



P.O. Box 1749  
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**Item No. 9.1.2**  
**Heritage Advisory Committee**  
**June 25, 2020**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** *-Original Signed-*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly Denty, Director of Planning and Development  
*-Original Signed-*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** April 17, 2020

**SUBJECT:** **Case H00484: Request to Include 2500 Creighton Street, Halifax in the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties**

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**ORIGIN**

Application by the owner, the St. Paul's Home Society.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*The Heritage Property Act*

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of 2500 Creighton Street, Halifax, as shown on Map 1, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
2. Approve the request to include 2500 Creighton Street, Halifax, as shown on Map 1, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality as a municipal heritage property.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Morris House is a wooden Georgian building closely associated with the Morris Family, who were notable surveyors active during the early history of Halifax and the era of British Colonial settlement in Nova Scotia. The structure dates to the early 1760s, making it the oldest wooden dwelling, and the fifth oldest structure in Halifax Regional Municipality. Notably it was moved three times, having originally been built on the corner of Hollis and Morris Streets in Downtown Halifax, and now situated on the corner of Charles and Creighton Streets in the North End of Halifax after a highly publicized relocation effort in January of 2013.

This application is being considered in accordance with Sections 14 (Recommendation as municipal heritage property) and 15 (Registration as municipal heritage property) of the *Heritage Property Act*.

### **HRM's Heritage Property Program**

The purpose of the HRM Heritage Property Program is to help protect and conserve significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and conservation districts that reflect the rich heritage found in local communities throughout HRM. One of the principal aims of the Heritage Property Program is to recognize significant heritage resources through the inclusion of properties in the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties.

Under the Heritage Property Program, all registration applications for heritage buildings are evaluated by the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) using "The Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in Halifax Regional Municipality" (Attachment A).

To assist the HAC in making a recommendation to Council, evaluation criteria for scoring a property and building are broken down into six categories as follows:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Highest Possible Score</b>
1. Age	25
2. Historical or Architectural Importance	20
3. Significance of Architect/Builder	10
4. Architectural Merit: Construction type and Style	20
5. Architectural Integrity	15
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Should the HAC score a property with more than 50 points, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to Regional Council. If the property does not score more than 50 points, then the report will not be forwarded to Regional Council.

### **Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act**

HRM's Heritage Property Program receives its authority from the *Heritage Property Act* which seeks:

*"...to provide for the identification, designation, preservation, conservation, protection and rehabilitation of buildings, public-building interiors, structures, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, areas and districts of historic, architectural or cultural value, in both urban and rural areas, and to encourage their continued use."*

Sections 14(2) and 15(1) under the *Heritage Property Act* require that notice of recommendation is given to the property owner at least thirty (30) days prior to any Council decision to include the property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The property owner is also given an opportunity to address Council before they make a decision on the registration request. Should a positive recommendation be forwarded to Council, staff will ensure the required notices are sent to the owners and deposited at the Registry of Deeds.

## DISCUSSION

Heritage registration applications are evaluated by the HAC relative to six evaluation criteria as outlined above and described in greater detail in Attachment A. To assist the HAC in their evaluation and scoring, staff offer the following comments based on a historical research report compiled by staff, and based on information provided by the applicant included as Attachment B.

### 1. Age

The building known today as the Morris House was built in 1764 by Dennis Heffernan, a cooper, on a lot in the South Suburb of Halifax. Its age was determined based on dendrochronological (wood age analysis) research and substantiated by land registry information. The age of the building makes it the oldest surviving wooden dwelling and the fifth-oldest structure in Halifax Regional Municipality, surpassed in age only by such notable historic buildings as St. Paul's Church (1750) and Carleton House (1760).

Due to the age of the building (1764 - one of the oldest surviving structures in Halifax), staff recommend a score of 25 points for age.



Figure 1: Charles Blaskowitz's map Halifax (1784).  
The red circle shows the Morris House.

### 2. Historical OR Architectural Importance

#### Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

#### **The Morris Family**

The Morris House gains much of its heritage value from its close relationship with four generations of the Morris Family, all of whom were Surveyors-General of Nova Scotia from 1749 until the post was eliminated in 1851. The family is also known for their ties to the early justice system in Nova Scotia as all of them held high postings as prominent jurists. The house was in the Morris Family from 1777 until 1850. The property was purchased by Charles Morris II in 1777 and it is thought that the building served as both an office for the family survey business, and a principal dwelling while a new, larger house was constructed. After the dwelling was built the building became solely an office space.



Charles Morris I (Fig. 2) came to Nova Scotia during King George's War in 1747 as a military officer and he did reconnaissance work in preparation of the British settlement of Halifax. As a surveyor and mapmaker, he planned the original townsites of Halifax, Lunenburg, Shelburne and many other early Nova Scotian communities. Upon the founding of Halifax, Morris was named Provincial Surveyor General by Governor Cornwallis, and also went on to serve as Chief Justice. While the elder Charles never owned the Morris House, it is likely that he would have used the family office space in the building regularly.

Charles Morris III inherited the building and the position of Surveyor General from his father in 1801. He was an officer in the local militia before being appointed Surveyor General upon his father's death. He is best known for overseeing the construction of the road linking Halifax and Annapolis Royal (one of the first roads in the province, and the precursor to today's Highway #1), and for his time serving on the Nova Scotia Executive Council. Upon his death, the title of Surveyor General finally went to his son, John Spry Morris, who held the position until it was eliminated in 1851.

In more recent history, the Morris House was saved from demolition by the efforts of a group of volunteers and non-profit organizations, who relocated the building temporarily in 2009, and again (this time to its current location) in 2013. Through this period, the house was the subject of national media attention (additional information in Attachment B).

Due to the building's intimate connection to a historic family of Provincial importance, staff recommend a score of between 11 and 15 points. The fact that the building has been moved three times in its long history is also of historical interest and may be worthy of additional points.

### **3. Significance of Architect or Builder**

As no information on the architect or builder is available, staff recommend a score of 0 points for the significance of architect of builder.

### **4. Architectural Merit**

#### Construction type or building technology

The Morris House is a two-and-a-half storey, timber frame building. Timber framing, often called post-and-beam construction, is a form of carpentry that involves connecting large pieces of wood together with woodworking joints using mortise-and-tenon construction. This type of construction was typical in early Nova Scotia and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as wood was readily abundant. The large timbers in the Morris House were etched with roman numerals by the builders to help with assembly, and these markings are still visible on the floor beams.

Of particular interest is the use of brick "nogging" within the exterior walls of the house. This is a building technique where bricks were installed between the wall structure to provide stability, security and thermal massing at a time before insulation was widely used. This construction method is seen in only the oldest colonial buildings in New England and Nova Scotia, including St. Paul's Church (1750) which is the only other example in HRM.

As an intact example of very rare and early colonial construction methods, staff recommends a score of between 7 and 10 points.

#### Style

The Morris House was designed in the Georgian architectural style which is defined by simplicity and symmetry. Emblematic of Georgian residential buildings built in Halifax between the mid-18<sup>th</sup> and the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the house has a truncated roof and a five-sided Scottish dormer. Two-over-Two hung windows are evenly spaced horizontally across the sides of the building, and it is clad in wood shingles. An 1840s watercolour painting (fig. 3) of the building clearly shows a simple entrance door and central gable dormer which has since been removed.

In the 1890s several Victorian features were added to the front of the building (see fig. 4). These include decorative dentils under the eave, a raised entrance with box porch, and a unique two-storey bay window that is three-sided on the first floor and four-sided on the second. Despite the addition of the Victorian features, the house retains a dominant Georgian style.

The character-defining elements of the Morris House include:

- truncated, pitched roof;
- wood shingle cladding;
- five-sided Scottish dormer;
- c.1890 front bay widows;
- c.1890 enclosed front porch;
- wooden hung, sash windows with divided lights;
- cornerboards and returns; and
- dentils under eave.

As a very early example of Georgian colonial architecture, staff recommend a score of between 7 and 10 points.



Figure 3: 1840s watercolour of Morris House by J.S. Clow

## 5. Architectural Integrity

Thanks in-part to the efforts of the late Dr. Phil Pacey, a former President of the Heritage Trust and volunteer member of the Morris House committee, every effort was made to ensure the building was preserved and restored during and after its recent relocation. Exterior features were restored by making copies of original but decayed elements where possible, and by employing photographic or documentary evidence.

Throughout the building's long history, various changes have been made, including:

- Removal of the central gable dormer on the north side of the building sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century;
- Addition of the Victorian entrance porch, bay window and dentils in the 1890s;
- Removal of a rear addition during the building's relocation in 2009; and
- Reconstruction of a new shed addition on the rear of the building in 2017.

Despite the building's age, it remains very much intact with original materials and forms. The most drastic of the exterior changes are themselves over a century old. As such, staff recommends a score of between 11 and 15 points.



Figure 4: Current view of Morris House at its Creighton Street location

## 6. Relationship to Surrounding Area

While no-longer in its original setting and neighbourhood, the Morris House was moved from the Old South Suburb to the Old North Suburb. This is a neighbourhood that also was built-up early in Halifax's history and contains a large number of small Georgian and Victorian workers houses dating to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. In its previous location, the Morris house represented one of the last remaining small wooden colonial dwellings, most of which were replaced by later masonry buildings in the Victorian Era or by modern construction of a much larger scale. In its new location, the house is surrounded by buildings of a similar scale, material and style, though significantly younger in age than the Morris House.

The building is compatible with its surroundings and maintains its heritage character, therefore, staff recommends a score of between 1 and 5 points.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The HRM costs associated with advertising and processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2020/21 operating budget for C340 – Social and Heritage Policy.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The community engagement process for a heritage registration is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through public access to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting. As a provision of the Heritage Property Act, no registration of a municipal heritage property shall take place until Regional Council has given the owner of the property an opportunity to be heard.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no significant environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this Report.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to reject the application to include 2500 Creighton Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. In doing so, the application will not proceed to Regional Council for evaluation.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Map 1: Location Map

Attachment A: Evaluation Criteria

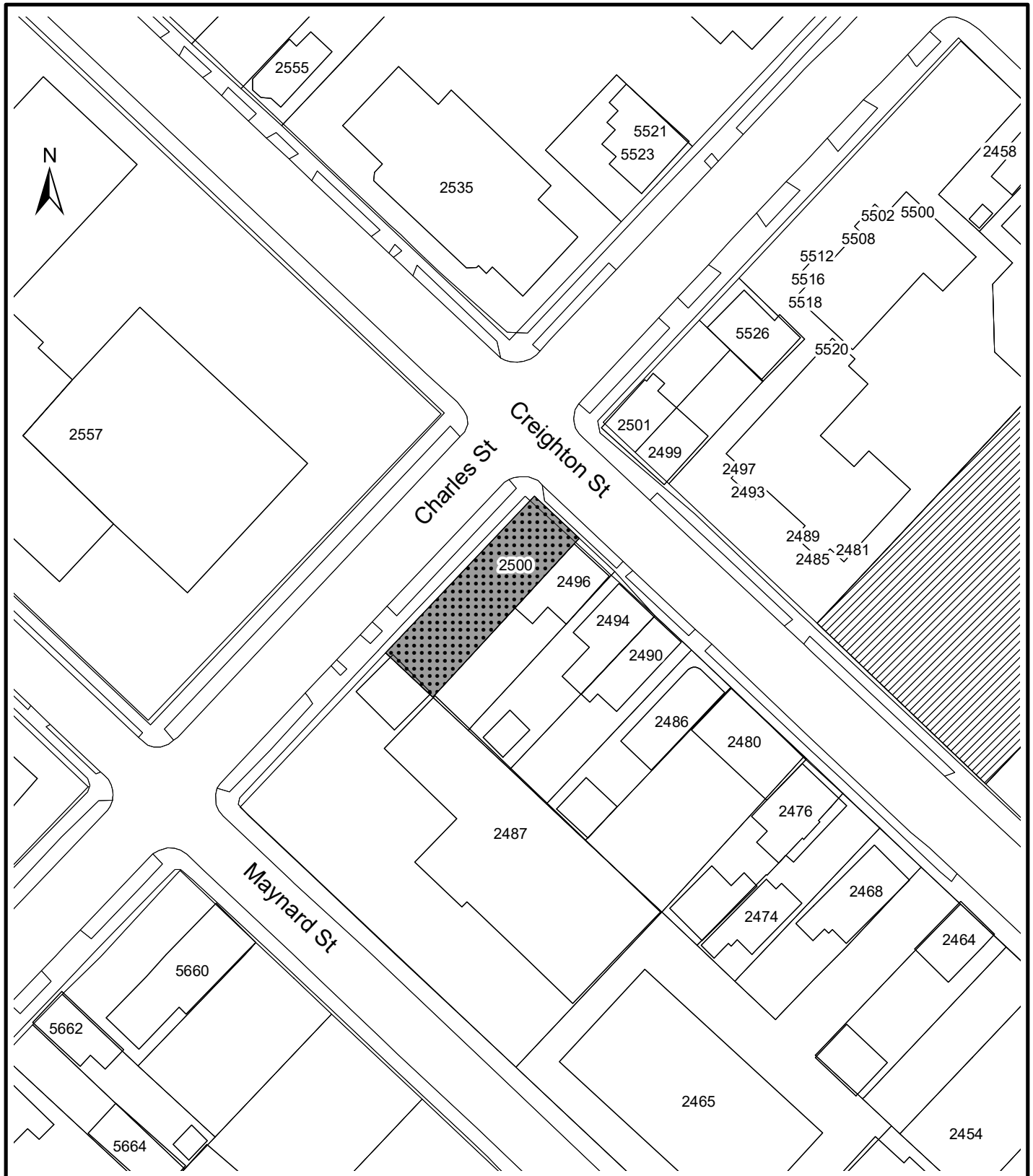
Attachment B: Historical Research Report

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.



Report Prepared by: Aaron Murnaghan, Principal Heritage Planner, 902.292.2470

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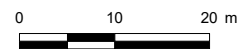


**Map 1 - Location Map**

2500 Creighton Street,  
Halifax

-  Registered Heritage Property
-  Subject Property

**HALIFAX**



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.

# **Attachment A**



## **HERITAGE PROPERTY PROGRAM**

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

**Heritage Property Program  
Community & Recreation Services**

**March 2013**



**EVALUATION CRITERIA  
FOR REGISTRATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS (Revised 2004)**

**1. AGE**

Age is probably the single most important factor in the popular understanding of the heritage value of buildings. The following age categories are based on local, national and international occasions that may be considered to have defined the character of what is how the Halifax Regional Municipality and its architecture.

Date of Construction	Points	Timeline
1749 - 1785	25	Halifax Garrison Town to the Loyalist migration
1786 - 1830	20	Boom period following construction of Shubenacadie Canal
1831 - 1867	16	From Boom to Confederation
1868 - 1899	13	Confederation to the end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century
1900 - 1917	9	Turn of the Century to Halifax Harbour Explosion
1918 - 1945	5	The War Years
1945 - Present	3	Post-War

*\* Maximum score of 25 points in this category*

**2. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE**

A building can receive points for:

- A) Having specific associations with important occasions, institutions, personages and groups,  
**OR**  
B) For being architecturally important unique/representative of a particular period.

**2A) Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups**

Nationally	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	16 - 20	
Moderately Related	11 - 15	
Loosely Related	1 - 10	
Provincially	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	11 - 15	
Moderately Related	6 - 10	
Loosely Related	1 - 5	

Locally	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	11 - 15	
Moderately Related	6 - 10	
Loosely Related	1 - 5	
No relationship to important occasions, institutions, personages or groups.	0	

*\* Maximum score of 20 points in this category, scoring from one of the three categories only*

## 2B) Important/Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era

Importance	Points	Comments
Highly important, Unique, or representative of an era	16 - 20	
Moderately important, Unique, or representative of an era	11 - 15	
Somewhat important, or representative of an era	10 - 1	
Not important, Unique, or representative of an era	0	

*\* Maximum score of 20 points in this category.*

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECT/BUILDER

Is the structure representative of the work of an architect or builder of local, provincial or national importance?

Status	Points	Comments
Nationally	7 - 10	
Provincially Significant	4 - 6	
Locally Significant	1 - 3	
Not Significant	0	

*\* Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*

#### 4. ARCHITECTURAL MERIT

The assessment of architectural merit is based on two factors:

A) **Construction type/building technology:** which refers to the method by which the structure was built (early or rare uses of materials), and building techniques;

AND

B) **Style:** which refers to the form or appearance of the architecture.

<b>Construction Type/Building Technology</b>		
<b>A) Construction type</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Very rare/ early example	7 - 10	
Moderately rare/ early	4 - 6	
Somewhat rare/ early example	1 - 3	
Not rare/ common example	0	
<b>B) Style</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Very rare/ early example	7 - 10	
Moderately rare/ early	4 - 6	
Somewhat rare/ early example	1 - 3	
Not rare/ common example	0	

*\* Maximum score of 10 points for Construction Type, and a maximum score of 10 for Style - a total maximum of 20 points in this category.*

#### 5. ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

Architectural Integrity refers to the extent to which the building retains original features/ structures/ styles, not the state of the building's condition.

<b>Architecture</b>	Consider any additions/ removal/ alterations to windows, doors, porches, dormers, roof lines, foundations, chimneys, and cladding.	
<b>Exterior</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Largely unchanged	11 - 15	
Modest changes	6 - 10	
Major changes	1 - 5	
Seriously compromised	0	

*\* Maximum score of 15 points in this category.*

**6. RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Comments</b>
6 - 10	The building is an important architectural asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area.
1 - 5	The Architecture is compatible with the surrounding area and maintains its heritage character.
0	Does not contribute to the character of the surrounding area.

*\* Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*



## Attachment B

# Research Report

## Morris House

2500 Creighton Street, Halifax

In support of Heritage Registration Application H00484

### Prepared by:

Paul Boucher, Planner I

and

Aaron Murnaghan, Principal Heritage Planner

Based on information compiled by

Dr. Allen B. Robertson on behalf of the applicant

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

# Table of Contents

Age ..... 3

Historical or Architectural Importance ..... 5

Important / Unique Architectural or Highly Representative of an Era ..... 8

Significance of Architect / Builder ..... 10

Architectural Integrity ..... 10

Relationship to Surrounding Area ..... 10

References ..... 11

## Age



Figure 1: Image of 2500 Creighton Street (Google Street View).



Figure 2: 1750 map of Halifax showing South Suburb. Source: Heritage Assessment Report, Dr. Allen B. Robertson

The Morris House, situated at 2500 Creighton Street, is the oldest wooden dwelling in Halifax. It was moved from its original location at 1273 Hollis Street (corner of Hollis and Morris Street) in late 2013. Initially believed to be constructed in 1781, research has found that it is older than previously thought and was very likely built in 1764, only 15 years after the founding of Halifax.

At the time of its construction on Hollis Street, it was located outside the town palisade in an area known as the South Suburb (Lot 1B, Block F 18). The lot itself was initially part of a crown land grant to John Baragon, a cooper, in March of 1750. John Baragon sold the property to Dennis Heffernan, also a cooper, in 1753 for £2 10s. The low price would suggest it was a vacant lot at the time of the sale. Dennis Heffernan owned the property for 27 years, but did not register his title until 1764, suggesting that he made significant investment in the property in that year (such as construction of a dwelling) and wanted to secure title. In 1777 he sold the lot to Charles Morris II for £65, a significant sum at the time. The large amount is a strong indication that there was a building on the lot at the time of sale.

Morris was Surveyor General of Nova Scotia, second in a long family line of Provincial Surveyors-General who laid-out settlements and boundaries throughout Nova Scotia, typically for the demarcation of crown land grants and administrative boundaries. The Morris House was actually the location of office space for the family's surveying operations, while they lived in an adjoining dwelling.

Following the Morris family's tenure on the property, the building was used as a private residence by various owners throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.





Figure 3: J.F.W. Des Barres Map of Peninsular Halifax (1777) showing south suburb depicting the Morris Building as the sole occupant of the of the lot. Building circled. Source: Heritage Assessment Report by Dr. Allen B Roberson



Figure 4: The Morris House at 1273 Hollis Street in April 1953 next to the Victoria Hotel. Source: The Griffin, June 2013, volume 38, No.2 ISSN 0384 7335

In 1898 the Morris House was moved about 30 meters south along Hollis Street to make way for construction of the Victoria Hotel, where it remained until 2009. Throughout that time it was variously used as a private residence, hotel and rooming house.



Figure 5: Morris House - 2009. Located on Nova Scotia power lands. Source: The Griffin, June 2013, 38, No.2 ISSN 0384 7335

In December of 2009 the building was slated for demolition to make way for the construction of an apartment complex. Through the efforts of volunteer groups including the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and the Ecology Action Centre, funds were raised to temporarily move the building to a neighbouring lot owned by Nova Scotia Power. During that time the building was the subject of several research projects by students at Mount Allison, St. Mary's and Dalhousie Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College. One such project consisted of dendrochronological research (age analysis of wood construction materials) to try and establish an accurate year that the building was constructed. The research suggested that the

dwelling was built between 1758 and 1764. This information, along with the fact Dennis Heffeman only registered the deed for the lot in 1764, is a very strong indication the house was built in that year.

In 2013 the Morris House was finally moved for a third time to a vacant lot on the corner of Charles and Creighton Streets in the North End of Halifax. At that point additional fundraising and renovations were undertaken to rehabilitate the building for reuse as space for at-risk youth.

# Historical or Architectural Importance

## Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

The building has great historical value for its association with several generations of the Morris Family, all of whom held the title of Surveyor General of Nova Scotia. The house is most commonly associated with Charles Morris I who is reputed to have surveyed the original town-site of Halifax and was an important figure in Halifax and Nova Scotia history. Interestingly Charles Morris I never owned the Morris House, but it was his son, Charles Morris II who purchased it in 1777.

### Charles Morris I (1711-1781)

The Honourable Charles Morris was born in Boston Massachusetts, the eldest son of Charles Morris and Esther Rainsthorpe (despite being the second generation to hold the name Charles, for consistency with the historical record Charles Morris Junior is referred to in this report as Charles Morris I). He married Mary Reid who was the daughter of the Attorney General of Massachusetts Bay, John Reid. In 1747 he was given orders to raise a regiment of 100 men and come to Nova Scotia in defence of an anticipated attack from a large French fleet. Once in Nova Scotia he was ordered to march to Minas where he arrived to take part in “The Battle of Grand Pre”. He returned to Massachusetts shortly after the battle.



Figure 6: Charles Morris. Source: Dictionary of Canadian Biography.

In the spring of 1748 Charles Morris was sent back to Nova Scotia. This time he was to explore parts of the province to assess what areas were settled and by whom. He wrote detailed reports with related maps of three French settlements: Annapolis Royal, Minas and Chignecto. The reports were sent to Boston and then on to London and formed instrumental intelligence ahead of the founding of Halifax.

Charles Morris I arrived at Halifax in 1749 and was here to greet Edward Cornwallis' settlement expedition upon its arrival. He was appointed Chief Surveyor of Lands within the Province of that year and assisted Cornwallis in laying out the townsite. In 1751 and 1752 He surveyed the coast of Nova Scotia from present day Liverpool to Chezzetcook to find possible sites for new townships for British and “foreign protestant” (mainly German) settlers. He created some of the first British maps of Canada's maritime region and laid-out the Halifax Commons. In 1753 he went to what is now Lunenburg and assisted with the founding and surveying of the town.

The fall of Louisburg in 1758 put an end to French claims in Nova Scotia and set-off a wave of British and New England immigration to the Province. Morris assisted in the relocation and establishment of many settlers between 1759-1770 in several areas of Nova Scotia. Windsor (Piziquid), Truro (Cobequid), Liverpool and Yarmouth are a few of the places where he surveyed town grids for new settlements.

In late 1760 he mapped Cape Breton and Canso as well as areas of the Saint John River. He also surveyed the street grid for Charlottetown in 1768.

Charles Morris I's Judiciary career was also very rich. In 1750 he was appointed a justice of the peace for the town of Halifax. In 1752 he was made a justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas. In 1763 he was one of two judges appointed to assist Chief Justice Belcher and in 1764 he was appointed master in Court of Chancery. He was acting Chief Justice of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court between 1776 and 1778, passing away only two years after his retirement on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1781.

### **Charles Morris II (1731-1801)**

As previously stated Charles Morris I never owned the dwelling. It was his son, Charles Morris II who purchased the house in 1777, although the elder Morris likely worked out of the family office in the building and had strong connections to the property.

Charles Morris II was born in Hopkinton, Massachusetts in 1731. He was the son of Charles Morris I and Mary Reid. He married Elizabeth Bond Leggett and came to Nova Scotia in 1760. He assisted his father with his work and was named Surveyor General of Nova Scotia after his father's death in 1781. As the new Surveyor General of Nova Scotia his workload was heavy with loyalist land claims following the American Revolution. The work coupled with health issues encouraged him to hire his son Charles Morris III as well as other deputy surveyors to assist him.

Between 1770 and 1785 he served in the House of Assembly for Sunbury County (then part of Nova Scotia, but now in New Brunswick). He was also Registrar of the Vice Admiralty Court from 1771 until his death in 1801, and Registrar of Will and Probate from 1791 to 1798. In 1798 he was named Surrogate General of the Probate Court and Justice of the peace.

Although he may not have been as accomplished as his father, Charles Morris II was nevertheless a good businessman. He held land in many different locations in Nova Scotia including the township of Maugerville (NB), Passamaquoddy Bay (NB) and around the Annapolis Valley. Over his lifetime he bought and sold many pieces of land including the two properties located at the corner of Hollis and Morris Streets which he purchased in 1777. It is believed that Mr. Morris used this building first as a dwelling and then for his surveying business. A number of readings refer to the building as a business while others refer to it as a place of residence.

### **Charles Morris III (1759-1831)**

Charles Morris III was born in Hopkinton Massachusetts in 1759. He came to Halifax with his parents in 1760 and married Charlotte Pernette in 1786. In 1778 He was commissioned a lieutenant in the Royal Nova Scotia Volunteers. He became lieutenant of the 70<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot in Halifax in 1782. He was later appointed a Deputy Surveyor by his father, although the date of this appointment is unclear. At his father's death in 1801, Charles Morris III became the Surveyor General of Nova Scotia.

Like his father and grandfather, Charles Morris III also had political aspirations. In 1788 he was elected to the House of Assembly for Halifax County. He was re-elected in 1797 and sat until 1806.

In 1808 he was appointed to the Executive Council and continued to serve until his death. Charles Morris III was a Captain, and later a Major in the Halifax Militia. He was a Justice of the Peace, Registrar of Will and Probate from 1798 and Surrogate General of the court of probate and Registrar of the Vice-Admiralty Court in 1802. He assumed nearly all of these titles after his father.

One of Charles Morris III's major achievements was to survey and develop a road between Halifax and Annapolis Royal. The road served the new settlements and gave access to inland resources. He also worked meticulously to resolve contentious land claims between individuals and groups such as Acadians, Mi'kmaq, and Loyalists.

Although Charles Morris III was a public servant, he managed to accumulate considerable wealth. Upon his death in 1831 he left an estate estimated between £8,000 and £9,000, a considerable sum in those days. He also had a 900 acre country estate near Halifax and a home in town comparable to other wealthy people in Halifax.

Prior to his death he was replaced as Surveyor General of Nova Scotia by his son John Spry Morris. John Spry Morris served as Surveyor General of Nova Scotia until the office was merged with the Commissioner of Crown Lands 1851. The Morris family held the position of Surveyor General of Nova Scotia through four generations and the entire existence of the office itself. The building now known as the Morris House remained in the Morris Family for over 60 years, finally being sold at auction by Charles Morris III's widow in 1850.

### 2013 Relocation

The relocation of the Morris House to Creighton Street during the late evenings of January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2013 was in itself an important event, extensively covered by national news media and the subject of an HGTV reality docuseries called "Monster Moves". The move was completed by the firm of S. Rushton of New Glasgow, who placed the building on a flatbed trailer using a series of hydraulic jacks. Two excavators were used in addition to a tractor-trailer to push the house up the steep incline of Sackville Street.



Figure 7: Morris House moving up Sackville Street, Halifax on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2013. Photo by Michael Tutton, of The Canadian Press. Courtesy Huffington Post

The process was made more challenging by the number of overhead wires that had to be temporarily moved. Nova Scotia Power donated the time of dozens of line crews to undertake this work through the two-day process. The house was finally placed on a prepared foundation at 2500 Creighton Street on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2013 amid a crowd of onlookers and media.

## Important / Unique Architectural or Highly Representative of an Era.

### Construction Type/Building Technology

The Morris House is a two-and-a-half storey, timber frame building. Timber framing, often called post-and-beam construction, is a form of carpentry that involves connecting large pieces of wood together with woodworking joints using mortise-and-tenon construction. Metal or wood pegs, called treenails, are used to fasten the timber together to create the frame and trusses. The trusses were then fastened to the frame with treenails. At the time of the dwelling's construction, wooden pegs would have been used as it is unlikely metal hardware was available or very limited at the time. The abundance of large and cheap timber, along with traditional English building practices helped popularize timber-frame homes throughout North America.



Figure 8: Image of 1237 Hollis street C. 1840: J.S Clow watercolour depicting the Morris mansion (centre) and office (circled) at the intersection of Hollis and Morris street. (Original at NSARM)

Dendroarchaeological analysis (wood age analysis) of the floor beams identify the date the trees were cut to between 1741 and 1764. The dwelling also contains construction methods that were common at the time, but are now extremely rare in Nova Scotia due to the small number of remaining 18<sup>th</sup> Century buildings. These include joists which were transformed from logs using only an axe (hand hewn). Beams and joists in the Morris house are marked with roman numerals which would have aided with assembly and construction.

Another important construction detail is the fact that this building contains rare brick nogging (Bricks roughly mortared between the wood studs and beams within the building's exterior walls). This feature is only found in the oldest buildings in Halifax, including St. Paul's Anglican church. Brick nogging served many purposes including soundproofing, fireproofing, and thermal massing at a time before insulation was widely used. The origin of the bricks is unknown, but they could have originated at a brick factory in Dartmouth, one of that town's earliest industries. Bricks were also known to have been brought to Halifax as ships ballast from overseas or from New England.

It should be noted that because of the brick nogging, the Morris House weights 80 tons, which is quite heavy for a building of its size. The weight of the Morris House posed a challenge during its various moves, especially in 2013 when the building had to be hauled up Sackville Street in Downtown Halifax. Currently the building sits on a cement foundation. However, originally the building would have had a stone foundation.

## Style

The building was designed in the Georgian architectural style, which is characterized by square or rectangular building forms with symmetrical windows and door placement and simple detailing. They often have hipped, truncated roofs, sometimes with dormers. They may be constructed of brick, stone, or wood.

An early 1840s watercolour by J.S. Clow (fig. 8) depicting the office at the corner of Hollis and Morris Street (fig. 8) shows this simple Georgian design prior to the addition of Victorian elements later in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The roofline facing Morris Street had a strong triangular gable dormer that was later removed. The placement of the windows is very symmetrical, with two floors of 3 windows all evenly spaced. The side of the building which faces Hollis Street had windows on all floors which were evenly centered on the wall. The right side of the roof has a Scottish dormer which cannot be seen in the painting.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century the building had some Victorian architectural elements added. The entrance along Hollis Street was originally at street level but was raised and a covered porch added. A two-storey bay window was also added in the 1890s. The projecting bay window on the first floor is typical of the Queen Anne style common between 1880 and 1910. This would support the estimated date of the additions.

Through the years many additions, alterations, and renovations have been made to the Morris House. Regardless, the building has been beautifully restored and retains much of its characteristics and remains a valuable historic building.

## Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the Morris House include:

- Truncated, pitched roof;
- Wood shingle cladding;
- Five-sided Scottish dormer;
- c.1890 front bay windows;
- c.1890 enclosed front porch;
- Wooden hung, sash windows with divided lights;
- Cornerboards and returns; and
- Dentils under eave.



Figure 9: Truncated narrow flat roof with dentils under eave. Source: Heritage Assessment Report – Dr. Allen B. Robertson



Figure 10: Scottish dormer. Source: Heritage Assessment Report – Dr. Allen B. Robertson

## Significance of Architect / Builder

No information regarding the architect or builder of the house has been identified.

## Architectural Integrity

Due to the efforts of the late Dr. Phil Pacey, a former President of the Heritage Trust and member of the volunteer committee that oversaw the relocation and restoration of the Morris House from 2009 to 2016, the architectural integrity of the dwelling is very high. Pacey was firm that although the building was not a registered heritage property, that it should someday be designated. As such, every effort was made to undertake restoration work in-keeping with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

The historic form of the building, for the most part has been maintained and represents two distinct architectural periods; the original Georgian form, and the later Victorian additions. The truncated roof as well as the Scottish dormer have been maintained in their original 1764 form. The dentils under the front eaves of the house have also been conserved. Furthermore, the brick nogging, which is not common has also been kept despite the extra weight it adds to the building. The original five-sided Scottish Dormer, iconic of Georgian Halifax architecture, has been preserved.

Over the years, several additions, alterations, and renovations have been done to the house. The unique two-storey bay window and a covered porch were added in the 1890s. The enclosed porch has wood detailing as well as dentils under the eaves to match those under the roof eave. A shed-roof addition has recently been constructed at the rear of the dwelling, however characteristics of the original house have been incorporated into its design. Some of these characteristics include two-over-two hung windows and wood shingles.

The south side of the roof (originally facing Morris Street), had a wide gabled dormer that was removed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 2013, solar panels were added to this side of the roof. The panels have the same angle as the roof and do not detract from the building. As well some of the windows on the left side of the building (originally facing Morris Street) were removed to make the building more accommodating to its new use and due to their proximity to the neighbouring building.

## Relationship to Surrounding Area

The Morris House has been relocated from the Old South Suburb to what was known as the Old North Suburb on Creighton Street. The North Suburb was another area of Halifax outside the town palisade which saw early development, though not quite as old as the building's previous location. Adjacent to the Morris house are other examples of Georgian and late Victorian architecture, many from the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These dwellings are examples of simple workers houses and are a similar style and scale to the Morris House, creating a very natural transition. In fact, the building could easily be mistaken to be native to its new neighbourhood.

## Conclusion

Morris House was built 15 years after the founding of Halifax and just after the signing of the Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years War between Britain and France. It was used as an office by four generations of Morris family, a dynasty of Surveyors-General of Nova Scotia, and prominent jurists. Even though this house has changed in appearance and location over time, the fact it has survived for 256 is extremely noteworthy.

The efforts by volunteers, artists and others to save, celebrate, relocate and restore the building have all added considerably to the history of the house and have grown its local prominence. Based on its age, its historical connections and its unique construction type, the heritage value of the Morris House is undeniable.

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