

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report



Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Monday, April 8, 2024
Subject	106 Carden Street: Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

Description

This information report provides a cultural heritage evaluation, draft statement of significance and determination of cultural heritage value or interest for 106 Carden Street. This 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 Royal Hotel building at 106 Carden Street 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 Royal Hotel building at 106 Carden Street 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 Heritage Evaluation Report

Location

The legal description of the subject property is:

Lots 2 & 3, Plan 8; Part Lots 1 & 4, Plan 8, Parts 24 & 25, 61R11523; Guelph

Attachment-1, Figure 1 shows the location of the subject property parcel at 106 Carden Street. Attachment-1, Figure 2 shows the portion of the property that contains heritage attributes and would be protected by the heritage designation by-law.

The Carden Street façade with its limestone building mass and gable roofline is shown in Attachment-1, Figures 3 and 4. The later, brick additions on the north and west sides and on the Macdonell Street frontage (Attachment-1, Figure 5) would not be protected by the heritage designation by-law.

Attachment-1, Figure 6 shows the view of east end of the Carden Street streetwall from the railway tracks.

The legal owner of the property known as the Royal Inn and Suites is 8499616 Canada Inc.

Historic Background

The Royal Hotel at 106 Carden Street is a historically prominent building in the culturally significant 'Market Ground' area of the Old Downtown cultural heritage landscape of Guelph. The Market Ground area was established by John Galt in his 1827 plan for the Town of Guelph (Attachment-2, Figure 1). The massing and form of the street wall has remained relatively unchanged since the 1870s.

The Royal Hotel building sits on Lot 2 and 3 of Plan 8, registered in 1855 (Attachment-2, Figure 2). The current Royal Inn and Suites comprises the 17-bay, 3-storey limestone building on Carden Street and the 6-bay wide, 3-storey brick building on Macdonell Street (Attachment-1, Figures 3 and 4). The development of the property was completed over stages from 1862 to 1946. Fortunately, the window and door openings, scale, roofline and limestone façade remain relatively unchanged from the building constructed in stages from 1862-1892. The wooden lintels above the main stable doors from the 1840's livery are still visible on the eastern most block of the hotel (Attachment-1, Figure 7).

The empirical evidence available shows that the first buildings on Lots 2 and 3 of Plan 8 played an important role in the development of the City's judicial services and provided a hub of community for the early settlers of Guelph. The inns, taverns and hotels that quickly sprung up in the area, of which the Royal Hotel was one of the first to be built, were meeting places for businessmen and new settlers alike. The area, therefore, provided the impetus for the beginnings of Guelph's business and commercial core.

Although a hotel was established on the property in 1851, it is reputed that "Suffolk House", the first hotel, was built in the early 1830s. According to historian Gordon Couling, this makes the Royal Hotel property Guelph's oldest continuously operating business and the building is possibly one of the oldest stone hotels in the province still in operation. Both Lots 2 and 3 began their development in the 1830's according to the land registry abstract index. Lot 2 was purchased in February 1833 by Thomas and Patrick Keating and Lot 3 was purchased by John Linderman in November 1830. Subsequent owners were William Clarke in January 1842 and the illustrious hotel developer John Thorp. Thorp, renowned as a hotelier throughout Ontario, appeared in the "Canada Business Directory" of 1851 named as proprietor of the British Hotel. It is possible that the British Hotel was the existing 2½-storey building that became part of the Royal Hotel only to be rebuilt in the 1880's. This building is referenced in the 1875/1878 Fire Insurance Plan (FIP) and can be viewed in an 1874 photograph of Carden Street (Figure 16).

James O'Neil sold the Royal Hotel to Charles and William Williams in October 1871 when the name changed from the Anglo-American to the Royal. In 1878, according to the fire insurance plan of 1875/1878, there was still a 2½-storey, 5-bay wide building and a 2-storey, 4-bay wide stable building to the left of the 1862, 3-storey

limestone building. A photograph taken in 1874 from Carden Street shows the 2-storey stable company, the 2½-storey building and the 3-storey limestone hotel with the canopy of the entrance in view (Figure 14). By 1892, according to the FIP of 1881/1892, the two buildings to the west had been replaced by the 3-storey, 5-bay wide limestone buildings that exist today. A photograph from 1885 shows the Royal Hotel as a completed four block building which we see today (Figure 20).

The Royal Hotel is steeped in Guelph's changing history. A hotel has stood on the property since the 1830's and although the majority of the building seen today is from 1862, it represents an integral element in Carden Street's commercial, social and cultural development. The roof is still supported by the original queen post truss system from 1860 shown in Figure 27.

The Royal Hotel has been the backdrop for two royal visits, been one of the seats of local court, and provided elegant rooms for patrons. The Royal Hotel continues to be one of the first buildings viewed from the railway upon arrival to downtown Guelph from the east. The Royal Hotel is a bookend to the Carden St/Wilson St streetscape and is an important element delineating the north street wall of the Market Ground area of Guelph's Old Downtown cultural heritage landscape.

Statement of Significance

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as it meets all three of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The heritage attributes of 106 Carden Street display design/physical, historical/associative and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

The subject property has design value or physical value because it is a representative and early example of Guelph's architectural styles throughout the 19th century. Three of these styles related to the Royal Hotel are Neo-classical lightness, Georgian formality/proportion and Italianate decoration, all of which reflect Guelph's vernacular commercial architecture. The building seen today was constructed in stages over a period of 20 years. However, changes to the property gradually changed the face of Carden Street from 1-½ and 2-storey buildings in the 1830s to 3 and 4-storeys in the 1880s.

The building displays a high degree of craftsmanship seen in its load-bearing ashlar masonry construction using local smooth-faced, hammer dressed limestone with the majority of joints being tape pointed. This pointing method accentuates the rectilinear stonework and helps to visually square any imperfect edges. Although asymmetrical in its original design due to the triple window feature, the façade shows typical aspects of Georgian architecture through its proportioned and balanced asymmetry. The repetitive nature of the large windows is indicative of Neo-classical form and lightness and the trademark flat arch limestone heads with a centre keystone and thin, tooled limestone sills are indicative of the simplicity of Georgian design. The curved window lintels in the later block and the brackets in the eaves are reminiscent of Italianate detailing.

The side gable roof has a low-medium pitch with four firewalls corbelled at the façade. Each firewall supported two stone chimney shafts connected by a flat

parapet wall with large copings. Not all of the original ten chimney shafts have survived but three over the middle sections have retained their original stone caps. The firewalls are corbelled out at the eaves to form a natural transition from façade to parapet. The detailing is also reminiscent of Italianate and Georgian architecture. The eastern most corner of the building has large quoins to help provide strength in the wall construction.

The interior contains only two items of historical interest: the original central staircase and the original heavy timber roof framing construction (queen post trusses) seen in the attic. Planning staff recommend that the central stairway and the heavy timber roof framing members are important extant features of the original building that should be retained.

Historical/Associative Value

The property has historical value or associative value because it is part of the initial development of Lots 2 and 3 of John Galt's 1827 Plan for the Town of Guelph. There has been a hotel on this property since the 1830s which makes the property the oldest continuously operating business in Guelph. The hotel has been synonymous with two Royal visits to Guelph, speeches by politicians and was the first seat of local judicial court. As a hotel in the 1830s the property offered sanctuary to the pioneers of Guelph providing them with food and lodgings while downtown Guelph established itself as a functional town. Many prominent people have stayed at the hotel throughout its hotelier history.

The hotel has a direct association with the development of hotels in Guelph's downtown and was built using locally quarried Guelph limestone. There are historic and possibly physical links to what could have been the first hotel in Guelph. Although many hotels were built on Carden Street in the latter half of the 19th century, the Royal Hotel was the first to be established and as such has a direct link to the founding pioneers of Guelph.

Contextual Value

The property has contextual value in that its front façade forms the beginning of an uninterrupted block face on Carden Street that is a fundamental part of the north street wall of the Market Grounds area of the Old Downtown cultural heritage landscape. The Royal Hotel building is important in defining and maintaining the heritage character of the Carden Street streetscape, John Galt's Market Grounds area. The Royal Hotel also forms part of a cultural heritage landscape with connections to the Town Hall, Wilson Street and the adjacent railway station. As one of the first properties to be built upon in Guelph's downtown, the Royal Hotel is a prominent part of the historical and social development of downtown and it has been a major landmark in this area of Guelph since the mid-19th century. The Royal Hotel is built on Lots 2 and 3 of Registered Plan 8, a plan devised by John Galt in 1827 and surveyed by John McDonald in 1855. Lots 2 and 3 are two of six lots that hold a prominent position in relation to the planning of Guelph's downtown and the Market Grounds area and, as such, any building constructed on these lots was an integral part of that initial development.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Property Location and Current Photos

Attachment-2 Historical Images

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