



100 John West Way  
Aurora, Ontario  
L4G 6J1  
(905) 727-3123  
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora

## General Committee Report

No. PDS21-123

---

**Subject:** Amendment to Heritage Designation By-law Number 6182-19  
De La Salle College and Pine Ridge Trail (Monk's Walk)  
50-100 Bloomington Road West

**Prepared by:** Brashanthe Manoharan, Planner/Heritage Planning

**Department:** Planning and Development Services

**Date:** November 16, 2021

---

### Recommendation

1. That Report No. PDS21-123 be received;
2. That Council direct staff to issue a Notice of Intent to amend Heritage Designation By-law Number 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West, as discussed herein in accordance with the requirements of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and,
3. That Council direct staff to bring forward the amending by-law should there be no objections to the proposed amendment to By-law Number 6182-19.

### Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to the application for a proposed amendment to Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West.

- The subject property is designated as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Section 29 (Part IV) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- Staff are proposing an amendment to the "Historical/Associative Value" section of Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West, to acknowledge the history of the Pine Ridge institution.

## Background

### Property Description

The subject property is located on the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Bloomington Road West. The property exceeds 70 acres in and includes heritage attributes such as the front courtyard and the Monk's Walk trail at the northern portion of the property. The four-storey building was constructed c. 1916, designed in a Collegiate Gothic Architectural style by J.P. Haynes. The building currently serves as an office building for the Government of Ontario. There is an Ontario Provincial Police Building located to the north of the subject lands, that was constructed in 1989. It is also noted that a walking trail known locally as "The Monk's Walk" is located in a wooded area at the northern portion of the property.

### History of the Property

50-100 Bloomington Road West has a unique history over the past 200 years. The lands were originally settled by Joseph Minthorn in 1808. Another notable early settler includes William Mair, who held the land until 1878. In 1914, the property was purchased by the Christian Brotherhood. By 1916, the Brotherhood built a school known as "De La Salle College" for young men destined to pursue religious services. During this time, the Brotherhood established the walking trail at the north end of the property known locally as Monk's Walk. This trail comprises of religious carvings in trees along the route, used by the Brotherhood for meditation. The Christian Brotherhood continued to operate the school until 1949 when at that time, the school was moved back to Toronto.

In 1950, the property was purchased by the Government of Ontario and the building was converted into a residential facility for males 16 years of age and older with developmental disabilities due to the overcrowding at the Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia. The facility was re-named "Pine Ridge" in 1974 and continued to operate until August 1984. During these years, it has been reported that the residents were emotionally, physically, and psychologically abused. The building housed over 170 residents, until it closed in August 1984.

After the closure of Pine Ridge, the Government of Ontario retrofitted the building for offices. The building was converted into an office for the Ministry of Natural Resources and an Ontario Registry Office. An Ontario Provincial Police facility was constructed on the north end of the property in 1989. These uses continue to exist on the property to this day.

A portion of the site (approximately 10 acres at the north end of Academy Drive) was also the subject of a Ministry's Zoning Order issued in 2020 to permit the development of a long-term care facility and low-density housing.

## **Heritage Designation**

In 2019, Town Council passed By-law 6182-19 to designate 50-100 Bloomington Road West under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a cultural heritage landscape. By-law 6182-19 identifies the exterior and cultural heritage landscape elements as the original key attributes that contribute to the heritage value of the property (see Attachment 1).

## **Analysis**

**Staff are recommending that Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West be amended to include additional information about Pine Ridge**

During the April 5, 2021 Heritage Advisory Committee meeting, Len Bulmer and Kathy Kantel requested that the heritage designation by-law be reconsidered to acknowledge the true history of the Pine Ridge institution. Staff have since undertaken a thorough investigation to gather the facts of the events that occurred at Pine Ridge, and based on that review, are proposing an amendment to Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19.

Institutions for people as we describe today as having “developmental disabilities” have existed for over 130 years in Ontario, from the opening of the first asylum in 1876 to the closing of the final three facilities in 2009. While the intention of these facilities was to promote health, support services, and other aspects of well-being, it was ultimately determined that the institutionalization of people with disabilities was not the best approach as it contributed to isolation, stigmatization, and abuse.

In December 2013, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice approved a \$35-million settlement between the survivors of Huronia Regional Centre (including Pine Ridge) and the Ontario government. Shortly after, the Ontario government issued a formal apology to the former residents of Huronia Regional Centre, recognizing that the residents of this institution endured forcible restraints, were stripped of their dignity, and underwent physical and emotional abuse.

As such, Staff are proposing an amendment to Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 by way of the following addition to the “Historical/ Associative Value” section:

*In 1950, the property was purchased by the Government of Ontario and the building was converted into a residential facility for males 16 years of age and older with developmental disabilities due to the overcrowding at the Huronia*

*Regional Centre in Orillia. The facility was re-named “Pine Ridge” in 1974 and continued to operate until August 1984. During these years residents were victim to emotional, physical, and psychological abuse instead of receiving the care that these residential institutions claimed to have provided. The building housed over 170 residents, until its closure in August of 1984.*

Staff will also be recommending that a commemorative plaque be erected on the site at the owner’s cost. Should the proposed amendment be approved, wording for the plaque will be drafted by the Town.

## **Advisory Committee Review**

The Heritage Advisory Committee discussed the proposed amendment at its meeting on November 1, 2021. The Committee inquired about the present owner of the property and clarified the number of residents that were at the facility during the time of its closure.

The Heritage Advisory Committee had no objections to the proposed amendment of Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West.

## **Legal Considerations**

Under Section 30.1 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, Council may amend a by-law designating a property made under Section 29 to clarify or correct the statement in the designation by-law that explains the cultural heritage value or interest of the property.

If Council decides to proceed with the amendment to the heritage designation by-law, a notice of intention will be served on the property owner. Once the Town issues a Notice of Intention to Amend the Designation (the “Notice”), the owner may object to the proposed amendment within 30 days of the Notice. If there are no objections within the 30-day period, the amended designation by-law for the subject property will be brought forward to Council for enactment. If there are objections, the objection will be brought to Council for consideration, and Council may either withdraw the notice or proceed to enacting the amended designation by-law. If the owner objects to the passing of the amended designation by-law, it may appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal for a hearing.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## Communications Considerations

The Town will use 'Inform' as the level of engagement for this application. There are five different levels of community engagement to consider, with each level providing the community more involvement in the decision-making process. These levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. Examples of each can be found in the Community Engagement Policy. These options are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and assist in establishing guidelines for clearly communicating with our public and managing community engagement. In order to inform the public, this report will be posted to the Town's website.

## Link to Strategic Plan

The conservation of heritage resources supports the Strategic Plan goal of *Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All* through its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in objective *Celebrating and Promoting our Culture*.

## Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. That Council refuse the amendment to Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West with an explanation for the refusal.

## Conclusions

Staff have reviewed and verified the information provided by the delegates from the April 5, 2021 and support the amendment to "Historical/ Associative Value" section of Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 for 50-100 Bloomington Road West, to acknowledge the history of the Pine Ridge institution.

## Attachments

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 - Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19

## Previous Reports

Heritage Memorandum – Amendment to Heritage Designation By-law 6182-19 – November 1, 2021

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on October 28, 2021

## **Approvals**

Approved by David Waters, MCIP, RPP, PLE, Director, Planning and Development Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer