

**Supplementary to August 8, 2013
Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment
170 and 178 Elizabeth Street
Guelph, ON**



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At the September 9th meeting of Heritage Guelph, the *Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment* for 170 and 178 Elizabeth Street, Guelph was discussed. The draft minutes of that meeting recorded:

Doug Haines described some additional observations on the condition of the houses based on the site visit. Doug advised that while 170 Elizabeth St does not contain many interior features of heritage value he added that 178 Elizabeth St has coupled windows which are not common, and that although it has substantial water damage, in his opinion, it doesn't appear to have structural damage.

Committee members commented that although the CRHIA notes that the associated value is minor some members feel that the property tells a significant story in the development of Italian families and business in the Ward and that they would like to see the house at 178 Elizabeth restored and retained. There was discussion on the potential for development in the railway setback and it was clarified that there could be no habitable space created within the setback.

This supplement to the *Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment* has been prepared to provide further information to verify the recommendation in the August 8th *Assessment* for 178 Elizabeth Street. That recommendation was 'salvage mitigation' be employed by "recognizing the site through an interpretive plaque in nearby Franchetto Park coupled with a photographic inventory of the houses and any historic photos of the Franchetto era that can be found."



Figure 1

front (south) elevation

The front elevation (Figure 1) of this c. 1889 house is symmetrical with a small gable complete with gothic window, paired (coupled) windows with rounded buff brick headers, flanking a central door with glazed transom. The original red and buff brick has been painted white and is spalling from water damage in an number of areas. (Figures 2, 3 & 4)



Figure 2 east facade



Figure 3 upper front facade



Figure 4 west facade

The interior has been altered and is in very poor condition, having been without heat for a number of years. Water pipes froze and there is considerable water damage and mould throughout. (Figures 5 & 6).



Figure 5 mould on newel post



Figure 6 mould on peeling wallpaper

A structural report by Tacoma Engineers, October 15, 2013 provides detail on the structural condition of the house. The report does not support the Committee member's suggestion that "*although it has substantial water damage,, it doesn't appear to have structural damage*".

With respect to the painted brick, there has been a suggestion that chemical means can be used to strip the paint. While this is feasible (and the author has first hand experience with this method on 2 similar buildings), it is not a particularly environmentally-friendly procedure and requires that the brick be in good condition. 178 Elizabeth Street was painted because the brick had spalled and its glaze was already compromised. Paint stripping by any method will not repair the spalled glaze and will exacerbate the situation further.

Significance

The August 8th HIA noted that 178 Elizabeth Street is listed on the *City of Guelph Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties, Non-Designated Properties* with a suggested build date of *c. 1875* whereas the home was build *c. 1889*. It is a fairly ordinary example of a late 19th century vernacular Guelph home.

It does not exhibit *design value or physical value* because it is not rare, unique, or a representative early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method, nor does it display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

The Committee member's assertion that "*178 Elizabeth St has coupled windows which are not common*" is not factual. The author has found over 100 similar coupled windows in the City, (including 6 within sight of his own home), most dating from the 1890s. Coupled windows of this type are very common in Guelph.

178 Elizabeth Street was purchased by Peter and Bruno Franchetto in 1957 to expand their greenhouse operation. The HIA noted that the house has minor *historical value or associative value* because it has a 9 year association (1957 - 1966) with a market gardening family that could be considered significant to the community. It does not yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture as the market gardening / greenhouse environs is gone (the house was never related to the business, but was purchased to garner land at the rear for an expansion of the greenhouses, and rented to tenants thereafter). It does not demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community.

It is not important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area (Elizabeth Street is a potpourri of building styles, eras and land uses). It has a modicum of *contextual value* because it remains physically linked

to its surroundings. It is not a landmark.

Considering that the term “significant” means resources valued for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people ¹, perhaps the significance criterion best met by this houses is that related to the Franchetto family who conducted a market gardening / greenhouse business from the premises for 9 years. The Franchetto family has been honoured with the naming of a park (1973) and a street located on their former market garden on Grange Street nearby.

Development potential

Development of this property is compromised by a required 100' setback from the railway right-of-way and a north-south easement through the property, limiting the potential significantly as was noted in the HIA.

Conservation of the house is not considered economically feasible. The house at 178 Elizabeth Street is very small, with small rooms and would not be marketable even if it were restored. The storey and a half configuration leaves very little ceiling height on the 2nd floor. Restored, this house would not be easily marketed, especially considering the expense that would be required to replace much of the masonry assuming that quality matching brick could be found, to replace structural members within the building, to replace all windows including the sills, to gut the interior and completely rebuild and refurbish it.

178 Elizabeth Street is not significant from an architectural or contextual point of view.

¹ *Ibid*