

# Staff Report



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To	<b>City Council</b>
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Tuesday, October 17, 2023
Subject	<b>33-35 James Street West - Proposed demolition of a heritage structure designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That the demolition of the detached dwelling at 33-35 James Street West be approved.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with staff's recommendation that the proposed demolition of the detached dwelling located at 33-35 James Street West, a property designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, be permitted.

### Key Findings

The detached dwelling at 33-35 James Street West is located in the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

A heritage permit application for demolition of the detached dwelling was deemed complete on September 14, 2023.

Staff completed a review of the structure and concluded that substantial alterations to the historic structure have removed all heritage attributes and significantly diminished the structure's cultural heritage value.

Heritage Guelph was consulted on this application on September 18, 2023.

According to Section 4.5.1 of the [Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines](#), "The demolition of heritage buildings and structures (as outlined in Appendix A) shall not be permitted, except in extenuating circumstances such as natural disasters (e.g. fire, flood, tornado, or earthquake), or where there is a greater public interest served through the demolition of the building or structure." Staff are of the opinion that greater public interest is served through the demolition of this structure and the redevelopment of this property.

### Strategic Plan Alignment

This heritage permit application aligns with the direction of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Priority "Building our Future" to continue to build strong, vibrant, safe and

healthy communities that foster resilience in the people who live in Guelph. Modifications to housing stock is aligned with building and maintaining vibrant and resilient communities. This application will align with the direction of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Priority "City Building", improving our housing supply.

## **Financial Implications**

None.

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## **Report**

### **Location**

The subject property is located on the north side of James St W between Martin Avenue and Gordon Street. The Legal description is PT Lot 6, Plan 37.

### **Historic Background**

33-35 James Street West is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and located in the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District. The property is situated on the western half of Lot 6 in Plan 37. Plan 37, or the "Plan of the Estate of Mr. Robert Thompson" was registered in 1856 (Attachment-1). The Land title abstract indicates that lots 4-9 were sold by Robert Thompson to Willie Jackson in 1867. Willie Jackson died in 1870, and the property passed to his daughter Mary Jackson (later Paterson), who sold the property in 1885 to Peter Martin. The property was later sold to the Suburban Construction Company, owners of the property from 1914-1925. The Suburban Construction Company was formed in 1911 to engage in construction work in general and, in particular, construction of the Toronto Suburban Railway, which began operation in Guelph in 1917. From approximately 1914 to 1925, The Suburban Construction Company/Toronto Suburban Railway owned all properties on the north side of James Street West between Gordon Street and Martin Avenue.

The current structure at 33-35 James Street W is a one-and-a-half storey stone and wood frame dwelling clad in vinyl, with a symmetrical façade. The roof is side-gabled, with two front-gable bays flanking the east and west sides of the front façade, as well as two gable dormers above the enclosed front porch. An attached drive-in garage is located on the east side of the building.

Cooper's Map from 1875 does not indicate any building on Lot 6, but the 1922 Fire Insurance Plan (FIP) shows an L-shaped one-storey stone dwelling (see Attachment-1). Gordon Couling dated the structure to "1880 or earlier." It is likely that the original stone house was built by either the Jacksons (owners 1867-1885) or Peter Martin (owner 1885-1896).

The 1946 FIP shows that the property was expanded sometime between the 1929 and 1946 FIPs (Attachment-1). An aerial photograph of the Brooklyn neighbourhood from approximately 1940 shows the L-shaped structure recorded in the 1929 Fire Insurance Plan, so the addition was added sometime between 1940 and 1946 (Attachment-1). The 1940 aerial photograph shows the house clad in white stucco. While the 1946 FIP indicates that the addition was constructed of stone, heritage staff have determined, based on wall widths and gaps in drywall, that the addition is a wood frame construction. A colourized aerial photograph from 1948 shows the expanded house with two front-gable bays and an attached garage (Attachment-1). Some walls of the original stone structure remain within the

present building, though original attributes like the roofline, windows, and doors have been significantly altered or removed entirely. The extant stone walls can be seen in the building permit drawings from the 1980s created by the property's owner, Tracey Clifford, for the building permit to increase the height and pitch of the roof (Attachment-1).

The property owner removed parts of the drywall to expose the original rubble stone and timber walls beneath. The photographs (Attachment-2) reveal that the original house was a rubble stone and timber construction, clad in plaster on the interior and likely clad in stucco on the exterior.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Heritage staff are of the opinion that the substantial alterations to the historic structure on the subject property have removed all heritage attributes (original roof, windows, doors, stucco) and significantly diminished the structure's cultural heritage value. Additionally, the subject property does not meet any of the O. Reg 9/06 (as amended by 569/22) criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest. Thus, staff recommend that the owner's intention to demolish be permitted. A subsequent heritage permit application will be required for new construction on the property.

### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Consultations**

At their meeting of September 18, 2023 the Heritage Guelph advisory committee considered [staff report 2023-362](#) and carried the following motion:

THAT Heritage Guelph advises City Council that they do not object to the demolition of the detached dwelling located at 33-35 James Street West.

### **Attachments**

Attachment-1 Historic Images and Documents

Attachment-2 Current Photographs

### **Departmental Approval**

Melissa Aldunate, MCIP, RPP Manager of Policy Planning

### **Report Author**

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### **This report was approved by:**

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**This report was recommended by:**

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