



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (PACAC)

From: Erik Hanson, Heritage Resources Coordinator

Meeting Date: February 4, 2021

Subject: Report PACAC20-030B
Designation of 470 Water Street - The Peterborough County Courthouse

Purpose

A report to recommend that PACAC recommend to Council that 470 Water Street, Peterborough, Ontario - The Peterborough County Courthouse, be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the **Ontario Heritage Act** (the Act) as a Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest to the City of Peterborough.

Recommendations

That the Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee approve the recommendations outlined in Report PACAC20-030B, dated February 4, 2021 of the Heritage Resources Coordinator, as follows:

- a) That the Designation Brief for 470 Water Street, Peterborough, Ontario, as revised (attached as Appendix A), be received, and;
- b) That the property at 470 Water Street be recommended to Council for designation pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the **Ontario Heritage Act**.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budgetary or financial implications as the result of the recommendations of this report.

Background

Under Part IV of the Act, municipalities may designate individual properties deemed to be of “cultural heritage value or interest” to the community, through the passage of municipal By-Laws. The designation process strikes a balance between the interests of the individual property owners and the recognized need of the community to preserve its heritage resources. Heritage designation prohibits unwarranted demolition and controls major alterations that might otherwise harm specific heritage features.

Under the Act, Council is required to consult with its municipal heritage committee prior to issuing a notice of intention to designate a property. The designation brief for the property outlining its significance is attached as Appendix A for PACAC to review.

Staff reviewed the Peterborough County Courthouse property against the criteria for significance outlined in Regulation 9/06 of the Act and determined that the area is suitable for designation.

In August of this year Peterborough County announced plans to pursue the sale of the Courthouse and associated lands and buildings including Victoria Park. At its meeting of September 17, 2020, the PACAC passed a recommendation requesting that staff prepare a draft designation brief for 470 Water Street (Peterborough County Courthouse and south wing addition) and the adjacent lands known as the County jail, and Victoria Park. Subsequently staff held discussions and met with a heritage consultant from the architectural firm +VG, hired by the County to provide its own opinion of the heritage value of the site.

At its meeting of December 10, 2020, the PACAC received Report PACAC20-030 recommending the designation of the County Courthouse Precinct as a Cultural Heritage Landscape. At that meeting the committee also received a report by +VG providing its initial Statement of Significance for the site. Following review of the documents, the committee passed the following motion:

That PACAC defer the matter back to the City and County to present a unified designation brief.

During the month of January 2021 City staff and members of +VG Architects met numerous times to continue research and revise the designation brief. At that time the decision was made to recommend the designation as a single property instead of a cultural heritage landscape given that it is currently one parcel of land containing all the significant structures and this would simplify review of subsequent proposed alteration applications. The collaborative process was beneficial and:

- Created deeper research on the development of Ontario courthouses;
- Reconciled numerous details relating to dates of construction;
- Clarified the role of various architects, designers and builders;

- Refined periods of significance, and;
- Strengthened justification for the identified heritage attributes.

Staff supports the revised brief as attached to this report as Appendix A.

The Courthouse Property

The Courthouse property has cultural heritage value or interest as a prominent judicial complex within the city of Peterborough. It is a property which includes the original Courthouse designed by Joseph Scobell, 1879 renovations by John Belcher, 1917 repairs and renovations by William Blackwell, Registry and County Offices addition by Craig & Zeidler in 1960, the Heritage Jail Park, Victoria Park (originally Courthouse Square), and the residence of the caretaker. The Courthouse has been in continuous operation since its completion in 1840, first as the District then County Courthouse and it continues to serve the community in this capacity as the Ontario Court of Justice and Ontario Family Court. It has specific physical and design value as a fine and very early example of a judicial complex from the earliest days of the Province of Upper Canada.

Historically, it has direct associations with and yields significant information regarding the evolution of the judicial system in Ontario from its inception. It also yields information about the importance of location and the relationship between buildings and greenspace which was typical of early courthouse design in Ontario. Contextually the Courthouse property defines the area as a landmark – in its siting, design, and as an important early judicial building and as one of the earliest public buildings constructed in the town, overlooking one of the town’s first public parks. The setting is in the historic centre of Peterborough, giving the building a dignified and prominent place in the community. In many ways, the property has influenced community values over the course of its 180-year history.

Summary

This report recommends the designation of The Peterborough County Courthouse under Part IV of the **Ontario Heritage Act**.

Submitted by,

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Attachment:

Appendix A – Designation Brief 470 Water Street – The Peterborough County Courthouse