

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

HERITAGE COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: June 3, 2026

To: Heritage Advisory Committee

From: Melanie Knight, Director of Development Services and Engineering,
and Sally Coutts, Heritage Consultant

Subject: Heritage Designation for 492 River Road Tesky House

Recommendation:

THAT the Heritage Advisory Committee recommends Council Issue a Notice of Intention to Designate 492 River Road under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* similar in effect to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value in Attachment A.

Background:

A Heritage Register is a formal listing of properties to be considered for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act (*Act*). Properties that are on the heritage register are formally added to the register by municipal council.

Historically, properties on a heritage register could remain on the register for an unlimited period. There is no limit to the number of properties that can be on a heritage register.

Provincial Changes to the *Act* – Heritage Register

Changes by the Province to the *Act* have imposed a time limit for properties to remain on a heritage register. Before the end of 2026, the properties must be removed from the Municipality's Heritage Register or notice must be provided for an intention to designate the property.

If this process is not followed, the property is automatically removed from the Register (via the provisions of the *Act*) and cannot be added back to the register for five years. For Mississippi Mills, this means that the properties which are currently on the Municipality's Heritage Register must be evaluated this year and either be removed from the Register or issued formal notice of intent for designation.

Heritage Committee and Staff, with the support of Sally Coutts, Heritage Consultant, have been working to evaluate the properties on the Heritage Register. The purpose of the evaluation is to recommend that a property be removed from the Register because it does not meet the criteria of the *Act* to be designated or that the property does meet the criteria of the *Act* and should be designated.

Role of Staff

As noted above, Staff's role in the designation process is to review the properties that are on the Heritage Register by the Heritage Advisory Committee and approved by Council between 2006 and 2011. After the analysis of the property is complete, staff have a professional responsibility to provide a recommendation report to Heritage Committee based on the criteria of the *Act*.

Role of Heritage Committee

The Heritage Advisory Committee's role in the designation process is to review the attributes of the heritage criteria and recommendation(s) provided by Staff and the Heritage Consultant. Once reviewed, Committee must decide if the property meets the requirements of the *Act* to be designated based on the criteria and evaluation. This decision of Committee is made by approving, deferring or defeating staff's recommendation.

Role of Council

Council's role is to either pass Heritage Committee's recommendation or pass their own recommendation at their discretion. The decision to designate a property ultimately lies with Council.

If Committee does not pass staff's recommendation, this information is provided to Council via the Heritage Advisory Committee meeting minutes and an explanatory memo to Council. As noted above, Council's role is to either pass Heritage Committee's recommendation or, if there is no recommendation, make their own decision.

DISCUSSION:

The subject property is listed on the Municipality of Mississippi Mills' Heritage Register. The property will be automatically removed from the Municipality's Heritage Register if Council does not issue a Notice of Intention to Designate before the end of this year. In addition, Council will not be able to add this property to the Register for five years after this date.

As noted above, the Municipality has been conducting a review of all properties on its Register and, because of that review, this property is being recommended for designation. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the evaluation of the property detailing the reasons for designation.

The Teskey House is an early 19th century stone house located on a large lot on River Road in the Village of Appleton, facing the Mississippi River. The main house was built in 1837 with the Kitchen and Carriage House added in 1844. The Teskey House was constructed of limestone, quarried nearby. It is a vernacular interpretation of Georgian Classicism, a style that dominated domestic architecture in Upper Canada during the first half of the 19th century.

Its first occupants were Joseph and Margaret (nee Cuthbert) Teskey. Joseph Teskey (born 1799) arrived in Canada in 1823 with his parents and siblings on the "Hebe" as part of the Peter Robinson migration from Ireland. Joseph and his brothers, John and

Robert, obtained land close together and established mills on the river near Appleton that were expanded or replaced over the decades.

The Teskey House at 492 River Road meets **seven (7)** of the **nine (9)** criteria for designation in Ontario Regulation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as outlined below in the Evaluation Section.

Consultation with Property Owner(s)

The Municipality has informed all owners that have properties on the Heritage Register advising them that the Municipality will be evaluating their property for designation.

Multiple letters and emails have been sent to the property owners of 492 River Road since the register review process began in 2024, advising them of the Municipality's intention to designate the property. It should be noted that the property is currently for sale. These communications offered a meeting between the owners and staff to discuss the process of designation and to hear any of their concerns. Owners were also advised of the Heritage Advisory Committee meeting date their property would be discussed at.

The owners have advised Staff that they are not against the heritage designation; however, asked for additional information on benefits to heritage homeowners. Staff provided details of the Municipality's heritage grant and tax relief programs along with the attached Statement of Cultural Heritage Value, evaluation report, previous historical reports, and newspaper articles detailing the importance of this property to Appleton, Ramsay Township and Mississippi Mills as a whole. Additional zoning and property information was also provided to the perspective buyers.

EVALUATION AND PROPOSED DESIGNATION:

Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

Section 4.6 of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) includes the following policy regarding the conservation of cultural heritage resources:

4. Planning authorities are encouraged to develop and implement:
 - b. proactive strategies for conserving built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes.

Staff are of the opinion that the proposed designation is consistent with the 2024 Provincial Policy Statement.

Official Plan

Section 4.3 of the Official Plan provides the policies for the protection and consideration of heritage resources in the Municipality. The goal of the policy is to:

Recognize the area's heritage as being of central importance to the community's sense of identity.

Protect and enhance cultural heritage resources for their cultural, historic, architectural and/or economic value to the community.

Section 4.2.3 of the Official Plan provides the policy framework for heritage resource conservation enabling Council, in consultation with Heritage Committee and property owners, to designate properties under the *Act*.

Staff are of the opinion that the proposed designation of this property meets the intent of the Official Plan.

Ontario Heritage Act

Part IV of the *Act* provides municipalities with the authority to designate properties of cultural heritage value. Section 29 of the *Act* sets out the process for the designation of individual buildings. It requires:

- that Council consult with its municipal heritage committee, and
- that the official Notice of Intention to Designate served on the owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust contain a description of the property and its heritage attributes, as well as a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a statement that a notice of objection may be served on the Clerk within 30 days after the date of publication of the notice of intention in a newspaper.

Regulation 9/06 (Attachment B) establishes criteria to determine if a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the *Act* if it meets two or more of the nine criteria set out in the regulation. Through research and evaluation, staff have determined that the Teskey House, **492 River Road property meets seven (7) of the nine (9) criteria**. Detailed research and analysis are outlined in the Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report contained in Attachment C and a brief analysis of each of the applicable criteria is provided below.

Criteria 1: The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

The property is valued for its cultural significance as a prime example of Georgian Classicism. This style, rooted in classical traditions, became widespread in Upper Canada between 1800 and 1850, largely due to settlers from the British Isles and Ireland who chose it as it reflected the architecture of their countries of origin and Loyalists who brought it with them from the United States.

Georgian houses incorporated decorative features, floor plans, and elevations influenced by ancient Greek and Roman architecture. In Upper Canada, these houses generally had rectangular layouts and symmetrical façades. Typical design elements included side gable roofs and central hallways, with entrances often highlighted by fanlights and sidelights.

The basic layout and proportions of Georgian architecture were versatile and were found in structures ranging from simple log buildings and wood frame structures to substantial brick and stone houses. These stone houses were constructed to meet the needs and aspirations of the emerging middle and upper classes, demonstrating the enduring appeal and adaptability of Georgian design.

Criteria 2: The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

The Teskey House has design value as an elegant example of Georgian Classicism architecture in Canada. Constructed by local craftsmen in 1837 and 1844, its multi-paned windows, front door with sidelights and an elliptical fanlight are sophisticated elements of the style. Although the stone masonry does not display a high degree of craftsmanship, the fanlight and sidelights are excellent examples of local craftsmanship.

Criteria 4: The property has associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The Teskey House has cultural heritage value because of its associations with the Irish Palatines and the Peter Robinson emigration scheme of 1823. It was built in 1837 and 1844 by Joseph Teskey, an Irish Palatine who had emigrated from Ireland with his parents as part of the first sponsored emigration organized by Peter Robinson. Robinson organized two settlements of southern Irish immigrants in the 1820s, one to Shipman's Mills (Almonte) in 1823 and the other to the Newcastle District, near present-day Peterborough in 1825. A total of about 500 arrived in the area from Ireland in the autumn of 1823. These settlers played a prominent role in the early history of Ramsay Township.

Criteria 5: The property yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

The Teskey House has historical and associative value because of its links with the Teskey Family who settled the land that became Appleton in 1823 after their arrival in Upper Canada as part of the Peter Robinson emigration scheme.

Criteria 7: The property is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.

The Teskey House has contextual value as it helps define the character of the small village of Appleton. The house is prominently located on attractive grounds on River Road, the main access road through the village. It overlooks the former mill sites that once dominated the village and serves as a reminder of the wealth and prosperity of the village in the 19th century.

Criteria 8: The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

The Teskey House has cultural heritage value because it is physically linked to its surroundings, overlooking the Mississippi River and the former site of Joseph Teskey's grist mill. Joseph Teskey opened Appleton's first mill, a grist mill, in 1823 soon after his arrival in Upper Canada. While the mill no longer exists, the house's proximity to its original site reflects his role as both an employer and a leader in the small community.

Criteria 9: The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

The Teskey House stands on a large lot along River Road in Appleton, facing the Mississippi River, beside the former United Church. Its prominent location, unique architecture, unusual "ell" shape and attractive fenced front garden make it a notable local landmark.

SUMMARY:

Having reviewed and assessed the property based on O.Reg 9/06: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest, the Provincial Planning Statement 2024 and Official Plan, Staff recommend that Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Respectfully submitted by,

Drew Brennan
Senior Planner

Reviewed by:

Melanie Knight
Director of Director of Development
Services and Engineering

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Statement of Cultural Heritage Value
2. O.Reg. 9/06: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest
3. Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report