

June 5, 2025

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors,

We are the owners of 5 Queen St, Guelph (historically known as Riverview), which is on the June 10 Planning Meeting Agenda for a Notice of Intention to Designate.

**We do not support this non-voluntary designation for the following reasons:**

**1. Unjustified:**

- This process should not be unexpectedly forced upon good heritage stewards in a reactive response to provincial legislative changes.
- We are not an 'at-risk property'. In follow-up discussion with staff, they commended us for "...the extensive careful and thoughtful work [we] have undertaken as stewards of the property...".

**2. Increased costs in money and time:**

- Higher restoration costs: We would be subject to the Enhanced Property Standards By-Law Council passed last year. Staff's letter to us did not mention that.
- **Insurance problems: We have been with the same insurance company for 30 years. We contacted them, and they stated explicitly: "We do not insure individually designated heritage properties." The agent stressed "...the application form asks if the property is heritage designated, and if the answer is 'yes', [the agent is] not allowed to proceed with the application".**
- Time: Part IV designated properties require a Heritage Permit if a renovation affects the named heritage elements (which is essentially everything on our home), even if those renos wouldn't normally require a building permit. This would greatly inhibit progress and diminish desire for restoration.

**3. Insufficient notice:**

- We did not receive adequate notice to prepare as this was a complete surprise to us. Staff's letter dated March 18<sup>th</sup> (attached) arrived sometime between March 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> (we were away that week). It informed us that they were presenting a draft designation report for our home to Heritage Guelph (HG) on April 3 and to Council on May 13. We discussed with staff that we wished to speak at the April 3 HG meeting, but were told by Jack Mallon that we had missed the delegation deadline.

**4. Unintentional misinformation:**

- We tried to register to delegate at the May 13 Council meeting, but learned that the draft designation report for our home was not on the agenda.

**5. Lack of information:**

- We were not informed about our right to contest the intention to designate, or to appeal to Council if it votes to issue a Notice of Intention to Designate. Staff's letter does not mention that at all.

**6. Lack of benefit:**

- There are no benefits from designation, beyond a plaque, as told to us by staff after we followed up per the suggestion in their letter. Guelph offers no benefits such as renovation grants and property tax breaks as is afforded in other municipalities in Ontario.

**7. Conflicting leadership from the City – an example:**

- At the meeting on April 3, 2025, HG recommended preserving and maintaining Allan's Bridge, opposed moving the bridge and carried a motion that Part IV designation be pursued for the Allan's Mill Ruins.
- During the April 3, 2025 HG meeting, city staff argued against preserving the bridge and were not supportive of the above motion. During the Allan's Mill discussion Jack Mallon stated "Mechanistically, the purpose of Heritage Designation is to compel property owners to do certain things with their property". The take-away message from that meeting is that while it is acceptable to compel private property owners to incur the additional expenses of heritage designation, the City argues that designation is too expensive for its own heritage properties.

**8. Non-equitable application of the selection process for Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act - examples:**

- There are several other private homes of equally or more significant heritage value than ours that have not been brought forward for designation. In fact, three homes on Queen St [REDACTED] were on the Heritage Staff Recommendations for 2024 Part IV Designation Priorities; our home was not. These properties have not been brought forward, but ours has. Why have we been prioritized above them - are we perceived as 'low-hanging fruit'?
- Despite repeated recommendations by HG (2005, 2013, 2016), staff has not pursued the designation of a Catholic Hill cultural heritage landscape. The Basilica is not heritage designated. Has the diocese been sent a designation letter?

We are strong supporters of heritage preservation, which is evidenced by the meticulous work we have put into our home over the past 30 years. When we purchased our home in 1995, it was in very poor condition. We have put every spare hour and dollar into restoring our home so that it can remain a centrepiece of Guelph's heritage far into the future. Our restoration has been, and will continue to be, true to our home's heritage and history.

When we worked with HG while planning the rebuild of our derelict porch, we discussed voluntary Part IV designation with them. We decided it was not good timing for us due to the

time required for the permitting processes and increased costs. It is still something we would consider in the future, but not at the risk of losing our property insurance and not without some benefits being offered by the City and more transparency around the process.

Sincerely,

Meg Thorburn  
Lorenz Calcagno  
5 Queen Street,  
Guelph, ON



March 18, 2025

5 Queen St. E.  
Guelph, Ontario  
N1E 4R4

Dear Margaret Thorburn,

Your property at 5 Queen St. E. is listed on the City's Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, meaning it has been identified as a valuable heritage resource in the community. Due to provincial changes to the Ontario Heritage Act, all non-designated properties listed on the Register will be removed at the end of 2026. This will mean that approximately 80% of Guelph's heritage buildings will no longer have protection under the Ontario Heritage Act as of January 1, 2027. You can find out more about the heritage register on the City's website at [www.guelph.ca/heritage](http://www.guelph.ca/heritage).

Heritage Planning staff, in collaboration with the Heritage Advisory Committee, are evaluating listed properties to identify suitable candidates for designation. Your property has been identified as a priority candidate for individual designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

With its beautiful, local limestone construction, regency cottage elements and architectural features like its open gable with barge board, decorative roundel and wrap around veranda; as well as its connection to Nathaniel and the rest of the Higinbotham family, our research indicates that this 'treasure house' meets the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, and heritage staff will be recommending that Council issue a notice of intention to designate.

Designation recognizes a property's heritage value and protects it for future generations. Designation does not prevent changes to a property but provides a framework to ensure that alterations do not negatively impact the property's heritage value. It is important to note that a designation bylaw would only apply to exterior elements of your property.

I will be bringing a draft designation report to the Heritage Committee at the April 3, 2025, meeting, and a recommendation to Council on May 13, 2025.

Please contact me if you have any concerns, or if you would like to discuss benefits of designation.

**Imogen Goldie**, Heritage Planner  
Planning and Building Services  
**Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services**  
[Imogen.goldie@guelph.ca](mailto:Imogen.goldie@guelph.ca)

**City Hall**  
1 Carden St  
Guelph, ON  
Canada  
N1H 3A1

T 519-822-1260  
TTY 519-826-9771