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| TO: | CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 |
| FROM: | JOHN M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER |
| SUBJECT: | NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE 275 THAMES STREET |
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RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning & City Planner, with the advice of the Heritage Planner, the following actions **BE TAKEN**:

- A. The municipal Council **BE REQUESTED** to issue a Notice of Intention to designate the property located at 275 Thames Street under Section 29.(1.1) of the Ontario Heritage Act as property of cultural heritage value or interest for the reasons attached; and,
- B. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

2013, April 23: Report to PEC - **Demolition Requests-275, 277 & 281 Thames Street**
2013, June 18: Report to PEC - **275, 277 & 281 Thames Street Status Update**

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on April 23, the Planning and Environment Committee considered the requests for the demolition of three properties listed on the Inventory of Heritage Resources, including the property at 275 Thames Street, identified as the former Fugitive Slave Chapel dating to 1848. Considerable interest was expressed with respect to the importance of this building and its connections to this aspect of London's early history. Planning and Environment Committee made several recommendations with respect to this matter to municipal council. The LACH had been consulted and made its views known at this meeting.

At its meeting on April 23 Municipal Council concurred with the PEC recommendations, specifically:

- it did not intend to designate the properties at 277 and 281 Thames Street;
- it deferred, with the owner's consent, the demolition request for 275 Thames Street pending the possible relocation of the building to another site;
- it noted that should the relocation to a new site not be possible, that Council would be requested to issue a notice of intent to designate the property as a property of cultural heritage value or interest with the draft Statement of Significance attached;
- it directed civic staff to initiate a zoning amendment to facilitate the relocation to another site;
- it directed civic administration to assist with the historical interpretation of the Thames Street neighbourhood, specifically marking the site of the building at 275 Thames; it was further noted that administration would advise Council if additional support would be needed to assist with a community driven archaeological assessment of these properties and that civic administration be directed to establish a source of financing to support an

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archaeological assessment on all three properties.

At its meeting on June 18, responding to direction to provide a status update, Planning and Environment Committee was advised by staff of the following matters with respect to the Thames Streets buildings:

- a source of funding was identified to assist with the conduct of the Stage 3 assessment and the initial aspects of the Stage 4 assessment.
- a potential site for the relocation of the Fugitive Slave Chapel had been identified as 432 Grey Street.
- civic staff was reviewing requirements related to zoning and other permits needed to facilitate the move.
- staff had been involved in one meeting related to interpretive signage noting that no source of funding for such signage had been identified as of that meeting.
- recommending that in order to facilitate the completion of the archaeological assessment, the Chief Building Official be advised that a demolition permit be issued for the buildings at 277 and 281 Thames Street and that the demolition be monitored by the licenced archaeologist. As well, it was recommended that the owner be allowed to remove later additions to 275 Thames Street to facilitate the archaeological assessment and the probable relocation of the building.

At its meeting on June 25, Council received the report to PEC for information but took no further actions.

The rezoning of 432 Grey Street has been approved by municipal Council at its meeting August 27, 2013 and is expected to be finalized by September 25.

Subsequent Events June- September

Archaeological activities continued as part of the Stage 4 Assessment. This work extended through the month of June and into early July with extensive assistance from volunteers working under the direction of the licenced archaeological firm. A substantial quantity of artefacts has been removed and is awaiting cleaning and analysis in the fall. The Stage 4 assessment has not been completed. It was noted that the final aspects of the site work would require the demolition of the two buildings to the north of 275 Thames Street and the removal of trees in the backyard to facilitate a final scraping of the topsoil to determine whether any significant archaeological features remained for assessment and mitigation. It was hoped that a sharing of equipment could be arranged between the owner and the archaeological firm as it was expected that a back hoe would be used for the demolitions of the adjacent buildings and that a special blade provided by the archaeologists could be used for the scraping required.

Extended delay in the removal of the building at 275 Thames Street has the potential to allow for deterioration of the structure especially with the removal of a portion of the rear of the building exposing some gaps. There is some uncertainty about the prospects of the Fugitive Slave Chapel Project Committee’s ability to complete its fundraising efforts in the near future to allow for the removal of the building to the new site.

Recommendations

There is a degree of uncertainty regarding the future of the former slave chapel building. These uncertainties include the completion of the archaeological assessment, the relocation of the building to its proposed new site, the long-term preservation of the building, and the plans for the interpretation of the site at 275 Thames Street and the former neighbourhood.

Therefore, it is recommended that Municipal Council issue a notice of its Intention to Designate the property at 275 Thames Street under Section 29 (Part IV) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a building of cultural heritage value or interest as identified in the attached Statement of Significance. (Appendix 2) This recommendation is consistent with the previous direction from Council in April. Such notice would serve as a signal of the municipality’s commitment to the

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preservation of the building. It should be noted that this draft statement may require editing in the event that the building is relocated at a future date to the Grey Street site. The LACH has been consulted on this draft statement and indicated its support for it at the April 23 meeting of the PEC.

Further, Municipal Council may wish to consider directing staff to review the current risks and barriers related to the long-term conservation of this building and its historic significance and report back to Council at a future date with respect to:

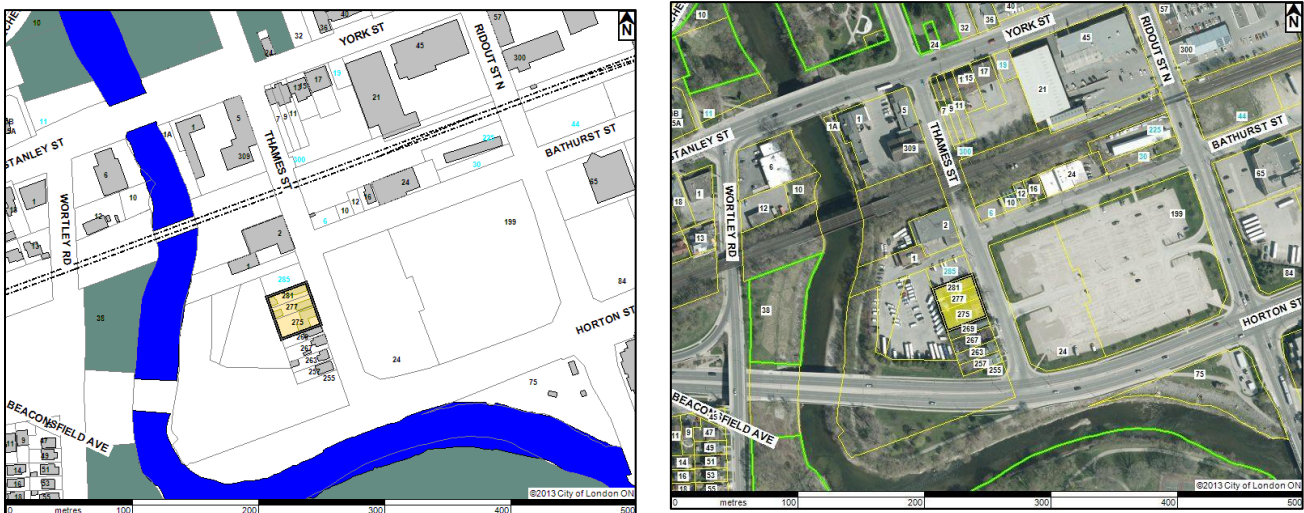
1. The completion of the archaeological work.
2. the removal by transport of the chapel building to its proposed new site.
3. securing and stabilizing the chapel on its new site.
4. interpreting the site at 275 Thames and the historic neighbourhood.
5. Identifying costs for the above matters and the current community contributions available to date to address the above.

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| PREPARED BY: | SUBMITTED BY: |
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| D. MENARD HERITAGE PLANNER POLICY PLANNING AND PROGRAMS | GREGG BARRETT, AICP MANAGER, POLICY PLANNING AND PROGRAMS |
| RECOMMENDED BY: | |
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| JOHN M. FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER | |

September 24, 2013
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 Attach: Appendix 1- Location Map; Appendix 2- Draft Statement of Significance
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Appendix 1- Location Map



Appendix 2- Draft Statement of Significance

Description of Property

The principal structure at 275 Thames Street is a one storey wood frame residential dwelling built c. 1848 in the vernacular style. It is located on the west side of Thames Street, Plan Nil, Part Lot 26 S/S Bathurst Street, in the City of London, County of Middlesex.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest.

The cultural heritage interest of the property and building at 275 Thames Street is based on its associations with the formative history of London. More specifically, the building is associated with the early development of the Black community in London, its later connections to the Underground Railway and to the emergence in London of a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, later renamed the British Methodist Episcopal Church.

From the information available, the building represents the former “Fugitive Slave Chapel”, probably constructed around 1848. The building and the adjacent area became a terminus of the Underground Railway with probable links to the activities of John Brown, the American anti-slavery advocate of the pre-Civil war period. There are specific references in early sources that suggest John Brown visited London on more than one occasion and it is possible the chapel was associated with these visits.

In 1869, the building at 275 Thames was sold to James Seale, a cooper. The British Methodist Episcopal Church branch relocated to its current location at 430 Grey Street. Subsequently, the building at 275 Thames Street was used for residential purposes. From 1944 to 2000 it was owned and occupied by members of the Mancari Family.

Description of Heritage Attributes

- Key heritage attributes that embody the heritage value of the building at 275 Thames Street include:
- its age dating to c. 1848
 - its plain expression of a vernacular cottage style in a wood framed structure
 - its central entrance balanced by two window openings on its front facade
 - its use as a chapel as a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church which, in 1856, became the British Methodist Episcopal Church.
 - its association with the later construction of Beth Emanuel British Methodist Church at 430 Grey Street (designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.)
 - its association with the Black community which took shape in the formative years of the town and city's early growth in this area of the City adjacent to the south branch of the Thames River.