

Subject: Demolition of Former North Pelham School Structure –
801 Metler Road

Recommendation:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2023-211 as it
pertains to the demolition of the former North Pelham school
structure at 801 Metler Road, for information.**

Background:

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council regarding the demolition of the former North Pelham school structure on a property that was proposed to be on a register of non-designated properties that are of cultural heritage value or interest. The property is located on the north-west corner of Maple Street and Metler Road at 801 Metler Road (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Property Location



The property was recently sold and the new owner initially was planning to renovate the former school structure and build an addition to it. Once the new owner took ownership of the property and was able to properly inspect the structure, it became evident that the structure was in very poor condition and it would be financially prohibitive to repair the building. The new owner subsequently contacted town planning staff to determine whether it would be possible to demolish the structure.

Planning staff completed a review of the Town's records with respect to the property and determined that the property was contemplated for inclusion on the Municipal Register of Non-Designated Heritage Properties and identified as having a preliminary rating as a B+ or of moderate heritage value.

According to Municipal Property Assessment Corporation records, the property contains two structures: a dwelling, being a former school constructed in 1900 and a Quonset hut constructed in approximately 1987. Historical research indicates that in 1834, the village of North Pelham deemed it time to erect a school. The site originally chosen was opposite the Flour and Feed Mill in the village. The site was changed in 1855, to the location at the corner of Maple and Metler Road. It was decided that the best option would be to construct a new frame building rather than move the log one. It is unclear when the school building was constructed on this site, but the earliest records are from an annual Trustees and Ratepayers meeting in 1912. In 1953, an addition was built at the back. The school closed in 1965, following a merger with the "Township School Area". The building was used for storage and supplies for a time and was also the site of the Hunters and Anglers Association. More recently, it has been used as a private home.

The full statement of cultural and historical significance is available in Appendix A.

Planning staff attended the site to take photographs of the former school structure (Figures 2-8) and documented any heritage features or attributes that may exist.

Figure 2: Former School Structure - Front



Figure 3: Former School Structure – East Side Windows



Figure 4: Former School Structure – Interior Wall



Figure 5: Former School Structure – Wood Stove

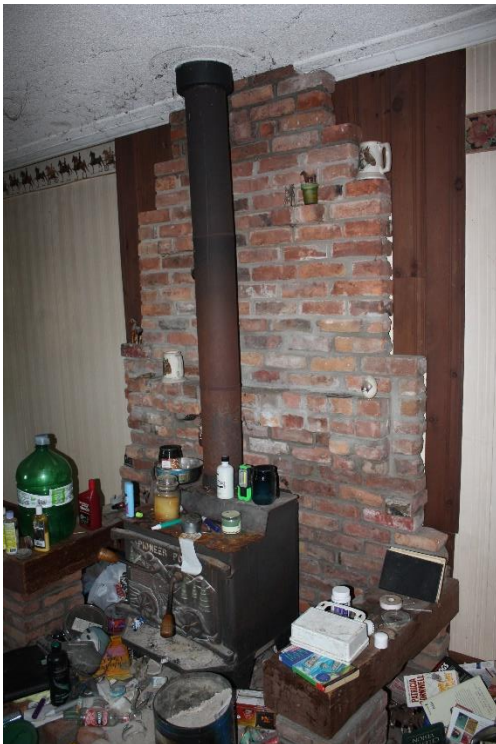


Figure 6: Former School Structure – Stained Glass Windows

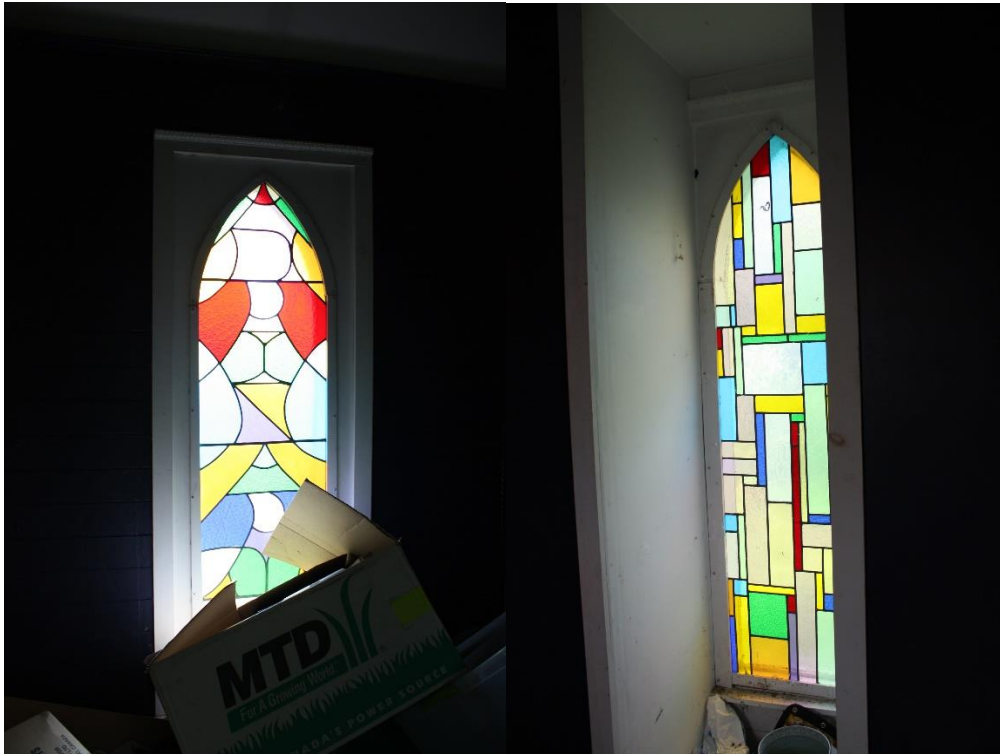


Figure 7: Former School Structure – Interior Staircase



Figure 8: Former School Structure - Roof



Analysis:

Ontario Heritage Act

Section 27- Register

Section 27 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* permits a register to be compiled of property within the municipality that is of cultural heritage value or interest. The register, which is kept by the Clerk, contains all properties that have been designated (under Section 29) or listed (under Section 27 Subsection 3). With respect to each property, the register contains: a legal description of the property; the name and address of the owner; and a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property.

Once a property has been placed on the register as a listed (not designated) property, the owner cannot demolish or remove or permit the demolition or removal of the building or structure unless the owner gives Council at least 60 days' notice. The purpose is to provide Council the opportunity to consider if the property should be designated. If Council decides the property is worthy of designation, the designation process, outlined in Section 29, would occur and the demolition or removal of the building or structure would be halted. If the property is not designated, the 60 days

also affords the time and opportunity to record through a photographic record any attributes of the building prior to demolition.

If Council approves the request to demolish or remove a listed building or structure, the property could be removed from the register, a demolition permit may be applied for by the owner, and the Building Department has up to 10 days to issue a demolition permit once received.

Recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* allow Council to include listed properties on the register for only a two-year time frame. If the property is not designated within two years, it must be removed from the register and cannot be included again for a period of 5 years. However, it can be designated at any time.

Planning staff have been working on a register of non-designated properties, however it is not complete and has not received approval from Council. As a result, the Town does not have a formal register of listed (non-designated) properties and property owners do not require the permission of Council to demolition structures. The recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* which include the timeframes discussed above make keeping a register of non-designated properties to protect from demolition without consideration for designation less feasible given properties can only be listed for two years. To achieve Provincial, Regional and local objectives relating to heritage resource conservation, it may be more effective to proactively target properties for designation with known high cultural heritage value or interest than to continue work to list non-designated properties on the register. Planning staff can provide a future report on this matter for Council's consideration.

Staff Comments

Despite this property not being on a register of listed (non-designated) properties, staff felt it was important to inform Council of the property owner's desire to demolish this building. It is unclear when the school structure was constructed but it is estimated to be sometime between 1855 and 1900. The building has been significantly altered both inside and out over the years to accommodate its conversion to a dwelling. The bell tower was removed many years ago and the building reclad with various materials including a heavy stone veneer and board and batten vinyl siding. Window openings have also been altered and vinyl windows installed. The interior contains no original features of note, i.e., flooring, trim, mouldings, doors, etc. The staircase, wood stove and contemporary stained-glass windows are also not original.

The structure would meet criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest defined under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* including design value or physical value as the structure is representative of the style for schools of that era, associative value due to its direct association with the early village of North

Pelham, and contextual value being a landmark as an institution located at the crossroads of Metler Road and Maple Street.

Planning staff attended the property and photographed the structure for documentation purposes. Unfortunately, the structure was not maintained for many years. As a result, the original framing and roofing structure is rotting and deteriorating. This is an unfortunate situation of 'demolition by neglect' whereby the building has not been properly maintained and has been neglected to such an extent that repair and reuse of the structure not being feasible.

While no action is required by Council as a result of this report as there is no protection afforded to this property from demolition by the *Ontario Heritage Act* at this time, this report is being provided to advise Council that the property was reviewed by Planning staff for cultural heritage value or interest and has been documented prior to issuance of a demolition permit.

Financial Considerations:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report. The property owner is responsible for all costs associated with demolition of the structure.

Alternatives Reviewed:

n/a

Strategic Plan Relationship: Community Development and Growth

Consideration of cultural and heritage significance in decision making is an important part of ensuring that growth and development will maintain the high quality of life and community identity enjoyed by residents. In this case, there is limited heritage value remaining with the building at 801 Metler Road due to the significant alterations undertaken and neglect that has occurred over the years.

Consultation:

n/a

Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:

Appendix A Statement of Culture and Historical Significance

Prepared and Recommended by:

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