



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Laura Loney, Manager of Heritage Planning

DATE: October 13, 2023

REPORT NO.: PD-2023-069

SUBJECT: Amendment of Designating By-law No. 2010-0061 (Cedarvale) and Interpretation Opportunities

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. PD-2023-069, dated October 13, 2023, regarding Amendment of Designating By-law No. 2010-0061 (Cedarvale) and Interpretation Opportunities be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council state its intention to amend By-law 2010-0061 in accordance with Appendix D and in accordance with Section 30.1(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act;

AND FURTHER THAT, although the Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills is not required to provide written notice of the proposed amendment in accordance with Section 30.1(3) of the Ontario Heritage Act, public notice will be provided due to the site's significant cultural heritage value and associated stakeholder interest;

AND FURTHER THAT the amended Designating By-law for the property at 181-185 Main Street as contained within Appendix D of this report be brought forward to Council for adoption;

AND FURTHER THAT Council amend the original Designating By-law for the property at 181-185 Main Street, By-law 2010-0061, as contained within Appendix D of this report.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- ATA Architects Inc. was engaged by staff to prepare a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) for the Cedarvale Park to re-evaluate the property against Ontario Regulation 9/06 (O. Reg 9/06) criteria and to prepare an Interpretation Plan to provide further understanding and added value for the public benefit in future;
- The CHER's findings identify a lack of physical and design value for the Community Centre, and no direct association with the Armenian Genocide as previously understood;
- The 2020 Feasibility Study for the Cedarvale Community Centre also indicated that the retention of the current building would require significant investments in order to meet building code, AODA and essential maintenance needs to continue operating as a public building over the longer term. As a result, Council approved a decision to decommission the building by the end of the current decade (2030).
- ATA's Interpretation Plan for the site identifies several opportunities to interpret, preserve and commemorate the site's layered, complex, and important history;
- Staff have consulted with key stakeholders prior to bringing forward this report to Council requesting that the Designation By-law for the property be amended;
- Although public notice for an amendment of this nature is not required per the *Ontario Heritage Act* due to the nature of the amendment, staff will work with Communications to provide additional notice of the amendment to the public given the site's significant cultural heritage value and associated stakeholder interest; and,
- As part of future Master Plan work for the site, public consultation will be undertaken including potential interpretation opportunities for the site.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

Designation

In March 2010, Council considered Report No. CS-2010-0037, entitled "Designation of Cedarvale Park as an Associative Cultural Landscape, including Freeman-Bradley House, Cedarvale Community Centre and Cedarvale Cottage, under Section IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; 181 – 185 Main Street South, Georgetown, Halton Hills, legally described as Plan 1269 Part Block N, Town of Halton Hills, Regional Municipality of Halton (formerly Lot 17, Concession 9, Esquesing)". Council approved the recommendations within this report at its meeting and the Designation By-law was adopted by Council on May 25, 2010 (Appendix A).

Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER)

Staff engaged the services of ATA Architects to prepare a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) and an Interpretation Plan for the entirety of the Cedarvale Park property (Appendix B). The CHER provides a fulsome and in-depth assessment of the property's cultural heritage value considering findings and features of the property determined to contribute to its cultural heritage value as a designated property based on O. Reg 9/06 criteria, including physical and design value, historical and associative value, and contextual value.

The assessment of the cultural heritage value of the entire site, including the existing buildings, can be found in Appendix B on pages 61 and 69 of the document, respectively.

Cedarvale Community Centre Feasibility Study

A precursor to the recently completed Cedarvale CHER was a 2020 feasibility study that was completed by ATA Architects for Recreation and Parks to examine the Cedarvale Community Centre and Park. That study reported on the cultural heritage value of the building, the facility's accessibility shortcomings and its significant deficiencies compared to present day building code requirements. The report concluded that the existing Cedarvale Community Centre building had no historical association with the Armenian Genocide, as previously understood, and that it was not a material element to the important history of the site. The report also indicated that the retention of the current building would require significant investments in order to meet building code, AODA and maintenance needs (to continue operating as a public building over the longer term).

The report was presented to Council on June 15, 2020, (Report No. RP-2020-0013) in Closed Session and the recommendations within the report were approved, including a recommendation to decommission the building by the end of this decade (2030).

Amendment of the Designation By-law and Interpretation Opportunities

Staff concur with the findings of the ATA Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report and agree that the heritage attributes of Cedarvale Park, as identified through the re-evaluation of the entire site, should be updated within an amended Designation By-law. Although the change in designation is necessary, staff acknowledge the complexity of this decision and its potential impact on key stakeholders for the site.

The history and significance of Cedarvale Park is multi-faceted, and it is the opinion of staff that the proposed amendment of the Designation By-law for the park also provides an opportunity for the Town to communicate its significance to the public in a more meaningful and comprehensive way and in consultation with key stakeholders.

Recognizing the national significance of the property, as part of the long-term vision for its use, is essential in preserving its cultural heritage value and interpreting its layered history for future generations.

The Interpretation Plan prepared by ATA Architects Inc. (Appendix C) will serve to inform future plans for the site. The Interpretation Plan identifies several ways the site can be organized to include comprehensive opportunities for interpretation and commemoration.

Within the Interpretation Plan, ATA recommends several strategies ranging in cost and impact that reflect the core themes of the site: Lived Experiences, Connecting the Past and Understanding the Future; and Living with the Land. Interpretation options include, but are not limited to, a commemorative pavilion for gathering, education and adaptive re-use of the Community Centre's foundations, an interpretive walkway, monuments such as a bronze sculpture and interpretive signage, and significant programming and event opportunities for the site.

The benefits of the interpretation strategies proposed by ATA extend beyond appreciation of the site as a cultural heritage resource into tourism and educational opportunities for the community at large. Staff have identified potential opportunities and funding for inter-departmental collaboration for the interpretation of the site, including Culture, Economic Development and Tourism, and Recreation and Parks, and will continue to work internally to identify additional opportunities.

Consultation with Key Stakeholders

Staff acknowledge that the site holds significance for members of the Halton Hills community and have identified the Canadian-Armenian and United Church communities as key stakeholders. Staff have engaged with these key stakeholder communities to outline the findings of the Feasibility Study, CHER and identified physical and design, historical and associative, and contextual values of the Community Centre within the site and have advised of the intent to amend the Designating By-law for the property considering these findings.

Staff have been in contact with key stakeholders since 2019. In October 2021, Staff consulted with the United Church of Canada regarding the connection of the church with the former school. The church representatives did not advise of any concerns, however requested that they be included in future discussions for the site going forward. Additionally, on November 29, 2021, staff consulted with the representatives from the Armenian community to advise them of ATA's findings and to outline next steps. Since 2021, staff have continued discussions with representatives from the Armenian community, specifically the Armenian Society of Toronto, representatives of the Halton Peel Armenian Saturday School, and the St. Vartan Church Community.

Staff will continue to work with Communications staff on this matter and will ensure public notice regarding an amendment to the Designation By-law will be provided through the Town's website and local newspaper as appropriate.

The Interpretation Plan options and future opportunities for public art and interpretation will be integrated into the Master Plan for the site, which is proposed for 2027 in the 2024-2033 Capital forecast. The Master Plan will include public consultation to review options for the site. Implementation of the Interpretation Plan is anticipated to be in 2029 or later subject to future budget approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report aligns to the Town's Strategic plan recognizing the value to preserve, protect and promote our distinctive historical urban and rural character of Halton Hills through the conservation and promotion of our built heritage, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources.

This report also identifies shaping growth as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Key stakeholders within the Armenian community in Canada, representatives from the United Church of Canada, and Cedarvale Community Centre lease holders have been consulted and will continue to be consulted as part of the future Master Plan for the site. Additionally, staff will work with Communications to develop a Public Relations Strategy as part of the Master Plan process.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

On February 15, 2023, staff reviewed the details of the proposed amendments to the Designation By-law for 181-185 Main Street (Appendix D) with Heritage Halton Hills. The committee adopted the following recommendation:

THAT Heritage Halton Hills recommend Council amend the designation by-law for Cedarvale Park at 181-185 Main Street South as presented by staff and in accordance with the current understanding of the cultural heritage value of the property.

Staff from Planning & Development, Communications, Recreation & Parks, and Economic Development, Tourism & Culture have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

Aaron Matthews, Director of Facilities

Kevin Okimi, Director of Parks & Open Space

Paul Damaso, Commissioner of Recreation & Parks

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer