

Re: 1269 Mohawk Road,

I have done a lot of research on it because there are plans to demolish a good part of it, and we believe strongly it should be protected as a property of significant historical interest.

It was listed in the Ontario Heritage Inventory as a property of historical interest, prior to the amalgamation. Strangely, the reasons why it was listed were not there. Instead some " — " marks were there. Other properties listed had details to describe why they were considered important.

This historic farmhouse has been a Landmark at the boundary between Hamilton and Ancaster, most likely since it was built about 1880. It is on the Ancaster side. It fronts onto Mohawk Road, which was the original Indigenous trail that brought people to the area from as far away as the state of New York.

It probably replaced the original log home of the Blaine family who were most likely given the 200 acre tract of land initially.

It also marked the location of the road (now represented by Scenic Drive), that led to the Escarpment, where there were trails down to the developing city below. In maps of 1875, you can see that the Blaines had property at the foot of the escarpment. They were among the first farmers to bring goods to the market below, alongside their neighbours, the Hornings.

The farmhouse is a late Victorian Farmhouse built in a unique, 3 wing design. The front looks familiar in Southern Ontario, but the overall structure is different from anything I have seen on the heritage inventory lists or elsewhere. There are L- shaped homes listed, but 3 wings are unusual, I think.

From the back, you can see that it was all built at the same time. The brick is perfectly matched red brick with a subtle design of some lighter bricks for edges and trims. They were probably made locally. It is considered to be a 2 1/2 storey building.

The Farmhouse symbolically represents 13 families of farmers that, working together, carved the road(s) down the Escarpment, with primitive tools. They connected to the area where Wilson Street and Main Street West now meet, and where Dundas begins. This is where the first school was established.

I read that the Wilson Street access up the Escarpment was a natural break in the Escarpment but had become a toll road. These farmers overcame that obstacle to their markets, too. One of the families, the Filmans, also created Filman Road, which prior to the 403 development, was another road connecting Mohawk Road with this area.

The Blaine family faced a lot of tragedy from 2 cholera outbreaks, losing family members at a young age, but continued to work the land until more prosperous times. The Farmhouse is a symbol of these prosperous times. Instead of the "gingerbread" and other ornate features of earlier Victorian designs, the house was built to represent Family and Hospitality with its unique structure.

The Horning family lived on the Hamilton side of the boundary, as neighbours, and I think they were instrumental in bringing the farmers together to build roads and markets below the Escarpment. There are some great stories about Mr. Horning. He had 9 children, dressed in buckskin most of his life, was a strong voice for change, built Horning Road, and left everything behind in the USA to start over in Canada instead of getting into political conflict. He also persevered while the officials here held out on giving him land, and then cleared 200 acres of mostly bush and escarpment rock, and also helped the others.

Personally, that farmhouse was always a landmark to me. It was important to know where Ancaster ended and Hamilton began or vice versa. I loved the rolling farmland, and the horses I passed in the former Meadowlands area. It was when I started reading about the early farmers that I really grew in awareness of how this is the last remnant of any reminder of those early settlers. We should be so aware and grateful for them. The farmers provided for the City as it grew. It wasn't the city reaching up. It was the farmers who built the connections.

The farmhouse looks almost like an "eyesore" now. There are ugly signs, random strings of lights here and there, and now tall grass and weeds growing. I think instead it should be taken care of with pride,

with a detailed plaque on the retaining wall, and at the most, the “wings” converted into single family homes.

It's not an impossible hope yet. We just need some huge help to bring attention to this situation.

There are other concerns too. The condo plans break all the Ancaster bylaws because the property is only half the size that has been claimed. It's 1/2 an acre, not approximately an acre, (.4 hectare) that is required. It requires huge retaining walls on all sides to accommodate an underground parking lot and because the property is elevated. There is a huge drop down to the daycare children in the playground below. How can they manoeuvre huge excavating equipment, etc, without disturbing the retaining walls or destroying the farmhouse? Anyone who views the property can see it is far smaller than an acre.

I hope this is clear enough. We would truly appreciate any attention you can bring to this matter. Many properties with heritage designation that I have read about are chosen for their architectural features or their historical features alone. This beautiful old farmhouse has both.