

Staff Report



To **City Council**
Service Area Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date Tuesday, May 14, 2024
Subject **9 Omar Street – Removal from Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties and Notice of Intention to Demolish**

Recommendation

1. That the property known as 9 Omar Street be removed from the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, and;
2. That the demolition of dwelling at 9 Omar Street be approved.

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information and staff’s recommendation regarding the proposed removal of 9 Omar Street from the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties and the owner’s notice of intention to demolish.

Key Findings

In March 2024, Knight Lumber Company submitted an application of Intention to Demolish the dwelling at 9 Omar Street. The application was deemed complete on March 27, 2024. According to Section 27 (9) of Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, when the municipality has issued receipt of a complete application Council has 60 days to consult with Heritage Guelph and make a decision whether to protect a listed property under the provisions of the Act.

9 Omar 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. Heritage Planning staff and the Heritage Guelph Advisory Committee are recommending that 9 Omar Street does not have sufficient cultural heritage value or interest to merit protection under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The key findings and recommendations of this report do not detract from the Future Guelph Strategic Plan.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Grow and care for our community space and places

Financial Implications

None

Report

The property known as 9 Omar Street is located on the southeast side of Omar Street east of Alma Street (Attachment-1, Figure 1). The property is described historically as Part of Lots 62 and 64 from Plan 258 and currently as Part 1 on Plan 61R-22379 registered in December 2022 (Attachment-1, Figure 2).

A severance application involving 7 and 9 Omar Street came to Heritage Guelph for their comments in 2018 as the owner at that time was intending to demolish both buildings. The committee concurred with staff's recommendation that the building did not merit protection by designation and that staff had no concern with its removal from the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties. The owner of both addresses did not elect to make an application for a demolition permit at that time.

In 2024 Heritage Planning was made aware that 7 Omar St had been sold and the owner of 9 Omar was now proceeding with a demolition permit. Heritage Guelph was consulted at their April 8, 2024, meeting to confirm their position regarding the cultural heritage value of the property. The following cultural heritage evaluation was presented by Heritage Planning staff.

Cultural Heritage Evaluation

9 Omar Street contains a small, single-storey, wood frame dwelling with a side gable roof and a transverse gable roof tail (Attachment-1, Figures 3, 4, and 5). The façade has three bays with a centre door flanked by two front windows. The front door and windows have concrete lug sills with modern wood trim added to create an architrave head and side casings. Although the window sashes are wood, they likely date from the early 20th century. All exterior walls of the building have been clad with modern, wood board and batten siding and it sits on a concrete basement.

Historic Background

Although Cooper's Map of the Town of Guelph circa 1875 (Attachment-2, Figure 7) does not show the real property of 9 Omar Street, Lots 62 and 64 were created by the registration of Plan 28 (Attachment-2, Figure 6) in 1855 an early subdivision of property owned by George J. Grange in the Junction area. By 1877 the lot fabric was reiterated by the registration of Plan 258 (Attachment-2, Figure 8). As shown in excerpts from the title abstract for Town of Guelph (Attachment-2, Figure 9) Thomas Flaherty purchased lot 62 in 1877 from the executors of George J. Grange. By 1882 the lot was sold to Mary Flaherty and then passed by Mary Flaherty's will to John Flaherty. John Flaherty purchased Lot 64 from Edmund Harvey in 1896 and appears as the owner and resident of 9 Omar Street in the 1923 City Directory for Guelph. The fire insurance plan of the City of Guelph revised in 1946 (Attachment-2, Figure 10) shows 9 Omar Street as a wood frame dwelling with a wood shingle roof. Gordon Couling's photo of the building taken in 1974 (Attachment-2, Figure 11) shows insulbrick cladding over what was likely wood or stucco siding.

Evaluation of Significance

The subject property (9 Omar Street) does not merit individual 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 building at 9 Omar Street is an example of a simple, late nineteenth century working class dwelling, 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: Building at 9 Omar Street does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit. Apart from the original form of the house, most of the original exterior features and materials have been replaced.

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: Staff 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 by the Flaherty family is not significant to the 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 houses like 9 Omar 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 9 Omar Street is unknown and the design is typical of small, late nineteenth century workers' houses.

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: The neighbourhood surrounding 9 Omar Street is working-class housing but this home individually is not a particularly important supporter of the character of the area.

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

Staff analysis: 9 Omar Street has been substantially altered and the property is not significantly linked to its surroundings.

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

Staff analysis: 9 Omar Street is not a landmark.

Financial Implications

None

Consultations and Engagement

In 2018 Heritage Guelph carried the following motions:

THAT while Heritage Guelph supports the retention of built heritage resources, Heritage Guelph does not recommend that Council protect 7 and 9 Omar Street through individual designation under section 29, Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, and;

THAT Heritage Guelph has no objection to the property known as 7 and 9 Omar Street being removed from the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, and;

THAT Heritage Guelph encourages the proponent to consider retaining salvageable elements of the building (e.g. exterior brick and wood window sashes) for possible reuse and integration into proposed new construction on the property.

At their meeting of April 8, 2024, Heritage Guelph carried the following motion:

THAT the comments provided by Heritage Guelph members on the '9 Omar Street: Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report' be provided to staff and Council for their consideration, and;

THAT Heritage Guelph advise City Council that 9 Omar Street does not meet the provincial criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest as outlined in O. Reg 9/06.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Property Location and Current Photos

Attachment-2 Historical Images

Departmental Approval

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