

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 6/17/2025

Subject: 25-064-CD: 215 Queen Street West, Heritage Permit Application

Submitted By: Melissa Aldunate, Manager of Policy Planning

Prepared By: Jeremy Parsons, Senior Planner

Report No.: 25-064-CD

File No.: LAC 8.56.56

Wards Affected: Ward 2

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 24-064-CD: 215 Queen Street West, Heritage Permit Application be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the Heritage Permit Application for the proposed window replacements as detailed in Report 25-064-CD, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Following the approval by the City of Cambridge, any minor changes to the plans and elevations shall be submitted to the satisfaction of staff, prior to an application for a building permit and/or the commencement of any alterations; and,
- 2) That the implementation of alterations shall be completed no later than two (2) years following approval by the City of Cambridge. If the alterations are not completed by such a time, then this approval expires as of that date and a new approval must be issued by the City of Cambridge to proceed with alterations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

This report has been prepared to provide a recommendation to Council on a Heritage Permit application for proposed alterations that include the replacement of exterior windows on the former Forbes Textile Mill building at 215 Queen Street West, a property designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Key Findings

- The property at 215 Queen Street West is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and designated as a National Historic Site of Canada through the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*.
- The property is the site of a former mill, once the largest woollen and worsted mill in Canada. It has operated under many names including R. Forbes and Co. Ltd., Star Woollens, Dominion Woollens and Worsteds Ltd., Silknit, and Waterloo Textiles.
- The applicant has submitted a Heritage Permit application to alter the property by removing wood windows and adding thirty-five (35) new windows to the building exterior.
- Heritage Planning staff are in support of the proposed alterations given the condition of the existing wood windows, the functionality of replacement windows, and the proposed pattern modeled after existing wood windows.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to the City as a result of this application. The owner has not elected to apply for the City's Designated Heritage Property Grant Program at this time.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

☐ Strategic Action

Objective(s): Not Applicable

Strategic Action: Not Applicable

☒ Core Service

Program: Community Development

Core Service: Heritage Conservation

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is located at 215 Queen Street West, bounded by the Speed River to the north and the Goderich-Exeter Railway line and Queen Street West to the south (Figure 1). The subject property is located west of downtown Hespeler and is adjacent to a large vacant parcel of land that historically contained a portion of the mill complex (Figure 2). The property is 2.43 acres (9,870.50 square metres) in size. The property is zoned Industrial (M3) for general industrial uses with site-specific provisions as per the

City of Cambridge Zoning By-law. Within the City's Official Plan, the property is designated as Business Industrial and Natural Open Space.

The subject property is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (By-law No. 353-87). The property is also classified as a National Historic Site under the *Historic Sites and Monuments Act*. The subject property is located adjacent to two 19th century dwellings, referred to as "cottages" or "workers' housing", at 211 Queen Street West.

The existing buildings, formerly part of the Forbes Textile Mill, were constructed at various points in time. Many of the buildings that once formed part of the mill complex have been demolished. However, the main section of the eastern portion of the buildings that remain was built between 1910-1917. The main section of the western portion of buildings was built between 1885-1900.



Figure 1: The subject property, outlined and hatched in blue, shown on an aerial map (City of Cambridge).



Figure 2: Looking west from Queen Street West at the building façade and parking area (Google Streetview, 2019).

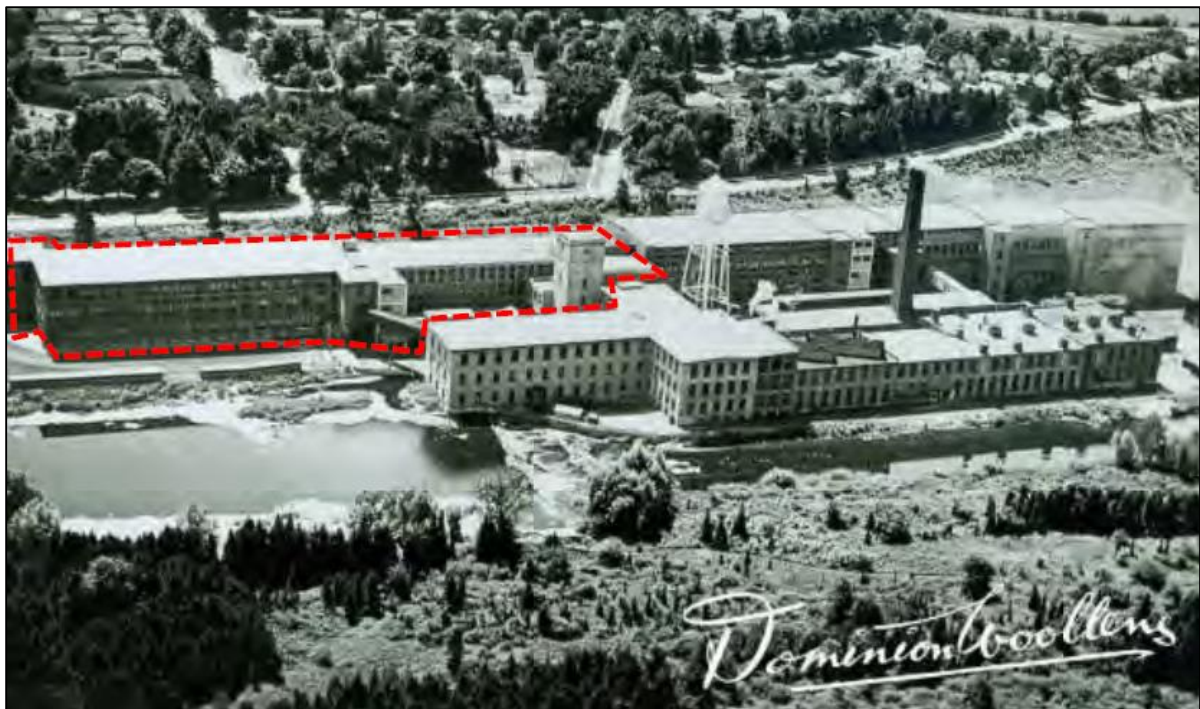


Figure 3: The existing portion of the mill, outlined in red, on an early-to-mid 20th century photograph of the complex (MHBC HIA 2021, sourced from City of Cambridge Archives).

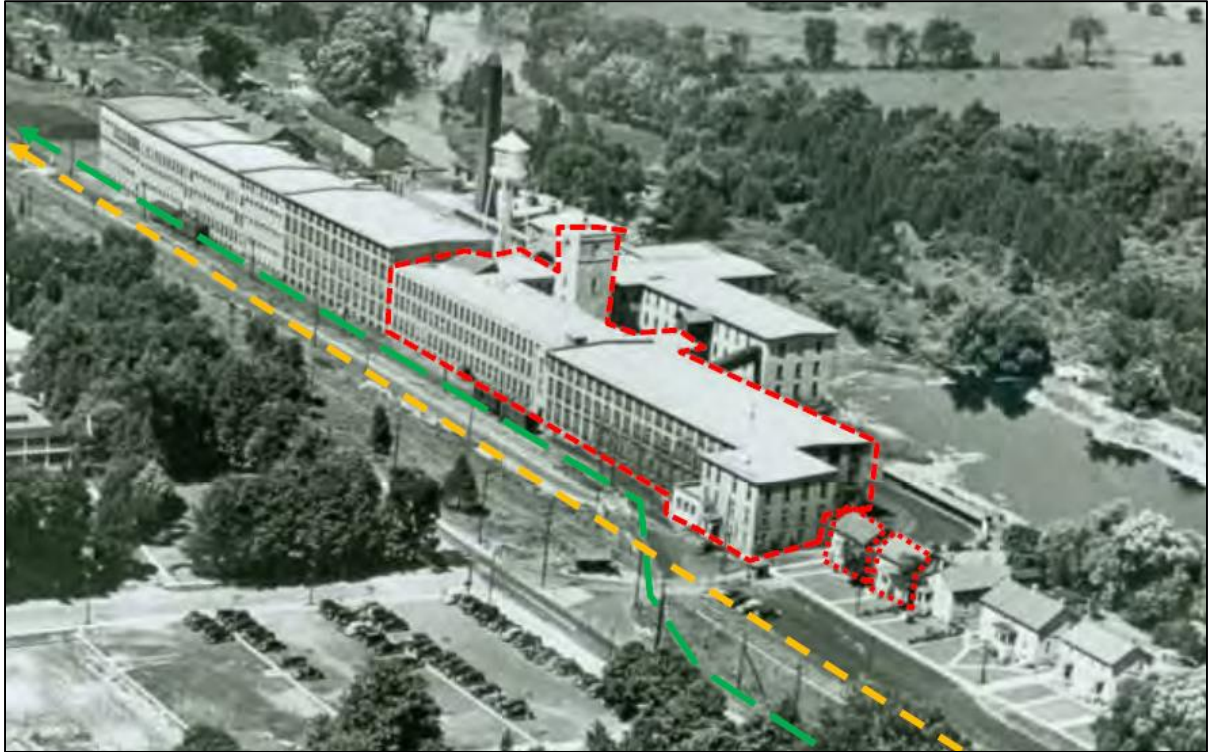


Figure 4: The existing portion of the mill, outlined in red, in an early-to-mid 20th century photograph of the complex. The yellow hatched line indicates the rail line while the green line indicates the former streetcar line (MHBC HIA 2021, City of Cambridge Archives).

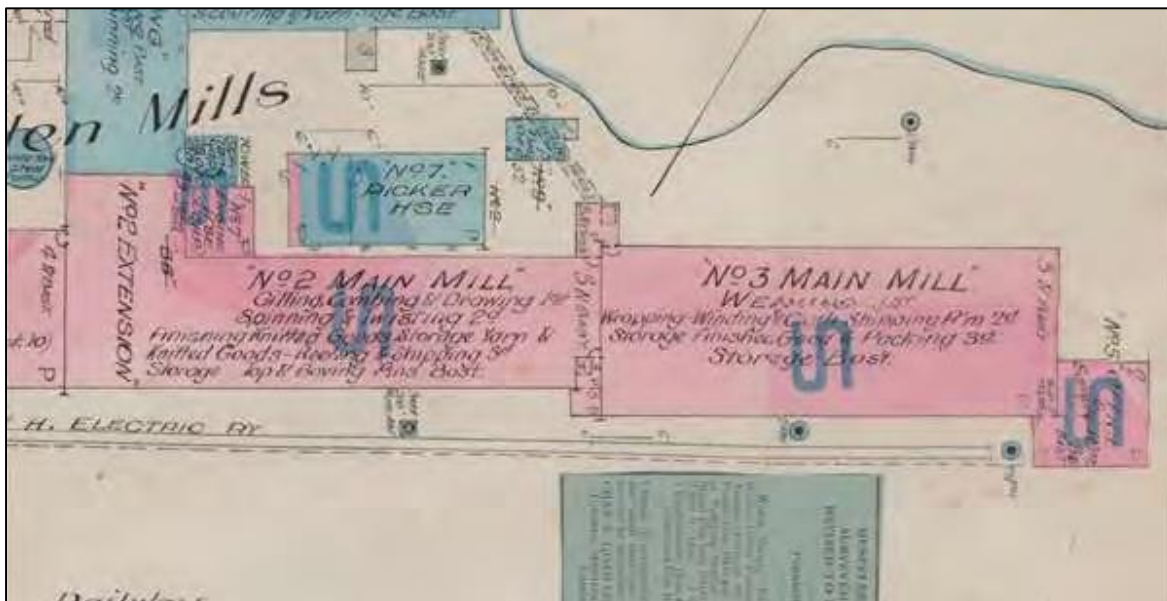


Figure 5: Showing the two remaining eastern and western portions of the mill on the 1910 (revised 1917) Fire Insurance Plan for Hespeler (Library and Archives Canada).

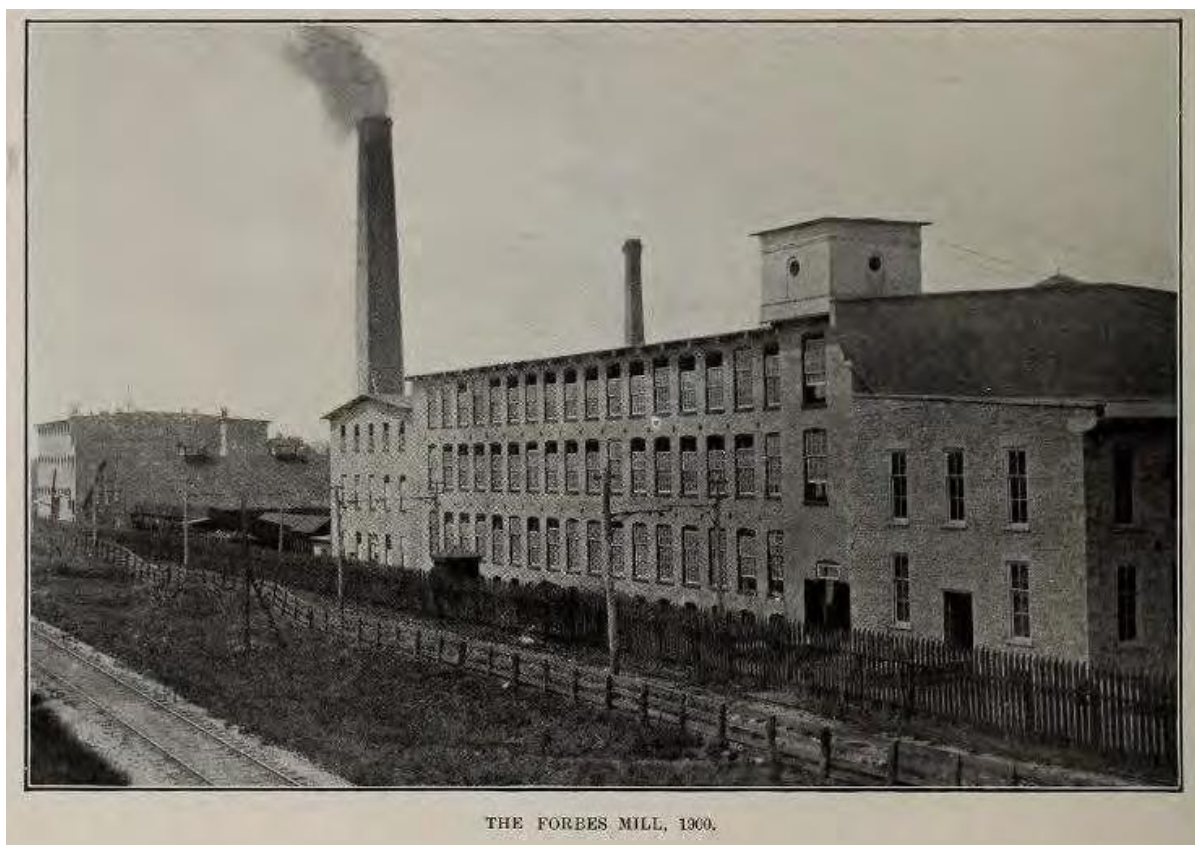


Figure 6: Circa 1900 photograph of the mill showing the extant western portion (centre) and windows at the time (Oscar Eby, *Hespeler: A Souvenir of the Factory Town*, 1901).

ANALYSIS:

On March 17, 2025, the property owner contacted Heritage Planning staff regarding the proposed alterations.

On March 26, 2025, Heritage Planning staff conducted a site visit to inspect the property and existing wood windows.

On March 31, 2025, the property owner submitted a complete Heritage Permit application with supporting documentation (Appendices A, B, and C). On April 7, 2025, Heritage Planning staff issued a Notice of Complete Application to the property owner, in accordance with Section 33(4) of the Ontario Heritage Act.

On April 17, 2025, the Heritage Permit application was brought before the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC), who provided support for staff recommendations.

The proposed alterations to the former textile mill at 215 Queen Street West include the removal and replacement of thirty-five (35) existing wood windows with new custom

vinyl windows. The proposed windows are very large frames (46" by 131") in vinyl material and black matte colour. They are modeled after the existing wood windows which are inset casement windows with both operable top and bottom window sashes. The proposed windows have operable bottom sashes and a widened middle mullion bar and widened horizontal muntin bars to match original proportions. Faux muntin bars function as pane division to further match original window proportions.

Within Designation By-law No. 353-87, protected features include: the exterior envelope of the building and all existing openings including associated voussoirs, keystones, and lug sills. The wood windows are not specifically specified in the by-law, however, all window openings are included as well as all exterior wall materials. The existing eastern and western sections of the mill building were built in 1900-1917 and 1885-1900.

Collectively, there are over 100 window openings on the elevations of these two buildings. The openings are currently framed and covered with sheet metal on the exterior and drywall and insulation on the interior. Many of the existing wood windows have been replaced over the years, although some remain in place. Many of the remaining windows have been substantially altered or degraded over the years (see Figure 7).

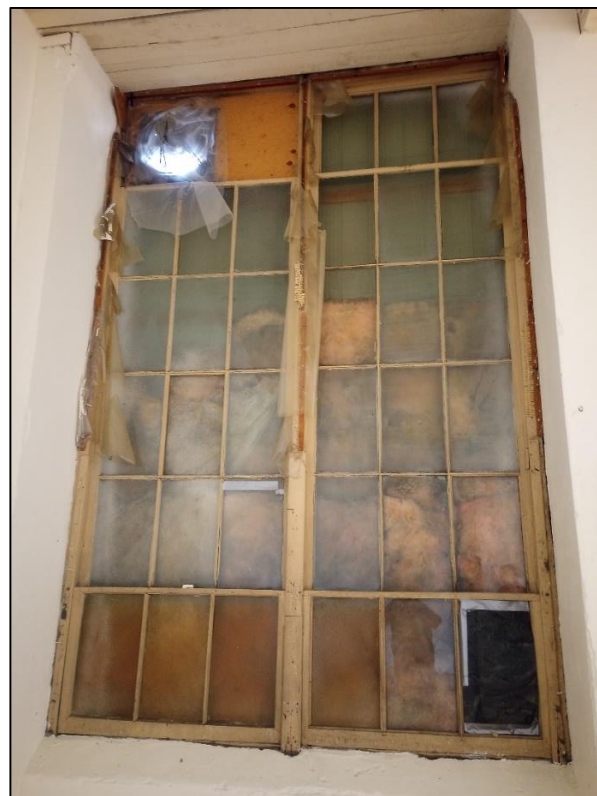


Figure 7: Interior view of one of the early or original wood windows, showing its condition (Parsons, 2025).

Given the poor condition of the windows, their lack of physical integrity, and the practical constraints around the repair or replication of hundreds of damaged or missing windows, Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion that replacement of extant wood windows with modern windows is supportable. The applicant has submitted examples of the proposed windows (Appendix B) as well as specifications from the window supplier with details for the proposed windows (Appendix C). Despite being of vinyl material, the proposed windows match the proportions of existing wood windows with both mullions and muntin bars. Heritage Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposal represents needed building alterations to enable its adaptive reuse and continued function. Further, the proposed windows echo the style of windows supported by the City of Cambridge in the redevelopment of other post-industrial buildings, such as those within Galt's Gaslight District.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

Ontario Heritage Act

Alteration of property

33 (1) No owner of property designated under section 29 shall alter the property or permit the alteration of the property if the alteration is likely to affect the property's heritage attributes, as set out in the description of the property's heritage attributes in the by-law that was required to be registered under clause 29 (12) (b) or subsection 29 (19), as the case may be, unless the owner applies to the council of the municipality in which the property is situate and receives consent in writing to the alteration. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Application

(2) An application under subsection (1) shall be accompanied by the prescribed information and material. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Other information

(3) A council may require that an applicant provide any other information or material that the council considers it may need. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Notice of complete application

(4) The council shall, upon receiving all information and material required under subsections (2) and (3), if any, serve a notice on the applicant informing the applicant that the application is complete. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Notification re completeness of application

(5) The council may, at any time, notify the applicant of the information and material required under subsection (2) or (3) that has been provided, if any, and any information and material under those subsections that has not been provided. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Decision of council

(6) The council, after consultation with its municipal heritage committee, if one is established, and within the time period determined under subsection (7),

(a) shall,

(i) consent to the application,

(ii) consent to the application on terms and conditions, or

(iii) refuse the application; and

(b) shall serve notice of its decision on the owner of the property and on the Trust. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Same

(7) For the purposes of subsection (6), the time period is determined as follows:

1. Unless paragraph 2 applies, the period is 90 days after a notice under subsection (4) is served on the applicant or such longer period after the notice is served as is agreed upon by the owner and the council.

2. If a notice under subsection (4) or (5) is not served on the applicant within 60 days after the day the application commenced, as determined in accordance with the regulations, the period is 90 days after the end of that 60-day period or such longer period after the end of the 60-day period as is agreed upon by the owner and the council. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

Deemed consent

(8) If the council fails to notify the owner under clause (6) (b) within the time period determined under subsection (7), the council shall be deemed to have consented to the application. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 11.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There are no financial impacts to the City as a result of this application. The owner has not elected to apply for the City's Designated Heritage Property Grant Program at this time.

PUBLIC VALUE:

Transparency:

MHAC reports and meetings are open to the public.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

The MHAC was consulted on April 17, 2025, through Report 24-016 (MHAC) and was provided with Heritage Planning staff's recommendations as presented in this report. MHAC passed the following recommendations to Council:

THAT Report 25-016 (MHAC): 215 Queen Street West, Heritage Permit Application be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) support the Heritage Permit for the proposed window replacements as detailed in Report 25-016, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Following the approval by the City of Cambridge, that any minor changes to the plans and elevations shall be submitted to the satisfaction of staff, prior to an application for a building permit and/or the commencement of any alterations; and
- 2) That the implementation of alterations, in accordance with this approval, shall be completed no later than two (2) years following the approval by the City of Cambridge. If the alterations are not completed by such a time, then this approval expires as of that date and no alterations shall be undertaken without a new approval issued by the City of Cambridge.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Meetings of Council are open to the public via the City's YouTube channel.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Heritage planning staff liaised with the property owner on the proposal and the process of applying for a Heritage Permit.

CONCLUSION:

For the reasons outlined in this report, Heritage Planning staff recommend that Council approve the Heritage Permit application requesting for window replacements on the former textile mill at 215 Queen Street West, subject to the conditions outlined in this report.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 25-064-CD Appendix A – Heritage Permit Application
2. 25-064-CD Appendix B – Interior and exterior photographs, supplied by the applicant
3. 25-064-CD Appendix C – Window specifications, supplied by the applicant