

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report



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| Committee | Heritage Guelph |
| Date | Monday, February 5, 2024 |
| Subject | 15-23 Fountain Street East: Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report |

Description

This information report provides a cultural heritage evaluation and determination of cultural heritage value or interest for 15-23 Fountain Street East prepared in accordance with O. Reg 9/06 and Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for Heritage Guelph's review and comment.

Executive Summary

Key Findings

15-23 Fountain Street East 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 concludes that 15-23 Fountain Street East does not meet any of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Location

The subject property is located on the south side of Fountain Street East, east of Gordon Street, west of Wyndham Street South, and north of Surrey Street East. The Legal description of the property is PLAN 8, LOT 136. The subject property includes a residential 5-unit terraced house.



Figure 1: Aerial image of 15-23 Fountain Street East, indicated in light blue (City of Guelph GIS)

Historic Background

The earliest record of ownership from the Land Title Abstract for Plan 8 indicates that Lot 136 was owned by John Dyson from 1837 to 1840, after which the entirety of the lot was sold to F.T Conunning. Cooper’s Map from 1862 and 1875 indicates that there were two L-shaped buildings on Lot 136, and Brosius’ Birdseye Map depicts two houses on the lot (See Attachment 1). The ownership changed hands multiple times until 1892, when William Johnson purchased the lot and it stayed in the Johnson family until the early-1940s, when it was sold to John Hockins in 1943.

The rowhouse, colloquially known as “Johnson Terrace,” was built by William Johnson, uncle of Guelph’s famous operatic tenor Edward Johnson. William Johnson owned and operated the Boat House from 1916-1924. On August of 1997, the City of Guelph designated portions of the boat house as a building of architectural and historical significance under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (By-Law 1997-15531).

Built with red pressed brick laid in stretcher bond pattern, the structure is a good example of terraced housing or row housing that was popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The terrace is composed of five units, each with an entry door facing Fountain Street. While the original front doors have been replaced, the transom lights remain intact. A 1974 photograph from the Couling Inventory shows that there were once small porches on each unit. Beside each entrance is a protruding bay with coupled double hung sash windows above stone sills. The protruding bays are capped with a shed roof that is supported by corbels and decorated with dentils. The second storey of each unit contains two double hung sash windows with stone sills. The roof of the terrace is hipped, with small decorative gables that protrude above the entrance of each unit.



Figure 1: 1974 photograph of 15-23 Fountain Street (Couling Building Inventory)

Seen in typically low- to mid-density areas of the city, these styles of housing were regularly associated with the working class and the demand to provide housing solutions following the Industrial Revolution. 15-23 Fountain Street East would have been proximate to several industries, including M.F.Gray Ltd. (coal and wood yard), Union Gas Co. Ltd., and Guelph Spring and Axle Co. Ltd.

Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property is not worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it does not meet any of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22.

Design or Physical Value

Criteria 1: The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

Staff Analysis: The structure at 15-23 Fountain Street is a good example of a late nineteenth century working class rowhouse, however, it is not a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

Criteria 2: The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

Staff analysis: While 15-23 Fountain Street may be well-built, it does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit. Many of its original features, including the porches and doors, have been significantly altered.

Criteria 3: The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

Staff analysis: The property does not demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

Historical or Associative Value

Criteria 4: The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

Staff analysis: While the construction of Johnson Terrace represents the expansion of the working class in late-nineteenth century Guelph, research did not indicate any direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community. The ownership as income property by James and William Johnson, while interesting, is not significant to a community.

Criteria 5: The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

Staff analysis: While rowhouses like 15-23 Fountain Street have the potential to contribute to an understanding working-class housing in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, research did not conclude that the property *individually* yields or has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community or culture.

Criteria 6: The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

Staff analysis: The builder and/or designer of 15-23 Fountain Street is unknown and the design is typical of late-nineteenth-century rowhouses.

Contextual Value

Criteria 7: The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area.

Staff analysis: While the neighbourhood surrounding 15-23 Fountain was once populated by factories and other working-class housing, the character of the area has changed dramatically over the last half century. Johnson Terrace is now primarily surrounded by parking lots (see Figure 1).

Criteria 8: The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings.

Staff analysis: As noted above, the surroundings of 15-23 Fountain have been substantially altered and the property is no longer significantly linked to its surroundings.

Criteria 9: The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

Staff analysis: 15-23 Fountain Street is not a landmark.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Historical Documents and Maps

Attachment-2 Current Photos

Departmental Approval

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