architectural and historical value or interest, be amended, to include the Designation Report, as adopted, to be consistent with the criteria set out under Ontario Regulation 9/06, made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and that the amending by-law be approved.

Background

The Ridge House Museum property is a locally significant heritage property. It is owned by the Municipality and located at 53 Erie Street South in the Community of Ridgetown. The property contains a Gothic revival style house that was constructed in 1875, the same year that Ridgetown was incorporated as a Village. In 1975, the property was purchased by the Ridgetown Rotary Club as its centennial project and was later donated to the former Town of Ridgetown. In 2018, Chatham-Kent Council, which serves as the Ridge House Museum Board, approved the Ridge House Museum mission statement as follows: “to collect and preserve artifacts and specimens significant to the area represented by Ridgetown and the former Howard Township, and to use these to present and promote the history of this region.”

The Ridge House Museum operates as a Community Museum in a historic house. Unlike a living history museum, in which historic tools, activities, and dress are incorporated into an interactive, “role-playing” presentation, a community museum such as Ridge House invites guests to be guided through the house by uniformed museum ambassadors who provide information about the exhibits on display.

Management of Property

The responsibility to meet the mission of the Ridge House Museum is delegated by Council to Chatham-Kent Administration through the Community Human Services Department, Community Attraction and Leisure Services Division, Arts and Culture Services Section. The museum staff maintain a collection related to Ridgetown and Howard Township from pre-history to present. Access to the collection is facilitated through research, exhibition, interpretation, and education. Museum staff develop exhibitions, special events, and educational and public programming on a variety of themes presented both at the Ridge House Museum and outreach locations.

Council has also established the Ridge House Museum Advisory Committee to provide recommendations for consideration and to assist the Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent in the operation of the Ridge House Museum as follows:

- exploring available funding sources,
- providing support to other heritage/museum organizations,
- providing recommendations to administration with respect to short term and long term goals and objectives and the evaluation of performance of the Ridge House Museum, and
- providing recommendations with respect to any other issues of concern brought forward by Administration.

The maintenance of the Ridge House Museum is the responsibility of Chatham-Kent Administration through the Infrastructure and Engineering Services Department, Drainage, Asset & Waste Management Division, Asset Management Section.

Ontario Heritage Act

The Ridge House Museum property was designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* on September 12, 1983, for its architectural and historical value or interest.

In 2005, the Ontario Heritage Act underwent a comprehensive amendment through the Ontario Heritage Amendment Act, 2005, which came into force on April 28, 2005.

Among the changes at this time was the introduction of criteria regarding the cultural heritage value or interest a property must meet to be designated by a municipal council. The evaluation criteria was subsequently established in O. Reg. 9/06 which, to be designated, a property must meet one or more of the criteria grouped into the following categories:

- Design / Physical Value
- Historical / Associative Value
- Contextual Value

The Ontario Heritage Amendment Act, 2005, also introduced the requirement for a statement explaining such cultural heritage value or interest of a property and a description of the specific heritage attributes of a property.

The By-law designating the Ridge House Museum property was passed prior to the Ontario Heritage Amendment Act, 2005 coming into force, and therefore, does not include a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property, nor does it contain a description of its specific heritage attributes. In such cases, Section 30.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act permits council of a municipality to amend a by-law designating a property to make it consistent with these new requirements.

The recommendations of this report are to amend Designation By-law 83-35 to bring it into conformity with the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to clarify the parameters that guide municipal decision-making around service delivery (museum operations) and asset management (building maintenance) as it relates to the property.

As required by Section 30.1(5) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Municipal Heritage Committee, a Committee established by Council with the responsibility for advising Council regarding matters arising from the Ontario Heritage Act, was consulted on this matter. The Community Development Department, Planning Services Division provides administrative resources to the Municipal Heritage Committee, and has incorporated and summarized the advice of the Municipal Heritage Committee in this report.

Comments

The Municipal Heritage Committee passed a motion at its April 17, 2019 meeting to amend designation By-law 83-35 to be consistent with the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as described above. The amendment includes a statement of cultural heritage value or interest and a description of the specific heritage attributes of the property. This information is included in Schedule A (Designation Report) of the amending By-law that is attached as Appendix A, and is being recommended for adoption to facilitate the amendment. This Designation Report specifically identifies the following character defining elements of the property:

- Footprint
- Roof line
- Window placement
- Window casements and trim
- Window pediments
- Window sashes
- Front porch supports and gingerbread trim
- Front porch railing
- Front door casements and trim
- Clapboard siding
- Picket fencing and gates
- Well pump

A report that was adopted by the Municipal Heritage Committee was circulated to the Administrative Departments responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Ridge House Museum property. Through this consultation, it was recommended that the Designation Report be amended to remove the following character defining elements:

- Attributes and/or character defining elements associated with the office addition
- Picket fencing and gates
- Well pump

The Arts and Culture Section has indicated that the well pump had to be removed to prevent injury because it was in poor condition and imposed a health and safety concern, as the platform upon which it sits was unstable and rotted through. The pump's location was problematic because it prohibited accessible entrance to the backyard. According to Ridge House annual report archives, the pump was installed in 1981. The pump was not interpreted by museum ambassadors as tours do not include the outside of the house. If museum staff chooses to interpret the need for a water pump in a rural 1875 house, other more effective options are available as the water pump described in the designation report was not functional. One option is to use a transparent working model of a water pump that can be operated indoors with water as a STEM activity to demonstrate the science behind this important Victorian-era device.

Additionally, the Arts and Culture Section has indicated that the picket fencing and building addition are only sympathetic elements and not original features of a middle class Victorian home. As such, it was identified that inclusion of these elements will add additional costs and administrative constraints in maintaining the property in a manner acceptable to, and expected of, the Municipality. The picket fence is not interpreted by

museum ambassadors as tours do not include the outside of the house. The building addition is pointed out to visitors, just as any restoration or non-original part of a museum artifact on display would be, but tours do not include this area.

The Asset Management Section also provided comments regarding financial implications related to the maintenance of the Ridge House Museum property. These comments have been summarized in the Financial Implications section below.

Part of the designation by-law amendment process is that the owner on Title of the designated property be given notice of the proposed amendment to the designation by-law. As stated above, Chatham-Kent is the owner of the subject property, and as such, the consultation that was undertaken in drafting this report and the recommendation, satisfies this requirement of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The adoption of a by-law to amend By-law 83-35 will complete the final step of the process outlined under Section 30.1 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, for amending a Designation By-law.

Options for Council

As stated previously, it is appropriate that By-law 83-35 be amended to be in compliance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The recommendations of this report reflect the advice of the Municipal Heritage Committee and have taken into consideration consultation with Administration. Therefore, Council has several options with respect to the By-law amendment process, which are as follows:

- 1) Proceed with a motion to adopt Recommendations 1, 2 & 3. This will revise the Designation Report adopted by the Municipal Heritage Committee and amend Designation By-law 83-35.
- 2) Proceed with a motion to adopt only Recommendation 1 & 3. This will amend By-law 83-35 with the Designation Report as adopted by the Municipal Heritage Committee.
- 3) Receive this report and take no action. The Ridge House Museum property will remain designated under the current by-law. Under this option, issues related to the ongoing management of the property will persist.
- 4) Receive this report and proceed with a motion under Section 31 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to initiate the process of repealing Designation By-law 83-35. The outcome of this process is that the property is no longer designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Areas of Strategic Focus and Critical Success Factors

The recommendations in this report support the following areas of strategic focus:

- ☐ Economic Prosperity:
Chatham-Kent is an innovative and thriving community with a diversified economy
- ☐ A Healthy and Safe Community:
Chatham-Kent is a healthy and safe community with sustainable population growth
- ☒ People and Culture:
Chatham-Kent is recognized as a culturally vibrant, dynamic, and creative community
- ☐ Environmental Sustainability:
Chatham-Kent is a community that is environmentally sustainable and promotes stewardship of our natural resources

The recommendations in this report support the following critical success factors:

- ☐ Financial Sustainability:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is financially sustainable
- ☐ Open, Transparent and Effective Governance:
The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is open, transparent and effectively governed with efficient and bold, visionary leadership
- ☐ Has the potential to support all areas of strategic focus & critical success factors
- ☐ Neutral issues (does not support negatively or positively)

Consultation

Municipal Heritage Committee

The Municipal Heritage Committee was consulted in accordance with Section 30.1(5) of the Act. The Committee does not support Recommendation 2 as set out in the report. Of the options available to Council, the Committee recommends Option 2 which is to amend By-law 83-35 with the Designation Report as adopted by the Municipal Heritage Committee.

The Municipal Heritage Committee has submitted comments that further clarifies its position in the matter being considered by this Report. The comments are attached as Appendix B.

Ridge House Museum Advisory Committee

The Ridge House Museum Advisory Committee was consulted on April 14, 2021. Of the options available to Council, the Ridge House Museum Advisory Committee recommends Option 1 which is to adopt Recommendations 1, 2 & 3 as set out in the report.

Community Human Services

The Community Human Services Department is responsible for the operation of the Ridge House Museum. Consultation with Community Human Services resulted in Recommendation 2, to revise the Designation Report adopted by the Municipal Heritage Committee. Of the options available to Council, Community Human Services recommends Option 1 which is to adopt Recommendations 1, 2 & 3 as set out in the report.

Infrastructure and Engineering Services

The Infrastructure and Engineering Department was consulted to obtain financial costs associated with maintenance of the Ridge House Museum property. These figures have been summarized in the Financial Implications section of this report.

Financial Implications

The appropriate annual lifecycle budget allocation for the Ridge House Museum property is \$6 per sq. ft. (approximately \$20,700). The actual annual lifecycle budget allocation is \$2 per sq. ft. (approximately \$6,900).

Maintenance costs associated with current projects at the property include the following:

- \$3,000 - replacement of side porch
- \$1,200 - repaint front porch

Additionally, with respect to those items requested to be removed from the Designation Report, the following are the potential maintenance costs associated with each item:

Picket Fencing and Gates:

- \$2,000 - repair and painting
- \$1,000 - every four years to maintain fence and gates


Well Pump:

- \$800 for the safe removal of the pump and restoration of the area

Large Windows associated with addition:

- \$2,000 replacement cost for two large windows on building addition with standard window. Anything custom as per a heritage designation could double this cost.

Prepared by:



Anthony Jas
Manager, Development, Planning Services

Reviewed by:



Ryan Jacques, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning Services

Reviewed by:



Bruce McAllister, MCIP, RPP
General Manager, Community Development

Consulted and confirmed the content of the consultation section of the report by:

Tom Skodak, P. Eng.
Manager, Municipal Assets

Heather Slater
Manager, Arts and Culture

Attachments: Appendix A – By-law to amend By-law 83-35 (Ridgetown)
Appendix B – Municipal Heritage Committee Comments

c: Municipal Heritage Committee
Ridge House Museum Advisory Committee
Tom Skodak, Manager, Municipal Assets
Heather Slater, Manager, Arts and Culture

P:\RTC\Community Development\2022\Planning Services\Jan 17\Jan 17-22 Ontario
Heritage Act - Amendment to Designation By-law Ridge House Museum Report.docx

By-law Number _____

of The Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent

A By-law to amend By-law No. 83-35, designating the property located at 53 Erie Street South (Ridge House Museum), Community of Ridgetown, for the purposes of clarifying the statement explaining the property's cultural heritage value or interest or the description of the property's heritage attributes.

Whereas By-law 83-35 was enacted by the Corporation of the Town of Ridgetown on September 12, 1983, designating 53 Erie Street South pursuant to Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act;

And Whereas pursuant to Section 30.1 (2) (a), the council of a municipality may by by-law amend a by-law designating property under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act to clarify or correct the statement explaining the property's cultural heritage value or interest or the description of the property's heritage attributes;

And Whereas the requirement for Council to consult with its Municipal Heritage Committee pursuant to Section 30.1 (5) has been fulfilled;

And Whereas the Notice Requirements pursuant to Section 30.1 (4) of the Ontario Heritage Act have been fulfilled;

Now therefore be it and it is hereby enacted as By-law Number _____ of the Corporation of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, that:

1. By-law 83-35 be amended by adding the following Schedule "A" of this By-law to By-law 83-35 as Schedule "B".
2. The Clerk be authorized to register this by-law against the property known as 53 Erie Street South, Community of Ridgetown, described as Lot 5, Plan 68, Block N.
3. The Clerk be directed to cause a copy of this by-law to be served on the owner of the 53 Erie Street South, Community of Ridgetown, and on the Ontario Heritage Trust:

This By-law shall come into force and effect upon the final passing thereof, subject to the provisions of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990 Chapter. P.13, as amended.

Read a First, Second and Third Time the 17th day of January, 2022.

Mayor – Darrin Canniff

Clerk - Judy Smith

Schedule "A"

DESIGNATION REPORT

53 Erie St S, Ridgetown - Ridge House Museum

PREAMBLE

Originally built for Mr. and Mrs. George Mulholland, the Gothic Revival-style home was completed at the cost of \$200 in 1875, the same year that Ridgetown was incorporated as a village. The Ridgetown Rotary Club purchased the house in 1975 as part of their centennial project, and is now known as the Ridge House Museum. The house was then partially furnished through donations from the community. It continues to function as a living history museum today and hosts many local events.

The property was originally designated in 1983 under the Ontario Heritage Act by the Corporation of the Town of Ridgetown, by-law 83-35, as Lot Number five in Block "N" according to Registered Plan 68.



DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Ridge House Museum is a two storey Gothic Revival-style house on a corner lot, with a cross gable roof, full width front porch with turned spindle supports, and gingerbread trim. Secondary side porches that been upgraded to include a modern accessibility ramp are also included.

The house is clad in clapboard siding, and features small stylized triangular pediments above the side windows. A half-round window above the front door extends into the gable.

A white picket fence surrounds the property, enclosing a garden, well pump, and an outhouse.

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

Historical/Associative Significance

It is a typical representation of a Victorian middle class working man's family home. In its current capacity as a living history museum, the architectural and cultural impact of the property is not just preserved, but promoted through interactive engagement with the community.



Architectural Significance



The property is an example of a working-class Gothic Revival home typical of its time period. Like other rural area houses the Ride House was built with a single front gable above the centre front door. A half round italianate window extends into the gable.

The batten front door sports a wood carved decorative crown, and exits onto a full width front porch. The porch sports turned spindle support columns and support rails, from which sprouts some external gingerbreadding. Two front windows flank the door. All this combines to make a striking feature when viewed from the street.



The structure has four windows on either side of the main section, each topped by a carved gabled pediment. Two other windows feature pediments on the rear street side of the house, which are slightly different, and are later additions possibly when a rear extension was built circa 1975. Pediments of this sort are quite common around Ridgetown and could indicate a local supplier.



Clapboard siding clads the house, and is made from tulip wood (yellow poplar) which is unusual for the area. The white picket fence replaces an original wire fence.

Contextual Significance

As the property was constructed in the same year as the incorporation of Ridgetown, it can be seen to act as a contextual and cultural barometer of how the community of Ridgetown has and is evolving over time. The property's corner lot location makes it a anchor for the surrounding community.



DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES / CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

Exterior

- Footprint
- Roof line
- Window placement
- Window casements and trim
- Window pediments
- Window sashes
- Front porch supports and gingerbread trim
- Front porch railing
- Front door placement
- Front door casements and trim
- Clapboard siding
- Picket fencing and gates
- Well pump



Appendix B

To: Mayor & Council

From: Chatham-Kent Municipal Heritage Committee

Re: Problems With Report To Council

Background:

At the January 15, 2020 meeting of the Chatham-Kent Municipal Heritage Committee (MHC), administration presented the committee with a draft report regarding the Ontario Heritage Act Amendment to Designation By-law 83-35 Ridge House Museum, 53 Erie Street South, Community of Ridgetown.

The report centres around a revised heritage designation that the Municipal Heritage Committee has written for the property in order to bring the designation up to current provincial standards.

The staff recommendation is that Council amend the Heritage Committee's designation report by removing, from the Description of Heritage Attributes/Character Defining Elements, the following:

- i. Any elements associated with the new office addition
- ii. Picket fencing and gates
- iii. Well pump.

The Municipal Heritage Committee believes that these elements are important features that support the historical, architectural, and contextual significance of the property. As such, the MHC does not agree with the recommendation to remove these from the Designation Report.

Since the Committee's reasons for objecting to the removal of these elements is more involved than the brief descriptions given under the "Others Consulted" section of the report, it was agreed that the

committee's concerns would be articulated in this following explanation as an attachment to the RTC.

Explanation For Objection:

The purpose of designation report is to present, in some detail, the reasons why a property is significant and worthy of Council consideration before alterations are carried out. Significance is based on:

- The Historical/Associative value of the property (events, people associated with it)
- Architectural
- Contextual (how the property fits into its surroundings, e.g. a landmark)

The Heritage Attributes/Character Defining Features are the specific elements that require consultation with MHC/Council before alterations can occur (note: it does not necessarily preclude alteration but it allows Council to represent and consider the interests of the community before alterations can occur). These are the features that also support the historical, architectural, contextual significance of the property.

It is important to note that significant features are not restricted to original features from the time of construction. Historical significance evolves over time as do the significant features.

What are legitimate reasons for removing a feature from the list?

The only reason is that the feature is not, in fact, significant.

In the staff report, it is argued that:

- i. The pump is in poor condition, needs repair and is in a problematic location.

Because the main historic significance of the house is that it is a restored “living history site” portraying middle class life in Ridgetown in 1875, the presence of an out-door hand pump is integral in supporting the property’s significance as a living history site. The pump’s presence, therefore, supports the historical significance of the property. It should remain as a feature and administration should work with the MHC to relocate it to an historically logical location on the property that doesn’t impede traffic flow and do the necessary (and relatively minor) repairs. Ask yourself, what kind of convincing portrayal of 1875 life would be complete without an outdoor water pump. Such a feature is integral to proper historic interpretation of the period.

- ii. The fence is not original to the house and requires maintenance:

While not the original fence built in 1875, it is most certainly an appropriate and quintessential element of such a property. Period photographs support that fences were an integral and practical part of the design of even modest town homes. Because it was part of the restoration in 1975, the fence supports the historical significance of the house as a living history site as well as its contextual significance as a landmark. How memorable would the drive or walk along Erie Street South be without the distinctive fence that has been there for the past 50 years?

- iii. No features associated with the office addition (c. 1975) should be included:

The office addition was designed to be very sympathetic and complementary to the original design and most people would

never guess that it is not an original part of the house. It, again, supports the historical significance of the 1975 restoration and subsequent use as a museum and it also supports the landmark status. Any changes to it should, therefore, preserve this visual complementarity and should be subject to consultation.

Another point that needs to be stressed is that maintenance costs should never be used as an argument to include or exclude features in a designation report. The historic significance of a feature does not depend on maintenance and repair costs. Confusing these two very separate issues is akin to a doctor using the cost of treatment as a deciding factor as to whether a patient is sick. Obviously, this makes no sense.

The whole point of including items as significant features is so that their historic contribution to the property as a whole can be taken into consideration when deciding whether to maintain them or remove them. It places a requirement on administration to consult with the Heritage Committee and Council before these features are altered or destroyed. If they are not included, they can be removed as administration sees fit without any additional consultation. It does not mean that these features must be maintained, but if they are included as designated features, it will be at the discretion of Council (as representatives of the public interest) and not an administrative cost saving decision alone.

The Chatham-Kent Municipal Heritage Committee, as advisors to Council, would therefore recommend that Council adopt Option #2 as presented by staff on Page 5 of the RTC “Proceed with a motion to adopt Recommendation 2. This will amend By-law 83-35 including the Designation Report as adopted by the Municipal Heritage Committee”.

Thank you.