

Denise Holmes, AMCT

From: Mary Jane T. Weir [mjtweir@hurontario.net]
Sent: Friday, January 29, 2010 1:32 PM
To: dholmes@melancthon township.ca
Subject: Fwd: presentation for discussion of demolition permit, Feb 4 mtg
Attachments: ACO Preservation Works! - Wier House.pdf

>Date: Fri, 29 Jan 2010 10:37:18 -0500
 >To: info@melancthon township.ca
 >From: "Mary Jane T. Weir" <mjtweir@hurontario.net>
 >Subject: presentation for discussion of demolition permit, Feb 4 mtg
 >Cc: dfawce@melancthon township.ca
 >Bcc:
 >X-Attachments: :Macintosh HD:403667:ACO Preservation Wor#1227F0.pdf:

>Dear Council:

>I would like to submit a draft report by John Rutledge, architect
 >for the Preservation Works! programme of the Architectural
 >Conservancy of Ontario done this past year on my property at 557417
 >Mulmur-Melancthon Townline. Although the house is on the Mulmur side
 >of the townline, what the report has to say has implications for
 >the history of Hornings Mills in Melancthon and it turns out, for
 >the history of building in Canada.

>I would direct Council's attention to the section entitled A Rare
 >and Unique Form of Construction, and to the Conclusions and
 >Appendices.

>When I bought the house in 1975, I knew from the roof pitch, cornice
 >returns and width of the front dormer and from the size of the log
 >joists in the basement that the house was early for his area, but I
 >did not consider it of architectural significance. I did not even
 >take pictures of the original house as it was when I bought it. It
 >is, as John Rutledge terms it, a "plain Jane". There was nothing
 >left of the old house in the interior, which had just been renovated
 >under the CHIP programme. My first winter in the house also taught
 >me that it was very solidly built, reacting not at all to sustained
 >>winds under 75mph. I did however find and employ a trained heritage
 >contractor in Michael Ash for all renovations, starting in 1989.
 >Even then, it was not until work was started on the front half of
 >the house in 2009 that both Michael and I knew that the house had
 >significance and I called in the ACO for a report. That draft report
 >is attached to this email.

>My points with respect to your discussion of a demolition bylaw for
 >Melancthon Township are as follows:

>You cannot tell from looking at a structure whether it is
 >historically significant or not. If I had followed the advice of the
 >real estate agent, of bank appraisers and of the majority of my
 >neighbours and visitors, which was to "tear it down and build
 >something decent!", that house would not exist today, and a

1/29/2010

FEB - 4 2010

>structure of significance to both Melancthon's history and to the
>story of building in Canada would have been lost. Council members
>cannot tell now what other significant structures have been lost in
>the demolition or burning down of houses and barns which has
>happened in the last 3 years.

>
>I would very much support not only the need for a demolition permit,
>but also a clause requiring that old barns be offered for salvage
>before they can be burned down. I would suggest a delay of at least
>a month - and local advertising to be required before a permit to
>burn is issued.

>
>I would further submit that Council form a Heritage Committee
>immediately to assess the built structures in Melancthon township
>and indicate those of historical or architectural significance. (see
>references in Appendix # 1). Heritage designations are not solely
>restrictive; there are grants available for restoration.

>
>I have lived in Dufferin County since 1964, and in that period of
>time I have seen the demolition of at least 5 Georgian stone homes,
>innumerable Victorian ones and many heritage barns. One has only to
>look at such villages as Alton, Elora, Fergus to see the value of
>preserving these structures and the benefits to the local community
>when suitable reuses are found. It isn't only historic house tours
>which draw people to an area; it is the sense that the community
>values their history and the sense of permanence that history gives
>to the community.

>
>Respectfully submitted,

>
>Mary Jane T. Weir

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>
>

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The evolution and history of concrete's mixture of lime, sand, and stones is now an extensive one in Ontario and beyond the scope of this report.

As houses were built in Ontario during the 1800's, many different types of construction using concrete and wood were attempted. The Wier House located at 557417 Mulmur – Melancthon Townline in Mulmur Township north of Shelburne, Ontario, originally built circa 1860 by the Postill family, is a rare and unique example of one of these attempts.

The original owners and builders of the Wier House built the house using a hybrid form of construction that balances Orson S. Fowler's "gravel wall for all" with traditional Yorkshire timber framed construction that was infilled with brick nogging, stones, masonry, or parged wattle and daub panels.

A RARE AND UNIQUE TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION

Historical information provided by Steve Brown, an archivist from the Dufferin County Museum indicates the following five points:

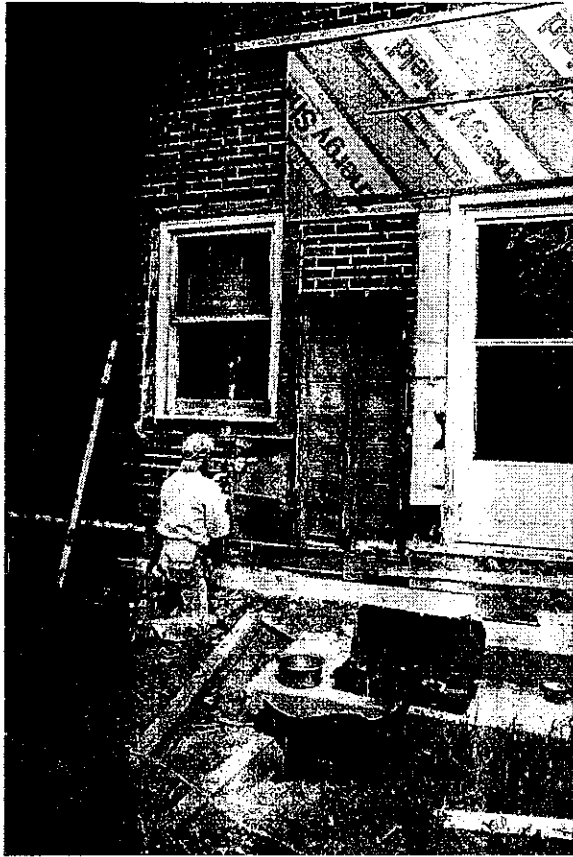
- it may be safe to say Stephen Postill caused the house to be built circa 1860.
- there may be a resemblance to the way this house is built with the way houses were built in the Yorkshire area of England, at that time.
- in the 1861 census Stephen and Sarah Postill gave their place of birth as East London in England.
- many settlers, originally put down new roots in the Dufferin County area, particularly around Honeywood which was first known as the Yorkshire Settlement.
- it is possible, that carpenters and tradesmen who were originally from Yorkshire in England, helped Stephen and Sarah Postill build the house, that is the subject of this report.

Traditional timber-framed buildings made of large, heavy, hand-hewn, wood timbers connected together using carved wood joints that are dovetailed, lapped, and / or pegged together were originally constructed and developed for centuries in the Yorkshire area, throughout England and Europe, long before Europeans came to Canada.

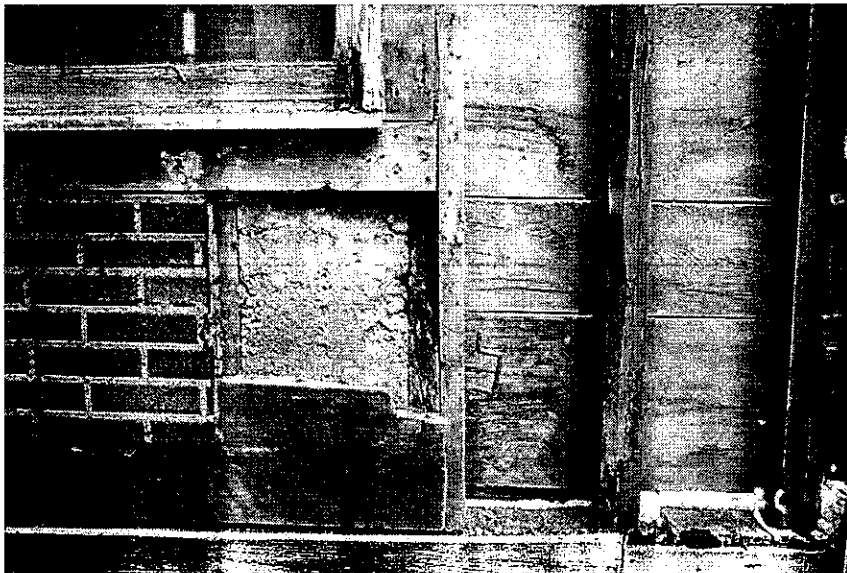
The assembled wooden framework of timber-framed buildings, structurally, hold up the building with many different types of material used between or over the timbers used to provide enclosure from the elements.

Historically in the Yorkshire area and throughout England, timber framed buildings had the spaces between the timbers filled in, with bricks and mortar which is referred to as nogging, stonework and mortar, various masonry mixtures, and parged wattle and daub panels, leaving the hand-hewn timber and their carved timber joinery exposed to view on the exterior and interior of the building.

Historically in North America, traditional heavy timber-framed construction evolved into wood frame or wood stud construction as we know it today. Many attempts and variations, over time, created many hybrid variations that combined heavy timber-framed construction with newer lighter weight wood framing.



One of the contractor's workman is shown here exposing the exterior walls' original mixture of lime, sand, and stones that was used to fill the spaces between the original wood studs. When this investigation occurred some of the original concrete had deteriorated to powder and was removed from the test hole. The vacant cavities of the test holes were refilled with batt insulation but the rest of the original exterior walls of the farmhouse remain with their original mixture of lime, sand, & stones, insitu, inside the wood framed walls. In the photo's foreground is one of the owner's many cats, being a "sidewalk superintendent".



This photo, of the test hole illustrates the farmhouse's original construction. From inside out one can see the horizontal wood boards on the inside of the wood studs, the vertical wood studs, the spaces between the wood studs, the mixture of lime, sand, & stones that fill the spaces between the wood studs, the horizontal wood boards on the outside of the wood studs, and "insul-brick" exterior siding.

CONCLUSIONS

A COMMENDATION

Mary Jane Wier is to be commended for the recent restoration and renovation work which was done to her home in Mulmer Township. This work was done with regards, in sync, historically, and stylistically with the original Gothic, Georgian, and Classical architectural styles of the house.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

The old saying, “do not judge a book by its cover”, is equally applicable when it comes to determining the historic value of old buildings. Old buildings are often covered with inappropriate or deteriorating layers of time that do not “at a glance” reveal the story of a building’s historic authenticity. All old buildings should be evaluated by qualified historians and professionals to establish their historic value, if there is any, before demolition is considered.

MUNICIPAL DESIGNATION

Based on the following **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value** which has been set in quotation marks.

“This unique and rare adaptation of poured concrete inside the extremely strong structural assembly of horizontal wood boards continuously over both sides of wood stud framing is and should be acknowledged as one of the integral increments of historic transformation of the traditional craft of timber-framing into contemporary wood stud frame construction.”

**It is recommended that
THE WIER HOUSE located at
557417 Mulmur-Melancthon Townline
north of Shelburne, Ontario
apply for and be granted
MUNICIPAL HISTORIC or MUNICIPAL HERITAGE DESIGNATION.**

Refer to the Appendix in this Report

APPENDIX # ONE

MUNICIPAL DESIGNATION

It is understood that the Municipality of the Township of Mulmur does not have a Municipal Heritage Committee.

With help from the Ontario Ministry of Culture, the Municipal Council of Mulmur Township can directly place Historic or Heritage Designation on a building or create a Municipal Heritage Committee for Mulmur Township to assist Council with placing Historic or Heritage Designation on a building.

Ministry of Culture for the Province of Ontario

900 Bay Street, 5th Floor, Mowat Building, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2

1-866-454-0049 www.culture.gov.on.ca info.mcl@ontario.ca

contact departments involved with Heritage Designations and Municipal Heritage Committees

contact Ministry of Culture to obtain the

ONTARIO HERITAGE TOOL KIT

The following contacts maybe able to help with information about Municipal Designation.

- **Shelburne Heritage Committee**

contact committee chair – Laurita Townsend Email: lodds@sympatico.ca

contact administrative assistant – Jennifer Willoughby

Municipality of Shelburne

203 Main Street East, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0

(519) 925-2600 www.townofshelburne.on.ca

- **Collingwood Heritage Committee**

Contact committee chair – Lindsay Cook

contact building official – Ron Martin Email: rmartin@collingwood.ca

Municipality of the Town of Collingwood

Owen Sound City Hall

808-2nd Avenue East, Owen Sound, On N4K 2H4

(519) 376-1440 Email: cityadmin@owensound.ca www.owensound.ca

- **Collingwood Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario**

contact president – Richard Lex

(705) 445-5764 Email: acocollingwood@gmail.com www.heritagecollingwood.ca

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**A LANDMARK
CAN BE
SO MUCH MORE
THAN LANDFILL!**

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for information about the
Myths and Facts surrounding Demolition
visit www.hips.com/ACO

•
for information about
Old and Historic Buildings
in Ontario contact
THE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY OF ONTARIO
10 Adelaide Street East, Suite 403
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3
416-367-8073 1-877-264-8937
email: aco@on.aibn.com
website arconserv.ca

APPENDIX # TWO

EIGHT GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The following guiding principles are statements prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Recreation regarding the conservation of historic properties and are based on international charters which have been established over the century. These principles provide the basis for all decisions concerning good practice in architectural conservation around the world. Principles explain the “why” of every conservation activity and apply to all heritage properties and their surroundings.

1. **RESPECT FOR DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE:**
Do not base restoration on conjecture.
Conservation work should be based on historic documentation such as historic photographs, drawings, and physical evidence.
2. **RESPECT FOR ORIGINAL LOCATION:**
Do not move buildings unless there is no other means to save them.
Site is an integral component of a building. Change in site diminishes heritage value considerably.
3. **RESPECT FOR HISTORIC MATERIALS:**
Repair / conserve – rather than replace building materials and finishes, except where absolutely necessary. Minimal intervention maintains the historic content of the resource.
4. **RESPECT FOR ORIGINAL FABRIC:**
Repair with like materials. Repair to return the resource to its prior condition, without altering its integrity.
5. **RESPECT FOR THE BUILDING’S HISTORY:**
Do not restore on period at the expense of another period. Do not destroy later additions to a building solely to restore to a single time period.
6. **REVERSIBILITY:**
Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique. e.g. When a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are rubbled, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.
7. **LEGIBILITY:**
New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.
8. **MAINTAINANCE:**
With continuous care, future restoration will not be necessary. With regular upkeep, major conservation projects and their high costs can be avoided.

APPENDIX # THREE

“PRESERVATION WORKS!”

Buying an Older Home? Restoring A Heritage Building? Concerned About A Threatened Structure?

Is it structurally sound? Do you need information on repair, upgrade, and restoration approaches? Interested in an architectural description and evaluation? Interested in its history?

Contact the **Architectural Conservancy of Ontario ACO** for professional advice. For more than 30 years the ACO has been providing – for a very nominal fee – preliminary advice on a wide range of heritage conservation concerns.

We match clients with one of our **Preservation Works!** Professionals – conservation architects, engineers, landscape architects, archaeologists and historians – who will make a site visit to investigate, and deliver a brief but significant preliminary written report.

Preservation Works! is available to private residential and commercial property owners, museums, historical societies, government departments, municipal heritage committees, and citizens’ groups across Ontario.

A service fee is charged to pay for administration costs. In addition, the client reimburses the project consultant for any of his or her out-of-pocket expenses.

To request a **Preservation Works!** professional contact:

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario ACO

10 Adelaide Street East, Suite 204

Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3 telephone 416-367-8075 fax 416-367-8630

For further information about the ACO’s programs, activities and events,
call 416-367-8075, email us at aco@on.aibn.com or visit us at www.hips.com/aco.

Before the ACO started the Preservation Works! Program, these evaluations were known as the ACO Advisory Board Reports. The objectives of the Advisory Board of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario state, in part:

“The Board will respond to requests for appraisal from within the Conservancy and from outside... An appraisal should be duly undertaken by the Conservancy where it becomes aware of a significant property that is vulnerable.”

“The Board will appraise built structures, their environment, and places of natural beauty in Ontario. A structure will be appraised for its architectural significance, physical condition and its role, if any, as part of a group of structures, a streetscape, a larger area, or its place in history...”

“An appraisal will be general rather than exhaustive. A brief written report will be made which may include suggestive uses for the property, structural modifications and necessary repairs, but detailed recommendations respecting design or structure will not be given...”

The objective of the ACO Advisory Board Reports continues to be the objectives of the ACO Preservation Works! Reports.

Provision of cost estimates for projects are not included in the scope of work of these “Preservation Works!” reports.