

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date	Tuesday, April 8, 2025
Subject	54 Paisley Street – Notice of Intention to Designate

Recommendation

1. That the City Clerk be authorized to publish and serve notice of intention to designate 54 Paisley Street pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
 2. That the designation by-law be brought before Council for approval if no objections are received within the thirty (30) day objection period.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

In November 2022, the Government of the Province of Ontario passed Bill 23 (amended by Bill 185), which made changes to the Ontario Heritage Act that will remove all non-designated properties from the Municipal Heritage Register on January 1, 2027. Heritage planning staff and the Heritage Advisory Committee have been reviewing properties on the Municipal Heritage Register for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Council publish its intention to designate 54 Paisley Street pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The cultural heritage significance and heritage attributes of the property are described in this report.

Key Findings

54 Paisley 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.

A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if it meets two or more of the criteria used to determine cultural heritage value or interest as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06 (as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22; see Attachment-1).

Heritage planning staff, in consultation with Heritage Guelph, have completed a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report and Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. Staff have determined that the property meets three of the nine criteria used to determine cultural heritage value according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 (as amended by O. Reg 569/22) under the Ontario Heritage Act. Therefore, the property merits individual heritage designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The key findings and recommendations of this report align with 2024-2027 Strategic Plan priority 6.1.4 to conserve our cultural heritage resources.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

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

Financial Implications

None.

Report

Location

54 Paisley Street is on the south side of Paisley Street between Dublin Street North and Glasgow Street North. It bears the legal description of Plan 8, Lot 593.

Figure 1: Portion of a GIS map showing the location of 52-56 Paisley St.



Statement of Significance

Figure 2: Photo of 52-56 Paisley St. May 2022. Google Maps



The neighborhood surrounding 54 Paisley Street was first surveyed in the 1827 Galt plan. By the next year, the 1828 McDonald plan subdivided the area into lots. Paisley Street was one of the first westward roads to be developed in this area and it connected the “Paisley Block” of Scottish settlers to the growing commercial/industrial centre of Guelph. In 1857, the Great Western Railroad was built near Edinburgh Road. This spurred development in that area but left a gap in buildings from around Guelph Junction to Norfolk Street. Development in this area could have been challenging with the presence of one of Guelph’s geologically significant drumlins. Paisley Street heads directly up one of these drumlins with Lot 593 located near its top. When the town of Guelph was established in 1855, this area was a part of the West Ward. In 1879, when Guelph became a city, this area was a part of the Saint Andrews Ward.

Robert Torrance became the first person to purchase Lot 593 in October 1871. One month later, he sold the property to John Hogg, who would own it for about two years. At this time, there was no building as illustrated by the absence of a building on the 1862 Cooper map, though it shows three structures on the adjacent property, Lot 592. The 1872 Bird’s Eye View shows the same three structures on Lot 592 but still no structure on Lot 593 at that time. This suggests that there was no building on Lot 593. The row house must have been built after 1872. Hogg sold the property to Robert Crawford in the summer of 1873. It was Crawford who likely had the structure built as early as 1873.

Robert Crawford moved to Guelph around 1870. He is identified in the 1871 Directory, which notes that he lived at his shop on Wyndham Street. The first Guelph newspaper ad published by Crawford was in 1870, mentioning his 20 years of previous work experience in Britain. According to the 1871 Census, Crawford was from Scotland. He had a wife and three kids. His business involved the selling, repair, and manufacture of watches and jewelry. He also practiced dentistry.

Beginning in the spring of 1874, Crawford advertised the closure of his shop on Wyndham. In an ad from a November 1874 newspaper, Crawford explained that he was closing his shop because managing it along with his factory was too difficult. A later ad Crawford published in September 1875 reveals that his factory was the building on Lot 593. The ad states his factory is at "68 Paisley," now 52 Paisley Street. The first mention of Crawford's factory was in a November 1874 newspaper, it implies the factory was built before that. Meaning the building was likely constructed as a factory in either 1873 or 1874.

Evidence suggests Crawford and his family lived at their factory in 1875. In 1874, Crawford closed his shop on Wyndham, which had also been his home. The 1875 Wellington Directory states that Crawford lived at "74 Paisley," now 56 Paisley Street. Further, this idea is supported by tax assessment records. In 1874, Crawford was listed on three different tax forms for three different properties. For his shop on Wyndham, he is listed as a householder with a separate owner. For his factory on Paisley, he is the only listed owner. In 1875, Crawford was only listed on one tax form for one property: the Paisley Street factory property. Since he was only associated with this one property, he must have lived there. Although advertised as a factory, it likely contained a proper residence and a workshop. A later newspaper ad from 1876 reveals the specifics about Crawford's factory. He would produce metal watch cases himself and combine them with watch works from another manufacturer. In 1877, a newspaper explained that Crawford's apprentice allegedly stole from him by diluting copper during the melting process. This reveals that Crawford's manufacturing process involved the actual melting of metals.

A newspaper ad from January 1876 says that Crawford has leased a building on Wyndham for his new store. Ads published in the subsequent months make clear Crawford has a shop on Wyndham and a factory on Paisley. It is assumed this factory remained operational until September 1877, when Crawford advertised the rental or sale of three dwellings on Paisley Street. Crawford sold Lot 593 to manager of the Guelph Mercury John McLagan in October 1877. McLagan then published ads for dwellings on Paisley. Late 1877 was likely the first time the row house was lived in by renters. Crawford continued his business out of a shop on St. Georges Square. Beginning in January 1879, Crawford's business began to fail. Soon, he goes bankrupt and is forced to sell his remaining assets. A newspaper from February 27th, 1879, writes that Crawford has abandoned his debts and left Guelph and his wife, behind. A publication from March mentions that Crawford went to New York City though newspaper from that spring explains that Crawford's wife and family are going to leave Guelph to join him in Britain.

From 1878 onwards, the row house was being rented to occupants. By comparing owners from the land title abstract and residents of the house from the City directories, it's clear almost all the occupants were renters excluding the two sets of owner-occupiers, Mr. and Mrs. Hall, and Mrs. McLaughlin. Some of the occupants lived alone but many of them shared the small units with a wife and more family. Residents appear to have had either middle-class or skilled working-class occupations. The turnover of residents at the row house was fast. No renter ever lived there for more than 10 years. The majority lived there for 5 years or less. This contrasts with wealthier neighbourhood residents who have lived in the area for a long time. For example, William Tytler lived next door at 66 Paisley Street from 1889 to the 1930s.

The 1881 fire insurance plan reveals three wooden extensions behind the main structure (52 and 54 Paisley St.) and two disconnected wooden outbuildings. One of these outbuildings was an outhouse, but this wasn't specifically labelled until a later plan. It appears a single outhouse was shared by all three of the units. None of the outbuildings are marked as horse stables indicating the residents of the row house had less money. The outbuildings and extensions were destroyed and replaced over time. For example, the 1897 fire insurance plan reveals the loss of an outbuilding, leaving only a single outbuilding in the backyard for years. It had been replaced by the time of the 1922 fire insurance plan by a brick outbuilding with its own address, "A56". The main structure, the row house, did not experience any major changes over this time.

The building encompasses Georgian and vernacular styles. Georgian architecture experienced a revival in mid-nineteenth-century Ontario, in what is sometimes called Late Georgian architecture. The structure at 54 Paisley Street represents this style because it is broadly symmetrical. Doors and windows are equally spaced apart. Both ends of the façade are weighted equally, with three windows between the door and the end of the structure. Representative of vernacular architecture is the building's simplicity and minimal ornamentation. The design emphasized cheap construction and functionality above style. Further, the use of limestone affirms its vernacular designation. Limestone was traditionally used as a building material in Guelph and could be sourced nearby, which reduced costs.

According to multiple fire insurance plans, the entire 3-unit building is L-shaped and made of stone. Visual inspection of the building reveals this to be limestone. Stones forming the façade appear to be finely cut and vary greatly in size. Some old white pointing can be found around various stones. The building is one story and divided into three residential units. Much of the building has a side gable roof layered with shingles. From the façade, eaves slightly protrude. Two of these windows have been removed and filled with stone. All the window openings are rectangular. They have simple stone lintels and extended stone sills. The doors are framed by modestly decorated pilasters. Above the doors is a transom window and projecting cornice.

Determination of Cultural Heritage Value

Figure 3: 1974 Photo of 52 & 54 Paisley St.



54 Paisley Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets three of the nine prescribed criteria for determining design and physical value, historical and associative value, and contextual value, as per Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by 569/22.

Design/Physical Value

54 Paisley St. meets criterion 1 because it is representative of building with Guelph's local limestone.

Historical/Associative Value

54 Paisley St. meets criterion 5 because initially as a factory it connects to the early industrial and manufacturing history of the area. The parallel use as a residence also connects to the working-class history of the community.

Contextual Value

54 Paisley St. meets criterion 7 because it contributes to the understanding of early industrial and working-class history with connections to the growing commercial core of the City.

Heritage Attributes

The following elements of the property at 54 Paisley Street should be considered as heritage attributes in a designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act:

- Building form, including:
 - Single-storey, horizontal massing

- Symmetrical Georgian facade
- Exterior limestone walls, including:
 - Hammer-dressed lintels
 - Projecting sills
- Original doorways, including:
 - Doorframe pilasters, transom windows and projecting cornice

Financial Implications

None.

Consultations and Engagement

A letter was sent to the property owners on February 25, 2025

At the [March 6, 2025](#) meeting of Heritage Guelph, the Committee passed the following motions:

That Heritage Guelph advises City Council that the 54 Paisley St merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act; and

That Heritage Guelph advises City Council that the committee supports the heritage attributes for 54 Paisley St as outlined in the Heritage Planning staff report dated March 6, 2025.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Ontario Regulation 9-06 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Departmental Approval

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