

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report



Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Monday, January 15, 2024
Subject	408 Willow Road – Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Description

This information report provides a cultural heritage evaluation, a draft statement of significance and determination of cultural heritage value or interest for 408 Willow Road. The report is presented for review and comment by Heritage Guelph 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 property addressed municipally as 408 Willow Road is listed as a non-designated built heritage resource on the City of Guelph's Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties under Section 27, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. This report recommends that the stone farmhouse at 408 Willow Road meets six of the nine 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 Evaluation Report

Location

The subject real property is located on the east corner of Willow Road and Marksam Drive, southwest of the Hanlon Expressway (Figures 1 and 2). Historically, the property is part of what was Lot 5 in Concession 1 of Division E in the Township of Guelph. The current legal description of the subject real property is Plan 615, Block H.

Figure 3 - View of rear of house from Willow Road. (Photo: S. Robinson, Heritage Planning)



Figure 4 - View of original front of house (now at rear). (Photo: S. Robinson, Heritage Planning)



Background

Ownership History

According to the land titles abstract, Lot 5 in Concession 1 of Division E in the Township of Guelph was purchased from the Canada Company by Andrew Fisher

(Sr.) in 1834 and the 100-acre lot was sold by Andrew Fisher (Jr.) to George Hood in 1837. One year after George Hood's death in 1857, the ownership of Lot 5 is indicated as "G. Hood" on Hobson & Chadwick's 1858 Map of the Township of Guelph (Attachment-2, Figure 1), in 1861 on Leslie & Wheelock's 1861 Map of the County of Wellington (Attachment-2, Figure 2) and also on the 1877 Map of Guelph Township from the Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington (Attachment-2, Figure 3). On the 1877 map George's son Gideon Hood is shown as owner of Lots 5 and 6 in Concession 2 and Lot 5 in Concession 1 of Division E. The land title abstract indicates that Gideon Hood registered the sale of Lot 5 in Concession 1 of Division E to his son George D. Hood in 1888. The map of the Township of Guelph from the 1906 Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington shows George D. Hood as the subject property owner. The 1906 Atlas map also shows properties owned at that time by other Hood family members (Attachment-2, Figures 4 and 5). In 1920 George David Hood sold all of Lot 5 to Robert McCorkindale and Jessie B. McCorkindale. The McCorkindales sold the entire lot to Dorothea R. Smith in 1960 who (as Dorothea R. Garrad) sold the lot to Armel Properties. The subject real property was created as Block 'H' with the registration of Plan of Subdivision 615 (Attachment-2, Figures 9 and 10).

Hood Family

The patriarch of the Hood family in Guelph Township was George Hood, born in 1782 and died on the subject property in 1857 (Attachment-2, Figure 6). George Hood was from a family of merchant millers in Selkirk, Scotland. George married Elizabeth Scott and emigrated to Canada with his children (James, Mrs. Robert Buchan, Gideon, George Jr., William, Thomas, Mrs. John Shortreed, and Elizabeth) arriving in Guelph in 1832. George Hood purchased Lot 12 in Concession 1 of Division B and named it "Elderslie".

Gideon Hood was born in Selkirk, Scotland in 1807 (Attachment-2, Figure 7). The 1906 Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington, described Gideon Hood as follows:

"In a business way, he was one of the most notable men in the district. He did the first regular teaming between Guelph and Hamilton, and carried the first mail between the two places, not for the Government, but for the accommodation of the settlers, and without remuneration. He also carried the funds for the "Gore" Bank, to and from its head office in Hamilton to the Guelph Branch. During the trouble of 1837-38, he was drafted into service at Hamilton, and with his team, drew the cannon, ammunition and supplies, for the Government troops to the Niagara River. He, and his brother William, introduced the first open cylinder threshing machine into Wellington Co.

As a cattle buyer, drover and feeder of cattle, he became noted, winning first prizes in various parts of the Province. A Liberal in politics, he never aspired for office. He was one of the Trustees of the Chalmer's Pres, Church for two years, being one of the promoters. His motto was, "Never risk, never win," and while he made losses that would be a fortune to the ordinary business man, he was very successful, and left at his death eleven hundred acres of prime land in Guelph Tp., besides other property."

Gideon Hood married Mary Bell (nee Bohn, b. 1827-d. 1917) and adopted Mary's daughter Jessie Bell who later married William McCrae. Gideon and Mary had three children of their own: George D., Mary E. and Isabella B.

Guelph Township Assessment Rolls for the year 1859 indicate that Gideon Hood was a 50-year-old farmer living residing on the subject property, which was valued at \$3,400. Similar properties in the area were indicated with lesser values which could indicate that the stone farmhouse and its stone carriage house (now at 404 Willow Road) had been constructed by this time.¹

The 1871 Census for the Township of Guelph provides a good indication of the agricultural success Gideon Hood had achieved by age 63, living on the subject property with his wife Mary (age 44) and his children: Jessy (age 15), George (age 10), Mary Elizabeth (age 8) and Isabella (age 4). Schedule 3 of the census indicated that Gideon owned 1,250 acres and seven dwelling houses, as well as 14 barns or stables, three carriages or sleighs, six wagons, four plows, and two fanning mills. Schedule 4 states that the family occupied 100 acres containing 40 acres of pasture and 3 acres of gardens. The property produced 300 bushels of wheat and 400 bushels of oats and supported four horses over three years of age, one colt and filly, five milk cows, 15 other horned cattle, 15 sheep and 45 swine. Schedule 5 indicates that the property produced 14 cattle for slaughter or export as well as 400 pounds of butter and 130 pounds of wool.

As stated above, the land titles abstract for subject property indicate that the entire Lot 5 in Concession 1 of Division E of the Township of Guelph was granted to George D. Hood in 1888. The 1891 Census indicated that George D. Hood lived in a 2-storey, stone house with eleven rooms which would suggest that the dwelling had the form and footprint that is seen today. At that time Gideon was still listed as the head of the household living with his wife Mary, son George D. and daughters Mary and Belle. Members of the Hood family are shown in front of the Fountainhead farmhouse in an undated photo in Attachment-2, Figure 8. The photo shows that at that time that house had mature trees close to the front elevation and a barn is seen on the far left (west of the house). The front elevation windows have shutters and the hung window sashes have a 12-over-8 pane arrangement. The front porch at that time had a low wall below a handrail and trellis work or treillage in long brackets between bays and as the four supporting posts.

George Hood (Sr.) and his son Gideon Hood both died at Fountainhead Farm; George in 1857 and Gideon in 1900 at 93 years of age. Gideon's son George David Hood (b. 1860-d. 1938) married Margaret Henderson (b. 1867-d. 1938). The 1901 Census indicated that George D. Hood and Margaret Hood had three children: Marion (age 3) and Grace (age 1).

The ASI Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report for 404 Willow Road (the adjacent property to the east) has suggested that when the farm was sold to the McCorkindales, Mary and Isabella Hood remained as tenants on the property, converting the carriage house to a residence sometime in the 1920s.²

¹ Cultural Heritage Evaluation and Documentation Report – 404 Willow Road. Report prepared by Archaeological Services Inc. for Ministry of Transportation, November 2015.

² Ibid.

By the 1990s the farmhouse had been converted to a bed & breakfast establishment known as Willow House. The subject property is now a private residence again and the adjacent carriage house at 404 Willow Road was purchased by the Ministry of Transportation and is currently owned by the MTO.

Property Description

The subject property has mature trees along the Willow Road and Marksam Drive frontages (Attachment-1, Figures 1 and 2) and contains a 2-storey, 3-bay, side gable roof stone house and a new detached, gambrel roof garage (Attachment-1, Figures 3 to 5). Attachment-1, Figure 6 shows the view east along the south side of Willow Road. The stone carriage house at 404 Willow Road is seen beyond the driveway to 408 Willow Road.

The original front elevation of the stone house (Attachment-1, Figure 7) faces south with a 1.5-storey stone tail extending to the north and from that a single-storey stone extension to the west. All three sections have gable roofs with two shed roof dormers in the west slope of the 1.5-storey tail. All roofs are clad in modern, flat metal shingles and all soffits and fascia have been clad in metal.

The 2-storey section of the house (Attachment-1, Figures 7 to 10) has been constructed with limestone rubble walls with roughly squared quoins in all four corners. The limestone walls have been pointed with a typical smear and strike technique which was common in mid-19th century masonry in Guelph and Wellington County. A limestone chimney shaft rises from the roof ridge above both side gable walls. A modern brick chimney stack has been added to the southwest gable wall.

The five windows in the 3-bay façade have a flat head constructed with limestone voussoirs. The two main floor windows flanking the front door are slightly wider than the upper three windows. All window sashes and frames have been replaced with modern units with appearance of a 9-over-six pane arrangement and an awning sash in the lower section. The open front porch is a new addition and has a shed roof supported by simple, square posts. The front door (Attachment-1, Figure 10) has six recessed panels (cross-and-bible) under a Georgian transom light. The door opening has a deep, recessed panel reveal and is flanked by wood panel pilasters that emulate Classical columns resting on the large, limestone threshold.

The northeast wall of 1.5-storey tail (Attachment-1, Figures 11 and 12) was constructed in rubble limestone up to just above the top of the side door and windows. Above this point the walls are split-faced granite of varying colours with quoins, lintels and sills in roughly squared limestone. This may indicate that the tail was originally a single storey that was expanded in granite with a half-storey addition in height to the tail and the single-storey addition made to the west. The use large, split-faced granite continues on the north elevation and the western extension with the stone laid in regular courses matching the limestone quoins.

Statement of Significance

The City of Guelph Official Plan states in Section 4.8.1 that:

The predominant built heritage resources in the periphery of the city are the farmsteads. While there have historically been strong cultural, economic, social and political links between the City of Guelph and its rural neighbours,

it is the farming history which sets this area apart from the more heavily urbanized parts of the city. In many cases, the farmsteads are linked to settlers and other important persons, technologies, architectural styles and developments, or represent the historical development of Guelph and Wellington County. Many are intact examples of early settlement patterns in Wellington County, which survive as a testament to the prosperity and history of this area. These built heritage resources are most deserving of preservation and careful incorporation into developments in accordance with the provisions of this Plan.

The subject building is an excellent example of what was an important farmstead in the Township of Guelph and now within the City of Guelph. The farmhouse at 408 Willow Road is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets six of the nine prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by 569/22. The subject building at 408 Eramosa Road has design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

The subject property meets Criterion 1 because the building exhibits design or physical value as a representative example of Georgian architectural style from the mid-19th century in a rural residential building design.

The subject property meets Criterion 2 because the building has high physical integrity in that it has retained most of its original architectural design features in limestone and granite displaying a high degree of craftsmanship.

Historical/Associative Value

The Hood farmhouse known as "Fountainhead Farm" meets Criteria 4 of Ontario Regulation 569/22 being of historic and associative value because of its direct ties to Guelph's agricultural history and to the Hood family, an important settler family of Guelph Township and what is now the City of Guelph. The Hood family has a long history in the area and the farmhouse is tied to three generations of the Hood family – George Hood, and primarily his son Gideon Hood and grandson George D. Hood.

George Hood was a merchant miller in Selkirk, Scotland and emigrated to Canada arriving with his family in Guelph Township in 1832. George's son Gideon Hood was described in the 1906 Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington as becoming one of the most notable men in the district of Guelph Township. Gideon did the first regular teaming between Guelph and Hamilton and carried the first mail between the two places. Gideon Hood made Fountainhead farm into a very successful agricultural business and by 1871 owned 1,250 acres and seven dwelling houses, as well as 14 barns or stables, three carriages or sleighs, six wagons, four plows, and two fanning mills. The Fountainhead Farm was granted to Gideon's son George D. in 1888 who continued to manage the farm until it was sold to the McCorkindale family in 1920.

Contextual Value

The subject property meets Criteria 7 because it is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the architectural character and agricultural history of the Willow Road area.

The subject property meets Criteria 8 because the stone farmhouse at 408 Willow Road and the adjacent stone carriage house at 404 Willow Road maintain their original configuration and are functionally, visually and historically linked.

The subject property meets Criteria 9 because the building's distinctive form, building footprint and combined limestone and granite construction has become a landmark within the historic Willow Road streetscape.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Current Photos

Attachment-2 Historic Images

Report Author

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