

February 8, 2024

Guelph City Council Planning Meeting
Agenda Item 7.2 Notice of Objection to Intention to Designate 2187 Gordon
Street under Section 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, 2024-36



Dear Members of Council,

Ontario Barn Preservation (OBP) is a registered, not-for-profit provincial heritage organization, affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) and dedicated to preserving, documenting, and promoting Ontario barns. OBP members are volunteers from across Ontario, including the City of Guelph and Wellington County. Members represent a variety of backgrounds and interests and share the goal of preserving Ontario's fast-disappearing old barns: their architecture, cultural heritage, and contribution to the rural landscape. One of the ways that OBP achieves this is by sharing knowledge with barn owners about how to preserve, renovate and re-purpose their barns.

The Kidd Barn, located at 2187 Gordon Street, Guelph, is a stone slot barn estimated to date from the late 1840s. It is the *last* stone barn in Guelph, one of the last stone slot bank barns in the County of Wellington, and one of the few remaining stone barns in Ontario. A timber frame bank barn addition with a number of St. Florian's crosses under the gables was added to the stone barn in the late 19th or early 20th century.

OBP understands that the need for housing is urgent, placing extreme pressure on older buildings like the Kidd Barn that may appear to have limited economic or functional value. At the same time, there are many examples of older barns that have been turned into economic and cultural assets, rather than liabilities.

The OBP is of the opinion that the stone slot Kidd Barn presents an extraordinary opportunity to preserve one of the last cultural assets of its kind, and to showcase the successes that engaged community partners can achieve by working together. Through adaptive re-use, heritage barns can become community hubs, income-generating venues, centres of innovation, vibrant public spaces, and even new forms of housing.

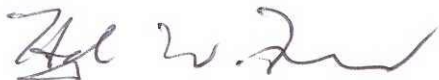
There is a very limited supply of these historic buildings, in particular stone slot bank barns, like the Kidd Barn. Unfortunately, once they disappear, it will never be known what role they could have played in strengthening a local economy, educating future generations, or contributing to the wellbeing of a neighbourhood or community.

There are many examples of property owners and housing developers working together with communities and allied organizations to preserve structures that are of value for their historical and cultural significance.

OBP believes that the stone slot barn at 2187 Gordon Street is of great value, and we urge the City of Guelph and the property owner to work together toward a viable option that would allow for its preservation without undue cost or risk to the property owner. Members of OBP who have in the past visited and photographed the Kidd Barn from inside and out consider that it is “clearly a gem”, albeit one that needs considerable structural work to make it safe and adaptable to future use. Should the City and the property owner agree, OBP and its volunteer members could play a role in this process, providing their experience with unique heritage barns from around the province that have been preserved and put to other valued uses.

OBP strongly supports the staff recommendation that Council continue with its intention to designate 2187 Gordon Street and issue the proposed heritage designation By-law Number (2024) – 20901 for 2187 Gordon Street. OBP respectfully recommends that Council consider the creation of a task force to develop a viable plan to preserve the barn and allow it to function in a way that would complement adjacent land uses, respond to neighbourhood priorities, and generate highly positive public relations for the property owner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Hugh Fraser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "H" and a long, sweeping tail.

Hugh Fraser
President
Ontario Barn Preservation