
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDP-07-2024 Heritage Property Alteration Request - Cottonwood Mansion



For Consideration by Council in Committee on June 18, 2024

OBJECTIVE:

To obtain support, under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, for an alteration request to the property known as Cottonwood Mansion, 740 Haldimand Road 53, Selkirk, Ontario.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-07-2024 Heritage Property Alteration Request - Cottonwood Mansion be received;
2. AND THAT the application for the proposed alterations to the heritage property known as Cottonwood Mansion located at 740 Haldimand Road 53, Selkirk, Ontario, be approved;
3. AND THAT notice of Haldimand County's decision be served on the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust.

Prepared by: Anne Unyi, Supervisor, Heritage & Culture

Reviewed by: Katrina Schmitz, Manager, Community Development & Partnerships

Respectfully submitted: Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

Approved: Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Heritage Haldimand was established to advise and assist Council on all heritage designation matters relating to Parts IV and V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Part IV and Part V related to the formal designation of property identified as having historical, architectural or contextual value under this legislation.

The Trustees of Cottonwood Mansion, located at 740 Haldimand Road 53, Selkirk, have requested permission to alter existing features of the Mansion in order to create a barrier-free entrance to the Mansion. Alterations would include modifications to the front entry (porch), columns and second floor belvedere (balcony).

The Cottonwood Mansion is overseen by the Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation which was established in 1989; its mandate is to preserve the Holmes and Hoover family histories and showcase the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

Staff and Heritage Haldimand have reviewed the request and recommend that the alterations to the property be supported under Section 33 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

BACKGROUND:

Built circa 1860 for William Holmes and his family, Cottonwood Mansion was constructed on a farm originally established by Jakob Hoover.

Italianate in style, Cottonwood Mansion is distinguished by its variegated brick made of clay and beach sand from Lake Erie, both locally-available materials. Other distinctive features include yellow brick accents, decorative wooden eaves brackets, and a wrap-around veranda. The Mansion stands two stories tall with a third-floor widow's walk, which provides an excellent view of Lake Erie.

Cottonwood Mansion was designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its historical and architectural value in By-law 732/89 dated March 28, 1989. Through the current request, the Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation wishes to create a safe, accessible and welcoming entry to the visiting public.

ANALYSIS:

In 2023, Cottonwood Mansion received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to restore and create a barrier-free entryway.

An Alteration Request from the Trustees of the Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation was received April 30, 2024 (Attachment 1); the application outlined several modifications to the front entrance in order update the Mansion's accessibility and keep the structure in a state of good repair.

Heritage Haldimand convened a special meeting on May 6 to review and discuss the request and allow the Trustees of Cottonwood Mansion to begin work—if approved—as quickly as possible (before the summer season). A Trustee provided additional detail related to the intended scope of work (Attachment 2 and Attachment 3) including:

- Replace the existing front verandah roof sheathing, beams and roof battens;
- Taper approximately 10' x 6' of porch floor up to new level for barrier-free access;
- Replace front steps and handrails;
- Remove, in its entirety, and restore the second-story belvedere (balcony) located above the main front door entrance, including deteriorated soffit, battens, balcony deck;
- Replace the drainage system to ensure a long life for the front porch and balcony; and,
- Replace seriously deteriorated load bearing porch columns with new matching columns (similar to the 1860s design).

Repairs to the front porch are required to mitigate further damage caused by water ingress and poor drainage. In 2023, an Engineer retained by the Trustees noted the front load-bearing columns have deteriorated approximately 20% since 2022 (Attachment 4).

Taking into consideration, this review and comments related to the application and engineered drawings from the May 6 meeting—and the Committee's further discussion at its regular meeting on May 27th—Heritage Haldimand is supportive of the planned scope of work. The Committee is satisfied that restorative efforts will be carried out by contractors with not only a thorough knowledge of the Mansion, but familiarity with historic buildings and construction methods and will carry out the work sympathetically and in keeping with the original design/architecture. Heritage Haldimand recommends to Council that the Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Trust's request to undertake restoration and updates to the exterior and interior of Cottonwood Mansion be considered and that Heritage Haldimand be provided with regular updates from Cottonwood's Board as the work progresses.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Section 33 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* states that Council must provide consent in writing before any alterations can proceed that are likely to affect heritage attributes on properties designated under Part IV of the Act. Section 33 (1) reads:

“No owner of property designated under Section 29 shall alter the property or permit the alteration of the property if the alteration is likely to affect the property's heritage attributes, as set out in the description of the property's heritage attributes in the by-law that was required to be registered under clause 29 (12) (b) or subsection 29 (19), as the case may be, unless the owner applies to the Council of the municipality in which the property is situate and receives consent in writing to the alteration.”

Additionally, according to Section 33 (6) (a) and (b), Council, after consultation with its municipal heritage committee,

- a) shall,
 - i. consent to the application,
 - ii. consent to the application, subject to such terms, or
 - iii. refuse the application.

Under Section 33 (6) (b), notice of Council's decision will be served on the owners of the property and the Ontario Heritage Trust.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

The Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Trust will be required to comply with all Haldimand County building codes and obtain all necessary permits for the work to be undertaken.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

REFERENCES:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Alteration Request.
2. Drawings – Proposed Alterations (Porch Plan for Barrier-Free Access).
3. Drawings – Porch Restoration (West Elevation Section).
4. Images.