

Heritage Advisory Committee
February 27, 2024

HALIFAX

HRTG-2023-00650

Demolition Application for 1259 South Park Street, Halifax

Request to Demolish a Municipally Registered Heritage Property and Contributing Heritage Resource in the Schmitville Heritage Conservation District (HCD)

Application

Applicant: Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth

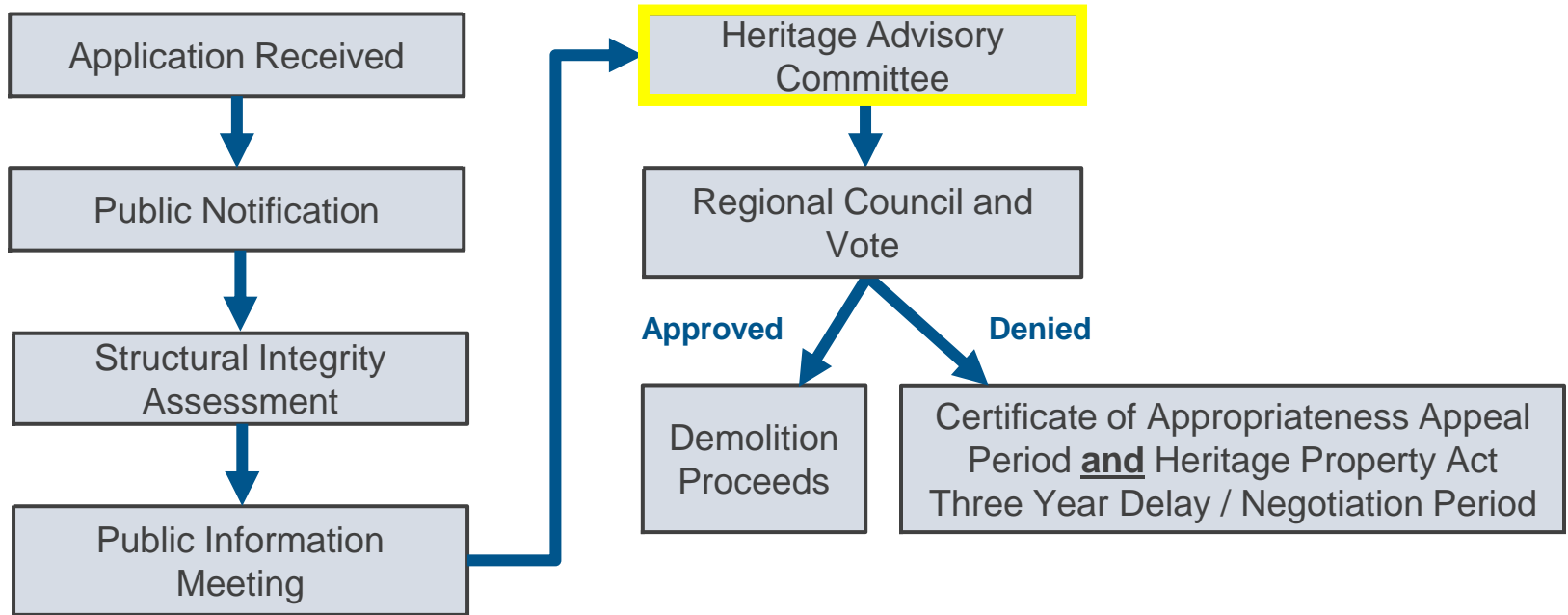
Location: 1259 South Park Street, Halifax
(*The Cemetery Keeper's House, which includes a Late-Victorian Plain style, circa 1846 dwelling*)

Proposal: Demolish the registered heritage property & contributing heritage resource, excluding the northern side stone wall, which will be retained.



Demolition Approval Process

Process for demolition of a Municipally Registered Heritage Property and a Contributing Heritage Resource in the Schmitzville Heritage Conservation District



Enabling Legislation / Policy

Heritage Property Act of Nova Scotia

- 17 (1) Municipal heritage property shall not be substantially altered in exterior or public-building interior appearance or demolished without the approval of the municipality.

- (2) An application for permission to substantially alter the exterior or public-building interior appearance of or demolish municipal heritage property shall be made in writing to the municipality.

Schmidville Heritage Conservation District By-law

11. A Certificate of Appropriateness shall be required for:
[...] (c) demolition or removal of a building or structure that is part of a municipal heritage property or is a contributing heritage resource; [...]

Site Context



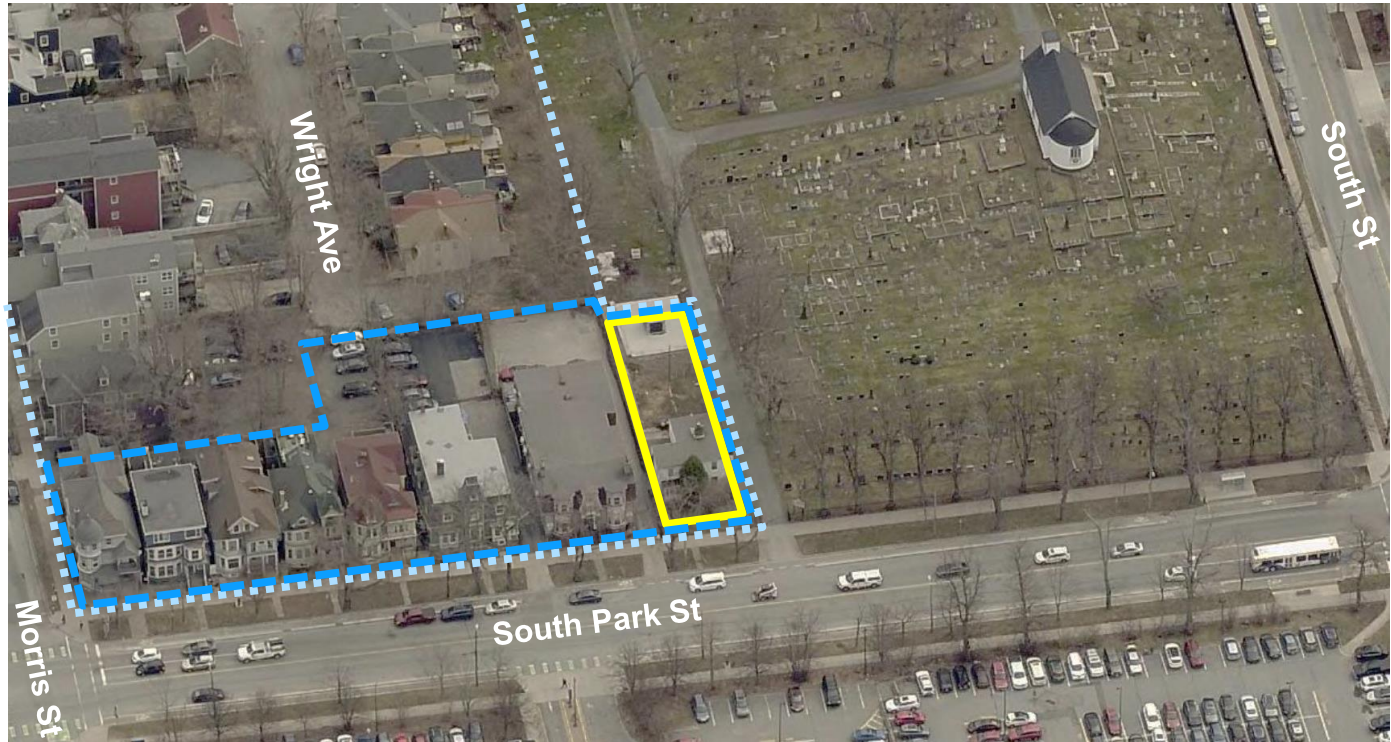
Subject
Property



Registered
Heritage
Streetscape



Schmidville
HCD
Boundary



Additional Site Context

South Park Street Victorian Streetscape (Registered)



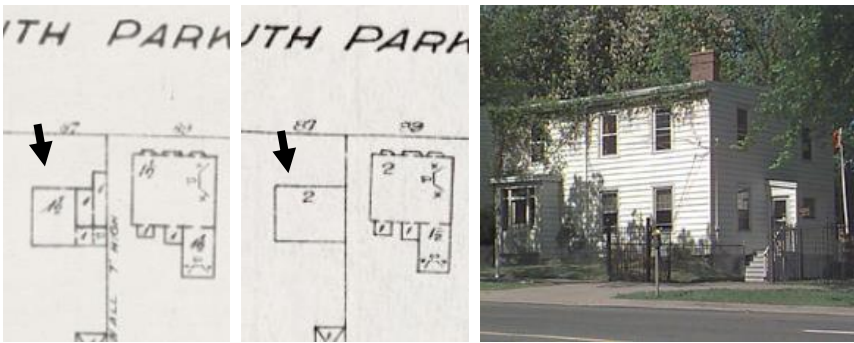
Holy Cross Cemetery with the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows and the Cemetery Keeper's House

Clarification of Scope



The applicant has provided written confirmation that the scope of this demolition is limited to the Cemetery Keeper's House and does not include the stone wall associated with Letson's Tannery and located on the northern boundary of the property, which will be retained and conserved.

1259 South Park Street – Heritage Value



Top: 1849 J.S. Clow Lithograph of Holy Cross Cemetery
Bottom (left to right): 1895 insurance plan, 1914 insurance plan, 1997 photograph

- Originally a vernacular style dwelling constructed circa 1846 by local carpenter and contractor Rowland Eustace for the cemetery sexton, William F. Stoker;
- Expanded and modified in the late 1800s / early 1900s in the Late-Victorian Plain style to its present form;
- Longstanding history as the home of successive cemetery keepers / superintendents;
- Stone wall running along the northern boundary of the property associated with Letson's Tannery;
- Timber frame construction and stone foundations still present, dating from 1846.

1259 South Park Street – Structural Condition



Elevation photos taken during site visit (May 31, 2023)

- The building’s condition is generally poor, as it has evidently been left vacant for many years
- The applicant has submitted a Condition Report carried out in August 2017 and unattributed (Attachment B), asserting the building is beyond repair.
- An HRM Building Official conducted an inspection of the Cemetery Keeper’s House at 1259 South Park Street on May 31st, 2023, and completed a Structural Integrity Report (Attachment E) based on this inspection
- The conclusion of the Building Official’s report is that “repairing this structure would require an extensive amount of work, however the building could be repaired”

1259 South Park Street – Community Engagement

- A Public Information Meeting (PIM) was held June 7th, 2023, at Halifax Hall in City Hall
- Consistent with the procedure outlined in Attachment C, notice of this meeting was provided through a sign posted on-site, advertisement in the Chronicle Herald, a page on the municipal website, and postcards mailed to properties within a 76m (250ft) radius
- Notes from this Public Information Meeting can be found in Attachment H and public submissions received at this meeting can be found in Attachment I
- Attendees expressed general disagreement with the applicant's proposal to demolish the Cemetery Keeper's House and replace it with a columbarium, among other concerns

Discussion

- The building exhibits a moderate level of heritage integrity, with some original 1846 character-defining elements and many late 1800s / early 1900s character-defining elements still present
- The building's condition is generally poor, and upon inspection, HRM's Building Official described it as requiring an extensive amount of work, but still repairable
- If this demolition application is denied, the applicant may explore complete or partial conservation and adaptive-reuse options through the Substantial Alterations application process
- If denied, the only remaining avenue for demolition is through successfully appealing the denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness at the NSUARB, followed by waiting three years per Section 18 of the Heritage Property Act
- Approval of this demolition application may risk encouraging demolition by neglect, a phenomenon where owners of registered heritage properties allow their buildings to fall into disrepair, and then use that neglect to justify demolition

Other Considerations

- If this demolition application is approved and the Cemetery Keeper's House is demolished, then per the Schmidville HCD By-law, the property will no longer be considered a contributing heritage resource
- No amendments to the Schmidville HCD Plan or By-law would be required, and any new development will still require a Certificate of Appropriateness, as the property remains within the Schmidville HCD
- The stone masonry wall along the northern boundary of the property will remain a character-defining element, thus staff will not advise the deregistration of the property, and it will remain a municipally registered heritage property
- Future development may require a Substantial Alteration Application

Recommendation

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

1. Refuse the application by the Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth under the Heritage Property Act to demolish the registered heritage property at 1259 South Park Street, Halifax; and
2. Refuse the associated application under the Schidmerville Heritage Conservation District Plan and By-law for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of a contributing heritage resource.

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Thank You