

Heritage Vaughan Committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, January 31, 2024

WARD: 1

TITLE: DELISTING OF 6701 HIGHWAY 7, A PROPERTY INCLUDED ON THE VAUGHAN HERITAGE INVENTORY AS A LISTED STRUCTURE OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ('LSHS')

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Heritage Vaughan Committee's support and recommend to the Committee of the Whole approval for the proposed removal of the subject property at 6701 Highway 7 (shown in Attachment 1) from the Municipal Registrar as a *Listed Structure of Historical Significance* under Part IV Section 27 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Report Highlights

- Cultural Heritage staff are requesting the subject property be removed from the Register of Cultural Properties of Historical Value.
- The property previously contained a 2-storey farmhouse which was destroyed by fire and its remains were then demolished and removed.
- Following the fire and subsequent demolition, the property no longer has cultural heritage value.

Recommendations

THAT Heritage Vaughan recommend the approval of the proposed removal of the subject property from City of Vaughan Heritage Inventory as a *Listed Structure of Historical Significance*, under Section 27(1.3) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Background

The subject property contained five (5) structures:

- c. 1840-1900 residence;
- c. 1954 barn with c. 1970 silo, and c. 1978 and c. 1988 extensions - partially demolished from 2018 to 2019;
- c. 1954 outbuilding;
- c. 1988 north barn (replaced second c. 1954 outbuilding); and,
- c. 1988-1995 secondary residence.

The primary residence appears to have been constructed by Albert and Edith Witherspoon in a vernacular Victorian style, c.1840. This was demonstrated through the use of red brick, decorative bargeboard, elliptical windows, interrupting gables, radiating buff brick voussoirs, porch, bay window, and “L” shaped plan. The additions were also built in a similar vein. The structure was a two-storey dichromatic brick house with an irregularly shaped plan, two additions, and an attached garage. The residence had a side gable with interrupting gables along the north and west elevations. There were two exterior, single-stacked, brick chimneys located on the east and south elevations.

This was the only remaining building of notable heritage value on the property.

The remaining buildings on the property had been demolished sometime in 2021, and subsequently a Heritage Permit was issued after the fact (see Attachment 4).

Previous Reports/Authority

There are no previous reports.

Analysis and Options

Since fall 2021, a sizable portion of the property had been reconfigured to accommodate industrial / workshop activities. In December 2021, the site alterations already carried out were approved at Deputy City Manager level through a Heritage Permit (see Attachment 4). As a result, the property does not have the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

On March 29, 2023, a catastrophic fire completely destroyed the remaining farmhouse 2-storey building at 6701 Highway 7. The Fire Department were called to the scene. The farmhouse was *“a large orange glow... main floor was showing fire in all the windows but the garage was not involved with fire... second floor showed fire in all but 2 windows”*. Despite fire suppression efforts, the result was a total loss of the building. An excavator was brought on to the property at the request of the fire department to *“knock down parts of the home”*. No debris or construction material was left on scene: all was removed and the site then was covered in gravel (see Attachment 6 photos).

Following the destruction of the residence by fire, the property cannot be considered to be a landmark, and all heritage and cultural value have been stripped.

Financial Impact

There are no requirements for new funding associated with this report.

Operational Impact

There are no operational impacts or considerations.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no broader Regional impacts or considerations.

Conclusion

The built heritage resource at 6701 Highway 7 was destroyed by fire and subsequently the remaining material removed.

Cultural Heritage staff support the Heritage Vaughan Committee recommendation to Committee of the Whole that the subject property be removed from the LSHS register, as it no longer maintains the criteria for the Listing as a property of architectural, cultural heritage, or contextual significance.

For more information, please contact: Nick R. Borcescu, Senior Heritage Planner, ext. 8191.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – 6701Hwy7_Location Map
- Attachment 2 – 6701Hwy7_Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
- Attachment 3 – 6701Hwy7_Request to delist
- Attachment 4 – 6701Hwy7_site protection agreement
- Attachment 5 – 6701Hwy7_fire call report
- Attachment 6 – 6701Hwy7_Site plan and photos

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