

# THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Date:** June 3, 2026

**To:** Heritage Advisory Committee

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

**Subject:** Heritage Designation for 34 and 36 and 38 Mill St Black Watch Building

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### **Recommendation:**

**THAT Heritage Advisory Committee recommends Council Issue a Notice of Intention to Designate 34, 36 and 38 Mill Street 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 Black Watch building at 34, 36 and 38 Mill Street, is currently designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* which provides authority for municipalities to designate properties under a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). As part of the HCD, properties are required to obtain municipal approval and/or heritage permits before exterior alterations and renovations are undertaken. Therefore, the proposed designation under Part IV would not add any new administrative steps for proposed alterations to the building, rather it will provide detailed cultural heritage features to be protected through the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value. The Black Watch building is

connected to Almonte's daily public life along Mill Street's long-standing role at the heart of the community. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present, Mill Street has played a vital commercial role in the history of the community.

Under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* this property meets **five (5)** of the **nine (9)** criteria for designation in Ontario Regulation 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 34, 36, and 38 Mill St since the registry review process began in 2024, advising them of the Municipality's intention to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Staff received a response from the owners of 34 Mill St and 36 Mill St that they had no further questions regarding the designation. Staff have not received a response from the owners of 38 Mill St.

## **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 these properties 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 Black Watch building, **34, 36 & 38 Mill Street, meets five (5) 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 Black Watch Building has design value as a representative example of a late 19<sup>th</sup>, early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial main street building. Features of this building type include two to four storey, flat-roofed massing, cornice or decorative brickwork at roofline. Large glass display windows had recessed doorways, secondary cornices separating the first and second storey, often located on the front lot line, and directly adjacent to neighbouring structures or separated by a small gap.

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

The Black Watch Building has historical and associative value as an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century main-street building that reflects Almonte's transformation from a small grist-mill community in 1819 to an industrial hub with a thriving main street by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The street developed early in the town's history along the banks of the river and does not form part of Almonte's original grid. Its unique route is a distinctive feature of the town and reflects its origins as a track connecting the mills.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present, Mill Street has played a vital commercial role in the history of the community. Its north side along the water was the site of many of the town's mills and the many townspeople worked there, while the south side included stores, hotels, a bank, and the Mason's Hall. The town's first telephone exchange was

also located on Mill Street. Farther east, the post office, a centre of town life, occupied a prominent lot.

The Black Watch Building has historical and associative value as its connection to Almonte's public life reflects Mill Street's long-standing role at the heart of the community. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, main streets like this have shaped small-town life, hosting parades, public celebrations, and everyday village activity. Mill Street remains a central gathering place for social, commercial, and recreational life in Almonte. It is also a popular tourist destination and has appeared in many films.

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

The Black Watch Building has contextual value as part of Mill Street, Almonte's historic main street. The entire length of the street is included in the "Downtown Almonte Heritage Conservation District Plan", designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 2015.

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

The property has contextual value as one of many structures that line Mill Street that together form Almonte's historic main street. These buildings share a retail use, are similar in form, massing and design and an historic location.

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

The Black Watch Building is a landmark because of the distinctive Black Watch advertisement painted on its west façade. Commercial wall signs were a common feature in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century cities and towns, but few remain, which contributes to the feature's status as a 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,

Reviewed by:

Drew Brennan  
Senior Planner

Melanie Knight  
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