

# 1474 Highway 7A, Geographic Township of Manvers (Manvers Town Hall)

## Heritage Designation Evaluation

Geographic Township of Manvers

N1/2 LT 1 S/S KING ST AND W/S JOHN ST PL 5 MANVERS EXCEPT R391157;  
KAWARTHA LAKES

2023



## Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets any two of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. A heritage evaluation of the property has determined that 1474 Highway 7A has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 1. The property has design value or physical value because it:

i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method:

The property is a representative example of an early twentieth century small town municipal building. The structure includes a range of Romanesque features, such as the oculus window with keystones, pilasters, and rounded windows and doors on a simply rectangular form which was typical of government buildings in rural areas during this period.

ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

The property displays a typical degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit for a structure of this type.

iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

### 2. The property has historical or associative value because it:

i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to the community:

The property has direct associations with the development of local government in Manvers Township as the former Manvers Township Hall and municipal office. The building was constructed in 1912 to replace an older structure that burnt in the 1911 fire that destroyed much of downtown Bethany and has provided municipal services to the community since the early twentieth century. The property demonstrates the growth of local government from its nineteenth century beginnings into the twentieth century.

ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:

The property yields information regarding the history of local government in Manvers Township as its former township hall. The property also yields information regarding the participation of local men

and women in the First and Second World Wars as the location of the Manvers cenotaph.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community:

The former township hall was designed by Peterborough architect William Blackwell, a prominent architect in the local region. The town hall is reflective of his practice which specialized in institutional and commercial structures in Victorian and Edwardian styles. In particular, it demonstrates his use of the Romanesque style, for which he was well-known.

### 3. The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:

The property is important in maintaining the historic character of downtown Bethany as the commercial core of the village. The property forms one of a range of commercial, residential and institutional properties along the Highway 7A corridor through the village which together make up the centre of the community and help provide a historic small town character to Bethany.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings:

The property is visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the historic landscape of downtown Bethany. The corridor of Highway 7A which runs through Bethany includes a range of commercial, residential and institutional structure which form the historic core of the village dating from the nineteenth century and this property is linked to its surroundings as part of that development.

iii. is a landmark.

The property is a landmark as the former local township hall, the current location of the cenotaph and the present-day local library. It is also located in a prominent position along Highway 7A in the centre of Bethany.

## Design and Physical Value

1474 Highway 7A has design and physical value as a representative example of a small-town municipal building from the early twentieth century. While government buildings in larger centres were often large and architecturally complex structures, government structures in smaller communities were built on a smaller scale with less ornate details and designs, while nevertheless utilizing current architectural trends and stylistic features. The distinct architecture of the building sets it apart in downtown Bethany as the community's government building and it is a representative example of these types of structures in smaller communities across Kawartha Lakes.

The original municipal buildings in Upper Canada, later Ontario, came about in the first half of the nineteenth century as local government was slowly established throughout the province. Prior to the 1850s, when comprehensive legislation was introduced at the provincial level to provide direction and regulation of municipal operations, local governments operated on a hodgepodge of legislation and regulation with varying degrees of control at a local level to collect taxation, provide services and enforce rules within a community. These early municipal governments were primarily concentrated in larger centres, such as Toronto – then York – Kingston, and Hamilton, which erected some of the first municipal government buildings in the province.

These buildings were erected due to a need to house the officials of municipal government. Prior to this, most government operations, except for those of the provincial government, took place in courthouses which also developed in many communities in the first half of the nineteenth century. The focus of courthouses, however, was very specifically legal judgement and enforcement, and many also contained jail spaces, either attached or in close proximity to the courthouse building, making them unsuitable for other local functions; many were also situated at a distance from the town centre, which was also not seen as desirable by local officials. Town halls were to be public, accessible buildings, and use of an existing courthouse did not always fit this need, making purpose-built structures required. The passage of the first Municipal Act in 1849 further emphasized the need for structures specific to the provision of municipal administration as the framework was established for the consistent creation of local governments at city, county and township levels across the province; the passage of this act and the regularization of municipal governance across the province created a boom in construction.

It was widely understood that these new local government buildings had a number of key roles in community life and their architecture was required to reflect this. On one hand, these structures needed to provide spaces for the basic functions of municipal government, such as Council meetings and administrative offices. However, structures of these type were also widely used during the nineteenth century as assembly and performance spaces by

community groups and their design and construction also needed to take that function into account. Occasionally, these buildings were actively designed to account for a broad array of uses and were actually intended as multi-purpose buildings, with separate spaces for uses as diverse as markets, auditoriums, and fire stations, along with administrative offices and council chambers. More broadly, these structures were fundamentally public buildings and needed to be both distinguishable and accessible to local citizens in order to facilitate the some of the core activities of community life.

Many early municipal buildings, both before and after the passage of the Municipal Act, were constructed in the Classical style popular during the first half of the nineteenth century. Often based on a Palladian-inspired plan, these buildings integrated Classical design elements, such as column, porticos, cupolas and rusticated quoins, into symmetrical and balanced plans. This was also the style favoured for other government buildings, including courthouses and reflected the general understanding of the period that Classical architecture was most suited for the buildings of government because it conveyed order, balance and dignity; it was also directly associated with the origins of democracy because of the source of the style in ancient Greece and Rome. The preference for this style endured, although by the later decades of the century, architects, and by extent the municipal governments that employed them, had begun to experiment with other dominant architectural style, resulting in a diverse array of late nineteenth and early twentieth century municipal buildings across the province.

Whatever the stylistic execution, however, these structures needed to fulfil a number of key functions. The first was the practical and administrative functions of municipal government and the other, associated community uses of the buildings. The other was to display a sense of civic pride and achievement through prominent and often monumental buildings. Town hall buildings were viewed as structures which physically and visually demonstrated the prosperity of a community and were intended to be a lasting monument to the town's local government to be used for years to come. Many local councils intended their buildings to be local, and sometimes regional, landmarks which emphasized civic pride and the accomplishments of local government. As a result, many of these buildings were excessive for their purpose and vastly overstretched the financial and material resources of the community; Victoria Hall in Cobourg (1856-60) is a well-known example where a substantial and monumental Classical structure was erected for a mid-sized town and far exceeded the needs and finances of the community in the mid-nineteenth century. Despite the practical and financial implications, however, it exemplified the approach to municipal architecture throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century which was to create a unique and distinguishable

public business to both represent and facilitate the business of government within local communities.

Rural municipal buildings, however, while needing to fulfil the same requirements generally as their urban counterparts, were very different structures. While urban centres were able to create substantial architectural monuments, this was simply not feasible for small rural township who did not have the financial resources or the need to do so. While the complexity of local government in urban centres vastly increased throughout the second half of the nineteenth century as urban dwellings demanded increasing numbers of publically funded services, the role of local government in rural areas remained substantially less complex and most municipal buildings reflected this. In most rural areas, the roles of mayor and councillor were part-time positions, and the number of municipal staff was very low; often there was only a township clerk as the local government's full-time employee and even the clerk was sometimes a part-time role. As a result, the spatial needs of rural township governments were substantially less than their urban equivalents and buildings were constructed to reflect this reality.

A typical plan for rural township halls emerged quickly in the second half of the nineteenth century. These structures were general built on a simple rectangular plan similar to a school house or small church. The interior was often only one room, although sometimes small offices were included for the township clerk. The primary room was arranged as a public meeting hall often with a raised platform at one end for council and seating for the public; as these buildings often also doubled functionally as performance spaces and this layout was easily adaptable for this use. As municipal functions increased in size and complexity throughout late nineteenth and twentieth century, these structures were sometimes replaced by larger dedicated municipal buildings while the older town hall remained as a gathering space; in many cases, however, they were expanded and modified as needed with additions and changes to interior arrangements.

From a stylistic perspective, these types of structures were fairly diverse and the architectural style they employed was often determined by when they were constructed with Classical motifs more popular in the early to mid-nineteenth century, Victorian elements taking over throughout the second half of the century, and a shift to Romanesque or Edwardian Classical forms by the turn of the century. Like their urban counterparts, rural township buildings tended to adhere to the popular stylistic forms of the day but, in keeping with the size of the buildings and financial resources of the community, were vastly less ornate and usually consisted of a few stylistic features pasted on a very simple building. Ancaster Town Hall (1870) is one of the more ornate examples of this type of construction, integrating a range of Classical elements, such as columns, return eaves and a cupola, on what is effectively a rectangular box.

Although these buildings were still usually distinguishable architecturally from other rural buildings, some rural municipal buildings strongly resembled other types of institutional structures, particularly school houses. That they were constructed using a variety of architectural styles occasionally made it more difficult to differentiate between these new municipal buildings and other institutional architecture. However, their role as the seat of local government was emphasized not just by their architecture but also by their location. When constructing their new municipal buildings, councils generally wanted them to be located in a place that was a central hub for the local community to make them more easily accessible to the public. Most rural township halls were constructed in the township's largest settlement and commercial hub and were located in a prominent central place in that community. Not only did this make the township building accessible for people from the surrounding rural areas and hamlets, who would come into the larger centre for a variety of reasons, but also placed the structure in a position of prominence at the centre of community life.

A number of examples of these types of rural municipal buildings remain extant throughout Kawartha Lakes including in Oakwood (1874), Bobcaygeon (1874) and Woodville (1903). These buildings, all located in larger communities or hamlets serving a surrounding rural area, are constructed on this rectangular plan with a range of architectural details in different styles consistent with the time at which they were built: the buildings in Oakwood and Bobcaygeon are both Victorian in style, while the later structure in Woodville is Edwardian Classical. Each located in a prominent position within the community, they were built as central hubs of both local government and community life and their architecture and planning reflected that.

This was also the situation for Manvers Township which chose Bethany as its administrative centre. The current building located on the subject property was constructed in 1912 as the third iteration of the Manvers Township Hall. The first was constructed in Lifford in 1865 and very little is known about it architecturally; at this time, Lifford was a thriving local centre and anticipated to be the township's primary settlement, although this was not to be. A new hall was then built in Bethany in 1876, reflecting the increasing position of the village as the township's primary settlement after the arrival of the railway in the community in the mid-nineteenth century. The current structure was built in 1912 after the 1876 structure burned in the 1911 fire which destroyed a substantial portion of downtown Bethany.

Both the 1876 and 1912 structures are demonstrative of the development of rural municipal architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The earlier structure, like those constructed in Bobcaygeon and Oakwood, was constructed in the Victorian style using red brick with buff brick ornamentation on a plain rectangular form. When the new building was constructed, it was



built on effectively the same footprint and was, in many ways, the same building, but instead of Victorian architectural details, it employed Romanesque details, which was both the stylistic preference of the architect, William Blackwell, and a popular style for government buildings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Like the Classical and Gothic styles, Romanesque was a revival style which looked to the early Middle Ages for inspiration. It was a highly flexible style that integrated different elements from European Romanesque architecture and adapted them to a range of structures. Its primary characteristic was the rounded arch, which was drawn directly from early medieval architecture, but it also integrated a range of other features including but not limited to columns and pilasters, recessed entrances, varied rustication, towers and circular windows.

The Romanesque style rose in popularity in the late nineteenth century and was quickly adapted as a popular style for government buildings. It was easily suited to large structures and was very flexible for different types of spaces; like both Classical and Gothic styles, the basic building blocks could be used on both complex and simple architecture forms and it could easily be reduced to its most basic elements or scaled up in its complexity. In its most grandiose form in Ontario government buildings, it was used for both Toronto's City Hall (1889-1899) and the Ontario Legislative Assembly (1886-1909). These, however, are not representative of the wider use of the style and it was used elsewhere on a much smaller scale, including in the subject property.

The Romanesque elements on the Manvers Township Hall are limited but clearly identifiable. Most notable is the use of rounded arches in the main entrance and the windows on both the front and side elevations as this was the basic building block of the style. An oculus window with keystones is also present on the front elevation of the building; this was often used in Romanesque architecture as a nod to the rose window in medieval architecture. The other primary decorative feature of the building is the pilasters which divided the side elevations of the building into five bays and are reminiscent of the columns found in a substantial number of Romanesque-style buildings. It is very clear that the township building is a substantially scaled down version of this style, but this was seen as suitable and appropriate for a rural municipal building, as opposed to its larger and grander urban counterparts, in the same way that both Classical and Gothic styles were scaled down and adapted for rural buildings across the province. Through both this adaptation of a popular contemporary style and the design and layout of the building, the township hall is a representative example of a rural municipal building from the early twentieth century and provides insight into the architectural development of buildings for local government during this period.



## Historical and Associative Value

1474 Highway 7A has historical and associative value as the former Manvers Township Hall. Constructed in 1912 to replace an older township building, this structure is directly associated with the development of local government in Manvers Township during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries prior to the amalgamation of Manvers Township into the City of Kawartha Lakes. It yields information regarding the role and presence of local government in the township. The property also yields information regarding the participation of local residents in the First and Second World Wars due to the presence of the Manvers Township Cenotaph adjacent to the township hall. The building itself was designed by Peterborough architect William Blackwell who was a highly influential architect in the region throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is well-known for his public and institutional commissions.

The building on this property, which currently serves as the Bethany Branch of the Kawartha Lakes Public Library, was home to the Manvers Township Council and municipal offices from 1912, when it was constructed, until 2001 when Manvers Township became part of the City of Kawartha Lakes. The history of local government, however, stretches back to the mid-nineteenth century when the Manvers Township Council was first formed in 1850.

Manvers Township was surveyed between 1816 and 1817 and was originally part of Durham County, which was created as a geographic entity in 1792. It remained part of this county until the county's dissolution in 1974 and the creation of the Regional Municipality of Durham, which was formed from the merger of three townships in Durham County – Cartwright, Clarke and Darlington – with Ontario County to the west; the other three former townships – Manvers, Hope and Cavan – were redistributed to Victoria, Northumberland, and Peterborough Counties respectively. In this way, the administrative history of the township is more closely aligned to its more southerly neighbours than with the rest of Kawartha Lakes which originally were administered as part of Victoria County.

The records of administrative activity in Manvers Township in the first half of the nineteenth century are limited, but it is known that the initial administration of the township was undertaken in conjunction with Cavan Township to which it is directly adjacent. The first records of a separate administrative structure came in 1850 when the township's first by-law was passed to nominate William Graham as the tax collector for the township. A reeve, William Hunter, was also in place, as well as a township clerk, Robert Touchburn, and three constables. The creation of a new local administrative structure coincided directly with the dissolution of the Newcastle District which had formed the administrative

structure for the area until the shift from district to county municipal administration in the province. In 1850, Manvers became part of the United Counties of Northumberland and Durham which was established as the upper tier government for the region, and operated as the upper tier.

The creation of this system of government was established through the Municipal Corporations Act, also known as the Baldwin Act after its primary author Robert Baldwin, in May 1849. The Act established a system of local government pertained to the entirety of Ontario, then Upper Canada, and effectively recognized two important pillars of local governance: first was that counties, as opposed to the older districts, were established as upper tier governments with responsibilities within their geographic bounds and second, local townships were recognized a unit of municipal government in rural areas. The Act was a major shift in how local municipalities were governed; prior to its passage, local areas were governed with a hodgepodge of local powers and organization based on a range of older legislation beginning with the District Councils Act in 1791. In contrast, the Act was comprehensive in its application and provided clear direction for elections and local powers. Where this had the most impact was in rural areas; most urban areas in the province were more or less governed with structured local governments by the mid-century, but local powers in rural areas were less defined. For rural townships, therefore, the Act introduced a clear system of local governance that allowed for local townships to pass by-laws, collected tax levies and provide local services, as well as their relationship with the upper tier county, although then, as now, provincial legislation limited and defined the powers that local councils could have.

The creation of a township Council in Manvers Township coincided directly with this legislation. Through the clarification of what powers local areas had and how they were divided between upper and lower tier municipalities, townships such as Manvers had clear direction for local governance. The foundations of government proceeded quickly. By 1851, the township had been divided into five wards for local elections to elect local representatives. Similarly, records of assessment and tax collection appear the following year, with By-law 111 passed outlining the high level taxation categories and amounts levied for that year.

The location of council meetings was not consistent during these early years. The earliest record of where the township council met appears in 1857 when they met in Bushell's Inn Lifford, William Fallis' Tavern and Benson's Inn in Ballyduff. A dedicated building was not constructed until 1865, when a township hall was built in Lifford. Records from the 1860s and 1870s are limited, but the township's municipal government continued to develop and mature throughout this period, taking responsibility for a range of local services including taxation, roads and other infrastructure, and education funding.

By 1876, the township administration had moved to Bethany where a new Township Hall was built that year. The removal of the township offices reflects the demographic growth of the township which was substantially focussed around Bethany in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Midland Railway had arrived in Bethany in 1856, connecting the community with Port Hope, Omemee, Millbrook and Lindsay, and, over the next several decades, the village gradually became a local hub for goods and services because of the access to the railway. By 1869, the community had grown to over 300 inhabitants and boasted a range of stores and services, including several hotels and three churches. The 1878 map of the township which shows its farms and settlements clearly identified Bethany as its largest settlement and the removal of the township's administrative office and council seat to the community made sense.

The location of the new township hall can be seen on the Bethany Fire Insurance Map for 1898. By this time, the population of the village had grown to around 400 people and it had become a thriving railway community that provided a commercial and administrative hub for the surrounding agricultural area. The building, which was relatively small, was located in the heart of the community along its main street, then known as King Street and the present-day Highway 7A; it is located on the same block as the present building. The block on which it is located was home to a range of commercial properties and it was constructed across the road from the Bethany General Store, which is still extant and in operation.

The township hall's primary function was as a municipal office, holding Council meetings and administrative space for township employees, of whom there were just a small number at the turn of the century; at this time, municipalities still performed limited administrative function and did not provide the wide array of services they do in the present day. However, as one of the main institutional buildings in Bethany, the hall also served a range of other community groups who were able to use it. In particular, it was used a performance space by local groups such as the Bethany Drama Club and Bethany Band. In this way, the hall was an important community hub, both for municipal administration and government functions and for local groups to use.

In November 1911, the hall, along with a substantial amount of downtown Bethany burnt in a large fire that engulfed the south side of the street. This included a number of businesses and homes, as well as the town hall. There was no fire protection in the village and the fire moved quickly throughout the community and drastically changed the face of Bethany. It took several years to reconstruct the lost structures, and several were not rebuilt. On the south side of the street, for example, several of the commercial buildings were not reconstructed and the town hall, which was rebuilt very quickly in 1912,

occupied a much larger lot than previously and was not constrained on either side by commercial structures.

The new township hall was a similar structure to the older building, but differed stylistically, and was located in the same place as its predecessor. Like the older structure, the new hall served a range of purposes which provide insight into community life in Bethany throughout the twentieth century. The township council and administration continued to take place in this structure; an addition was eventually constructed on the east side of the building to facilitate the need for more space to facilitate the increasing number of functions that local townships were undertaking. While at the turn of the century, services had been limited primarily to taxation, facilitating the funding of education, and the development of basic infrastructure in community, particularly in rural areas, municipalities were expected and required to provide an increasing number of services and amenities throughout the twentieth century. Some of these functions, such as the management of recreational facilities, parks, libraries and other local amenities, developed gradually as towns became more prosperous and people wanted these types of places in their communities. Other, such as the management of building and new development, were required of municipalities with the passage of legislation, such as the 1946 Planning and Development Act which was passed by the provincial government to help municipalities manage the rapid increase in new development in the wake of the Second World War. These changes in municipal functions had a direct impact on physical structures that municipalities used; more space was needed to facilitate the increasing role of local government and many municipal buildings, including that in Bethany, expanded throughout the twentieth century.

At the same time, the building still took on an important and central role in community life. It continued to be a performance space for bands and dramatic productions, and was used by the local school for its school concerts. Other events, including church suppers, anniversary and birthday celebrations, dances and community group meetings were also held here, as a flexible multi-purpose space. The local Red Cross also made extensive use of the structure, holding meetings there and also storing and loaning hospital supplies from a space in the basement.

With the creation of the City of Kawartha Lakes in 2001, Manvers Township, as an administrative body, ceased to exist. Its township hall was no longer needed as most administrative services and Council meetings were transferred to Lindsay. However, the township hall was retained and transitioned to a municipal service centre and public library branch, enabling it to continue its function and history as a municipal building serving Bethany and the surrounding area. The building's long history as a municipal centre provides

information regarding the development of municipal services in both Bethany and Manvers Township.

In addition to its important role as a municipal building, the township hall also hold historical significance through its architect. The township hall was designed by Peterborough architect William Blackwell and is a representative of his work, which was primarily focussed on institutional and commercial projects, although he did design a number of notable residential structures. Blackwell is significant as a local architect due to his substantial role in the design of public buildings across central Ontario in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Blackwell was born in Douro Township in 1850 and, after articling with William Strickland in Toronto and working in both Winnipeg and New York in the 1870s, returned to Peterborough to open his own office in 1880. Throughout the next five decades, Blackwell became one of the most prominent architects in Peterborough County and, to a lesser extent, Victoria County and effectively monopolized commissions for institutional structures throughout the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, both on his own and in concert with his son W.R.L. Blackwell who joined his firm in 1919.

Blackwell is particularly known for his use of the Romanesque Revival style and is believed to have been the first architect in central Ontario to employ the style. One of Blackwell's most well-known public commissions, which demonstrates his use of this style is the Peterborough Y.M.C.A. completed in 1896 and still extant. The structure, which is constructed in red brick, integrates key elements of Romanesque Revival architecture in a large building, including rounded arches, rustication, parapet gables, and a hexagonal corner tower; it is clear, however, that Blackwell's use of this style is highly streamlined and focuses on its key elements, instead of more ornate example seen elsewhere across Canada and the United States. His interpretation of the style and its execution of public spaces can also be seen in the Guelph Opera House, constructed in 1893 and no longer extant. Blackwell was also comfortable and competent designing in the Classically-inspired Beaux-Arts style, which can be seen primarily in his school designs such as King George School (1911) and Queen Mary School (1912), both in Peterborough and both still extant.

The Manvers Township Hall appears to be one of only two town halls designed by Blackwell, and the only one still extant, despite the strength of his firm with regard to institutional commissions. The other town hall commission was the Ashburnham Town Hall, now absorbed into Peterborough, in 1889. These two buildings have some resemblances, but are not particularly similar; they are, however, separated by over twenty years of Blackwell's practice which certainly evolved throughout his career. Where they are similar, however, is in the general aesthetic Blackwell employed in much of his work, with red brick

and simplified lines, while still employing elements of the Romanesque Revival style.

Blackwell's known commissions in Kawartha Lakes all appear to be public buildings. His most well-known and notable design was the Academy Theatre in Lindsay which was completed in 1892 and employs Blackwell's preferred stylistic features, employing element of the Romanesque Revival style in a pared down fashion; element include its distinctive parapet gable, columns, a semi-circular central window and contrasting lintels and lug sills. Other commissions include Knox Presbyterian Church in Bobcaygeon (1900-1901) and the chapel and vault at Riverside Cemetery in Lindsay (1908-1909), both of which employ his characteristic use of rounded arches and simplified versions of contemporary styles. Later designs after his son joined his firm, including the Bank of Toronto in Bethany which is located across the road from the Township Hall, continue to use contemporary architectural forms although the firm moved away from Romanesque and towards Classical styling from the early 1920s onward. The Manvers Township Hall fits within this pattern of design, with its pared down use of Romanesque Revival features, and is consistent with Blackwell's designs in Kawartha Lakes and elsewhere.

The property is also the location of the Manvers Township Cenotaph which was constructed in 1965 and is located to the east of the Town Hall facing Highway 7A. A bronze plaque dedicated to those who died in the First World War is present on the property and is affixed to the side of the building; this plaque pre-dates the free-standing cenotaph and was installed during the interwar period. The presence of the cenotaph and plaque on the property yields information regarding the participation of men and women from Manvers Township in the First and Second World Wars. Manvers Township has a strong history of participation in military conflict and the cenotaph and memorial plaque provides evidence and insight into this tradition.

### Contextual Value

1474 Highway 7A has contextual value as a key institutional structure in downtown Bethany which supports and maintains the historic small-town character of the community. The structure is one of a variety of institutional, commercial and residential structures which make up the core of the community along the Highway 7A corridor. As part of this downtown streetscape which primarily developed throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the property is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. It is also a local landmark as the former Township Hall and municipal offices, as well as the location of the Manvers Township Cenotaph.

The subject property is located on the south side of Highway 7A in the heart of downtown Bethany. The community, which was established in the mid-nineteenth century, contains a range of historic, institutional and commercial

structures dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a range of historic styles. Taken together, these structures provide the community with an overall historic small town character from its varied and eclectic historic streetscapes which show its development from its earliest days.

The heart of the community, as well as the subject property, is located along the Highway 7A corridor. This corridor includes a range of historic buildings which mark the traditional downtown of the community. In particular, this includes a number of current and former commercial structures dating from the late nineteenth and twentieth century which define the commercial area of the community. This area also includes a number of residential properties and the former township hall. Taken together, these structures form the core of the community and demonstrate a historic village character, particularly through the mix of commercial, institutional and residential structures in a small geographic area.

1474 Highway 7A supports and maintains this downtown and small town character as the community's primary government building. Government functions have been located in location, in the current building and its predecessor, since 1876 and its continued presence in this location demonstrates the varied services available in an historic village downtown. It contributes to the character of the community as part of this downtown cluster and through its important function in the community's development. Similarly, the building is linked to its surroundings as part of the historic development of downtown Bethany where it is surrounded by buildings of a similar historic vintage. In particular, it forms part of a group of buildings reconstructed in the direct aftermath of the 1911 Bethany fire.

The property is also a local landmark due to its role as the former Township Hall and municipal offices, as well as being the current Bethany Library and Municipal Service Centre, making it a key government building in both Bethany and the surrounding area. The township hall for Manvers Township was located here beginning in 1876; this current building is the second incarnation of this structure, as it was constructed in approximately the same location as the older hall which burned in the 1911 fire which destroyed much of downtown Bethany. In this role, the building has served important functions in the community, including hosting municipal Council meetings and administrative offices which provided government services to Manvers Township until its amalgamation into the City of Kawartha Lakes in 2001. Since that time, the building has continued to function as a local government building, housing a local service centre and the Bethany Branch of the Kawartha Lakes Public Library. Its role as the government building for Bethany and Manvers Township have given it a unique role in the community, making it a local landmark as the hub of local government. The property's status as a landmark is further



emphasized by the presence of the local cenotaph on it. The cenotaph was constructed in 1965 to commemorate those from Manvers Township who had served in the First and Second World Wars and to memorialize those who had died in the two conflicts. The cenotaph itself is a landmark as a centre for commemoration and remembrance in the community and serves as the location for Remembrance Day services.

## Summary of Reasons for Designation

The short statement of reasons for designation and the description of the heritage attributes of the property, along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief, constitute the Reasons for Designation required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### Short Statement of Reasons for Designation

#### Design and Physical Value

1474 Highway 7A has design and physical value as a representative example of a small town municipal building constructed in the Romanesque style. The building was constructed in 1912 as a replacement for an older township hall and demonstrates the basic form and design elements of rural and small town municipal buildings and town halls as developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. It includes key elements of the Romanesque style as adapted for smaller institutional structures. These elements include its rounded windows and doors, an oculus window with keystones, and pilasters.

#### Historical and Associative Value

1474 Highway 7A has historical and associative value as the former Manvers Township Hall and municipal office. The building was constructed in 1912 as a replacement for an older municipal building from the 1870s and is directly related to the development of local government in Manvers Township in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The property yields information regarding the role and operations of local government in the township prior to its amalgamation as part of the City of Kawartha Lakes, and also provides insight on community activities as this building was used for other purposes than municipal functions. The town hall was also constructed by prominent Peterborough architect William Blackwell who was well-known regionally for his institutional and commercial designs.

#### Contextual Value

1474 Highway 7A has contextual value as part of the historic landscape of downtown Bethany. As one of a range of historic commercial, institutional and residential properties along the Highway 7A corridor through the community, the structure helps define the centre of the village as one of its primary institutional structures. It supports and maintains the historic small town character of Bethany and helps define its downtown core. The property is also a landmark as a longstanding and continuously operating municipal building, in its former role as a town hall and contemporary role as the local library, as well as the location of the local cenotaph.

## Summary of Heritage Attributes to be Designated

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations, unless otherwise specified, and the roof including: all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster parging, metal, glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features.

### Design and Physical Attributes

The design and physical attributes support the value of the property as a representative example of a small-town municipal building dating from the early twentieth century.

- One story red brick construction
- Gable roof
- Brackets
- Central front entrances including:
  - Entrance with semi-circular transom
  - Flanking rounded windows
- Fenestration including:
  - Rounded windows
- Pilasters
- Chimneys
- Bronze WW1 memorial plaque
- Stone cairn cenotaph including:
  - Irregular stone construction
  - Plaque and text
  - Crossed rifles
- Grassed lawn

### Historical and Associative Attributes

The historical and associative attributes support the value of the property as the local municipal building in both its current operation by the City of Kawartha Lakes and its former role as the Manvers Township Hall and municipal offices.

- Association with the development of municipal government in Manvers Township
- Date stone

### Contextual Attributes

The contextual attributes support the value of the property as the former local municipal building and local landmark, as well as a contributing feature to the historic landscape of downtown Bethany.

- Location along Highway 7A in the village of Bethany

- Relationship to the surrounding historic commercial and residential property
- Orientation towards Highway 7A
- Views of the property along Highway 7A
- Views of the surrounding historic properties from the subject property

## Images



Manvers Township Hall, c. 1912



Downtown Bethany prior to 1911. Town hall appears at the centre of the image













## Select Bibliography

Blumenson, John. *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms, 1784 to the Present*. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1990.

Carr, Violet, ed. *The Rolling Hills*. Manvers Township Council, 1967.

Craig, Gerald M. *Upper Canada: The Formative Years, 1784-1841*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963.

De Caraffe, Marc, C.A. Hale, Dana Johnson, G.E. Mills, and Margaret Carter. *Town Halls of Canada: A Collection of Essays on Pre-1930 Town Hall Buildings*. Ottawa: Environment Canada – Parks, 1987.

Isin, Engin F. "Rethinking the Origins of Canadian Municipal Government." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 4, no. 1 (1995): 73-92.

Kalman, Harold. *A History of Canadian Architecture*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Kirkconnell, Watson. *County of Victoria: Centennial History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lindsay: County of Victoria Council, 1967.

Leetooze, Sherell Branton. *The Trail Through the Bush: A Brief History of Manvers Township*. Bowmanville: Lynn Michael-John Associates, 1998.

McCrae, Marion. *Cornerstones of Order: Courthouses and Town Halls of Ontario, 1784-1914*. Toronto: Clarke-Irwin, 1983.

Morton, Kathy. *Reflections of Bethany*. Bloomfield: County Magazine Printshop, 2019.

Siegel, David. "Robert Baldwin and Responsible Local Government in Ontario." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 53, no. 2 (2019): 296-317.

Tindal, C. Richard and Susan Nobel Tindal. *Local Government in Canada*. Toronto: Nelson Education Limited, 2009.