



NOTICE OF INTENTION TO AMEND DESIGNATION BYLAW 262 Main Street West

TAKE NOTICE that Grimsby Town Council, on February 10th, 2025, resolved to amend the Designation Bylaw for the property at 262 Main Street West under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The Reason of amending the heritage designation By-law 04-70 is to clarify the statement explaining the property's cultural heritage value or interest and to include the description of the property's heritage attributes, to change the legal description and to revise the by-law to make it consistent with the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act or the regulations, including revisions that would make a by-law passed before subsection 7 (6) of Schedule 11 to the *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* comes into force satisfy the requirements prescribed for the purposes of paragraph 2 of subsection 29 (8), if any. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 11, s. 8 (1).

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Nixon Hall is a unique example of the Gothic-Revival architectural style and is one of the largest and most decorated examples of this style within Grimsby. Nixon hall and its opulent architectural elements display the wealth of Dennis Nixon, who constructed the building in 1854. The structure has a "T" shaped floorplan, with a rear summer kitchen addition. A wooden framed garage was later added to the rear of the summer kitchen.

The building features heavy ornamentation that can be seen throughout the exterior and interior of the dwelling. Notable exterior features include the decorative barge boards, drop-roof finials, carved stone window lintels, groupings of windows with unique muntin bar configurations. The exterior construction of the dwelling features triple brick exterior walls ornamented in an English style brick bond with raised ribbon tuck pointing. The brick dwelling was built upon a locally quarried stone foundation with a decorative stone belting course. Nixon hall was later altered by the Nixon family around the turn of the century. The building was further decorated in the classical style, including a new porch. Some of the window and door openings were altered to be in keeping with the classical style.

The Gothic revival structure displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit. The exterior of the home is decorated in elaborate hand-carved woodwork, and hand-carved stone accents around the window and door openings on the front façade. These intricate details would have been custom designed and built by highly skilled craftsmen in the 1850's. The retention of these fine details is a testament to the quality of work and materials used at the time of construction.

The front façade of the building also features a raised ribbon tuck pointing detail on the brick mortar joints, this was another high-quality detail historically used to display the skills of the craftsman and the wealth of the property owner.

The property at 262 Main Street West has direct associations with themes and notable figures in Grimsby's history. The Gothic-revival structure was home to Dennis Nixon, a United Empire Loyalist Descendant. Dennis was the son of William Nixon, and grandson of Allan & Mary Nixon. The Nixons were one of the earliest families to arrive at the Forty in 1787 and made many significant contributions towards Grimsby's agricultural successes.

Dennis Nixon was the grandson of Allan and Mary (Moore) Nixon and was born in November of 1820. Dennis was married to Mary Catharine Pettit, daughter of Jonathan and Catherine (Beamer) Pettit. Dennis had inherited his father's portion of the family farm in 1852 and began construction of Nixon Hall, completed in 1854.

Dennis was an agriculturalist and a leading member of the Dominion Grange. Between 1854 and 1864 he was President of the Grimsby Township Agricultural Society, and in 1865 he served as Vice President of the Lincoln County Agricultural Society. In 1866 he served as Director of the Agricultural Association of Upper Canada for Lincoln County and was also made Vice President of the Upper Canadian Fruit Growers Association. During this time, his skills and knowledge of cattle and cattle breeding were drawn on to serve as a cattle and sheep judge at the Ontario Provincial Exhibitions from 1864 to 1866.

The Dominion Grange was a Canadian offshoot of a farmer's movement that started in the US in 1867 (cofounded by a member of the Department of Agriculture) moving to Canada (first Quebec) by 1872 and becoming the Dominion Grange in 1874. Dennis was a founding member of Grimsby Grange #131.

Dennis also pledged funds to assist the municipality with building its first Town Hall and grammar school and, during the Fenian Raid period of the late 1860's, Dennis headed local volunteer support services for affected militia and their families. In 1866 he petitioned the municipality to build a drill shed for the Militia.

He was active in conserving and celebrating Grimsby's history. For most of his life, he was a member of Grimsby's Loyal Canadian Society, one of Ontario's first historical groups and the forerunner of today's Grimsby Historical Society. His known positions with the Society include: serving on various committees throughout 1859; serving as Vice Chair of the Society in 1862; and serving on the Committee of Management in 1871. Dennis also founded and was President of the Grimsby Farmers Sportsman's Club in 1860.

During the second World War, Nixon Hall was used as a hostel to house Farmerettes. Farmerettes were high school and college aged girls from such places as Hamilton and Toronto. They were used as farm labour during both World Wars to help with farm chores since many young men, who normally did the farm work, were called off to war. By 1943, nearly 13,000 young women were enrolled as Farmerettes.

After the second World War, Nixon Hall was used for 14 months as a temporary hospital. This was due to the Deer Park hospital burning down. During this time over 1,000 patients were treated at Nixon Hall, and 288 babies were born there.

The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to the Loyalist Nixon family, the Farmerette movement, and the building's temporary use as a hospital and public building for the community. The building and property can also be associated with Grimsby's rich agricultural history. The house is one of the earliest remaining buildings along the Main Street West corridor, and at the time of construction the home was built as a farmhouse set on over one hundred acres.

Nixon Hall provides a greater understanding of how the Grimsby Community was obtaining health care during the 20th Century.

The dwelling also contributes to an understanding of the scale, mass and form of the dwellings that line the historic Main Street East corridor.

The structure does demonstrate the work of D Marsh and Sons who were notable builders within the community. In the spring of 1900, Nixon Hall had further ornamentation added to the exterior in the classical style, this included a wrap-around 110' verandah on the south and east facades, built by Daniel Marsh for Adolphus Pettit. This verandah was said to be "one of the finest in the region". While the verandah has been reduced from 110' over the years, the remaining intact section framing the front entrance continues to stand as a testament to the quality of materials and craftsmanship used during the verandah's construction 124 years ago.

Daniel and his wife, Margaret Borland moved their family to Grimsby Park in 1885. It was at this time that Daniel joined forces with E.W. Bowslaugh, who was hard at work constructing cottages and other buildings in the rapidly growing Methodist campground.

The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of Grimsby's Black communities. A primary source confirms that a Black man, referred to by the name Bass, was the highly skilled trades man that worked on the fine decorative plaster within the house, including ornate medallions, curved walls and crown moldings.

The surrounding historical events in the Niagara Region provides greater context that may lead to the further discovery of Bass's role in Grimsby's Black communities and his arrival into Canada. The time period that Bass was working on the plaster at Nixon Hall, coincides with the arrival of many Freedom Seekers to the Niagara Area. This may be Bass's story, or he may have come to Niagara much earlier, with the Loyalist following the American Revolution. Nixon Hall has the potential to provide insight into this important layer of Grimsby's history.

The character of Main Street West is comprised of various historic and highly decorated homes and are a testament to the prosperous farming industry that the Town of Grimsby experienced in the 1890s-1920s. Nixon Hall is one of the earliest surviving examples of these dwellings that contributed to the town's agricultural success. The building is also one of Grimsby's most intact examples of Gothic Revival architecture.

The house at 262 Main Street West is visually and historically linked to its surroundings as it contributes to the historical character and former agricultural use along this section of Main Street West.

The dwelling was constructed as a farmhouse in 1854 on a rural agricultural parcel. The bricks used in the building's construction were made on the property and fired in a kiln oven that was built for that purpose, the stone foundation and detailing also came from the nearby escarpment.

The property's use as an early Loyalist farm directly contributes to the prosperity of the town. During the 1890's Grimsby was one of the wealthiest agricultural communities in Ontario, Nixon Hall and the surrounding farmland directly contributed to the town's success.

HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES TO BE DESIGNATED

The Heritage Attributes to be designated at 262 Main Street West include:

- 2-storey structure in the Gothic Revival Style
- "T" shaped building footprint with a wooden garage addition
- Steeply pitched gable roof with intersecting dormers
- Wood shingle roofing
- Octagonal buff brick chimneys
- Decorative bargeboard on the gables
- Drop finials at the gable peaks (originally built with projecting king posts)
- Stone carved window and door lintels and sills, some featuring decorative carvings
- Wood windows and doors throughout, multiple styles of window muntin bar configurations
- Classical style porch
- Balcony over the porch roof with camel back railings and turned spindles
- Groupings of tapered Tuscan columns on paneled pedestal bases supporting the porch roof
- Front door entrance with stone surround, paneled front door, sidelights, and transom
- Mechanical doorbells
- Wood paneled bay window on the east façade
- Wooden porch over the east kitchen door
- Wooden portico over the west kitchen door supported by iron brackets
- Triple red-clay brick construction
- Soft lime mortar with tuck pointing detail
- Stone water table banding between the brick and stone foundation
- Stone foundation
- Setback from Main Street West

OBJECTIONS

Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than 30 days after the date of publication of the notice of intention in a newspaper. Objections should be directed to Victoria Steele, Town Clerk, Town Clerk, 160 Livingston Avenue, Grimsby ON, L3M 0J53.

MORE INFORMATION

Any inquiries may be directed to Bianca Verrecchia, Intermediate Heritage Planner at 905-945-9634 ext. 2122 or by email bverrecchia@grimsby.ca

Last date to file Notice of Objection: April 19th, 2025