

## **Schedule “B” to By-law Number 26-2025**

### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **241 RIDGE ROAD NORTH**

#### **(THE MASONIC HALL)**

##### **Description of the Property**

The property is municipally known as 241 Ridge Road North and is legally described as PT LT SCHOOL HOUSE PL 349 VILLAGE OF RIDGEWAY; PT LT 18 E/S SOUTH MILL ST PL 349 VILLAGE OF RIDGEWAY; PT LT 17 E/S SOUTH MILL ST PL 349, in the Town of Fort Erie.

241 Ridge Road North is in the core historic Ridgeway on the west side of the road. The property features a former school building influenced by Italianate architecture, positioned with a modest setback from the road at the southern edge of the commercial core, surrounded by other buildings originally constructed as residences.

##### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

241 Ridge Road North is a representative example of the Italianate style. 241 Ridge Road North is a representative example of a former school built with Italianate architecture style influences. The two-storey red brick T-shaped plan includes the 1869-1880 schoolhouse. The running bond red brick building is laid on a stone foundation. The symmetrical façade contains two arched entrances with single doors topped by ornate fanlights. Each of the visible elevations are symmetrically balanced with rhythmically placed tall arched windows which are typical features of Italianate buildings. Additionally, the subject building includes Classical detailing including the oculus window with quatrefoil window finished design and a hexagonal belfry which are additional features associated with institutional Italianate buildings. The 1911 addition, while sympathetic with the schoolhouse, does not exhibit the Italianate style elements.

241 Ridge Road North has historical value as an early public school established in Ridgeway to serve the educational needs of the community. Initially established as the School Section No.11 in 1844 on or near the subject property the brick building was constructed in 1869, with subsequent expansion/addition in 1880 and 1911, to serve the growing educational needs of the community. The location of the subject property, as a school bridging the historic commercial centre of the community and the outlying residential areas, made a clear influential contribution to the pattern of settlement and development in the community as the residential area expanded around the school.

241 Ridge Road has historical value for its association with the Disher family who were prolific property owners in the area, and influential in the economic success of Ridgeway. The Disher family (Enos Disher) donated the land on which the school was built. R. Disher, who eventually became owner of the land, was a teacher at the school

and was integral to the construction of the extant school building. The prominent role and influence of the family in the community is also expressed with the naming of Disher Road, which is located immediately to the north of the subject property.

241 Ridge Road North reflects the work of Eber Cutler a builder noted by the Town of Fort Erie as “the largest builder in the area at the time”. Cutler was responsible for the construction of the 1880 portion of the schoolhouse. In addition to his work on the subject property, at least two other extant Cutler-built houses remain on within the commercial core along Ridge Road North. (the Part IV Designated Culter/Morin House at 348 Ridge Road North and 356 Ridge Road North).

241 Ridge Road North is important in supporting the 19th century character of the historic commercial core of Ridgeway. The commercial streetscape of Ridge Road North is comprised of predominantly one-and-a-half to three storey commercial buildings of various architectural styles and narrow setbacks that widen toward the periphery. The two-storey brick former schoolhouse is important in supporting and maintaining the character of this section of Ridge Road North, comprised of predominantly residential and institutional buildings located at the periphery of the core. There are two other redbrick Italianate buildings (224 and 264 Ridge Road North) in this area. 241 Ridge Road acts as a physical and historical anchor. The subject property is important in defining and supporting this transitional area made up of commercial, residential and institutional buildings, thus tying in the commercial core in with the outer lying residential areas through its massing and decorative details consistent with the character of the historic commercial core.

241 Ridge Road North is considered a landmark in the community. 241 Ridge Road North’s construction is consistent with the character of the neighbourhood and streetscape, the structure at 241 Ridge Road North is considered a visual landmark by the community.

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key elements that contribute to the heritage value of 241 Ridge Road North include:

- Overall height, scale, massing, and legibility as a former school
- Two-storey former schoolhouse with Italianate influences
- Red brick building constructed to a T-shaped plan
- Symmetrical and balanced façade
- Cross-gable roof with wide overhanging eaves
- Hexagonal belfry with classical decorative detailing
- Oculus window with quatrefoil window
- Rhythmically placed arched window openings with stone sills and brick voussoirs
- Four recessed arched entryways, with brick voussoirs and stone thresholds, three with fanlights
- Location along Ridge Road North

