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Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment **REPORT**

Dundas Street Pedestrian Underpass
Soper Park, City of Cambridge

Date:

August 14, 2015

Prepared for:

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Contents

1.0 Introduction..... 1

2.0 Description of the stone retaining wall..... 5

 Heritage attributes: 5

3.0 Description of proposed development 7

4.0 Assessment criteria..... 8

5.0 Development Alternatives 9

6.0 Assessment of development alternatives..... 10

7.0 Conclusions..... 12

8.0 Bibliography 13

1.0 Introduction

The Region of Waterloo is planning to undertake improvements to Dundas Street between Hespeler Road and Elgin Street North in Cambridge. The Region retained WalterFedy to complete design work for the reconstruction. In May 2015, WalterFedy retained MHBC to prepare a Cultural Heritage Evaluation for two structures within the study corridor: the Dundas Street pedestrian underpass at Soper Park, and the stone retaining wall alongside Dundas Street at the Gore Mutual Assurance Company property at 252 Dundas Street.

In May 2015, WalterFedy retained MHBC to prepare a Cultural Heritage Evaluation for the stone retaining wall along Dundas Street, located approximately between Chalmers Street and Spruce Street. The intention of the Cultural Heritage Evaluation was to determine the cultural heritage value or interest of the structure in advance of the reconstruction of Dundas Street. The structure was evaluated using Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Cultural Heritage Evaluation concluded that the stone retaining wall demonstrates significant cultural heritage value or interest for its shaped stone design. It is a visible remnant of the Augustus Soper estate, which was located on the property prior to the Gore Mutual building. Soper transformed the nearby Jackson Park that was later re-named for him into a well known and distinct landscaped area, complete with stone-banked creek, swimming holes and other features. The property was later purchased by the Gore Mutual Assurance Company, who constructed their new offices in 1935-37, using a similar granite stone to the pre-existing retaining wall. Though the two were not constructed at the same time, the retaining wall is visually linked to the Gore Mutual building and is a complementary part of the context.

The cultural heritage value identified in the Cultural Heritage Evaluation triggered the preparation of this Heritage Impact Assessment. The purpose of this report is to identify any potential impacts to the stone retaining wall and its heritage attributes as a result of the Dundas Street reconstruction, and to identify mitigation measures to avoid or lessen any potential impacts. The property at 252 Dundas Street adjacent to the stone retaining wall is listed on the City of Cambridge Municipal Heritage Register.

Policy Context:

The *Planning Act* makes a number of provisions respecting cultural heritage either directly in Section 2 of the Act or Section 3 respecting policy statements and provincial plans. In Section 2 *The Planning Act* outlines 18 spheres of provincial interest, that must be considered by appropriate authorities in the planning process. One of the intentions of *The Planning Act* is to

“encourage the co-operation and co-ordination among the various interests. Regarding Cultural Heritage, Subsection 2(d) of the Act provides that:

The Minister, the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board and the Municipal Board, in carrying out their responsibilities under this Act, shall have regard to, among other matters, matters of provincial interest such as, ...

(d) the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;

In support of the provincial interest identified in Subsection 2 (d) of the *Planning Act*, and as provided for in Section 3, the Province has refined policy guidance for land use planning and development matters in the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014* (PPS). The PPS is “intended to be read in its entirety and the relevant policy areas are to be applied in each situation”. This provides a weighting and balancing of issues within the planning process. When addressing cultural heritage planning, the PPS provides for the following:

2.6.1 Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.

The PPS provides the following definitions in support of policy 2.6.1:

Significant: *e) in regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.*

Built heritage resource: means a building, structure, monument, installation or any manufactured remnant that contributes to a property's cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Aboriginal community. Built heritage resources are generally located on property that has been designated under Parts IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act, or included on local, provincial and/or federal registers.

Cultural heritage landscape: means a defined geographical area that may have been modified by human activity and is identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Aboriginal community. The area may involve features such as structures, spaces, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association. Examples may include, but are not limited to, heritage conservation districts designated under the Ontario Heritage Act; villages, parks, gardens, battlefields, mainstreets and neighbourhoods, cemeteries, trailways,

viewsheds, natural areas and industrial complexes of heritage significance; and areas recognized by federal or international designation authorities (e.g. a National Historic Site or District designation, or a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Conserved: means the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained under the Ontario Heritage Act. This may be achieved by the implementation of recommendations set out in a conservation plan, archaeological assessment, and/or heritage impact assessment. Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches can be included in these plans and assessments.

Guidance on the preparation of Heritage Impact Assessments:

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been guided by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo's Regional Official Plan policy 3.G.17 which states that a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment will include, but not be limited to the following:

- a) historical research, site analysis and evaluation;
- b) identification of the significance and heritage attributes of the cultural heritage resource;
- c) description of the proposed development or site alteration;
- d) assessment of development or site alteration impacts;
- e) consideration of alternatives, mitigation and conservation methods;
- f) schedule and reporting structure for implementation and monitoring; and
- g) a summary statement and conservation recommendations.

The report also follows guidance found in the City of Cambridge Heritage Impact Assessment Guidelines, which identifies that a Heritage Impact Assessment should contain:

- Identification and evaluation of the built Heritage Resource
- Graphic and written inventory of the heritage resource
- Assessment of the proposal's impact on the heritage resource
- Means to mitigate negative impacts, in accordance with the heritage resource priorities established in the City's Official Plan
- Alternatives to the proposal
- Identification and justification of the preferred option

The preparation of this report has also been guided by the Ontario Ministry of Culture (now the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport) *InfoSheet #5 Heritage Impact Assessments and Conservation Plans*, part of the 2006 *Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process* document.

As a Cultural Heritage Evaluation has been prepared for the structure, this report will focus primarily on the description of proposed development, potential impacts and mitigation measures. Detailed information on the history of the subject property, its evaluation and conclusions to cultural heritage value can be found in the Cultural Heritage Evaluation.

2.0 Description of the stone retaining wall

The stone retaining wall along Dundas Street was constructed in the early 1920s, during ownership of the property by Dr. Augustus Soper. Soper acquired the property from his father in law, Henry McCrum. Local history sources suggest that upon taking ownership of the property, Soper had many of the large boulders that surrounded the former McCrum house removed, cut and shaped into stones for a retaining wall and fence surrounding the property. The resulting wall/fence reportedly totalled 1,400 feet at a height of five feet.

The Soper property was purchased in the mid 1930s as the new site for the Gore Mutual Assurance office. The fence remained on the Gore property, and the Gore building was constructed using a granite stone of similar appearance, complementing the pre-existing stone fence.

The stone retaining wall at 252 Dundas Street demonstrates design/physical value for its shaped stone design. It is a visible remnant of Augustus Soper, who transformed the nearby Soper Park that was later named for him into a well known and distinct landscaped area, complete with stone-banked creek, swimming holes and other features. The property was later purchased by the Gore Mutual Insurance company, who constructed their new offices in 1935-37, using a similar granite stone to the pre-existing retaining wall. Though the two were not constructed at the same time, the retaining wall is visually linked to the Gore Mutual building and is a complementary part of the context.

Heritage attributes:

- Curved southern end of the Dundas Street section
- Stone pillars and metal gate feature at the north end of the Dundas Street section
- Roughly shaped rectangular granite blocks of varying sizes
- Cap of unshaped stones atop the granite wall

The stone retaining wall/fence along the property edge at 252 Dundas Street is approximately 120 metres in length and approximately 5 feet in height, running approximately from the intersection of Dundas and Gore Street to the stone gate feature just south of Spruce Street. The southern end of the wall section is slightly curved. The stones of the wall have been shaped to roughly rectangular blocks. The stones are not uniform in length, but are within a close range. Capping the top of the wall is a layer of irregularly sized natural stones, affixed by mortar. The cap stones are not granite and may have been added later. An undated photograph (known to be taken after 1920) shows that stone caps are present on sections of the wall on the Spruce Street frontage and leading into the property (See Plate 1). However it does not appear that the same caps are present on the Dundas Street Frontage.



Plate 1: Early 20th century image of the stone retaining wall/fence. The Gore building has not yet been constructed. Source: City of Cambridge Archives.

A visual inspection in June 2015 noted that the wall appears generally complete, without missing blocks or cap stones. In several places along the wall, mortar appears to have deteriorated.

3.0 Description of proposed development

The Region of Waterloo is proposing a reconstruction of Dundas Street between Hespeler Road and Elgin Street North in the City of Cambridge. The proposed reconstruction involves a widening of Dundas Street to allow for sidewalks, cycling lanes in addition to vehicular lanes. The proposed development would require alterations to the existing stone retaining wall to accommodate the proposed works.

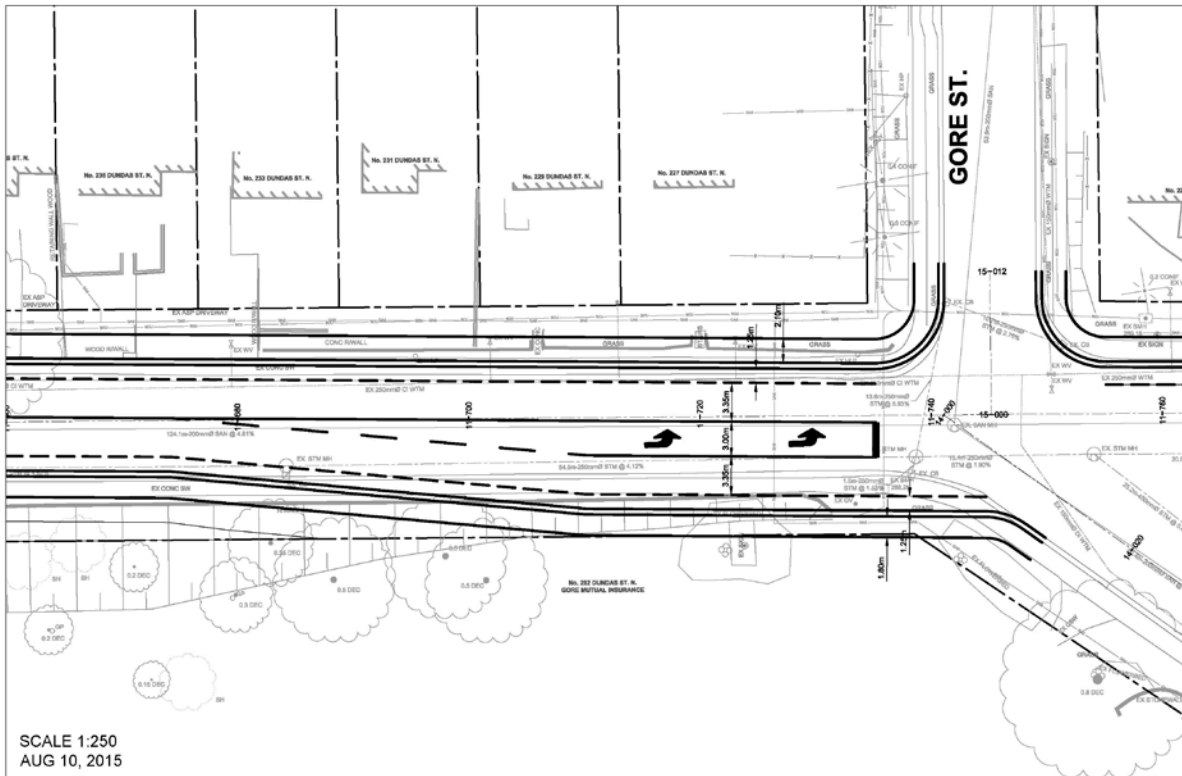


Plate 2: Proposed reconstruction of Dundas Street. Provided by WalterFedy August 2015.

4.0 Assessment criteria

There are three classifications of changes that the effects of a proposed development may have on an identified cultural heritage resource: beneficial, neutral or adverse. Beneficial effect may include such actions as retaining a property of cultural heritage value, protecting it from loss or removal, maintaining restoring or repairing heritage attributes, or making sympathetic additions or alterations that allow for a continued long-term use and retain heritage building fabric. Neutral effects have neither a markedly positive or negative impact on a cultural heritage resource. Adverse effects may include the loss or removal of a cultural heritage resource, unsympathetic alterations or additions that remove or obstruct heritage attributes, the isolation of a cultural heritage resource from its setting or context, or the addition of other elements that are unsympathetic to the character or heritage attributes of a cultural heritage resource. Adverse effects may require strategies to mitigate their impact on cultural heritage resources.

The impacts of a proposed development or change to a cultural heritage resource may be direct or indirect. They may occur over a short term or long term duration, and may occur during a pre-construction phase, construction phase or post-construction phase. Impacts to a cultural heritage resource may also be site specific or widespread, and may have low, moderate or high levels of physical impact.

5.0 Development Alternatives

The guidance for Heritage Impact Assessments from the Region of Waterloo, City of Cambridge and the Ontario Heritage Tool Kit require that alternative development approaches be considered as part of a Heritage Impact Assessment. The following alternatives have been considered for the stone retaining wall on Dundas Street:

1. Do nothing
2. Relocate and reconstruct the existing stone retaining wall
3. Replace the existing wall with a new structure

6.0 Assessment of development alternatives

1. Do nothing

This alternative would not result in the reconstruction and widening of Dundas Street, nor any alterations to the stone retaining wall.

If this alternative were selected, some mitigation would still be required to repair missing mortar and ensure the stability of the structure in the long term.

2. Relocate and reconstruct the stone retaining wall

This alternative would involve relocating the stone retaining wall further south than its existing location and rebuilding it in order to accommodate the road widening. Given the slope of the property at 252 Dundas Street, the retaining wall would either need to be increased in height or the slope would need to be terraced with a setback and additional retaining wall constructed past the setback.

This alternative would result in an adverse impact to the integrity of the section of the stone retaining wall. However the relocation and reconstruction of the wall would retain its visual appearance and historical/contextual contribution to the property.

If this alternative were selected, documentation of the structure should occur prior to dismantling and reconstruction. This would include photo documentation and measured drawings to be kept on file at the City of Cambridge, Region of Waterloo and local public libraries.

If this option is selected, a second retaining wall set back from the original should be constructed to deal with the existing slope of the property rather than increasing the height of the wall. That way, the new and historic structures would be distinct and separate from each other.

Reconstruction according to heritage best practices would involve tagging each stone block and reconstructing the wall in its exact configuration. This approach would be appropriate. The exact locations of the stones within the wall are not heritage attributes, and reconstruction in a similar, but not necessarily exact configuration could still be supported, given that it would still use all of the historic material and historic techniques. Other sections of the stone fence on the property would remain intact with their original integrity.

Reconstruction should be accompanied with appropriate interpretive/commemorative devices that illustrate the history of the stone wall and its reconstruction.

3. Replace the existing retaining wall with a new structure

This alternative would result in direct adverse impacts in the loss and removal of the existing structure, which demonstrates cultural heritage value or interest.

If this alternative were selected, the required mitigation would be detailed documentation of the existing stone retaining wall, including photo documentation and measured drawings. Documentation should be kept on file at the City of Cambridge, Region of Waterloo and local public libraries. Stones from the wall should be salvaged for potential use elsewhere on the site, or at the nearby Soper Park, if there are opportunities to use them in park signage or other amenity features.

7.0 Conclusions

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) states that “significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved”. The stone retaining wall has been evaluated and found to have cultural heritage value or interest, primarily vested in its design and historical associations. The structure was constructed in the early 1920s and is associated with Dr. Augustus Soper, an important landowner who contributed to the nearby Soper Park.

It is important to note that Cultural Heritage is one of many considerations in the PPS, and that the PPS is intended to be read in its entirety with relevant policies applied in each situation. As such, other planning rational may be considered where appropriate, and balancing policy objectives is often required.

The proposed reconstruction of Dundas Street to accommodate a left hand turn lane, cycling lanes and sidewalks poses an adverse impact to the stone retaining wall along Dundas Street which demonstrates cultural heritage value or interest. The preferred alternative to retain the cultural heritage value or interest of the retaining wall is to relocate the wall within the same site, moving it back from its current location to accommodate the widening. As additional retaining walls will be required due to the slope of the property at 252 Dundas Street, a terraced approach is recommended. This approach will allow for a distinction between the stone retaining wall and a new structure. Heritage best practices typically do not recommend relocation as it has the potential to remove a significant cultural heritage resource from its context. In this instance, the relocation is within the same site and a minimal distance, such that the contextual value of the wall to the property will remain. The addition of the additional terraced retaining wall will be a new layer of site history to be read in conjunction with the original wall.

8.0 Bibliography

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