

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report

Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Monday, March 4, 2024
Subject	14 Neeve Street: 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 14 Neeve Street. 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

14 Neeve 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 14 Neeve Street meets five 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

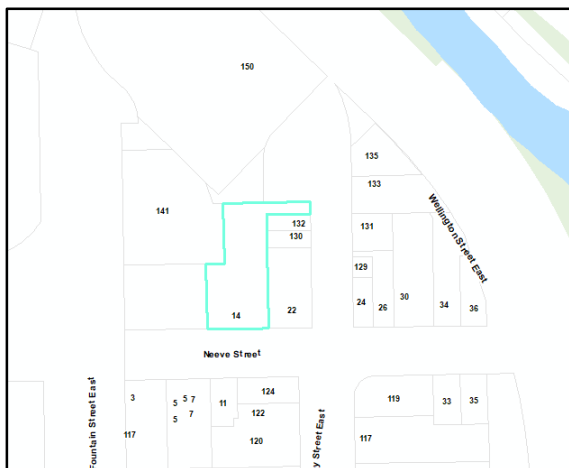


Figure 1: 14 Neeve Street (City of Guelph GIS)

14 Neeve Street is located on the east side of Neeve Street, north of Surrey Street and south of Fountain Street. The legal description of the property is 712850047 PT LOTS 3 & 4, PLAN 33, *PT 2 61R4475; LOT 4, PLAN 269; LANE, PL 269, AS IN ROS587105; GUELPH *AMENDED 2000/11/06 BY LAND REGISTRAR #7

Background

Lots 3 and 4 of Plan 33 first appear in the land title abstracts in 1870, when they were sold by Walter Lawson and Allan Neeve, after whom Neeve Street is named, to Canada Company surveyor and map maker Fred J Chadwick. Chadwick owned Lots 3 and 4 until 1873, when they are sold to Francis and Emma Law.

Francis Law, born in Lincolnshire, England in 1830, first arrived in Guelph during the early 1850s; a time when there were only two residences on the west side of the Speed River. Law was one of the early settlers of the region; trapping furs north between Luther marsh and Amaranth Township, working on the Grand Trunk Railway and quarrying stone, including the stone used to build George McKenzie Stewarts home, later named "Craiganour" by owner Donald Guthrie, part of the grounds of Homewood Health Centre. After some extensive travel, Law settled in Illinois in 1866 to work as an innkeeper and there he met his future wife, Emma Smedley. Returning to Guelph in June of 1866, Law brought Emma to Guelph and reunited with his trapper partner John Hewer to establish a business selling fish. In the late 1860s and onwards, Law began to acquire lands around Neeve Street and the Grist Mill lands on the west side of the Speed River.

By 1878 Francis and Emma had constructed "A two story stone residence 26 x 30 feet, containing seven rooms. Contractors: Wm. Slater. Stonework: Mr Robinson. Plastering: M Tobin Jr, painting. Cost \$800." (Guelph Mercury Building Operations Nov 28, 1878). William Slater was a noted stonemason and bricklayer, who was active across Guelph between 1872 and 1897, with over 14 entries under his name in the Guelph Mercury Building Operations, most notably as the stonemason that constructed St. James Church on Paisley and Glasgow, with R.G Windeyer acting as architect. (Guelph Mercury Building Operations, Oct. 23rd, 1891)

The Law House is located on the north side of Neeve Street, which at this time would have been a natural boundary of Market Square, the Mill Lands, and Guelph's overall downtown district (Attachment 1, Fig. 1). The Laws also had a frame stable and barn built at the cost of \$75 in 1878 (Guelph Mercury Building Operations Nov 28, 1878). The barn and stable housed horses, grain bins, hay mow and a wagon. Later updates included removing the stalls and grain bins and updating the stable for workshop use. The property also included outbuildings such as an icehouse – later converted for garage use. Examination of the Fire Insurance Plans for Guelph show that the stable may not be in its original location. It may have been dismantled and rebuilt as a converted garage behind the house in the 1920s (the original location was fronting Neeve Street).

The Law House was inhabited by the Law family for 134 years. On the ground floor there was a large living room, a parlor and a master bedroom, while the second floor contained four bedrooms, with an attic above. The basement originally contained a dirt-floor root cellar and the wood floor kitchen with southwest-facing windows. According to Francis' grandson Henry Law, the layout of the house changed significantly over time both to adapt to changes in technology but also to

support the growing family. In the 1871 census Francis and Emma had four children, by 1891 they had 7. Frederick Jr., who inherited the property after the death of his parents, would have 11 children, which was not an uncommon family size for the period. During expansion in the 1920s and 30s, the kitchen was moved to the first floor and part of the living space was converted for this purpose. Fredrick Law, who inherited the property following the death of his parents, installed electricity and indoor plumbing during this time.

As Henry notes, his father, Frederick Jr., allowed the property to act as a refuge for people travelling along the railways during the Great Depression. Namely, due to the property's proximity to the railway, many people ended up sleeping amongst the chokecherries or in the hay loft of the barn and stable, sometimes even inside the Law House on the living room couch. Additionally, they were always invited inside for Sunday dinner, at least those who maintained good behaviour.

Francis Law died in 1924 at the age of 94, but during his time he contributed to Guelph as a member of the merchant working class and witnessed its transition and growth as a community.

Building Description

The Law House at 14 Neeve Street is a two-story stone detached residential dwelling with a hipped roof flanked by twin yellow brick chimneys on the north and south elevations. The three-bay façade is symmetrical, with a central front entrance containing a modern vinyl door, flanked by two rectangular window openings containing modern sash window units. The second floor of the façade contains three rectangular window openings, which appear to contain original wood sash windows. The façade also features ornamental corbelled caps, hammer-dressed quoins, and tooled sills and lintels.

The property also contains two ancillary structures: a garage and a small barn. The garage is located to the northeast of the Law House and is constructed of cinder block with a front-gabled roof. There is a small window beneath the gable on the west elevation, and a painted wood single-car garage door. The garage does not appear in the Fire Insurance Plans until 1960 in the former location of the ice house.

The barn is a side gabled, timber frame, 1.5 storey construction with a cast-in-place concrete foundation. The barn is clad in board and batten and metal sheeting. The south elevation contains 3 doors: a single door at ground level, a double door at ground level, and a hayloft door beneath the eaves. There are two small windows on the west elevation, and one on the east elevation. It is likely that the barn is constructed of materials salvaged from the previous ancillary structures that can be seen on the property in the 1911 Fire Insurance Plan. The barn does not appear in the Fire Insurance Plan until 1929. At the November 24, 2008 meeting of Heritage Guelph a demolition application for the barn was considered and the committee passed the following motion: "That Heritage Guelph support the removal of the outbuilding located at 14 Neeve Street by way of relocation to another site or, if necessary, demolition, conditional upon a photographic record being submitted as well as the salvage of any historic materials. Heritage Guelph further directs City Staff to explore the family's consideration of designation of the house."

Statement of Significance

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets five 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 14 Neeve Street display: design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

The subject property meets Criterion 1 because it is a representative example of a stone residence built in the neo-classical vernacular style.

The subject property meets criterion 2 because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship through the stonemasonry of William Slater.

Historical/Associative Value

The subject property meets criterion 4 because it has direct associations with Frederick Law and the Law family, who was a significant merchant in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The subject property meets criteria 6 because it reflects the work of stonemason William Slater, a significant nineteenth-century stonemason who built several notable structures in the City of Guelph, principally St James the Apostle Anglican Church.

Contextual Value

The subject property meets criterion 8 because it is physically, functionally, and historically linked to its surroundings. Francis Law was a fish monger, and 14 Neeve is linked to 130-132 Surrey Street East, which was built by Francis Law in 1914. The property's proximity to the railroad permitted the property to function as a refuge and boarding house for people travelling along the railways during the Great Depression.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Historical Documents

Attachment-2 Current Photos of 14 Neeve Street

Departmental Approval

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