

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date	Tuesday, June 10, 2025
Subject	79 Suffolk St. W. – Notice of Intention to Designate

Recommendation

1. That the City Clerk be authorized to publish and serve notice of intention to designate 5 Queen St. pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
 2. That the designation bylaw 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 75 Suffolk St. W. 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

79 Suffolk St. W. 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 five 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

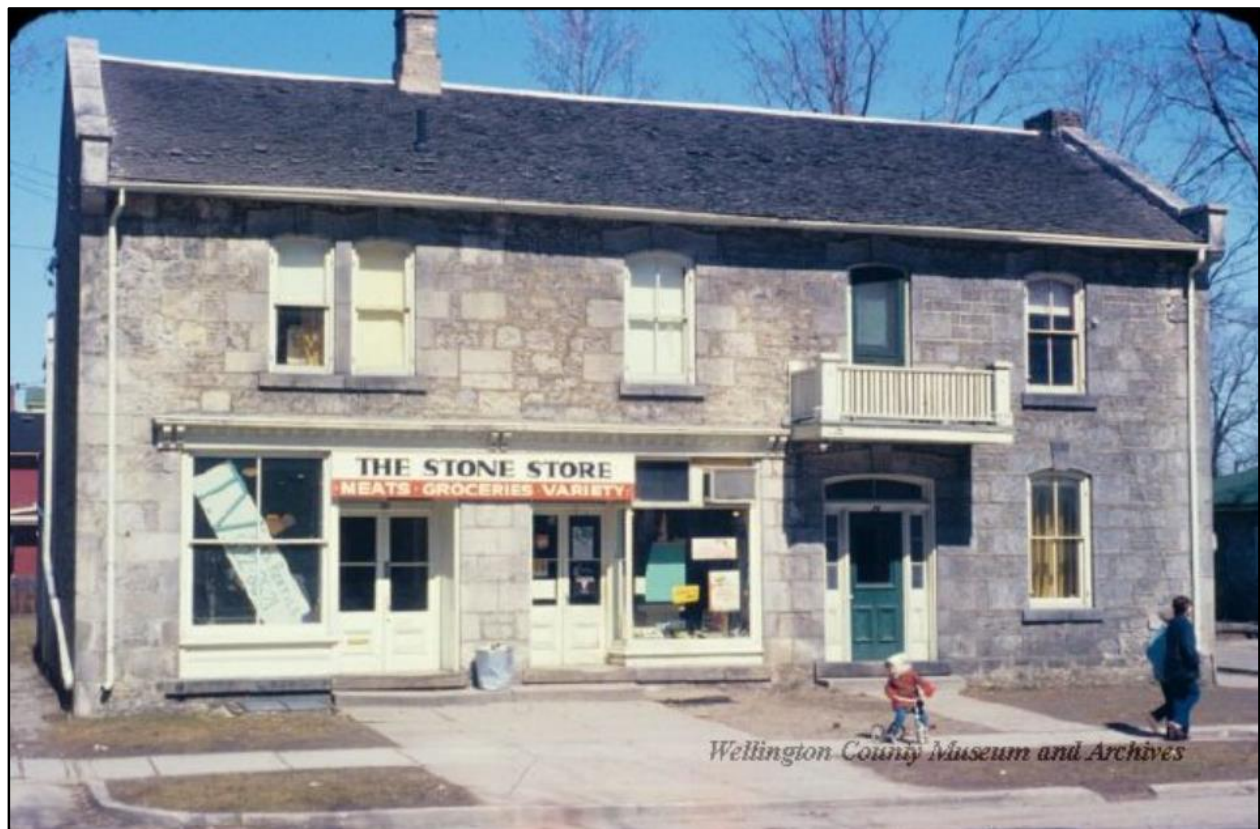
The subject property is located at 79 Suffolk St. W., between Glasgow St. N. and Park Ave. The legal description is Part Lot 3, Part Lot 4, Plan 145.

Figure 1 GIS map showing the location of the subject property



Statement of Significance

Figure 2 1967 Photo of 75-79 Suffolk St. W. (Wellington County Museum and Archives, A1985.110)



75-79 Suffolk St. W. began as a modest residential property in St. David's Ward at 2 Park Ave. (formerly Chambers St.). The original detached residential dwelling was constructed between 1859 and 1861, with the lots not yet being divided and numbered by 1858 and its building footprint first appearing on the 1862 Cooper's Map. The extended residential space at 75 Suffolk St. and the commercial portion of the property, fronting Suffolk St. W. at 77 & 79 Suffolk St., was constructed in 1880 when the property was purchased by former carriage maker Robert Barber. Barber opened the new commercial space as Barber Bros. Grocers the same year and would operate the business through the 1880s while also serving as alderman for St. David's Ward. Robert's sons, Frank and Charles, joined the business in the early 1890s. They are listed as clerks in the 1891 city directory but are noted as living at the northeast corner of Suffolk St. and Chambers St., across Chambers St. from the family business and home. In 1893, contractor J.H. Redwood was employed by Barber to turn 75 Suffolk St. into a double tenement and by 1894, Frank and Charles are listed as living on the northwest property with their father, possibly occupying the newly divided residential space. J.H. Redwood would return to the property in 1894 to construct a stable/driving shed.

Eventually, Barber Bros. Grocers split into two separate businesses, with Charles running a butcher shop out of 79 Suffolk St. W. and Frank maintaining a grocer out of the adjacent 77 Suffolk St. storefront. A 1908 article in the Evening Mercury of Guelph stated that Barber Bros. Grocers "is practically two stores, one being devoted to fine, fancy and staple groceries, the other to meats and hog products". The article refers to Charles and Frank as "natives of Guelph (who) are representative and substantial business men." 75 Suffolk St. would continue to be used as a rental property with tenants changing frequently over the years.

Building Description

75-79 Suffolk St. W. is a 2-storey, neo-classic vernacular building with many Italianate architectural features including its roof form and pitch and its window openings. The property includes 2 commercial spaces (77 & 79 Suffolk St.) and two residential units fronting Suffolk St. W. (municipally known as 75a and 75b Suffolk Street West); It is also connected to the original residence at 2 Park Ave. The building is made of broken course limestone walls with quoined corners and quoined window openings. It has a gable roof punctuated by a brick chimney and ends at corbelled parapet walls with corbel caps.

The upper storey of 79 Suffolk St. W. has a pair of narrow, curved head window opening. Like those found across the façade, these windows are topped with a projecting keystone which is flanked by cut stone lintels. The paired windows share a heavy, projecting stone sill. The first and second storeys are visually separated by a projecting corbelled cornice with dental details that it shares with 77 Suffolk St. W. This west storefront remains original with a large 4-pane storefront window. The doorcase matches the neighbouring store front with a transom window and double-leaf, windowed doors with bolection-moulded frames and sills.

Originally a residential dwelling as the St. David's ward was surveyed, sold, and developed, 75-79 Suffolk St. W. became an early community business offering groceries and other provisions as well as rental residential space. These uses have endured, with the property still serving as a mixed-use dwelling and retail space.

Determination of Cultural Heritage Values

Figure 3 Current photo of 75-79 Suffolk St. W. (Imogen Goldie, 2025).



The building at 75-79 Suffolk St. W. 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 569/22. The subject building at 75-79 Suffolk St. W. has design and physical value, historical and associative value, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

The subject property meets criterion 1 as an early locally quarried limestone mixed-use building with residential and commercial space.

The subject property meets criterion 2 because the building has a high level of physical integrity, well maintained stone and retaining most of its original architectural design and features.

Historical/Associative Value

The subject property meets criterion 4 as an example of a historic mixed-use building combining commercial uses with family homes, a frequent typology in Guelph's early development.

Contextual Value

The subject property meets criterion 7 as it supports the architectural character of the area through its limestone construction and Italianate features mirrored on adjacent properties and others in the neighbourhood.

The subject property meets criterion 8 because it is physically linked to the surrounding neighbourhood through material and architectural expressions and functionally linked to the area as a very early commercial space in the rapidly developing St. David's ward of the late 19th c.

Heritage Attributes

The following elements of the property at 79 Suffolk St. should be considered as heritage attributes in a designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act:

Building form, including:

- 2-storey building with gable roof line
 - Broken course limestone walls
 - Wall quoins
 - Corbelled parapet walls
 - Round head window and door openings with quoining, keystone and cut stone lintels
 - Tooled sills
- Door case with transom window and sidelights
- Corbelled balcony

Consultations and Engagement

A letter was sent to the property owners on March 18, 2025.

At the [April 3, 2025 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee](#), the committee passed the following motion:

1. That the Heritage Advisory Committee advises City Council that 79 Suffolk St. W. merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act; and
2. That the Heritage Advisory Committee advises City Council that the committee supports the heritage attributes for 79 Suffolk St. W. as outlined in the Heritage Planning staff report dated April 3, 2025.

Attachments

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

Departmental Approval

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