

Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register - 19 Plymbridge Crescent

Date: February 16, 2021

To: Toronto Preservation Board
North York Community Council

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: Don Valley West - Ward 15

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council include the property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value.

The subject property is east of Yonge Street and south of York Mills Road, situated on the east side of Plymbridge Crescent, between Plymbridge Road and Brookfield Road in the Hogg's Hollow neighbourhood. It contains a two storey stucco-clad house constructed in c.1912 as stables and designed in the Tudor Revival style. The building is a rare and unique example of a converted stables building within the neighbourhood, and is a remnant of the former Boulton family estate "The Hollow", representing an early period in the historical land development of the area.

The Boulton Estate Stables (c.1912) is believed to have been designed by the architect Samuel Hamilton Townsend (1856-1940), who is credited with the design of the main house, located at 59 Plymbridge Road. S. H. Townsend was a prolific architectural designer in Toronto who specialized in the design of large residences and estates for wealthy Torontonians, particularly within the Rosedale, Chestnut Park and Annex neighbourhoods. In addition to designing the Boulton Estate in Hogg's Hollow, Townsend is credited with the design of the family's previous home on Crescent Road.

A Heritage Property Nomination was submitted to Heritage Planning in March 2013 on behalf of the former property owner. City staff undertook further research and evaluation and determined that the property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

A Committee of Adjustment Application for a Minor Variance seeking to replace the existing structure with a new one was submitted on November 30, 2020 and is currently under review. A hearing is scheduled for February 25, 2021.

Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained in accordance with the Official Plan Heritage Policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council include the property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in accordance with the Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion), attached as Attachment 3 to the report (February 16, 2021) from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, City Planning.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history.

BACKGROUND

Heritage Planning Framework

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

Good planning within the provincial and municipal policy framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance, and ensures the conservation of these resources are to be balanced with other provincial interests. Heritage resources may include buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community.

The Planning Act establishes the foundation for land use planning in Ontario, describing how land can be controlled and by whom. Section 2 of the Planning Act identifies

heritage conservation as a matter of provincial interest and directs that municipalities shall have regard to the conservation of features of significant architectural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest. Heritage conservation contributes to other matters of provincial interest, including the promotion of built form that is well-designed, and that encourages a sense of place.

The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters shall conform to the Growth Plan and shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, both of which position heritage as a key component in supporting key provincial principles and interests.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on land use planning in Ontario and is to be used by municipalities in the development of their official plans and to guide and inform decisions on planning matters, which shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The Provincial Policy Statement articulates how and why heritage conservation is a component of good planning, explicitly requiring the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources, alongside the pursuit of other provincial interests. The Provincial Policy Statement does so by linking heritage conservation to key policy directives, including building strong healthy communities, the wise use and management of resources, and protecting health and safety.

Section 1.1 Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development states that long-term economic prosperity is supported by, among other considerations, the promotion of well-designed built form and cultural planning, and the conservation of features that help define character. Section 2.6 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology subsequently directs that "significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved". Through the definition of conserved, built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscape and protected heritage property, the Provincial Policy Statement identifies the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage conservation will be implemented.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) builds on the Provincial Policy Statement to establish a land use planning framework that supports complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment and social equity. Section 1.2.1 Guiding Principles states that policies in the plan seek to, among other principles, "conserve and promote cultural heritage resources to support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Metis communities". Cultural heritage resources are understood as being irreplaceable, and are significant features that provide people with a sense of place. Section 4.2.7 Cultural Heritage Resources directs that cultural heritage resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas.

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/place-grow-growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe>

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeology, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through listing on the City's Heritage Register, designation of individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or designation of districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. Council must consult with its municipal heritage committee before a property that has not been designated under Part IV is added or removed from the municipal register.

The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

The City of Toronto's Official Plan contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. Indicating the integral role that heritage conservation plays in successful city-building, Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan states that, "Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable City that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the City."

Policy 3.1.5.2 states that properties of potential cultural heritage value or interest "will be identified and evaluated to determine their cultural heritage value or interest consistent with provincial regulations, where applicable, and will include the consideration of cultural heritage values including design or physical value, historical or associative value and contextual value. The evaluation of cultural heritage value of a Heritage Conservation District may also consider social or community value and natural or scientific value. The contributions of Toronto's diverse cultures will be considered in determining the cultural heritage value of properties on the Heritage Register."

Policy 3.1.5.3 states that heritage properties "will be protected by being designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, and/or included on the Heritage Register". This includes designation under Parts IV or V of the OHA, as well as listing under Section 27 of the Act.

Policy 3.1.5.4 states that heritage resources on the City's Heritage Register "will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council."

Policy 3.1.5.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.5.26 states that, when new construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register does occur, it will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and will mitigate visual and physical impacts on it. Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) are required for development applications that affect listed and designated properties. An HIA shall be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

<https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

The Ontario Heritage Toolkit also provides guidance on the listing of non-designated properties on the Heritage Register. The Tool Kit provides direction on the purpose of listing heritage properties, and explains how the Provincial Policy Statement and the Ontario Heritage Act provide a framework for how listed properties fit within the land use planning system.

https://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/heritage/heritage_toolkit.shtml

COMMENTS

Identifying properties of cultural heritage value or interest is an essential part of a municipality's role in heritage conservation. Including non-designated properties in the municipal register is a means to identify properties that have cultural heritage value or interest to the community.

Descriptive Listings

Descriptive listings are prepared using a method by which properties are identified and recommended for inclusion on the Heritage Register. This approach to listing provides sufficient information to meet the requirements of Section 27 of the OHA to list a non-designated property on the Heritage Register and satisfies direction found within the City's Official Plan to make use of Provincial criteria when adding properties to the Register.

A statement has been prepared explaining why the property is believed to have cultural heritage value and which includes a description of the property's design and appearance, its primary address, estimated date of construction, and pertinent historical information. The information provided within the Reasons for Inclusion on the City's Heritage Register will help to specify those features and attributes that may warrant conservation should the property be subject to development and/or further evaluated and determined to merit designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

A location map and photographs (Attachment 1) are attached.

Located on the east side of Plymbridge Crescent, between Plymbridge Road and Brookside Road, the property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent is valued as a rare and unique example of an early 20th century stables building type designed in the Tudor Revival style, later converted for residential use and located within the Hogg's Hollow neighbourhood. The property is one of the earliest surviving buildings built within the area, and is a remnant of the former Boulton Estate ("The Hollow"), which occupied much of the Hogg's Hollow area through the first half of the 20th century. The property is significant as purpose-built and subsequently adaptively reused stables within Toronto, constructed during a period when transportation modes were rapidly changing, and horse-drawn carriages were being subsumed by the automobile.

The Boulton Estate Stables was constructed in 1912 to serve as the stables for the Boulton family. The building originally contained horse stalls, a tack room and groom's quarters, and was sited to the west of the main house located at present-day 59 Plymbridge Road (figure 2). The structure retains elements reflective of the stables building type in spite of later alterations, including a wide, planar façade (which would have been punctuated by stable doors), a general rectangular plan, and a cross gable roof, comprised of a low-pitched roof extending the length of the building and a steeply-pitched cross gable bisecting the main structure and enclosing the second storey. The structure's angled orientation towards Plymbridge Crescent reflects its construction prior to the subdivision of the area, and the more uniform pattern of suburban residential development that proceeded.

William "Thumby" Mulock Boulton (1873-1912) purchased part of Lot 9 within Concession 1 East of Yonge Street from the estate of Daniel Brooke in 1909 for the purpose of constructing a home for his young family. W. M. Boulton was a prominent and successful lawyer in Toronto who formed a partnership with Frank Denton and Herbert Dunn (Denton, Dunn & Boulton). Boulton would go on to make his fortune during the Cobalt silver rush, moving to the Town of Cobalt near Lake Timiskaming on the Ontario-Quebec border and developing a specialization in mining law.

In 1899 W. M. Boulton married Margaret Amy Douglas (1872-1952), and between 1902 and 1911 the couple had six children, all of whom survived to adulthood. Following their marriage the couple moved to 27 Crescent Road in Rosedale, a house designed by architect Samuel Hamilton Townsend (1856-1940), who had designed a number of houses for members of the Boulton family. After William's move to practice law in Cobalt, Margaret and the children relocated to live with her family in England, remaining there following William's acquisition of the York Mills property and during construction of the estate. Tragically, William died at the age of 39 in 1912 while in Toronto, and it wasn't until 1913 that Margaret and the children returned to move into the Hollow.

Margaret raised her young family at the Hollow through the 1910s and 20s, and assumed a well-respected position within the Toronto and York Mills communities as a host and benefactor. The family estate was frequently the site of social and charitable events, including a field day for wounded soldiers returning from World War One in 1916, numerous fundraisers for St. John's Anglican Church, and in 1931 a masquerade ball in aid of the Russian Orthodox Church in Toronto and hosted by Prince and Princess Nakashidze.

In 1925 Margaret began subdividing the estate for the purposes of facilitating residential development, including the filing of Plan 2478 which included the subject property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent. Residential development within Hogg's Hollow was gradual, however, and it wasn't until after 1945 that the majority of the lots were sold and developed. In addition to the gradual sale of residential building lots within the estate's grounds, Margaret also began to rent out the estate for private events and as a guest house. Renaming the property "Donwoods House", the property was a frequent location for weddings and fundraisers, while her son, Charles Douglas Boulton, managed the guest house.

In 1942 Margaret sold the subject property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent to James and Marjorie Leslie, who repurposed the former stables for residential use. Subsequent owners have undertaken various additions and alterations to the main structure, while maintaining the basic integrity of the structure as a former stables.

Prior to Margaret's death at the age of 80 in 1952, the main house at 59 Plymbridge Road was converted for use as the Waycroft private school. In 1955 the house was sold to the Central Jewish Institute, which relocated the Hillcrest Progressive School to the property and which continues to operate out of the house.

In 2013 a heritage property nomination form was submitted for the property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent by a member of the community on behalf of a previous owner.

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the Boulton Estate Stables (1912), located at 19 Plymbridge Crescent, is significant because it is a rare and unique example of the stables building type and an important remnant of the former Boulton Estate, and has cultural heritage value under all three categories of design, association and context.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Location Map and Photographs

Attachment 2 - List of Research Sources

Attachment 3 - Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion) - 19 Plymbridge Crescent

LOCATION MAP AND PHOTOGRAPHS:
19 PLYMBRIDGE CRESCENT



Figure 1. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown. The arrow marks the location of the property. (City of Toronto mapping)

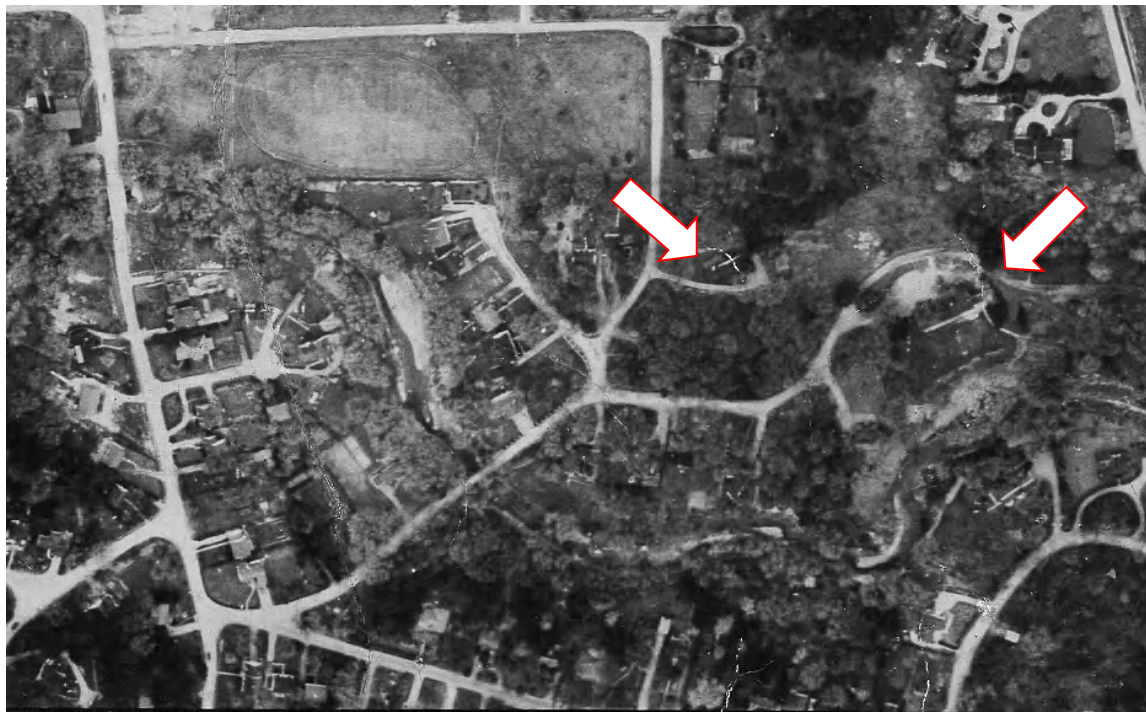


Figure 2. Historical aerial photograph showing (L) the subject property shortly after its conversion to residential use, and the former driveway configuration to the south of the building. The main house (R) located on Plymbridge Road is also visible. (City of Toronto Aerial Photograph, 1947)



Figure 3. View of the northwest façade of 19 Plymbridge Crescent (2013, nomination package)



THE FAMILY OF MRS. AMY (DOUGLAS) BOULTBEE, AND
THE FAMILY OF HER PARENTS, MR. & MRS. CHARLES DOUGLAS

Figure 4. Photograph of Margaret Amy (Douglas) Boulton (centre right) and family, c.1910s. (The History of the Boulton Family, access online)



Figure 5. 59 Plymbridge Road, formerly the main house of the Boulton Estate. (Google Maps 2019)



Figure 6. 19 Plymbridge Crescent, northwest façade (real estate listing, 2019)

LIST OF RESEARCH SOURCES:
19 PLYMBRIDGE CRESCENT

ATTACHMENT 2

Archival Sources

- Toronto Building Records - North District
- Goad's Atlas Maps, 1884-1924
- City of Toronto Directories, 1939-1950
- City of Toronto Aerial Photography, 1947-1955
- Globe and Mail Newspaper Archives
- Toronto Star Newspaper Archives
- The Toronto World Newspaper Archives
- Engineering and Contract Record, 1911, v.25, n.18. Internet Archive.

Secondary Sources

- Townsend, Samuel Hamilton. Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950.
- 19 Plymbridge Crescent. Architectural Index for Ontario, Toronto Public Library.
- 19 Plymbridge Crescent Heritage Property Nomination Form. 2013.



View of the northwest façade of 19 Plymbridge Crescent (nomination form, 2013)

DESCRIPTION:

19 PLYMBRIDGE CRESCENT (BOULTBEE ESTATE STABLES)	
ADDRESS	19 Plymbridge Crescent
WARD	Don Valley West
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	PLAN 2478 LOTS 15 & 16 PT LOTS 18 TO 21
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	BRIDLE PATH-SUNNYBROOK-YORK MILLS
HISTORICAL NAME	N/A
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1912
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Samuel Hamilton Townsend (architect)
RECORDER	Heritage Planning - Alex Corey
REPORT DATE	February 16, 2021

19 Plymbridge Crescent - Reasons for Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register:

Located on the east side of Plymbridge Crescent within the Hogg's Hollow neighbourhood, the property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent is valued for its association with William Mulock Boulton and Margaret Amy (Douglas) Boulton, who constructed a family estate in 1912 called "The Hollow" and later "Donwoods House" to the designs of architect Samuel Hamilton Townsend and who resided in the valley through the first half of the 20th century. The structure at 19 Plymbridge Crescent served as the estate's stables, consisting of stalls, a tack room and groom's quarters, and remained in the Boulton family's ownership until being sold in 1942 and renovated for use as a private residence.

The Boulton Estate Stables is a significant remnant of "the Hollow", which was a well-known estate within the York Mills community and the frequent site of social and charity events hosted by Margaret Amy Boulton. After her husband's premature death in 1912, Margaret raised her six children at the Hollow through the first three decades of the 20th century. Beginning in 1925 Margaret gradually subdivided the property for residential development, establishing the present-day garden suburb context of the Hogg's Hollow neighbourhood defined by curvilinear streets, a mature tree canopy and a natural landscape setting. Margaret retained ownership of the stables until 1942, at which point it was sold and converted for private residential use. The converted stables was one of the earlier privately-owned houses within the former Boulton Estate property, with subsequent development gradually infilling the remainder of the former estate grounds through the mid-20th century.

The property at 19 Plymbridge Crescent is a rare and unique example of an early 20th century stables building type, a period during which changes in modes of transportation saw the transition from primarily horse-drawn carriages to automobiles. Features emblematic of the stables building type including the wide, planar northwest façade, the general rectangular plan, and the cross gable roof, comprised of a low-pitched single story roof extending the length of the building and a steeply-pitched gable bisecting the main structure and housing the second story. The structure's angled orientation towards Plymbridge Crescent reflects its date of construction prior to the subdivision of the area, and the more uniform pattern of suburban residential development that followed. Exterior additions to the building include a single storey addition to the northwest façade, a two-storey extension towards the north, and the construction of a detached garage at the southwest corner of the structure.