



## Committee of the Whole Report

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**Report Number:** ED2022-020

**Meeting Date:** May 3, 2022

**Title:** **Proposed Heritage Designation of 6697 Highway 35, Geographic Township of Bexley**

**Description:** Proposed heritage designation of 6697 Highway 35 (Coboconk Train Station) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

**Author and Title:** Emily Turner, Economic Development Officer – Heritage Planning

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### Recommendations:

**That** Report ED2022-020, **Proposed Heritage Designation of 6697 Highway 35, Geographic Township of Bexley**, be received;

**That** the Municipal Heritage Committee’s recommendation to designate 6697 Highway 35 under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as being of cultural heritage value or interest be endorsed;

**That** staff be authorized to proceed with the process to designate the subject property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, including the preparation and circulation of a Notice of Intention to Designate, and preparation of the designating by-law;

**That** a designating by-law be brought forward to Council at the next Regular Council Meeting following the end of the notice period; and

**That** this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

**Department Head:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial/Legal/HR/Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Administrative Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background:**

The City of Kawartha Lakes designates properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Properties are recommended for designation by their owners, members of the public, local organizations, the Municipal Heritage Committee, Council or staff. Properties proposed for designation are reviewed by the Municipal Heritage Committee, as required by subsection 29(2) of the Ontario Heritage Act, and their recommendation is brought forward to Council under the cover of a staff report.

At its meeting of April 7, 2022, the Kawartha Lakes Municipal Heritage Committee adopted the following resolution:

### **KLMHC2022-050**

**Moved By** I. McKechnie

**Seconded By** J. Pitcher

**That** Report KLMHC2022-023, **Designation of Property – 6697 Highway 35, Geographic Township of Bexley**, be received; and

**That** the designation of the property known municipally as 6697 Highway 35, Geographic Township of Bexley be endorsed; and

**That** the recommendation to designate the subject property be forwarded to Council for approval.

**Carried**

This report addresses that direction.

6697 Highway 35 in the Geographic Township of Bexley contains the historic Coboconk Train Station and is located within the village of Coboconk. The property is listed on the City's Heritage Register. The station was closed in 1965 and moved to this location in 1995. It is currently owned by the City of Kawartha Lakes and is vacant. In 2018, the Coboconk, Norland and Area Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with other community groups, came forward with a proposal to renovate and expand the station as part of a major adaptive reuse project to turn it into a medical centre to serve the northern communities in Kawartha Lakes. In this role, the building is also intended to house other related community services, such as the local food bank, and will include historic exhibits to showcase the history of Coboconk, the railway, and the surrounding

area. This is an important community project which addresses a significant gap in services for the northern part of the municipality. The project is being funded through a combination of community fundraising, support from the City, and grants. The property will remain in the ownership of the City of Kawartha Lakes, but will be managed locally by a volunteer management committee.

The redevelopment of this property requires site plan approval in order to proceed. The first submission for site plan approval was circulated in fall 2021 and heritage staff and the Municipal Heritage Committee provided separate comments on the proposed design. The design would restore the historic train station and add a rear addition onto the building to house the bulk of the complex. The design for the project is being undertaken by ERA Architects, a Toronto-based architectural firm with significant experience undertaking adaptive reuse projects. Both staff and the Committee are highly supportive of this project as it preserves an important heritage building in Coboconk and provides a long-term sustainable use for it while addressing a community need. Staff and the Committee are working with the Chamber of Commerce and ERA Architects to finalize the heritage aspects of the design through the site plan approval process.

As part of the comments for the first circulation, staff requested that the property be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as a condition of approval. Staff have consulted with the Coboconk, Norland and Area Chamber of Commerce, which is heading the redevelopment process, as well as with senior City staff, who are supportive of the designation proceeding. A heritage evaluation of the property has been undertaken and it has been determined that the property is eligible for designation under Part IV of the Act.

Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act provides that, upon consultation with its municipal heritage committee, and after serving a Notice of Intention to Designate pursuant to the requirements of the Act, the Council of a municipality may pass a by-law designating a property within the boundaries of the municipality to be of cultural heritage value or interest if it fulfils the criteria for designation under the Act, as identified in Ontario Regulation 9/06. Both staff and the Kawartha Lakes Municipal Heritage Committee are satisfied that the subject property fulfils the criteria for designation set out under Ontario Regulation 9/06.

## **Rationale:**

The requirement that a property be designated as a condition of a Planning Act application recognizes that, increasingly, the preservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario takes place through the land use planning process. Although this type of condition has not been previously required at the City of Kawartha Lakes, it is common practice in municipalities across Ontario to ensure that cultural heritage resources are conserved as their redevelopment is contemplated. It is widely recognized as a best practice when addressing development applications with a heritage component. The intention is to support and allow new development while also providing legal protection to heritage assets which are important to a community. Both the City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan and provincial land use planning policy support this approach.

In particular, the request to designate the property is drawn from the City's primary policy addressing applications made regarding historic properties, CP2021-041 (Heritage Applications Policy). In most situations where an application of this type was received for a listed property that was privately owned, the policy would direct staff to negotiate entering into a heritage easement agreement with the property owner to ensure the conservation of the property through a mutually agreed upon legal framework as part of the development process. However, because the City is and will remain the owner of 6697 Highway 35, a heritage easement agreement cannot be made with regard to the property because the City is not able to enter into such a legal agreement with itself. In order to achieve its stated policy objectives, the comparable process to create a legal framework governing the long term protection of the property is the designation of the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. This would ensure that the property is legally recognized and protected as a heritage property as part of the land use planning process. The designation of the property will not delay or prevent the redevelopment of the site as both staff and the Committee will continue to receive and comment on the site plan application as it is finalized. The designation of the property will also help celebrate this important historic landmark and the significant work undertaken by the community to restore the building and create a new purpose for it.

The work undertaken on this project by the Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with its partners and the local community in the northern part of Kawartha Lakes shows strong and important community leadership with regard to the preservation and sustainable reuse of heritage assets. The sensitive redevelopment of an underutilized heritage resource to address a community need and also preserve an significant local

building is a model for heritage preservation and the potential reuse of other historic structures throughout the City. The designation of the property shows a commitment by the City to the community with regard to the building's long-term protection and also recognizes the important work done by the community in maintaining and restoring this structure. Similarly, the designation of its own properties positions the City as a leader in heritage preservation in communities across the municipality.

In order to be eligible for designation, properties must fulfil certain criteria established under the Ontario Heritage Act. Ontario Regulation 9/06 identifies the criteria for determining the cultural heritage value of a property. Under this regulation, a property may be designated under Part IV, s.29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. The property has design value or physical value because it:
  - a. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
  - b. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
  - c. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
  
2. The property has historical value or associative value because it:
  - a. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
  - b. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
  - c. demonstrates the work of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community.
  
3. The property has contextual value because it:
  - a. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of the area,
  - b. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
  - c. is a landmark.

6697 Highway 35 fulfils multiple criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06 and is therefore eligible for designation under Part IV of the Act. A heritage evaluation report has been prepared for this property which outlines its significance and demonstrates which criteria it fulfils. This report is attached as Appendix A. A statement of significance for the property as required by the Act, which summarizes the property's cultural heritage value and reasons for designation, can be found below.

## **6697 Highway 35 Statement of Significance**

### **Design and Physical Value**

6697 Highway 35 has design and physical value as a representative example of a rural railway station in turn of the century Ontario constructed by the Grand Trunk Railway to their standardized corporate plan. Using elements borrowed from the Queen Anne style, such as decorative shingles, brackets, and asymmetrical massing, the style is demonstrative of the romantic and picturesque styles preferred by the Grand Trunk Railway for their rural and small town stations in the early years of the twentieth century. The property is also a rare surviving example of a railway station in Kawartha Lakes where the majority of both urban and rural railway stations have been demolished.

### **Historical and Associative Value**

6697 Highway 35 has historical and associative value as the former train station for Coboconk which had a major impact on the town's economic and demographic growth beginning the 1870s when the line arrived in the community. The property yields information regarding the railway in Coboconk and its role in the development of the community where it helped to facilitate the lumber boom of the late nineteenth century as well as the shift in the economy in the early twentieth century with the development of the cottage country tourist industry which continues to be an important economic driver in the community today. Both the lumber and tourism industries were vital to the evolution of the community and the station, as the primary extant feature from the railway period, provides information on the role of the railway in their establishment and growth.

### **Contextual Value**

6697 Highway 35 has contextual value as an local landmark in Coboconk and the surrounding area, as well as part of the surviving historic landscape of the village. The property is an important community landmark from its original constructed as the train station in the village to its evolution to community centre and planned redevelopment. The property is historically related to the wider historic landscape of Coboconk dating from the mid-nineteenth century and supports the historic small town character of the community. It has wider significance as part of the broader railway landscape in the northern part of Kawartha Lakes where it has historic connections to other extant stations, infrastructure and engineering works.

## **Provincial Policy Conformity**

### **Provincial Policy Statement (2020)**

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) sets the policy foundation for development and land use planning Ontario. The policy intends to balance the needs of growth and economic development with the need for ensuring a high quality of life, public safety and health, and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage resources. Section 2.6 (Cultural Heritage and Archaeology) requires municipalities to conserve significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes as part of the land use planning process, stating that "Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved."

Significant built heritage resources, as defined by the PPS, are those which have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest as established by the criteria under the Ontario Heritage Act. These criteria are outlined by Ontario Regulation 9/06. The subject property has been evaluated based on the criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06 and has been found to fulfil those criteria and, therefore, is a significant heritage resource within the municipality which requires conservation through designation under Part IV of the Act.

### **A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)**

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was prepared by the Ontario government in order to help guide the land use planning process and assist communities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe achieve a high quality of life, positive economic development, and protection for important local resources.

Section 4.2.7 (Cultural Heritage Resources) requires municipalities to conserve their cultural heritage resources as part of the land use planning process "in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities". The Growth Plan defines cultural heritage resources as "built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, and archaeological resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution that make to our understanding of the history of a place, event, or a people. While some cultural heritage resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation."

The subject property has been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest through evaluation based on Ontario Regulation 9/06 and therefore requires conservation through designation under Part IV of the Act. This property has a high degree of historic significance with regard to the history of Coboconk in the late nineteenth century, as well as a being an important community landmark, and community benefit would be gained through its ongoing preservation.

**City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan (2012)**

The City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan was amended in 2017 to include strengthened cultural heritage policies. Those policies can be found in Section 10 of the Official Plan. Official Plan Amendment 26 outlined those amendments.

Three of the heritage policies speak directly to the conservation of individual heritage properties:

- a) Cultural heritage resources of significant cultural heritage value or interest shall be identified, protected and conserved.
- e) The City shall use the tools available to it under the Municipal Act, the Planning Act, the Environmental Assessment Act, and the Ontario Heritage Act to conserve cultural heritage resources.
- f) Cultural heritage resources shall be maintained in situ and in a manner that prevents the deterioration and conserves the identified cultural heritage values or interest and/or identified heritage attributes of the cultural heritage resource.

The City's policies require it to conserve cultural heritage resources and designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act is a tool for doing so. In this case, the subject property has been found to have cultural heritage value through evaluation and individual designation is the most appropriate method for ensuring its conservation.

The City's policies also state that:

- m) The City shall lead the community in the management of its cultural heritage resources by providing good examples of property heritage stewardship in the care and management of the municipally owned heritage properties.



The designation and on-going preservation of this property in conjunction with the community-led redevelopment efforts demonstrate strong leadership on the part of the City with regard to its own heritage resources and demonstrates a commitment from the City to the community to the long-term conservation of this structure.

### **Other Alternatives Considered:**

There are no recommended alternatives.

### **Alignment to Strategic Priorities**

The designation of property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act supports the following goals from the Council adopted Strategic Plan:

- A Vibrant and Growing Economy
- An Exceptional Quality of Life

The identification and protection of heritage assets in the community through designation promotes and exceptional quality of life by supporting and promoting arts, culture and heritage within the municipality. Designation provides long term protection and management for key heritage resources in the municipality and recognizes their importance to the community.

In particular, the preservation of this property, in conjunction with the redevelopment efforts led by the community, will have a significant impact on the quality of life for residents of the northern part of the municipality through the provision of medical and other services which will be located in this structure.

The protection of heritage resources in the municipality also assists in the growth of the local economy in general by identifying, protecting, and celebrating places where people want to live, work and visit. It encourages investment in local communities by ensuring and promoting attractive places for residents and businesses to be. It also has a direct impact on developing local tourism through the preservation of sites and landscapes that people want to visit.

### **Financial/Operation Impacts:**

There are costs associated with the publication of notices and the registration of the designating by-law on title for the property. These costs are covered by the existing Heritage Planning budget.

There is the potential for a third-party appeal for this designated to the Ontario Land Tribunal, as there is with all heritage designations under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. However, as this building is an important community landmark and is in the process of a major restoration as part of its redevelopment as a medical centre, staff do not anticipate an appeal of this designation.

As the property is City-owned, the designation will impact the future operations of this property as changes to the property will require a heritage permit. However, the City has in place a process to address alterations and renovations to City-owned designated properties and any future changes will fall within this framework. Similarly, any future redevelopment of the site more generally will be governed by the City's existing processes regarding the redevelopment of heritage designated properties under Council Policy CP2021-040.

### **Consultations:**

Coboconk, Norland and Area Chamber of Commerce  
CAO  
Director of Development Services  
Director of Community Services  
Manager, Economic Development  
Planning Officer – Large Developments

### **Attachments:**

Appendix A – Heritage Evaluation Report: 6697 Highway 35, Bexley Township



Adobe Acrobat  
Document

**Department Head email:** [rholy@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:rholy@kawarthalakes.ca)

**Department Head:** Richard Holy, Director of Development Services