

341 Forestell Rd and Willowgrove Farm house.

Dear Councillors,

Today I am writing to ask that 341 Forestell Rd and the property known as Willowgrove be saved from demolition. The former house has already been designated and was known to Guelph's senior heritage planner for some time even before designation was granted. Prior to the sale of #341 the house was in excellent shape and is still structurally sound as determined by city officials.

341 Forestell Rd is one of the finest examples of a pre-confederation farm house in Upper Canada. It was built by a pioneer family and was the centre of a working farm until 2001. The idea of removing the front verandah and storing it has been proposed. A practical and very economical solution to this demolition by neglect would simply be to replace the verandah's front four columns. Exact copies are still manufactured locally. This would be a huge saving economically. Furthermore, if the verandah were removed, the house would look very unattractive and hasten its journey towards demolition as deterioration was too advanced. Foxcustomcarpentry.ca in Erin could make columns identical to the deteriorating ones (519 833-9168). This house was very attractive, light-filled, with lovely high ceilings, and good detailing. It is my hope that such a striking example of early Puslinch/Guelph can be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Secondly I am writing to ask that the Crawley homestead, Willowgrove, another pre-confederation home, be designated by the city of Guelph. The present owner has carefully preserved and protected this house for almost a decade at his own expense. This striking neo-classical stone and granite house is a testament to several things: the prosperity of local farmers due to the American Civil War as well as the grain shortage in Europe at the time, the Victorian aesthetic and an uncommon sense of architectural harmony in the 1870's. Although not unique in this aspect, Willowgrove is rare and exceptional in this area. Few pioneer homes achieved such beauty. If we ignore the finest architectural testaments of our pre-confederation past, we run the risk of losing our sense of history and an understanding of our future. We owe it to ourselves to preserve the best elements of our past. At this particular moment heritage has become relevant as the city of NOTL received the Prince of Wales Award for its heritage preservation just yesterday. Kitchener is moving forward with its CHLs and Guelph can and should enhance its heritage past. Council has received extensive notes as well as photos that speak more eloquently of the Willowgrove homestead than this brief letter. Please help future generations recognize their architectural legacy by designating this house. Thank you for reading this letter.

Yours truly,  
Michael Crawley