

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report



Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Tuesday, October 10, 2023
Subject	167 Suffolk Street West: Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Description

This information report provides a cultural heritage evaluation and draft statement of significance and determination of cultural heritage value or interest for 167 Suffolk Street West. This report is provided 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

167 Suffolk Street West is listed as a non-designated built heritage resource on the City of Guelph's Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties under Part IV, Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act. This report recommends that 167 Suffolk Street West meets four of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, made under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Location

The subject property is located on the north side of Suffolk Street West, west of Yorkshire Street North, east of Arnold Street and south of Home Street. The legal description of the property is LOT 13, NORTH SIDE SUFFOLK ST, PLAN 29; PT LOTS 12 & 14 NORTH SIDE SUFFOLK ST, 29; PT PARK LOT 10, PLAN 8, AS IN RO780210; CITY OF GUELPH. Photos of the property are included in Attachment-1 Current Photos of 167 Suffolk Street West (Figures 1-7).

The subject property includes multiple connected businesses with a parking lot on the north side of the property with a grassed area on the west side of the property. The limestone structure is a Neo-Classic vernacular building 2-storeys in height with an additional attic, 5-bay parapet to gable roof (ca. 1876). Multiple extensions have been added to the original structure including a limestone and red brick, 4-bay, two-storey flat roofed extension on the east corner, a 2-storey, flat roof addition to

1880-1882 and eventually bought the factory on Suffolk Street in 1885 (Attachment-2, Figure 5-6).

Thomas Gowdy was a successful industrialist who was financially interested in multiple businesses across the province (Attachment-2, Figure 7-8). He was the president of the Toronto Lime Company, director of the Wellington Lime Company, Dominion Life Assurance Company, Wellington Mutual Fire Assurance Company and Waterloo Mutual Fire Insurance Company. Gowdy was one of the original directors of the Guelph Junction Railway and was also a prominent director of the Guelph General Hospital. From 1889-1890, Thomas Gowdy was the Mayor of the incorporated City of Guelph. His large home at 136 Glasgow Street North still stands. Gowdy is also associated with 'Guelph Bay' a small area near Magnetawan, Ontario frequented by prominent Guelphites in the summer months (Attachment-2, Figure 9).

Gowdy's Agricultural Works, established in 1865 in a different location in downtown Guelph, focused on devising implements designed to lighten the labours of the farmer. Specifically, they manufactured reapers, mowers, sulky rakes, fanning mills, land rollers, root cutters, turnip sowers, straw cutters, sulky ploughs, hang ploughs, single ploughs of all kinds, harrows, lawn mowers, etc. Their goods were shipped throughout Canada, Australia and other countries. Under Gowdy's ownership the Suffolk Street factory encompassed 2.5 acres of ground, with six separate buildings and stables. The factory is described as having a main building 3.5 storeys in height with a 1-storey foundry, polishing shop, and blacksmith shop. The works were powered by a 50-horsepower engine and over 40 skilled workmen were employed.

Gowdy eventually sold the factory to William and John Morlock of the Morlock Brothers Company in 1902 (Attachment-2, Figures 10-11). Their company, established in 1888, manufactured upholstered furniture, mattresses and bedsprings and parlour goods. In 1908, the Morlock Bros. had an annual output of more than \$150,000. Under their leadership the Suffolk Street factory was expanded with a 3-story, 100 x 54 feet addition in concrete block with almost 100 hands employed to maintain daily operations (Attachment-2, Figure 12).

After the Morlock Bros. sold the factory, the property exchanged hands fairly frequently, although it was always a home for business. The Rowen & Ogg Co. Ltd. operated out of the premises in 1912 and by 1915, New Idea Spreader Co. Ltd. had taken ownership. The Suffolk Street building was likely used to produce the New Idea Spreaders, a recently invented manure spreader. By 1922, a different business used the space, Sherer Gillett Co Ltd. By 1947, Holman Luggage Company, established 1925, took over the Suffolk Street factory, after their Carden Street location burned down in 1946 (Attachment-2, Figure 13). Their business focused on manufacturing leather luggage and card tables, although they later branched out into selling musical instruments (Attachment-2, Figures 14-15). By 1978, the Barber family acquired the building for their glass business and has remained in this location ever since.

Barber Glass and Barber Gallery, divisions of the parent company BG1883 Inc., are both located at 167 Suffolk Street West and represent a family run business of over one hundred years. Originally a painting and glazing store, the business expanded to include custom glass, mirrors, antique glass, framing and currently they

fabricate, supply and install glass, mirror and metal products for both commercial and residential projects. Even though the business went into receivership in 2011, the family were able to continue operations on Suffolk Street by refocusing and rebranding. Their work can be seen at 1 World Trade Center in New York City, the Perimeter Institute in Waterloo, the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto and closer to home at the bus shelters in Guelph's Central Station.

167 Suffolk Street was used by multiple owners over the years for several distinct industries. The original structure remains, although there are multiple additions that illustrate how the building has been changed over the years to suit its owners' needs.

Building Description

The building we see today evolved over time with multiple visible additions to the original limestone structure. The original 2-storey limestone structure with an attic has a 5-bay design and a parapet to gable roof. The remnants of tape pointing on the limestone can be seen on this part of the exterior structure. The eastern addition is a 2-storey, 4-bay design of limestone and red brick as well. There is a distinct difference in the stone used for the first storey in comparison to the secondary storey. This difference may be due to the renovations made by Thomas Gowdy after the fire under Cossitt's ownership in the 1870s. The western addition was added about 1900 using rock-faced concrete block, building on top of a limestone building leftover from the Gowdy Agricultural Works. This addition is 3 storeys in height and has a 10-bay design with a flat roof. Many of the windows in the limestone walls have tooled sills and hammer dressed lintels, although replacement of window sashes and doors has occurred throughout the property (Attachment-1, Figures 1-3). The doors to an original boiler for the building have been retained and are visible on the north side of the limestone exterior (Attachment-1, Figure 7).

Further additions were made to the east and north side of the property. A 2-storey red brick addition with a flat roof and wood siding on the east side of the limestone structure with a 4-bay design is the current main entrance to the Barber Glass Gallery. A further 2-storey addition on the north side of the limestone structure is smooth concrete block painted black with a loading dock and two-bay design. Another entrance to the property was added to this black brick addition. This addition is attached to the 1-storey brick structure moving west on the northern side of the limestone structure, again with a flat roof. A sea can is currently placed directly adjacent to the one storey addition for extra storage. The remainder of the property is taken up by paved and unpaved parking lot (Attachment-1, Figures 4-6).

Statement of Significance

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets four of the nine 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 167 Suffolk Street West display: design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

167 Suffolk Street West meets Criterion 1 having design or physical value as it is an early example of an industrial factory built in Guelph for the purposes of manufacturing in the mid-19th century. The 20-storey limestone design makes use of local materials and the iconic façade can be seen in multiple photographs of well-known Guelph businesses over time.

Historical/Associative Value

167 Suffolk Street West meets Criterion 4 because it has direct associations with a past mayor of Guelph, Thomas Gowdy, and his industry but also to agriculture as being the origin of multiple implements manufactured by Gowdy and L. Cossitt. Guelph has strong ties in the agricultural community and since this factory was used to promote and support this industry, it contributes to agriculture's continued legacy in the city.

Contextual Value

The subject property meets Criteria 7 because it is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the architectural character of the area. This segment of Suffolk Street West is an important historic area of the Guelph Collegiate Candidate Cultural Heritage Landscape as identified in the Cultural Heritage Action Plan (2021).

The subject property meets Criteria 9 because the building's distinctive form and limestone construction has become a landmark within the Suffolk Street West streetscape.

Attachments

Attachment-1: Current Photos of 167 Suffolk Street West

Attachment-2: Historic Photos and Documents of 167 Suffolk Street West

Departmental Approval

Melissa Aldunate, MCIP, RPP – Manager, Policy Planning and Urban Design

Report Author

Victoria Nagy, Heritage Planner