

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report



Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Monday, July 10, 2023
Subject	211 Silvercreek Parkway South – Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Description

This information report provides a draft statement of significance and determination of cultural heritage value or interest for the Sleeman House at 211 Silvercreek Parkway South (formerly 501 Wellington Avenue, 501 Waterloo Avenue). This report is presented to Heritage Guelph for review and comment in preparation for a notice of intention to designate the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

The Sleeman House located at 211 Silvercreek Parkway South (formerly 501 Wellington Avenue, 501 Waterloo Avenue) is a listed (non-designated) property on the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties. This report determines that the Sleeman House meets five of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22. The heritage attributes of 211 Silvercreek Parkway South display: design or physical, historical or associative and contextual value.

Report

Location

The subject property is located at 211 Silvercreek Parkway South on the north side of the street, immediately north of the Wellington Street exit on the Hanlon Parkway (Attachment-1, Figure 1). The property has a legal description of PT LT A E/S OF GALT & GUELPH RAILWAY PL 52 AS IN ROS524508, SAVE AND EXCEPT PT 2, 61R6538; CITY OF GUELPH SUBJECT TO AN EASEMENT AS IN RO791712 AND PT LOTS 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 & 12, PLAN 206, AS IN ROS524508; CITY OF GUELPH SUBJECT TO AN EASEMENT AS IN RO791712.

Background

The subject property is part of Plan 206 which was originally outside the Town of Guelph in 1872 (Attachment-2, Figure 1). At the time the street was named Waterloo Road which later evolved into Wellington Street and then Silvercreek Parkway South. The property was located in Lot 1, Division E of Concession 1 and was sold to John Harris in December of 1844 by the Canada Company. John Sleeman and his wife Ann Burrows bought multiple parts of the property totaling 8.2 acres on either side of the street (Attachment-2, Figure 2). The location of the property was ideal for brewing as the property was near a fresh-water spring (Attachment-2, Figures 3-5). John Sleeman built the Silver Creek Brewery in 1862 and by 1865 named his son George Sleeman was an official partner in the business. The first residence on the property was built in 1859 at the then 501 Waterloo Avenue. By 1867, John Sleeman retired and left his son George Sleeman as sole proprietor of the Silver Creek Brewery. George Sleeman also bought the family residence on 501 Waterloo Avenue and become a key community member of the Town of Guelph (Attachment-2, Figure 6).

George Sleeman and his wife Sarah Hill had eleven children, five daughters and six sons, over the course of their marriage including Caroline, Minnie, George Alfred (A), Charles, William, Edwin, Frederick, Lily, Henry, Eveline, and Florence. Brewing was a family business – George empowered his brother William to help with operations and brought his sons into the fold when they became of age. By 1886, his son George A. Sleeman began managing the Brantford agency. George A. would go on to write a family recipe book and work for the Sleeman Brewing and Malting Company in Ottawa. Additionally, George A.'s brother William was involved in the family business as a bottler according to the 1911 census. Their brother Henry Sleeman would eventually take over the business in 1905 after George Sr.'s retirement. Unfortunately, George Sleeman would watch as Henry Sleeman managed the declining family business during the years of Prohibition in Canada and the United States. George Sr. died in 1926, one year before the end of Prohibition in Ontario in 1927. In 1933, Henry Sleeman and his brothers were charged with smuggling alcohol to the United States and their brewing license was suspended. That same year, the Spring Bank Brewery was sold to the Jockey Club Brewery Ltd. and by 1955 the Sleeman Brewing and Malting Company was registered as inactive. However, John W. Sleeman, the great-grandson of George Sr., would be given George A.'s recipe book by his Aunt Florian (daughter of George A.) and reopen the family business in 1988. John W. Sleeman was the president of Sleeman Breweries Ltd. until 2010, four years after it was purchased by Sapporo Breweries for \$400 million (Attachment-2, Figure 7).

George Sleeman was also an innovator in the brewing industry. After being named partner, he instituted steam power to Silver Creek Brewery, added a malthouse, built a storage cellar and increased operations with the help of his brother William (Attachment-2, Figure 8). In 1874, he introduced the use of bisulphate of soda as a stabilizer and preservative as well as an attemperator (a coil of pipe through which hot or cold water may run to control temperature) into the brewing process. These advancements allowed him to lower labour costs and begin brewing lager. As the Sleeman family brewing business expanded, George Sleeman became an influential entrepreneur and politician in the Town of Guelph (Attachment-2, Figure 9). By the late 1880s, Silver Creek Brewery employed around 35-40 local Guelphites who took

pride in their trade (Attachment-2, Figure 10). The business continued to grow and by 1890 Silver Creek Brewing had outlets in fifteen (15) cities and towns from Sault Ste Marie to Quebec (Attachment-2, Figure 11). At the World's Columbian Exposition (also known as the Chicago World's Fair) held in 1893, the Silver Creek Brewery won multiple awards for their wares. In 1900, George Sleeman, his wife Sarah Hill and three of their sons (George A., Charles, William) incorporated the operations of the breweries as Sleeman Brewing and Malting Company Limited.

As the Sleeman Brewing business expanded, so did George Sleeman's influence in the Guelph community. In 1874, George Sleeman was elected the president of the Guelph Maple Leafs Baseball Club, the same year the team won the first baseball World Championship in Watertown, New York (Attachment-2, Figure 12). In 1876, George Sr. was elected to Guelph Town Council representing the South Ward. Four years later, he would become Guelph's first mayor after Guelph was incorporated into a city. One of his first official changes was to proclaim July 1st a public holiday and to advise all Guelph residents to observe the day of rest. This labour reform supported the working classes of the community, many of which were employed at Sleeman breweries. George would hold his position as mayor for three years. George Sr. was still an influential presence in Guelph after his mayoral term. Specifically, he funded the establishment of a streetcar system under the Guelph Railway Company to facilitate movement across Guelph with the primary focus of transporting his workers from St. Patrick's Ward to his brewery on the western edge of Guelph (Attachment-2, Figure 13).

The Sleeman family and their descendants occupied the subject property from 1859 until 1957. The original two-storey stone residence with a three bay design and a hip line roof was built in 1859 (Attachment-2, Figure 14). In 1890, George Sleeman decided to build a new home for the family as business remained profitable. The family remained in the original stone structure while the new residence was being built, but the original structure was demolished after construction was complete in 1891.

The Sleeman House was designed by George Sleeman and John Day, a prominent Guelph architect of the time who also designed the façade and addition of the Silver Creek Brewery, the Petrie-Kelly Building, the Commercial Hotel, and the Speed Skating Rink. The structure was the most expensive house ever built in Guelph at the total totaling over \$30,000, a two storey Queen Anne brick house was built the same year for only \$2,200.

The three-storey structure was made entirely of locally quarried limestone with 12-, 11- and 10-foot ceilings (Attachment-2, Figures 15-17). The vermicular stone cutting and the deep stone cornices along the main tower are quintessential markers of Queen Anne revival. Many features of the Queen Anne style can be seen to date including: a dominant, front-facing gable, bay windows, two domed turrets, and stained-glass windows. The original house possessed a conical roof with attic gables, a clustered shaft main chimney, stone brackets and a slate roof. All halls and rooms were supplied with combination gas and electric light fixtures and all the grates in the house burned gas. In fact, this residence was one of the first homes with electricity (Attachment-2, Figures 18-22). The house was finished in antique and red oak with oxidized copper hardware fittings. The house was built by many tradespeople including Walter Grierson (stone cutting), Alex Congalton (masonry),

George Daniels (carpentry), Peter Martin (plastering), J. S. Moffatt (painting and glazing), William Sunley (tinwork), Walker & Mahoney (plumbing, steam, gas fitting), Brown Brothers (slating), Robert Stewart (oak doors and wainscoting) and Hess Brothers (furniture).

The original structure has been heavily modified over time as the use moved from a home to a hotel to an adult entertainment establishment (Attachment-2, Figure 23). The original three street façade verandah was removed after the residence left family possession. The purchaser opened a restaurant business under "The Manor" (1963) and later "Country Kitchen" (1966). In 1965, an addition was added to the west side of the property to facilitate a hotel business for "The Manor Hotel". Later additions including a men's beverage room, kitchen, stage and one storey addition on the east side of the building to create the sprawling floor plan seen today (Attachment-3, Figures 1-5).

Statement of Significance

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets five of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22 (Attachment-4). The heritage attributes of 211 Silvercreek Parkway South display: design or physical, historical or associative, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

211 Silvercreek Parkway South meets Criterion 1 of Ontario Regulation 9.06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, being of design or physical value as it is an excellent and representative example of late-19th century Queen Anne revival style in the City of Guelph. In fact, it was one of the first homes with electricity in the City of Guelph and was the most ornate home at time of construction.

211 Silvercreek Parkway South meets Criterion 2 of Ontario Regulation 9.06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, being of design or physical value as it demonstrated a high degree of mason craftsmanship in the hand carved vermicular stone cutting and deep stone cornice on the front façade of the three-storey tower. The same degree of stone masonry is rarely seen elsewhere in the City of Guelph.

Historical/Associative Value

211 Silvercreek Parkway South meets Criterion 4 of Ontario Regulation 9.06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, being of historical or associative value as it has significant historically association with George Sleeman, the City of Guelph's first mayor, successful brewer and philanthropist. George Sleeman was an integral figure in the growing Guelph community during his life and Sleeman Breweries Ltd. continues to be a prominent employer of Guelph labour.

211 Silvercreek Parkway South meets Criterion 6 of Ontario Regulation 9.06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, being of historical or associative value because the Sleeman House reflects the work and ideas of both George Sleeman, an important innovator, and John Day, a successful local architect who designed the Petrie-Kelly building, portions of the Silver Creek Brewery and multiple other commercial properties and residences in Guelph.

Contextual Value

211 Silvercreek Parkway South meets Criterion 9 of Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, being of contextual value as the property is a visible landmark for the Guelph community. The three-storey Queen Anne structure is easily spotted from the Hanlon Parkway and Wellington Street West and marks the beginning of the older Guelph developments heading east on Wellington Street West into downtown Guelph.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Location of the Sleeman House, 211 Silvercreek Pkwy S

Attachment-2 Historical Images of the Sleeman House

Attachment-3 Current Photos of the Sleeman House

Attachment-4 Ontario Regulation 569/22 Criteria for Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Departmental Approval

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