



## Planning, Building and By-law Services

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Prepared for: Council-in-Committee

Report: PBBS-48-2025

Meeting Date: July 7, 2025

### 1. Title

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Heritage Property Designation – 451 Niagara Boulevard

### 2. Recommendations

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**That:** Council approves the designation of 451 Niagara Boulevard as outlined in this report, for architectural, historical and contextual attributes and reasons, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*; pursuant to the recommendation of the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee, and further

**That:** Council directs staff to prepare a Designation By-law and provide Notice of Intention to Designate in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

### 3. Relation to Council's Corporate Strategic Plan

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Priority: Sustainable and managed growth

Initiative: Number of designated heritage properties

### 4. List of Stakeholders

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- The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie
- Residents of the Town of Fort Erie
- Municipal Heritage Standing Committee/ Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee
- Archeological Research Associates Ltd (ARA)
- Owners of 451 Niagara Boulevard

### 5. Purpose of Report

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The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee's (MCHAC) recommendation to designate 451 Niagara Boulevard under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, as significant from an architectural, contextual, and historical perspective, as well as provide background associated with the recommendation.

### 6. Background

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Background information with respect to the Municipal Heritage Standing Committee, the impacts of heritage designation, and general criteria according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended

by Ontario Regulation 569/22 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

## 7. Analysis

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The property known municipally as 451 Niagara Boulevard is situated along the northeast edge of Old Fort Erie, near the Niagara River, as shown in **Appendix 2**. It features a two-and-a-half storey frame residence in the Queen Anne style, distinguished by a large complex roof with prominent pedimented dormers. Constructed between 1886 and 1891, the property has been recognized by both ARA and the MHSC for its architectural, contextual, and historical significance.

In 2011, the property was added to the Fort Erie Municipal Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value and Interest, as outlined in Report CDS-53-2011, and attached as **Appendix 3**. The property owner did not appeal the listing at that time, and the report did not indicate any issues or objections.

An evaluation of the subject lands was carried out by ARA and determined that 451 Niagara Boulevard meets two of the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest as outlined in O. Reg. 9/06 and therefore is worthy of designation. The evaluation performed by ARA is attached as **Appendix 4**.

On August 14, 2024, the MHSC met to consider the designation of 451 Niagara Boulevard and passed the following motion:

*That the Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee recommends the designation of 451 Niagara Boulevard, Fort Erie, for architectural, historical, and contextual attributes and reasons under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.*

Staff sent a letter to the property owners informing them that the Municipal Heritage Standing Committee (MHSC) had recommended designation and outlined the next steps in the process. The letter emphasized the Town's commitment to ensuring the process remains transparent and accommodating. It also stated that the Recommendation Report would not be presented to Council until there had been an opportunity to meet with the owners to discuss the report, hear their position on designation, and address any questions they may have. Following this, the property owners contacted Staff by phone to request additional time beyond what was indicated in the letter, explaining that they needed more time to discuss the matter and conduct their own research.

In early 2025, Staff sent a follow-up letter to the property owners expressing a continued willingness to engage in further discussion regarding the proposed heritage designation. The letter requested that the owners contact staff by May 23, 2025, to arrange a meeting. It was noted that if no response was received by that date, the recommendation report would proceed to Council on the basis that the owners were not supportive of the designation.

On May 2, 2025, the property owners responded by letter indicating that they did not wish to pursue heritage designation for their property but did not provide specific reasons for their opposition. Staff then followed up on May 8, 2025, to acknowledge receipt of the letter and to advise the owners that their opposition would be included in the upcoming report to Council, scheduled for July 7, 2025. Staff also reminded the owners of the opportunity to provide additional information by June 6, 2025, and explained the process regarding potential objections.

to designation following Council's decision.

Subsequent to the correspondence, the property owner contacted Staff by phone to discuss the details of the designation process and to ask questions. During this conversation, Staff clarified concerns and provided information about available programs, including the Heritage Property Grant Program and the Heritage Tax Rebate Program. Following the phone discussion, staff received an email from the property owner confirming that they are no longer in objection to the proposed heritage designation.

### Reasons for Designation

451 Niagara Boulevard is a notable example of a residence constructed in the Queen Anne architectural style. This grand two-and-a-half-storey building features an irregular floor plan characteristic of the style. The complex roofline includes brackets, pedimented gables on both the façade and south elevation, and triangular gables, one containing a rectangular window opening and another with a half-circle window, as well as a tall chimney, all hallmark elements of Queen Anne architecture. The open porch and balcony contribute to the asymmetrical and elaborate composition typically associated with this style.

The façade's pedimented gable is adorned with fish-scale shingles and intricate woodwork. Classical detailing is evident throughout the open front porch and balcony, which feature turned spindles, wood posts, decorative brackets, beads along the roofline, scrollwork, and gingerbread trim, all emblematic of Queen Anne design. Wood decoration extends to the fascia board, supported symbolically by small carved wood brackets, as well as to the flared walls. The building also showcases a variety of rectangular window openings with wood surrounds, some incorporating stained glass and other Queen Anne-style window elements.

In terms of contextual value, 451 Niagara Boulevard plays an important role in preserving the late 19th and early 20th century character of this section of Niagara Boulevard. While Niagara Boulevard appears on early maps, most residential development along this stretch occurred between 1876 and 1907. The street predominantly consists of one- to three-storey buildings from this period, typically featuring modest setbacks and landscaped surroundings. Common architectural features include side or cross gable roofs, formal compositions with classical detailing, and a dominance of the Queen Anne style.

451 Niagara Boulevard complements its surroundings through its construction, classical ornamentation, and consistent setback and massing, thereby contributing significantly to the heritage fabric and character of the streetscape.

### Cultural Heritage Attributes

Key elements that contribute to the heritage value of 451 Niagara Boulevard include:

- Two-and-a-half storey Queen Anne residence
- Location along Niagara Boulevard
- Contribution to the Niagara Boulevard streetscape through its setback, height, scale and massing
- L-shaped plan
- Complex roof with brackets, pedimented gables and triangular dormers
- Fine decorative woodwork in pedimented gables of façade

- Wall flare above first storey window openings
- Stone foundation
- Variable sized rectangular window openings with wood surrounds
- Three light bay window in façade pediment
- Queen Anne style windows
- Front porch and balcony including turned spindles and wood posts, gingerbread, brackets and beads along roofline and scroll

### Designation Process

If Council recommends moving forward with the designation of 451 Niagara Boulevard, Staff will prepare the “Notice of Intent to Designate” to be published in the local newspaper and to serve to the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust. If no objections are received within 30 days of the notice being circulated, Staff will bring forward the designating by-law for Council’s approval. Once the by-law has been passed, a Notice of Designation is published in the local newspaper and provided to the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust, and the property is listed on the municipal and provincial registers.

If there is an objection during the 30-day appeal period, the objection is referred to the Ontario Land Tribunal, which schedules a hearing and makes a final and binding decision on the designation.

### **8. Financial, Staffing and Accessibility (AODA) Implications**

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The MHSC has the mandate to advise Council on matters pertaining to heritage importance, particularly regarding the designation of properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Junior Community Planner is the Staff liaison for the Committee.

The property could be considered under the Town’s Designated Heritage Property Grant Program, which allows a property owner to apply for a grant of up to 50% of eligible maintenance, preservation, and conservation costs to an upset limit of \$10,000 for work performed to the identified heritage attributes of a designated property.

### **9. Policies Affecting Proposal**

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In accordance with section 11 of the Town’s Official Plan, the Town will actively promote cultural heritage and conservation in all applicable municipal activities in recognition of the non-renewable nature of cultural heritage resources, as well as the contribution they make to the character, civic pride, tourism potential, economic benefits and historical appreciation of the community.

Further, Council may consult with the MHSC in matters relating to the conservation of built heritage within the Town of Fort Erie. The MHSC may identify through the ongoing inventory, or on a case-by-case basis, properties of architectural and historical interest and recommend to Council those heritage properties considered worthy of designation under Parts IV and V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

## 10. Comments from Departments, Community and Corporate Partners

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The recommendation of the MHSC and evaluation by ARA are identified in this report.

## 11. Alternatives

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Council can choose not to support the MHSC recommendation to designate; however, it is not recommended as the MHSC and ARA have assessed this site in accordance with the established criteria under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

## 12. Communicating Results

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If approved, a Notice of the Intention to Designate will be provided to the owner in accordance with Section 29(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and the Ontario Heritage Trust, and placed in the Fort Erie Observer, as required under Section 29(3) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

## 13. Conclusion

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The Museum and Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (MCHAC) recommends the designation 451 Niagara Boulevard under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* because it is significant from an architectural, contextual, and historical perspective as outlined in **Appendix 5**.

## 14. Report Approval

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Prepared by:  
Kimberlyn Smith  
Junior Community Planner

Reviewed by:  
Edward Terry MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Policy and Community Planning

Submitted by:  
Anamika Dilwaria, M.A, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, Dipl.M.M  
Director – Planning and Development Services

Approved by:  
Chris McQueen, MBA  
Chief Administrative Officer

## 15. Attachments

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Appendix 1 – Background Information  
Appendix 2 – Location Map  
Appendix 3 – CDS-53-2011  
Appendix 4 – Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. Evaluation Report  
Appendix 5 – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest