



Corporate Report

Clerk's Files

Heritage Advisory Committee

DEC 14 2010

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DATE: November 30, 2010

TO: Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: December 14, 2010

FROM: Paul A. Mitcham, P. Eng. MBA
Commissioner of Community Services

SUBJECT: **Request to Relocate the Britannia Farm House, Chisholm
Gardner Dunton House and Conover Barn (Britannia Farm)
within the Cultural Landscape known as Britannia Farm
5576 Hurontario Street
(Ward 5)**

RECOMMENDATION: That the request by the Peel District School Board to relocate the Britannia Farm House, Chisholm Gardner Dunton House and Conover Barn, which are significant heritage attributes within the Cultural Landscape known as the Britannia Farm located at 5576 Hurontario Street, be approved pending all required approvals from the City of Mississauga for any development applications filed on the lands on which these buildings currently are located; and compliance, to the satisfaction of the Director, Culture Division, with all conditions outlined in the report from the Commissioner of Community Services, dated November 30, 2010, including the de-designation of the Britannia Farm House and the Chisholm Gardner Dunton House during relocation and re-designation following relocation.

REPORT SUMMARY: The Peel District School Board (PDSB) submitted a site plan application SP10/57 W5, which includes a proposal to relocate Britannia Farm House, Chisholm Gardner Dunton House and the Conover Barn. These are significant heritage attributes within the Cultural Landscape known as the Britannia Farm.

The PDSB received approval from the Province of Ontario to lease 13 hectares (32 acres) at the southeast corner of the Britannia Farm for development. In keeping with the original use of the property, funds from the lease will provide needed revenues to support educational programs reflecting the agricultural and educational history of the area. The Britannia Farm House, Dunton House and Conover Barn are currently located on the lands proposed to be leased. The PDSB requires the use of the three heritage buildings for their programs and so proposes to move them out of the development site and relocate them 159 meters (522 feet) north of their current location towards the Britannia School and within the remaining farm area.

The Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) considers five options to address the most appropriate way to ensure the heritage value of these three buildings is protected for years to come. Four of the options consider maintaining all, or some, of the buildings at their current location. This will result in a significant separation of the heritage buildings from each other, the Britannia School and the remainder of the farm. In order to protect the entire Farm and ensure it remains as a Cultural Landscape, it is important these buildings not be separated. The HIS recommends relocating all three buildings in the same configuration as they currently stand, with the same set backs from Hurontario Street and with similar natural attributes. This will allow the existing Cultural Landscape to be maintained and the farm, as it is known today, to remain intact.

BACKGROUND:

King William IV granted the subject 81 hectare (200 acre) property to local school trustees in 1833 for educational purposes. (Location map is attached as Appendix 1.) The original deed stated that rents or profits from the site are to be used for the maintenance of the school and the advancement of education in Peel region. The trustees immediately began renting the property out as a farm to support the school.

In the early to mid 1800's the rear of the building known as the Britannia Farm House was built. The main (east) part of the House was likely built in the 1870's. The house was vacated in 1976 until it was renovated in 1989 by the PDSB.

In 1989 the PDSB approved a Master Plan to redevelop the Britannia Farm lands and buildings into a Heritage Agricultural Education Centre. The plan was to re-establish the lands as a functional farm and provide outreach program for students. In order to facilitate this, the Master Plan proposed the development of an enclave of farm buildings. As a result, two other heritage buildings were moved to the property, close to the Farm House. The Georgian style Dunton House was moved to the site in 1989. The House was moved from two farm lots north of the subject property. This house was originally designated in 1988, then redesignated in its current location and renovated form in 1992. Designation was due to its architectural and historical significance. The Conover Barn was moved to the site from Oakville in 1990 and is listed on the Heritage Register.

The PDSB used this site for educational programs until 1998 when funding for the programs was no longer available through the provincial government. As a result, the use of the farm for educational purposes slowly wound down.

The Britannia Farm House was designated in 2001 because of its historical, architectural and contextual significance. The contextual significance for this designation was listed as the relationship of the Britannia Farm House to the Dunton House and Conover Barn. The entire farm was added to the Heritage Register in 2005 as a Cultural Landscape. This was warranted due to its landscape environment, historical association, built environment and historical or archaeological interest and outstanding features. The farm has historical value both for its farming past as well as its importance to the education system in Peel over many years.

In January 2010, the Province of Ontario lifted the patent that limits the property to school uses, allowing 13 hectares (32 acres) of the 81 hectare (200 acre) farm land to be leased for development. However, the PDSB is still required to use funds from the lease for educational purposes. This reflects the original use of the property, dating back to the mid 1800's, when the land was rented for farming purposes to support the Britannia School. This is in keeping with the PDSB's 1989 Master Plan, which proposes the rental of the property to ensure the PDSB has the necessary funds to support educational programs at the Farm.

In the spring of 2010, the PDSB submitted Site Plan application SP-10/57 W5 for the relocation of three heritage buildings. As the Britannia Farm House, the Dunton House and Conover Barn are located within the area of the Site Plan, the application proposes moving the three buildings approximately 159 meters (522 feet) to the north of their current location. The current configuration of these buildings and the existing set backs from Hurontario Street will remain the same.

The PDSB submitted a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) attached as Appendix 2. Receipt of the completed relocation application was issued by staff on October 25, 2010. As per the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA), Section 34, City Council has 90 days to either approve the application; approve the application with conditions; or refuse the application. If City Council does not provide a decision within the 90 day time frame, the OHA stipulates that the non-decision will be deemed as approval of the application. An extension to this time frame can only occur if the owner of the property agrees in writing. The 90 day time frame on this application expires on January 22, 2011. In order to meet this deadline, City Council must make a final decision at the scheduled Council meeting of January 19, 2011. This requires the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) to make a recommendation at the meeting of December 14, 2010 advising City Council on whether or not to approve the relocation application. It is staff's understanding the PDSB is not prepared to provide a 90 day extension. The PDSB previously provided the City with a 90 day extension in order to make revisions to their HIS and now wish to proceed with a decision from the City.

COMMENTS:

It is not the intent of this report to comment on the decision by the provincial government to allow the PDSB to develop this land. Should City Council approve a development proposal for the land, heritage planning staff are concerned about how this may impact the heritage value of the three existing buildings located within the site. The PDSB submitted a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) which provides five (5) options with regards to these buildings.

There are two interrelated issues involved in considering the options put forward in the HIS. The first and most important is the impact of the options on the value of the heritage buildings and the Cultural

Landscape of which they are a part. The preferred solution is to strive to keep designated buildings in their original location, albeit two of the three buildings in question were relocated from two different sites. Additionally, as this is a Cultural Landscape, it is important to keep it intact.

The decision regarding the location of the buildings has a direct impact on the PDSB's ability to offer their proposed programs. Keeping the three buildings in their current location means they will be cut off from the remainder of the farm and the PDSB will not be able to provide the programs they envision. This greatly diminishes the need to lease the parcel of land as the purpose of the lease is to generate revenues is to offset program costs. Without the proposed programs occurring in these buildings, their use will be minimal. Lack of use combined with the PDSB's ability to only fund minimal maintenance of the buildings will severely impact the sustainability of these buildings and likely result in their eventual loss.

Although the development plan for these lands has not been considered by City Council, staff understand the success of the development will depend on full utilization of the 32 acre site, including the land surrounding the heritage buildings. Because of the location of these buildings within the site, it is anticipated new development will block the view of them from Hurontario as well as direct access to them. In addition, staff expect a new street or lane way will separate the development from the farm, further isolating the heritage buildings.

OPTIONS:

The first three options in the HIS contemplate keeping all three buildings in their current location. Staff believe this will result in a significant separation between these buildings and the rest of the farm, including the school, as outlined above. As a result the Cultural Landscape is diminished, as is the farm experience.

Option four provides for the Dunton House and the Conover Barn to be moved, with the Britannia Farm House remaining on its original site within the proposed development. This option leaves the Britannia Farm House completely isolated from the rest of the farm site. The justification for this option is that the Conover Barn is not designated and neither it, nor the Dunton House, is original to the site.

However, one of the reasons for designating the Britannia Farm House was its contextual relationship with the Dunton House and the Conover Barn. This relationship would be lost with this option. Again, as in the first three options, the Cultural Landscape is diminished, as is the farm experience.

Staff believe there is significant heritage value in keeping these three buildings together as part of the Cultural Landscape known as Britannia Farm. In the June 26, 2001 report to the Heritage Advisory Committee recommending the designation of the Britannia Farm House, staff commented that these buildings present "a sense of history of agriculture in the nineteenth century and that the components work together to create significant open space and commemorate the rural cultural landscape". As well, an article written about the farm site by Heritage Mississauga and available through their website states that "although the individual structures and landscape features have independent significance, the contextual setting of the entire property is also a significant heritage asset." Although, from a heritage perspective the first desire is to keep buildings in situ, it is clear that to do so in this instance will devalue the context that allows for this farm to be considered as a Cultural Landscape.

The HIS recommends the relocation of all three buildings 159 meters (522 feet) north of their current location. The current configuration of these buildings and the existing set backs from Hurontario Street will remain the same. This option allows the buildings to continue to be part of the Cultural Landscape, ensures their ongoing use and care and supports the agricultural and educational heritage programs proposed by the PDSB. It allows for the description of the site as outlined in the City's Cultural Landscape Inventory to remain and keeps one of the last agricultural landscapes in the city intact.

Staff believe allowing the relocation of these buildings does not set a precedent for allowing other heritage buildings to easily receive approval to be moved. The nature of the Britannia Farm and the covenants that govern its uses makes this situation unique. Furthermore the Farm will remain zoned as I-1 (Institutional) that permits only "Development in association with Britannia Farm".

Peel District School Board's Commitment to Use of the Buildings

With the general decline in farming throughout the entire country over the past number of years, the viability and therefore the use of this site as a farm was not sustainable and consequently discontinued. This resulted in the loss of revenues to support the maintenance and use of the site for educational purposes. This in turn resulted in deteriorating building conditions as confirmed by the HIS. The PDSB is not allowed to use tax dollars or able to receive grants to maintain the buildings or support programming on the farm.

To address this situation, the PDSB applied for, and received, permission from the provincial government to seek development proposals for a portion of the site. The purpose in doing this was to obtain the necessary revenues to support the maintenance of the farm buildings and reinstatement of heritage and agricultural programs related to this site.

Programming of the farm is contingent on access to the buildings in a contiguous and contained farm site. If this is not possible, the PDSB has indicated they cannot operate the planned heritage and agriculture programs envisioned in their master plan. If no programs operate from this site, there is limited use for the buildings and therefore there is no need for the PDSB to lease land for development. With the loss of this revenue stream, the funding for the upkeep of the buildings will not be available.

Continued use of heritage assets is important. The farm offers a unique educational opportunity for students. Staff believe keeping the existing buildings together on a farm site supports the historical context of the site, allows for future use of the farm and will ensure the future sustainability of the heritage assets.

Staff are confident the PDSB is committed to keeping the farm for historical and educational purposes. The PDSB previously committed to this use of the farm at public presentations on March 2, 2005 and April 10, 2008. In a press release dated April 10, 2008, the PDSB stated that all "heritage buildings and natural features of the farm will be preserved". In a letter dated June 24, 2010, the Chair of the PDSB provided written commitment to direct the proceeds of the

development “to the care, maintenance and repair of the heritage buildings and programs as well as to create an expanded outdoor education experience for the students of Peel.” (Appendix 3). Staff believe this demonstrates a clear intent on the part of the PDSB to maintain, protect, and utilize the farm and its buildings.

Support for the relocation of the three heritage buildings was also received from the Friends of the Britannia Schoolhouse (Appendix 4).

Conditions for Approval

In weighing all of these factors, staff believe the heritage value of this site is best protected by conserving the Cultural Landscape of the Britannia Farm. Consequently, staff support the HIS recommendation to relocate the three heritage buildings currently located on the proposed development site. However, staff do not support moving any of these buildings until such time as all approvals to proceed with the development of the southeast portion of the farm land are issued. Furthermore, as part of the approval to move these buildings, the following conditions must be met in a manner satisfactory to the Director, Culture Division:

- All approvals of development applications and approval of the site plan for the first building on the proposed development site must be obtained from the City of Mississauga in advance of relocation;
- An archaeological review in the proposed relocation site must be conducted and accepted by the Ministry of Culture prior to the relocation to ensure there is no disturbance of any significant resources;
- Resolution of all site plan matters regarding the relocation of the buildings to the satisfaction of the City of Mississauga, prior to the relocation occurring;
- A letter of credit, in an amount to be determined by the Director, Culture Division, must be provided to the City to cover the cost of replacing and/or restoring any damage that may occur during the move;

- A detailed plan outlining the full process to be used in moving the buildings and that reflects, at a minimum, the recommendations in the HIS, and the move be conducted by an experienced and credible heritage moving company, subject to City of Mississauga approval;
- Written agreement from the PDSB to the de-designation of the Britannia Farm House and the Dunton House for the duration of the move and re-designation following their relocation; and
- Submission of a heritage permit, including a conservation plan and letter of credit of an amount to be determined by the Director, Culture Division, for the repairs to the buildings as outlined, but not limited to those identified in the HIS, including appropriate plantings and reinstatement of the pond. The conservation plan will set out a schedule for conservation work, inspection, maintenance, costing, phases of rehabilitation and restoration work and a long-term maintenance plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: NIL

CONCLUSION:

The PDSB has submitted a site plan application, SP-10/57 W5. The application proposes moving the Britannia Farm House, Chisholm Gardner Dunton House and Conover Barn approximately 159 meters (522 feet) north of their current location. This request is based on the assumption that the southeast corner of the farm will be developed. The Heritage Impact Statement considers five options for these buildings, including keeping some or all of them in their current location.

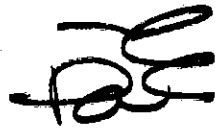
There is little doubt development will sever these buildings from the rest of the farm. These buildings are part of the Cultural Landscape that makes up the Britannia Farm. To isolate them from the rest of the Britannia Farm reduces the value of this heritage asset as they represent three of the four buildings on the site. Relocating the buildings with the same configuration, setbacks and natural elements around them maintains the intent of the Cultural Landscape, albeit in a reduced size. As well it allows the PDSB the opportunity to use the buildings for heritage and agricultural programs for students.

Although staff understand that the preferred solution is to leave heritage buildings in their original location, two of these buildings were moved to the farm about twenty years ago, and moving all three will allow the farming context of the buildings to remain intact.

If the Heritage Advisory Committee agrees with this recommendation and City approval is given for the development of the land and the conditions outlined in this report have been met by the PDSB, the necessary permits for moving the three buildings will be issued and the buildings de-designated for the move and re-designated after it.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix 1: Location map, Britannia Farm
- Appendix 2: Britannia Farm Heritage Impact Statement, October 19, 2010, Kearns Mancini Architects Inc.
- Appendix 3: Letter from Peel District School Board Chair, Janet McDougal, June 24, 2010
- Appendix 4: Letter from Friends of the Britannia Schoolhouse, Shirley Hoad, November 23, 2010



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Commissioner of Community Services

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