
To: Mayor and Council

From: Sasha HelmKay, Deputy Clerk

Date: February 17, 2021

Subject: Midhurst Community Centre - Identification of Heritage Attributes

Report Highlights

- At the August 5, 2020 meeting, Council approved proceeding with formally designating the Midhurst Community Centre a heritage property under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA).
- The next step in the designation process is to issue the Notice of Intention to Designate and then present the designation by-law, which requires identification of the key heritage attributes of the Community Centre.
- The Heritage Advisory Committee was presented with a report at their November 24, 2020 meeting outlining potential heritage attributes of the Midhurst Community Centre for consideration.
- From this meeting the Committee has recommended to Council for approval four (4) heritage attributes to be included in the notice and designation by-law.

Recommendation

That the report from the Deputy Clerk regarding the Midhurst Community Centre - Identification of Heritage Attributes, dated February 17, 2021, be received; and,

That Council approve the following heritage attributes to be provided within the Notice of Intention to Designate and Heritage Designation By-law for the Midhurst Community Centre:

- 1) Vespra Township Vault/Safe located on the lower level
- 2) Original upstairs room layout
- 3) Original concrete foundation and exterior structure
- 4) Exterior concrete buttresses/abutments

Background

At the August 5, 2020 meeting, Council approved proceeding with the process to formally designate the Midhurst Community Centre a heritage property under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA).

Designation under the OHA recognizes and protects the heritage features of the property. It promotes awareness and ensures that alterations made to these properties are managed effectively respecting the heritage attributes, and it provides protection from demolition.

As outlined in the report, designating a property under section 29 of the OHA is essentially a six-step process:

- 1) Identifying the property
- 2) Researching and evaluating the property
- 3) Serving Notice of Intention to Designate
- 4) Passing and registering the heritage designation by-law
- 5) Listing the property on the municipal Heritage Register
- 6) Listing the property on the provincial Heritage Register

To move forward with the designation, the heritage attributes of the Midhurst Community Centre need to be identified. It is required under the OHA that these attributes are included in the Notice of Intention to Designate and form part of the heritage designation by-law. Within the August 5th report to Council, staff advised that the identification of the heritage attributes should be done with the assistance of the Heritage Advisory Committee.

What are Heritage Attributes?

Heritage attributes under the Ontario Heritage Act are identified as the particular features that should be protected for the future. For reference, below are some of the heritage attributes of various designated properties in Springwater:

- Fieldstone walls and chimneys
- Original double entry wood doors with stained glass panels and fixed transom
- Original door hardware
- Wrap around porch built with double columns in the Doric style
- Wood mouldings, double pocket doors, bay windows with stained glass
- Original room layout and building perimeter plan
- Exterior unpainted brick finish and accompanying wood trim
- Original door latches, hinges, switch plates and register grates

Heritage attributes can take many forms as can be seen above. In the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries Tool Kit – Designating Heritage Properties it states that:

The Description of Heritage Attributes lists the key attributes of the property. It is not an exhaustive account of the property's heritage attributes. The identification of heritage attributes is a selective process. Only those principal features or characteristics that together characterize the core heritage values of the property should be included.

The Heritage Advisory Committee at their September 22nd meeting requested that the Deputy Clerk research potential heritage attributes for designation and provide a report at the November meeting outlining this research for the Committee's discussion. The Deputy Clerk toured the Midhurst Community Centre on November 3, 2020 and took pictures of various potential heritage attributes. Focus was on features that were outlined in the historical information provided by community members and the Midhurst Community Recreation Association.

Conclusion

The Heritage Advisory Committee was presented with the heritage attributes report at their November 24, 2020 meeting. Members reviewed each attribute discussing their historical, contextual and design significance, and provided the following recommendation:

Resolution

Moved by: Gannon

Seconded by: Harris

That the Springwater Heritage Advisory Committee receive the report from the Deputy Clerk regarding the Midhurst Community Centre Identification of Heritage Attributes; and,

That the Committee recommend to Council that the following heritage attributes be approved and provided within the Notice of Intention to Designate and Heritage Designation By-law for the Midhurst Community Centre:

1. Vespra Township Vault/Safe located on the lower level
2. Original upstairs room layout
3. Original concrete foundation and exterior structure
4. Exterior concrete buttresses/abutments

Carried

Below is a summary of each of the proposed attributes recommended by the Heritage Committee for Council's approval.

Midhurst Community Centre Heritage Attributes

1) Vespra Township Vault/Safe

The Midhurst Community Centre was built in 1927 as the new Township Hall for the former Vespra Township. The grand opening was held on December 9th with the Hon. Chas. Stewart and the Hon. WM Finlayson providing opening speeches. Council meetings were held in the building from the time it was built to 1967. A key attribute that gives a hint into the hall's past, is the old vault/safe room used by Vespra Township. Today, this vault room is found in the supplies closet of the basement and has remained untouched. This is where important documents as well as the Township funds were kept. It was solidly built into the hall's structure out of cement, concrete and steel.



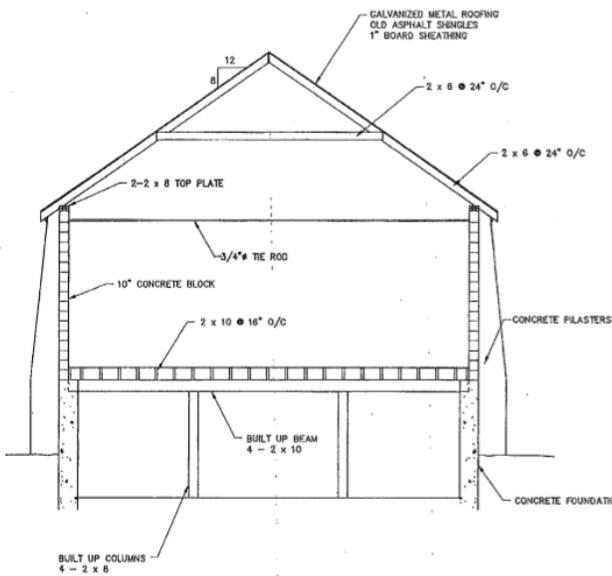
2) Original upstairs room layout

The layout of the upstairs area of the hall for the most part has remained unchanged since being built, except for the original stage that was removed in 1994. Although the stage is no longer present and minor updates have been made over the years including painting of the wainscoting, walls, and trim, the upstairs still reflects the original layout. Below is a current picture:



3) Original concrete foundation and exterior structure

Concrete was the main material that the community centre was built from, as identified in the Township of Vespra By-law 713 approving the works. The foundation and exterior of the structure has remained since being erected in 1927. The cement blocks were required to be properly laid with approved bond timber bedded in block every third course to receive strapping. Below is an original plan of the building materials and a current photo of the foundation and structure:



4) Exterior concrete buttresses/abutments

The concrete buttresses/abutments are original to the building when it was built in 1927. They are identified in the Township of Vespra By-law 713, approving the building of the new town hall in Midhurst. Below is an excerpt from the By-law identifying the abutments:

Two concrete abutments on either side of building to be 24" x 24" at base and tapered from top of basement wall to 24" x 8" at top. These abutments to be carried up and built in with the cement block so that the whole forms and integral part. *These abutments to run through to inside of wall and the ends of blocks bedded in the same top of abutment and wall will be 17 1/2" thick. Outside of abutments to be troweled smooth with float finish. These rods 1" diameter, with bolts, plates, & nuts to be provided, and to be fixed not more than 6" below plate.*



There are two buttresses on each side of the building and they are unique characteristics of the structure and literally, as well as figuratively, stand out.

Next Steps

Once Council has approved the heritage attributes the next step is issuing the Notice of Intention to Designate. A draft of this notice is attached as Appendix A. The notice will be published in the local newspaper outlining Council's intention to designate the Midhurst Community Centre and will include as legislated under the Ontario Heritage Act:

- The Description of Property so that it can be readily ascertained;
- The Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest which identifies the property's heritage significance;
- The Description of Heritage Attributes outlining the particular features that should be protected for the future; and,
- A statement that notice of objection to the designation must be filed with the municipality within 30 days after the date of publication of the newspaper notice.

If no objections have been filed, Council will be presented with the Designation By-law for approval which will then be registered on title for the property. Any future alterations to the heritage attributes of the Community Centre, or alterations that are likely to affect the attributes, will require Council approval as per the Ontario Heritage Act.

COVID-19 Impacts

When issuing the Notice of Intention to Designate staff will be mindful of current COVID-19 health restrictions and the public's ability to access information. As part of the Notice, it is important to include where the background information on the proposed designation (reports to Council) can be obtained. In addition to the Township website, hard copies would be available at the Administration Centre and the library branches for ease of access. With office closures and changing health restrictions, the Township website will be the main point for additional information on the Midhurst Community Centre designation. This has been included in the draft Notice attached as Appendix A. The alternative is members of the public can email the Clerk's Department to have a hard copy sent to them. Providing options is important to the designation process as it ensures transparency and accountability if for any reason an appeal is filed.

Financial Implications

For designating a property under the OHA there will be costs associated with placing notices in the local newspaper (intention to designate) and registering the designation by-law on title for the property. Council provided direction in 2020 to designate both the Midhurst Community Centre and the Anten Mills Community Centre. Therefore, funds were budgeted in 2021 to finalize the process.

It is also important to note that if the Township's intention to designate is appealed during the notice period, then there could be possible costs associated with the matter being heard at the Conservation Review Board.

Pillars of Commitment

The above initiative supports the following Strategic Pillars of Commitment:

- Community Development

Approvals

Submitted by: Sasha HelmKay, B.A., Dipl.M.A., Deputy Clerk

Reviewed by: Renée Ainsworth, AOMC, Clerk

Financial Implications Reviewed by: Jas Rattigan, CPA, CGA, Director of Finance

Approved by: Jeff Schmidt, CPA, CGA, Chief Administrative Officer

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Applicable Municipal Policy or Legislation

[Ontario Heritage Act](#)

Attachments

Appendix A – Draft Notice of Intention to Designate

Background or Relevant Reports on Subject

[2019-10-22 Heritage Advisory Committee Agenda - History of Midhurst Community Centre](#)

[2020-08-05 Report - Midhurst Community Centre Options for Heritage Recognition](#)

[2020-11-24 – Heritage Committee Report – Midhurst CC Heritage Attributes](#)