

## Report to Planning and Environment Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Planning and Environment Committee

**From:** Scott Mathers, MPA, P. Eng.,  
Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development

**Subject:** Request for Designation for the property at 81 Wilson Avenue  
pursuant to Part IV, *Ontario Heritage Act*

**Date:** June 19, 2023

## Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Planning and Development, with respect to the request for designation of the property at 81 Wilson Avenue, the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

- a) Notice **BE GIVEN** under the provisions of Section 29(3) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O. 18, of Municipal Council's intention to designate the property to be of cultural heritage value or interest for the reasons outlined in Appendix E of this report; and,
- b) Should no objections to Municipal Council's notice of intention to designate be received, a by-law to designate the property at 81 Wilson Avenue to be of cultural heritage value or interest for the reasons outlined in Appendix E of this report **BE INTRODUCED** at a future meeting of Municipal Council within 90 days of the end of the objection period.

**IT BEING NOTED** that should an objection to Municipal Council's notice of intention to designate be received, a subsequent staff report will be prepared.

**IT BEING FURTHER NOTED** that should an appeal to the passage of the by-law be received, the City Clerk will refer the appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

## Executive Summary

At the request of the property owners, an evaluation of the property at 81 Wilson Avenue was undertaken using the criteria of O. Reg 9/06. The property at 81 Wilson Avenue meets four of nine criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation pursuant to Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The cultural heritage value of the property at 81 Wilson Avenue is beyond what is recognized by its designation under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a Contributing Resource in the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District.

The property is directly associated with nurseryman, florist, and market gardener Alexander Leslie (1827-1901). The property is an early, representative example of the cottages built by market gardeners in London West from the mid-1850s to the early 1900s, featuring exceptionally large main floor windows on the main floor and basement level of the house that could support the germination of seedlings. The property is important in defining, maintaining, and supporting the character of the Blackfriars-Petersville area.

## Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This recommendation supports the following 2023-2027 Strategic Plan area of focus, "Wellbeing and Safety":

- London has safe, vibrant, and health neighbourhoods and communities.
  - Londoners have a strong sense of belonging and sense of place.
    - Create cultural opportunities that reflects arts, heritage, and diversity of community.

# Analysis

## 1.0 Background Information

### 1.1 Property Location

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is located on Part of Lot 4 in RP191(W). The property is on the east side of Wilson Avenue between Rogers Avenue and Cherry Street (Appendix A). The property was in the Village of London West (formerly Petersville) which was annexed by the City of London in 1897.

### 1.2 Cultural Heritage Status

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is a Contributing Resource in the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District, designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

### 1.3 Description

The building at 81 Wilson Avenue, known as the Alexander Leslie House, is a one and one half-storey, buff brick dwelling with an unusually broad centre cross gable, in which is found a pointed Gothic window that echoes a similar pointed window in the earlier back wing of the building. The building is an early, representative example of a market gardener's home found in London West.

For more information, see Appendix B (Evaluation) and Appendix E (Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest).

### 1.4 Property History

The Euro-Canadian history of the property begins on October 24, 1831, when Lots 1 and 2, East of the Wharncliffe Highway were granted from the Crown to John Kent, a native of Staffordshire, England who had immigrated to Upper Canada in 1823.

In 1853, John Kent subdivided his land and granted Park Lots 3 and 4 East of Centre Street and other lands in the Plan totalling 20 acres to Rev. Hompesch Massingberd, an Anglican minister and wealthy landowner in London and Westminster Township.

The original back wing of the house at 81 Wilson Avenue is dated as early as 1854. The Scottish nurseryman Alexander Leslie purchased the property from Rev. Massingberd in 1863. The main block of the house, visible from Wilson Avenue, was built between 1865-1866.

For information on Property History, see Appendices B and E.

## 2.0 Discussion and Considerations

### 2.1 Legislative and Policy Framework

Cultural heritage resources are recognized for the value and contributions that they make to our quality of life, sense of place, and tangible link to our shared past. Cultural heritage resources are to be conserved as per the fundamental policies in the *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)*, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and *The London Plan*. It is important to recognize, protect, and celebrate our cultural heritage resources for future generations.

#### 2.1.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Heritage conservation is a matter of provincial interest (Section 2.d, *Planning Act*). The *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)* promotes the wise use and management of cultural heritage resources and directs that "significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved" (Policy 2.6.1).

"Significant" is defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)* as, "resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest." Further, "processes and criteria for determine cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the Ontario Heritage Act."

Additionally, “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.”

### **2.1.2 Ontario Heritage Act**

Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to designate properties to be of cultural heritage value or interest. Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* also establishes consultation, notification, and process requirements, as well as a process to object to a Notice of Intention to Designate and to appeal the passing of a by-law to designate a property pursuant to Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Objections to a Notice of Intention to Designate are referred to Municipal Council. Appeals to the passing of a by-law to designate a property pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act* are referred to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

To determine eligibility for designation under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, properties are evaluated using the mandated criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06.

Pursuant to Section 41(2), *Ontario Heritage Act*, a property may be designated both individually and as part of a Heritage Conservation District.

#### **2.1.2.1 Ontario Regulation 9/06**

Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, establishes criteria for determining the cultural heritage value or interest of individual properties. These criteria are consistent with Policy 573\_ of *The London Plan*. These criteria are:

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

A property is required to meet two or more of the abovementioned criteria to merit protection under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

#### **2.1.2.2 Ontario Regulation 385/21**

Ontario Regulation 385/21 was proclaimed on July 1, 2021. This regulation prescribes certain requirements for a heritage designating by-law. Heritage designating by-law must meet the requirements of Ontario Regulation 385/21.

## **2.2 The London Plan**

The Cultural Heritage chapter of *The London Plan* recognizes that our cultural heritage resources define our City’s unique identity and contribute to its continuing prosperity. It notes, “The quality and diversity of these resources are important in distinguishing London from other cities and make London a place that is more attractive for people to visit, live or invest in.” Policies 572\_ and 573\_ of *The London Plan* enable the

designation of individual properties under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as well as the criteria by which individual properties will be evaluated.

### **3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations**

None

### **4.0 Key Issues and Considerations**

#### **4.1 Request for Designation**

In February 2020, the City received a request from the property owners of 81 Wilson Avenue to consider the designation of the property pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Working with the property owner, the Heritage Researcher completed historical research and completed an evaluation of the property according to the criteria of O. Reg. 9/06. A Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest was prepared. The Stewardship Sub-Committee of the Community Advisory Committee on Planning (CACP) was consulted at its meeting on April 26, 2023.

#### **4.2 Cultural Heritage Evaluation**

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue was evaluated using the criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06. The property has met 4 criteria for designation. The criteria it has met are:

- Criterion 1: The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method.
- Criterion 4: The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct association with a theme, event, believe, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
- Criterion 7: The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
- Criterion 8: The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

See Appendix B (Evaluation) and E (Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest) for more information.

#### **4.3 Consultation**

As an owner-initiated designation, the property owners have been engaged in the evaluation processes for the property. The property owner facilitated a site visit with the Heritage Planners and Heritage Researcher. The property owner has also reviewed and concurred with the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and identification of heritage attributes for the property at 81 Wilson Avenue.

In compliance with the requirements of Section 29(2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the Community Advisory Committee on Planning, as the City's municipal heritage committee, was consulted at its meeting on June 14, 2023.

## **Conclusion**

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is a significant cultural heritage resource that is valued for its physical or design values, its historical or associative values, and its contextual values. The cultural heritage value of the property at 81 Wilson Avenue is beyond what is recognized by its designation as a Contributing Resource in the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District.

The property is an early, representative example of the cottages built by market gardeners in London West from the mid-1850s to the early 1900s, featuring exceptionally large main floor windows and Italianate styling that would later be dominant in London throughout the 1870s.

The property is directly tied to the Scottish Presbyterian nurseryman, florist and market gardener Alexander Leslie (1827-1901). Leslie is significant to the community of market gardeners in London West for providing the Covent Garden Market with flowers and plants, fruit and ornamental trees, bushes and vines.

The property is important in defining, maintaining, and supporting the character of the Blackfriars-Petersville area as it reflects the favoured style of cottages built by market gardeners who settled in Blackfriars-Petersville in the 1850s and 1860s.

The property has been evaluated and has met the criteria for designation per Ontario Regulation 9/06. The property at 81 Wilson Avenue merits designation pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

**Prepared by:** Konner Mitchener, M.Arch, Intern CAHP  
Heritage Planner

**Reviewed by:** Kyle Gonyou, RPP, MCIP, CAHP  
Manager, Heritage and Urban Design

**Recommended by:** Heather McNeely, RPP, MCIP  
Director, Planning and Development

**Submitted by:** Scott Mathers, MPA, P. Eng.  
Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic  
Development

### **Appendices**

Appendix A Property Location

Appendix B Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Appendix C Images

Appendix D Documentation

Appendix E Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest – 81 Wilson Avenue

Appendix F Heritage Attributes

### **Selected Sources**

Corporation of the City of London. n.d. Property files: 81 Wilson Avenue.

Corporation of the City of London. (2016, consolidated May 28, 2021). *The London Plan*. London, ON.

Corporation of the City of London. (2020). *Register of Cultural Heritage Resources*. London, ON.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. (2020). *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*. Ontario: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

*Ontario Heritage Act*. (consolidated period from January 1, 2023 – last amendment 2022, c. 21, Sched. 6). Retrieved from e-Laws website  
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>.

### **Other Sources**

Archives & Special Collections. Western University. London, ON. Assessment Rolls 1854-1875 for London Township; Maps from the Historical Maps collection and Serge A. Sauer collection—Various.

City of London Directories—Various.

Corporation of the City of London. (January 2014). *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Study*. London, ON.

Corporation of the City of London. (May 2014). *Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan & Guidelines*. London, ON.

Library & Archives Canada. Ottawa, ON. *Census of Canada 1861, 1871, 1881, 1911*.

London Free Press. "Westward Ho! was lawyer's cry". September 30, 1972. London, ON.

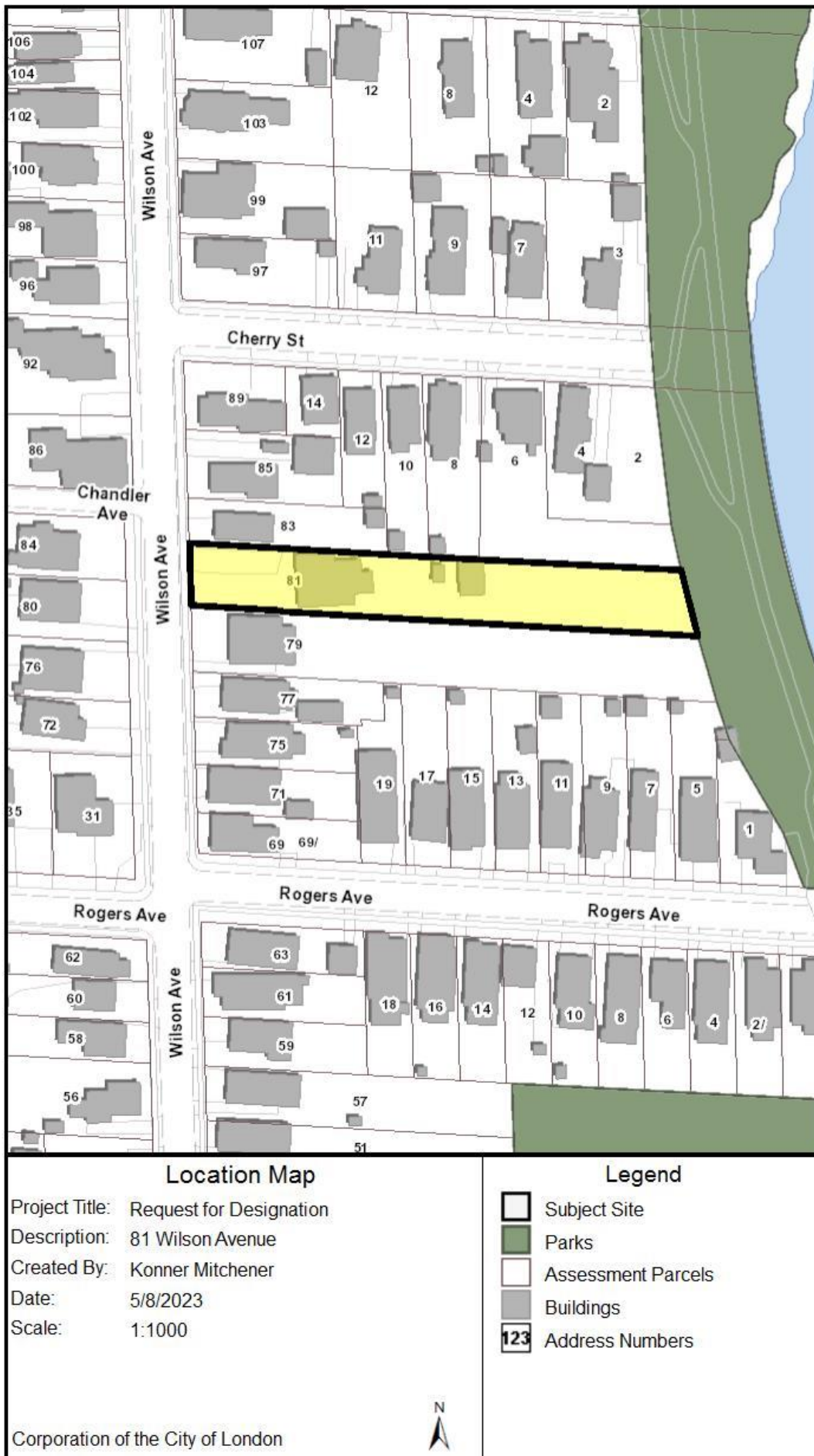
Lutman, John H. *The South and the West of London: An historical and architectural guide*. London: Corporation of the City of London, 1979.

ONLAND Ontario Land Registry Access. <https://www.onland.ca/ui/>. Parcel records, plans and instruments, various.

Page, H.R. & Co., *Illustrated Atlas of Middlesex County, Ontario*. Belleville: Mika Silk Screening, 1972.

Tausky, Nancy J. and Louis Taylor. *Historical Sketches of London: From Site to City*. Broadview Press: 1993.

# Appendix A – Property Location



Location Map for the property at 81 Wilson Avenue, London.

## Appendix B – Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

<b>Municipal Address</b>	81 Wilson Avenue
<b>Resource Name</b>	Alexander Leslie House
<b>Legal Description</b>	PT LT 4, E/S WILSON AV, PLAN 191 (W), PT 1 33R5907; S/T 909210 LONDON
<b>PIN</b>	08260-0083
<b>Construction Date</b>	1854-1862; 1865-1866
<b>Original Owner</b>	Rev. Hompesch Massingberd (1853-63); Alexander Leslie (1863-1901)
<b>Report Prepared By</b>	Lorraine Tinsley
<b>Date</b>	May 5, 2023



Photograph of the main elevation of the main block of the house.

### Property History

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is in the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District and is designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Euro-Canadian history of the property dates to 1831—an early period of colonial settlement in London Township at the Forks of the Thames, and it is historically linked to the pattern of agricultural development in London West from the mid-1800s onwards. The property and the building at 81 Wilson Avenue, known as the Alexander Leslie House, have been extensively described and illustrated in John H. Lutman, *The South & the West* (1979) and in Nancy J. Tausky, *Historical Sketches of London: From Site to City* (1993), and *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Study* (2014).

On October 24, 1831, Lots 1 and 2, East of the Wharncliffe Highway were granted from the Crown to John Kent, a native of Staffordshire, England who had immigrated to Upper Canada in 1823. The low-lying river flats were regularly flooded by the Thames River, and here the Kent family farmed the rich land that became known as Kent's Flats. In 1848 Kent had his lands in Lots 1 and 2, and part of Lot 3 laid out in Park Lots, ranging in size from three to nine and one-quarter acres, and designed to allow for small farms or market gardens. To provide access to these lots he placed a north-south road



through his survey named Centre Street—renamed Wilson Avenue after Mayor John Wilson, following the annexation of London West in 1897.

RP191(W), dated April 1848 (and registered on December 9, 1863, four years after Kent's death in 1859), shows the configuration of Park Lots on Kent's Plan between Wharncliffe Road and the Forks of the Thames, south of the Road to Blackfriars Bridge and extending to the river. The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is situated on Part of Park Lot 4 in RP191(W).

In 1853 Kent granted Park Lots 3 and 4 East of Centre Street and other lands in the Plan totalling 20 acres to Rev. Hompesch Massingberd, an Anglican minister and wealthy landowner in the City and Westminster Township (Instrument 2057). The following year, 1854, Massingberd was assessed \$250 for 18 acres East of the Wharncliffe Highway. (An assessment for the remaining two acres is not available. And from 1854-1862 no further assessment data is available for Massingberd's property in Petersville.)

Massingberd apparently did not intend to live on his newly acquired property on the river flats. In the same year, 1853, he established his household at the southeast corner of Talbot and Kent Streets, which is prominently identified as the property of "Rev. Mr. Massingberd" on the 1855 S. Peters Map of London.

It may be that Massingberd wished to establish a separate household for a personal gardener on his new property in Petersville, and he may have built the original farmhouse at 81 Wilson Avenue (referred to by Tausky as the "back wing" of the later house facing on the street) for such a purpose as early as 1854. Coincidentally, the Scottish nurseryman Alexander Leslie, who later purchased the property from Massingberd in 1863, listed his occupation as "Grower and Dealer in Nursery Stock" and his "Date of Settlement" in Petersville as 1854 in the Business Directory of the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County*. It is not known, however, whether Leslie knew or worked for Massingberd at this time.

The next available assessment after 1854 for Rev. Massingberd is in 1863, when he was assessed \$850 for 20 acres in "Concession 1, Lots 3,4,6,7". This significant increase in assessment value over nine years suggests the construction of the original building at 81 Wilson Avenue between 1854 and 1862. The public record does not allow for a more precise date.

Whether or not Leslie and Massingberd were already acquainted, Alexander and his wife Elizabeth purchased Lots 3, 4, 6 and 7, East of Centre Street for \$1000 from H. Maserberg [sic Massingberd] on December 2, 1863 (Instrument 7592). Massingberd held a \$900 mortgage, also dated December 2, 1863 (Instrument 7589) which was discharged on October 2, 1872.

It should be noted that the parcel records and assessment rolls for Alexander Leslie show a discrepancy at this time in the amount of property in question: The Instruments drawn up in December 1863 indicate that each of Lots 3 & 4 (together comprising one property east of Centre Street backing onto the river), and Lots 6 & 7 (comprising a second property diagonally across Centre Street), was 8 acres and 19 paces, or approximately 16+ acres in total. Leslie's first and second assessments in 1864 and 1865, however, are \$850 for 20 acres in "Concession 1, Lots 3,4,6,7" (identical to Massingberd's assessment for the same property in 1863). The acreage for Lots 6 & 7 appears to be understated in the Instruments, and in later assessments is indicated as comprising 12 acres.

There is no assessment data for Leslie in 1866, but the next available assessment in 1867 shows a dramatic increase to \$1000 for Lots 3 & 4 alone (comprising 8 acres, 3 cattle, 2 horses, and a dog) and \$600 for Lots 6 & 7, consisting of 12 acres—a near doubling of the total assessment over 1865. This suggests that the significantly larger addition to the house (referred to by Tausky as the main block) on Lot 4 was built after

the first quarter of 1865, and it would have been completed before the first quarter of 1867 when the assessment was undertaken.

In 1872 Leslie's nursery was prospering, and he advertised his business at some expense on the *Bird's Eye View of London*, drawn that year by E. S. Glover. A disproportionately large diagram of Leslie's property is placed prominently on Centre Street and labelled "17. Nursery."—the only such business listed on the plan.

By this time, Leslie had begun to reduce his land holdings while concentrating on his nursery business. RP303(W), made by McMillan and dated October 7, 1872, subdivides Lots 3 & 4 East of Centre Street in RP191(W), creating Leslie Street and several small lots on the south side of Leslie Street. The north side of Leslie Street was owned by Samuel Peters and had been subdivided into building lots earlier in the same year by RP297(W). Both developments had been spurred by the building of the Kensington Bridge in 1871, which had increased buyers' interest in the now more accessible Petersville and neighbouring Kensington.

An auction sale was held on September 19, 1872. The London Advertiser noted that some of the lots fetched "exorbitant prices"—\$240 to \$300 a lot. In fact, the lots had already been selling throughout 1872 in the range of \$180-\$500 and were usually held by mortgage, typically paid off in the first year or two. Initial profits from the sale of these lots would have allowed for the discharge of Alexander's mortgage from Rev. Massingberd by October 1872.

The London City Directory 1874-75 featured an advertisement for Alexander Leslie, Proprietor of "Blackfriars' Nursery, Petersville" for "All Kinds of Fruit and Ornamental Trees, constantly on hand; also a first-class selection of Shrubs and Grape Vines." In that same year, Leslie was assessed \$2000 for Lots 3 & 4, comprising 8 acres, 1 cattle and 1 dog. This doubling of the assessment in 1867 may have reflected an adjustment due to a legislated switch to market value assessment in 1868-69, as well as a large jump in assessment values around 1870, followed by annual increases in assessment values in the early 1870s.

Around 1875 Leslie began to fulfill his annual volunteer militia duties and continued to do so until at least 1886, initially as a Private in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles, and from 1880 in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, London Fusiliers, where by 1886 he had risen to the rank of Sergeant.

Leslie was not shy about advertising his services, and in 1878 he listed himself as a "Grower and Dealer in Nursery Stock" in the Business Directory of the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County*, while listing his services variously as a gardener, florist and nurseryman in city directories.

Leslie continued subdividing his land. A second Plan, RP397(W), was registered May 23, 1882, and it subdivided the remaining portions of Lots 3 & 4, East Centre Street in RP191(W) not covered in Plan 303(W). RP397(W) includes Alexander Leslie's signature, house and outbuilding footprints, as well as boundaries for Lots 3 & 4 in RP191(W). The Plan created Cherry Street and River Avenue (now Rogers Avenue) and included lots on both sides of the streets. Within two weeks of registration, on June 6, 1882, Lot 6 in RP397(W) was sold to Margaret and Peter Anderson for \$300 (Instrument 1076). A series of mortgages was also taken out by Leslie starting in the 1880s and held by Henry Marshall. Most were discharged by Margaret C. Marshall in the later 1890s.

On May 1, 1901, Alexander Leslie, now near death, granted Lots 20 and 21, directly south of the Leslie house in RP397(W) to his wife Elizabeth for \$1.00 (Instrument 7929). Alexander died shortly afterwards on May 19, 1901, age 74, in the home he built at 81 Wilson Avenue. His death was given as "softening of the brain, 2 years", a term used in this era to refer to dementia, likely brought on by a stroke. In 1907 Elizabeth sold Lots 20 & 21 to Thomas Knott for \$2000 each (Instrument 12055).

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue remained in the Leslie family until 1953. After Elizabeth's death in 1912, her daughter Annie continued living in the house until 1928. In 1925 Annie was joined by her sister Bessie, a saleslady at Kingsmills, who after 1928 lived alone there, or with tenants until 1953. From 1953-1973 Alfred Banga, a warehouseman with Ontario Furniture, lived at the property with tenants Ilgwars Upmalis and Dr Henry Upmalis and family. In the last ten years of Alfred Banga's occupancy the house was divided into apartments. In the 1990s, a grandson of the Upmalis family, John Ivars Upmalis, lived at 81 Wilson Avenue. The current owners have lived at the property at 81 Wilson Avenue since 2008.

The gardens on the property at 81 Wilson Avenue have been rehabilitated and landscaped and feature several varieties of bushes and flowering plants that may have been cultivated by Alexander Leslie, including the William Saunders rose and many peony varieties. A soil analysis has revealed a deposit of 24 inches of alluvial soil from the frequent flooding of the Thames River in the past. In the experience of the current owners, this rich and fertile soil allows for rapid drainage of accumulated flood waters and is an illustration of the resilience of the property to repeated and sometimes catastrophic flooding that was experienced throughout the river flats until the building of the Fanshawe Dam in 1952.

### **Resource Description**

The building at 81 Wilson Avenue, known as the Alexander Leslie House, is an early, representative example of a market gardener's home found in London West. It is a one and one half-storey, buff brick dwelling with a single centre gable, in which is found a pointed window derived from the Gothic tradition. The door in the centre of the main elevation is flanked by a single two-over-two window on either side. The foundation is composed of fieldstone set in heavy mortar.

In Tausky's words, the building is among the most attractive of the numerous small and often charming working-class cottages of London West. Its basic form was particularly popular with London's gardeners in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The building is solidly built, with walls composed of three layers of bricks bonded by iron ties. The back wing of the house, built between 1854-1862, appears to predate the main block visible from the street. Built c.1865-1866, the main block unifies the two parts of the house: the pointed window on the broad cross gable over the centre door echoes a similar window in the east-facing gable of the back wing.

Italianate influence is evident in the classical-inspired entranceway with flanking side lights, transom and inset oculus, and segmental arches of the windows and entranceway. The appealing breadth of the front gable is unusual in the region (Tausky), and it contributes to the overall imposing proportions of the house, setting it apart from the simpler Ontario cottages in the area.

The front gable once featured a Gothic finial and drop, as well as a carved bargeboard, which are clearly shown in a rare 1880 photograph of the Leslie family assembled in front of the house. The current owners replicated and restored the carved bargeboard and the heavy finial and drop in the front gable, to a high standard in 2019. This matches a second (original) finial and drop in the north gable, although a similar bargeboard in that gable no longer exists.

The 1880 photograph also reveals that the configuration of the front of the Leslie House originally was more elaborate and picturesque than it appears today. The photograph shows a central projecting vestibule below, and of the same breadth as the front gable, with front and side doors opening to covered verandahs on either side. Steps led up to the front entryway, which was flanked by sidelights set in curved mouldings, with a fanlight above. Ornamental moulding on the vestibule and verandah roofs, supported with architectural columns and decorative brackets, recall similar refinements on the Brough House at 1132 Richmond Street—a one and one-half storey buff brick building also built c. 1865, with a gable roof, projecting vestibule and bargeboards similar to some illustrated in Sloan's *Model Architect* (1852).

One chimney remains of the two originally situated over the north and south gables.

**O. Reg. 9/06 – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

*A property may be designated under Section 29, Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets two or more of the criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue, known as the Alexander Leslie House, is an early, representative example of the cottages built by market gardeners in London West from the mid-1850s to the early 1900s. The basic form of the house was popular in the rural and semi-urban areas surrounding London: a one and one half-storey buff brick building with a gable roof, and a main door centred under a cross gable with a single window on either side.</p> <p>The classical-inspired entranceway with transom and side lights, and the segmental arches of the windows and entranceway, are early examples of the Italianate style that would dominate the rest of London in the 1870s. The windows on the main floor of the main block of the house are exceptionally large at 7 feet in height.</p>
<b>2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.</b>	<b>No</b>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is not believed to display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.</p>
<b>3. The property has historical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.</b>	<b>No</b>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is not believed to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.</p>
<b>4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct association with a theme, event, believe, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is directly associated with the Scottish Presbyterian nurseryman, florist and market gardener Alexander Leslie (1827-1901) whose nursery provided the city's gardeners and the Covent Garden Market with flowers and plants, fruit and ornamental trees, bushes and vines. The large window openings on the main floor and basement level of the house contribute to its historical value as a market gardener's home where the large windows could support the germination of seedlings.</p> <p>Leslie's significance to the community of market gardeners in London West is evident in his prominence as a leading nurseryman, whose business, the Blackfriars Nursery, Petersville, was widely advertised in leading publications of the day, and whose legacy is still evident today in the gardens he cultivated at 81 Wilson Avenue.</p>

<p><b>5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is not believed to yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.</p>
<p><b>6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is not known to demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.</p>
<p><b>7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue has contextual value as a Contributing Resource in the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District. It is one of the earliest buildings and market gardens in the area, as indicated by its unusually deep setback. As it reflects the favoured style of cottages built by market gardeners who settled in Blackfriars-Petersville in the 1850s and 60s, it is important in maintaining and supporting the character of the area.</p>
<p><b>8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is physically and historically linked to its surroundings on the river flats of London West. It was the intention of the original holder of the Crown Grant, John Kent, to create Park Lots for small gardens or market gardens in his 1848 survey of these lands. This purpose was realized by Leslie, as a leading Dealer in Nursery Stock, and the proprietor of the Blackfriars Nursery, Petersville on this property from 1863 to his death in 1901.</p>
<p><b>9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is not believed to be a landmark.</p>

### Comparative Analysis

The Alexander Leslie House, with its one and one-half storeys, front gable, and symmetry, to some extent exemplifies the paradigm on which Brough House at 1132 Richmond Street is based (Tausky). Built approximately the same year, c. 1865, the Brough House displays the same basic form as the Leslie House. Early photographs of both houses reveal numerous subtle refinements. Like the Alexander Leslie House, Brough House originally included a wide vestibule at the front, from which two side doors led to covered verandahs at each side of the frontispiece. Brough House still has original carved bargeboards and heavy finials similar to some illustrated in Sloan's *Model Architect* (1852), all of which make it an exemplary Victorian cottage. The

Alexander Leslie House, however, is larger and very solidly built. A carved bargeboard, finial and drop that once adorned the front gable have been replicated and restored, matching an original finial and drop still existing in the north side gable. The windows, at 7 feet in height, are taller than average, particularly within the Blackfriars Petersville Heritage Conservation District.

<b>Authenticity and Integrity</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<p><b>Authenticity</b> is understood to mean the ability of a property and its heritage attributes to retain their significance over time, i.e., do the heritage attributes accurately display the cultural heritage value or interest of a property?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>The property at 81 Wilson Avenue has retained its form and its significance as an early, representative example of a market gardener's cottage in London West. As a one and one-half storey, buff-brick dwelling with a single broad centre gable, Gothic windows, and Italianate influences in the entranceway and flanking windows, the exterior heritage attributes accurately display the cultural heritage value and interest of the property.</p>
<p><b>Integrity</b> is understood to mean the ability of a property to secure its significance over time, i.e., do the surviving physical features continue to represent or support the cultural heritage value or interest of a property?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>The surviving physical features of the property at 81 Wilson Avenue continue to represent and support the cultural heritage value and interest of the property. The property and its gardens have been maintained, a factor which, together with the replication of the decorative bargeboard and finial in the front gable, contributes to the integrity of and authenticity of the house, while maintaining its original form and style.</p>

**Appendix C – Images**



*Image 1: Photograph of the main elevation of the main block of the house.*



*Image 2: Front entranceway with pair of divided sidelights flanking central door.*





*Image 3: Two-over-two wood window with wood storm window and segmental arch in the southern bay of the main (west) façade of the Alexander Leslie House at 81 Wilson Avenue.*



*Image 4: Cross gable on the front of the Alexander Leslie House with replicate bargeboard, finial, and drop (pendant).*



*Image 5: Gable on north elevation with original drop (pendant).*



*Image 6: East elevation showing back wing and T-plan of building. The side porch has been enclosed, and a conservatory has been added at the rear of the house.*



*Image 7: Pointed Gothic window in the back wing.*



*Image 8: Chimney on the north gable.*



*Image 9: Fieldstone foundation wall on the west elevation.*

Appendix D – Documentation



Figure 1: Detail—Map of the Township of London, Canada West, Samuel Peters, 1863 (CX1004) showing “Kent Farm Subdivided” (Archives and Special Collections, Western University).

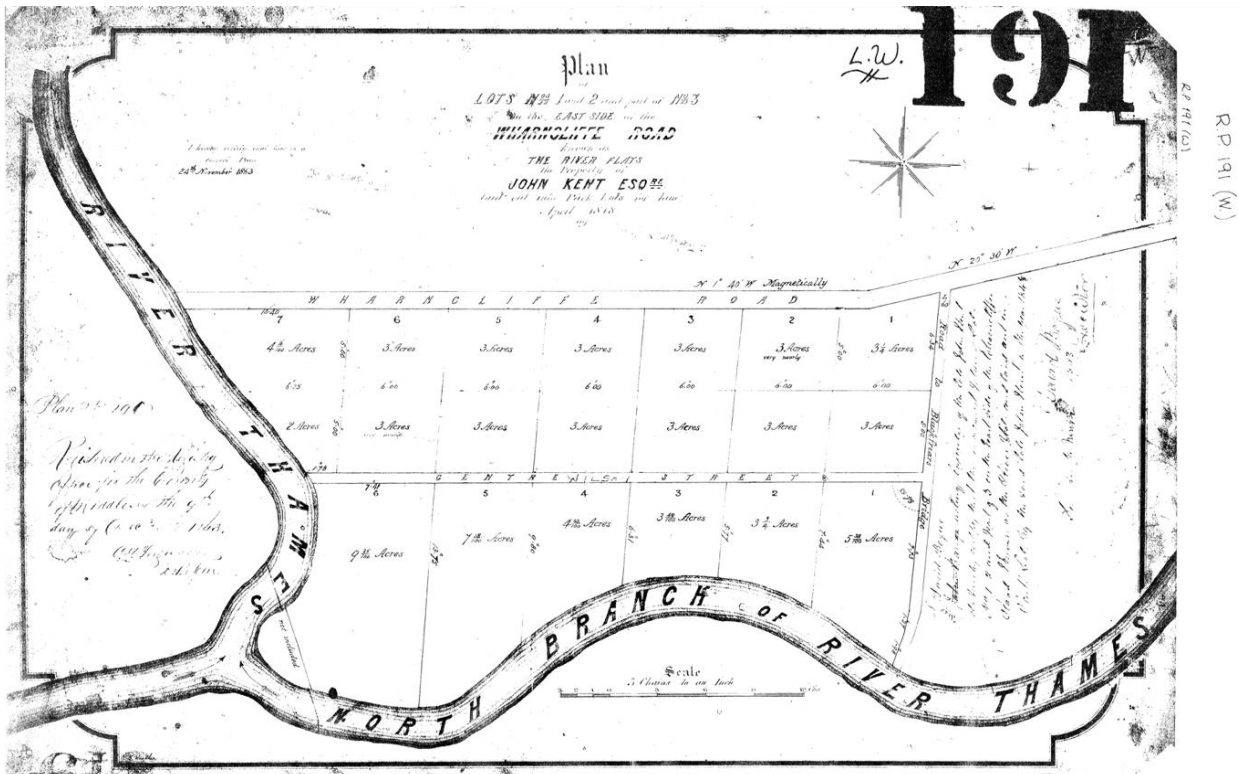


Figure 2: RP191(W)—Lots 1 & 2 and Part of Lot 3 East of Wharnclyffe Road known as the River Flats, Property of John Kent Esq., April 1848.

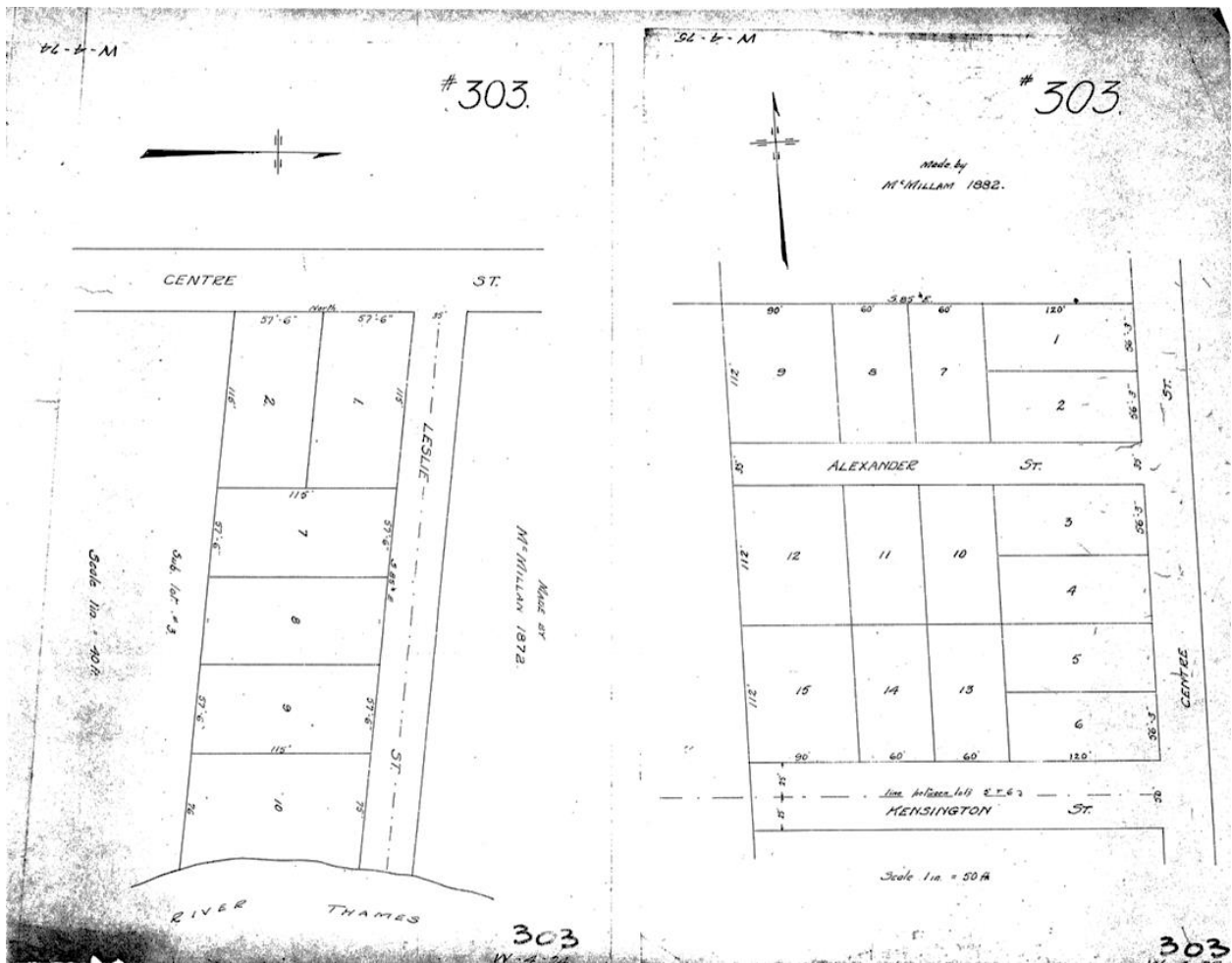


Figure 3: RP303(W) 1872 and 1882, creating Leslie Street and subdividing Lots 3 & 4.

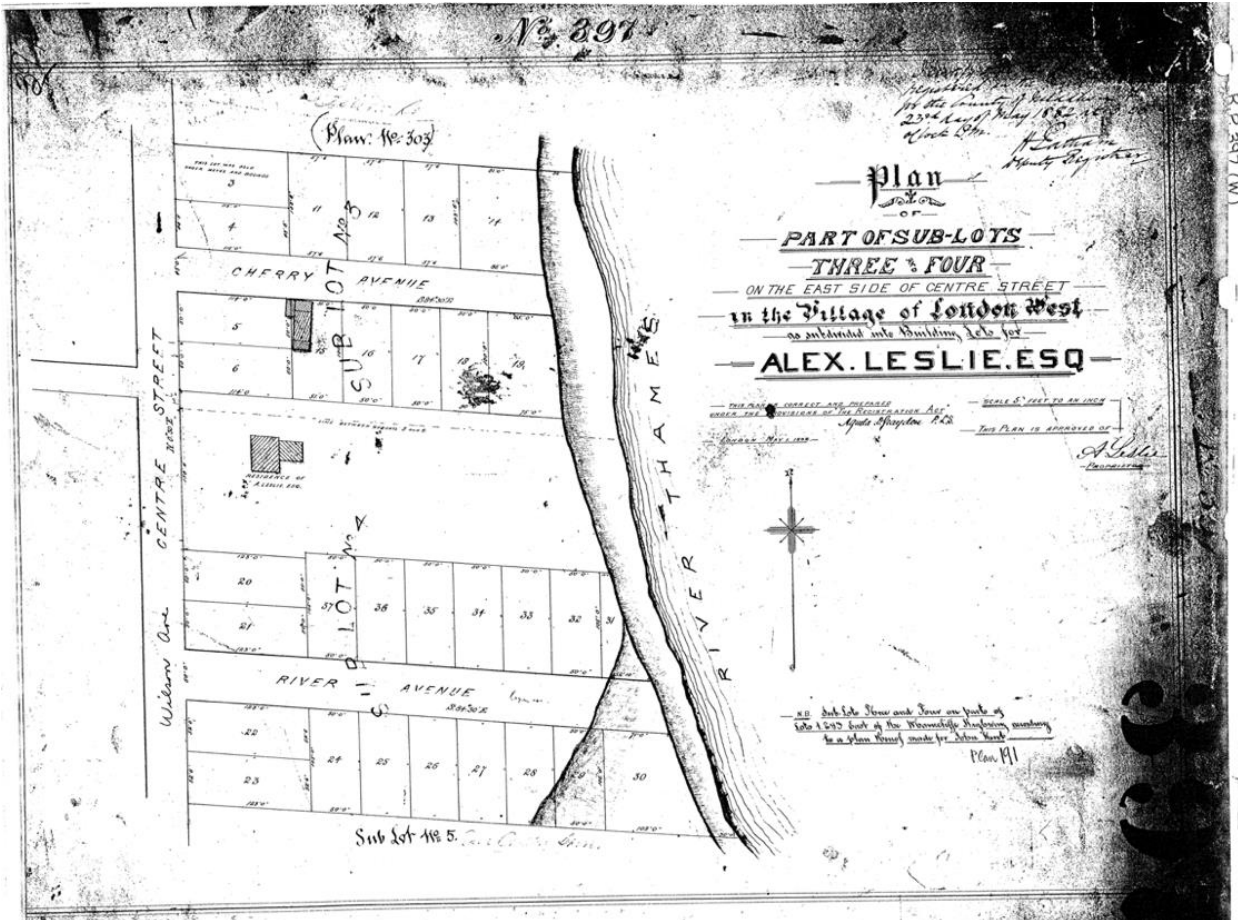


Figure 4: RP397(W), Alex Leslie Esq., May 23, 1882, subdividing remaining portions of Lots 3 & 4, East of Centre Street in RP191(W) not covered in Plan 303(W). Note the T-plan of building known as the Alexander Leslie House.



Figure 5: Detail—London C. W. Sketch of Country, 1867 showing “gardens” in approximate location of Lots 3 & 4 and “meadow” in Lots 6 & 7 (Serge A. Sauer Map Collection, Map and Data Centre, Western University).



Figure 6: Detail—Bird's Eye View of London, Ontario, Canada, 1872 (CXX13) showing Alexander Leslie's Nursery—No. 17 (circled) (Archives & Special Collections, Western University).

**BLACKFRIARS' NURSERY**  
**PETERSVILLE.**  
**ALEXANDER LESLIE, Propr.**  
 ALL KINDS OF  
**FRUIT AND ORNAMENTAL TREES**  
 Constantly on hand; also, a first-class selection of  
**SHRUBS AND GRAPE VINES.**

Figure 7: Advertisement for Blackfriars' Nursery in London City Directory 1874-1875.

**BUSINESS DIRECTORY OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY,**  
*Giving Names of the principal Professional and Business Men in the City of London and in the Towns and Villages, a Description of their Business, and of the principal Producers of each Township who patronize this Atlas.*

**CITY OF LONDON AND SUBURBS.**

NAME.	LOCATION.	Date of Settlement.	NATIVITY.	POST OFFICE.	BUSINESS.	NAME.	LOCATION.	Date of Settlement.	NATIVITY.	POST OFFICE.	BUSINESS.
-------	-----------	---------------------	-----------	--------------	-----------	-------	-----------	---------------------	-----------	--------------	-----------

Figure 8: Business Directory of Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County, Ontario (1878).

Leslie, A/.....	Petersville .....	1854	Scotland.....	Petersville.	Nnrseryman.
-----------------	-------------------	------	---------------	--------------	-------------

Figure 9: Listing for A. Leslie in Business Directory of Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County, Ontario (1878).





Figure 10: Alexander Leslie and family at 81 Wilson Avenue (c. 1880) (Courtesy of Susan Jory).



Figure 11: Alexander Leslie House by Louis Taylor in Tausky, From Site to City (1993).

## Appendix E – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

### 81 Wilson Avenue – Alexander Leslie House

**Legal Description:** PT LT 4, E/S WILSON AV, PLAN 191 (W), PT 1 33R5907;  
LONDON

**PIN:** 08260-0083

#### Description of Property

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue is located on Part of Lot 4 in RP191(W) in the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District and is designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The property is on the east side of Wilson Avenue between Rogers Avenue and Cherry Street. The building at 81 Wilson Avenue, known as the Alexander Leslie House, is a one and one half-storey, buff brick dwelling with an unusually broad centre cross gable, in which is found a pointed Gothic window that echoes a similar pointed window in the earlier back wing of the building.

The main block of the building was constructed by prominent nurseryman Alexander Leslie c. 1865-66. The back wing predates the main block and was built while the property was owned by Rev. Hompesch Massingberd, c. 1854-1862. The Blackfriars' Nursery, Petersville, operated at this location under Leslie's proprietorship from 1863 to his death in 1901.

#### Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property at 81 Wilson Avenue meets **four of nine criteria** for determining cultural heritage value or interest under O. Reg. 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and displays Design Value and Physical Value, Historical Value and Associative Value, and Contextual Value.

**Criterion 1**—The building at 81 Wilson Avenue displays design value and physical value as an early, representative example of the cottages built by market gardeners in London West from the mid-1850s to the early 1900s. It is a one and one half-storey buff brick building with a gable roof, and a main door flanked by two-over-two windows on each side. The entranceway is centred under a cross gable, which originally held a decorative finial and bargeboard that has been replicated and restored. The building is solidly built, with walls composed of three layers of bricks bonded by iron ties. The back wing of the house predates the main block visible from the street, and the two parts of the house are unified with a pointed window derived from the Gothic tradition on the broad cross gable over the centre door, that echoes the window in the gable of the back wing. Progressive Italianate influence is evident in the classical entranceway with transom and sidelights, and in the segmental arches of the windows and entranceway. These features anticipate the Italianate style that would dominate the rest of London in the 1870s. The windows on the main floor of the main block of the house are exceptionally large at 7 feet in height.

**Criterion 4**—The property at 81 Wilson Avenue displays historical value and associative value for its direct association with Scottish Presbyterian nurseryman, florist, and market gardener Alexander Leslie (1827-1901), a person of significance to the community of Petersville in the mid-to late-19<sup>th</sup> century. A prosperous and successful businessman, Leslie was a "Dealer in Nursery Stock" who operated the Blackfriars' Nursery in Petersville from 1863 to 1901, supplying the city's gardeners and the Covent Garden Market with flowers and plants, fruit and ornamental trees, bushes, and vines. The large window openings on the main floor and basement level of the house contribute to its historical value as a market gardener's home where the large windows could support the germination of seedlings.

The property is illustrated on the 1872 Bird's Eye View of London, and the Blackfriars' Nursery, Petersville was prominently advertised in city and business directories of the day.

**Criterion 7**—The property at 81 Wilson Avenue has contextual value for its importance in defining, maintaining, and supporting the character of the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District, in which it is a Contributing Resource. As one of the

earliest settled residential properties in the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District, the property reflects a development pattern of workers' and market gardeners' houses with small market gardens on site. The property also reflects the favoured style of cottages built by market gardeners who settled in Blackfriars-Petersville in the 1850s and 60s, and as such it is important in maintaining and supporting the character of the area.

**Criterion 8**—The property at 81 Wilson Avenue has Contextual Value because it is physically and historically linked to its surroundings on the river flats of London West. It was the intention of the original holder of the Crown grant, John Kent, to create Park Lots for small gardens or market gardens in his 1848 survey of these lands. This purpose was realized by Alexander Leslie, as a leading dealer in nursery stock, and the proprietor of the successful Blackfriars' Nursery, Petersville on this property from 1863 to his death in 1901. The illustration of Leslie's Nursery on the 1872 Bird's Eye View of London adds to its historical authenticity and cultural heritage value.

The detached outbuilding located at the rear of the Alexander Leslie House is not considered to be a heritage attribute of the property.

### **Heritage Attributes**

Heritage attributes that contribute to the Design Value and Physical Value of the property include:

- The form, scale, and massing of a one-and-one-a-half storey, buff brick dwelling with an unusually broad centre cross gable
- T-plan of the building, with the main block (front) built in c.1865-1866 and the back wing built in c. 1854-1862
- Pointed Gothic windows in the cross gable of the main block and in the gable of the back wing
- Heavy finial and drop in the north gable
- Chimney on the north gable, originally paired with a chimney on the south gable (not extant)
- Replicated bargeboard, finial and drop in the front cross gable
- Italianate-influenced segmental arches of the windows and entranceway
- Exceptionally large (7 feet in height), two-over-two wood windows, with wood storm windows, on the main floor
- Basement window openings
- Front doorway with a pair of divided sidelights flanking a central door and a transom, with inset oculus
- Fieldstone foundation walls

Heritage Attributes that contribute to the Historical Value and Associative Value of the property include:

- Location within the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District
- Exceptionally large (7 feet in height), two-over-two wood windows, with wood storm windows, on the main floor
- Basement window openings
- 

Heritage Attributes that contribute to the Contextual Value of the property include:

- Deep setback of the house from the street, contrasting with adjacent buildings
- Location within the Blackfriars-Petersville Heritage Conservation District

## Appendix F – Heritage Attributes



1. The form, scale, and massing of a one-and-one-a-half storey, buff brick dwelling with an unusually broad center cross gable



2. T-plan of the building, with the main block (front) built in c.1865-1866 and the back wing built in c. 1854-1862



3. Pointed Gothic windows in the cross gable of the main block and in the gable of the back wing



4. Heavy finial and drop in the north gable



5. Chimney on the north gable, originally paired with a chimney on the south gable (not extant)



6. Replicated bargeboard, finial and drop in the front cross gable



7. Italianate-influenced segmental arches of the windows and entranceway



8. Exceptionally large (7 feet in height), two-over-two wood windows, with wood storm windows, on the main floor



9. Basement window openings



10. Front doorway with a pair of divided sidelights flanking a central door and a transom, with inset oculus



11. Fieldstone foundation walls

Note: Not every heritage attribute indicated above; image is considered indicative of heritage attributes