

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE- SEPTEMBER 18, 2006**

### **REQUEST TO ENACT A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE UNDER PART IV OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, THE NATHANIEL WALLACE HOUSE, 137 WOODBRIDGE AVENUE**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Recreation & Culture recommends approval of the following Heritage Vaughan Committee recommendation:

1. That a by-law be enacted to designate the Nathaniel Wallace House, 137 Woodbridge Avenue under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

#### **Economic Impact**

There is no economic impact related to this request.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to enact a by-law that would designate under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Nathaniel Wallace House, 137 Woodbridge Avenue.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

Council at its meeting of November 27, 1995 approved the recommendation to designate under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City-owned Nathaniel Wallace House located at 137 Woodbridge Avenue. As required under the Act in 1995, a public "Notice of Council's Intention to Designate" was published in local papers for three consecutive weeks and this resulted in no public objection to the designation being filed with the City or the former Ontario Heritage Foundation of the Ministry of Culture.

Subsequently in early 1996, the City severed and sold the rear portion of the property and as a result, the designation of the property was suspended. On April 27, 1998, Council approved the recommendation that requested that a by-law be enacted to designate the Wallace house. Again, this by-law was postponed until such time as a legal description of the property was completed. The final designation of the Wallace House was never pursued after this time as the house was leased out for 5 years and used as a sales office for a local development.

The Wallace House Committee, who presently use the building for the purpose of providing community programs that help educate and promote the history and natural heritage of Woodbridge, requested in May 2006 that the house be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage Vaughan reviewed the request at its meeting on June 21, 2006 and recommended approval of the final designation of the house.

The Ontario Heritage Trust (formerly the Ontario Heritage Foundation of the Ministry of Culture) has advised that as the "Notice of Intention to Designate" required by the Ontario Heritage Act was officially published in local papers in 1995 and that this publication resulted in no objections being filed with the City at that time and as the property is owned by the City of Vaughan and the City is pursuing the designation of the property, the publication requirements of City's "Notice of Intention to Designate" phase of the designation is not required to be repeated at this time. The relevant transition provision

in the amended legislation at subsection 29 (16) of the Ontario Heritage Act authorizes a notice delivered under the former legislation to be continued under the legislation as it read prior to its amendment.

The Nathaniel Wallace House was built in 1873 by Captain Nathaniel Wallace an Irish immigrant who settled in Woodbridge in 1833. The Wallace family was a significant contributor to the economic development of Woodbridge and active in local and Provincial politics. Architecturally, the structure is an excellent example of its Gothic Revival style in the City of Vaughan. Most of the structure is original, having undergone few changes to both its exterior and interior. Of equal significance, is the building's importance in maintaining the historic integrity of the Woodbridge Avenue streetscape.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

Section 4.6 of the Vaughan Vision encourages the preservation and enhancement of the natural and built heritage environment and encourages the preservation of significant historical structures and communities.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources to implement all points outlined in this report have been allocated and approved.

### **Conclusion**

The Nathaniel Wallace House is a landmark structure in the Woodbridge historic core area and the designation of the structure will highlight the significance of the structure in the community.

### **Attachment**

1. Designation Report

### **Report Prepared By**

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Respectfully submitted,

Marlon Kallideen  
Commissioner of Community Services

# ATTACHMENT 1

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

***NATHANIEL WALLACE HOUSE, 137 Woodbridge Avenue, Woodbridge  
Part of Lot F, Plan 1200, Vaughan; Part 2 65R-20183***

### ***Historical Significance***

The history of the Wallace family in Woodbridge spans four generations and is a story of pioneering individuals attaining recognition as successful political representatives and as prosperous commercial entrepreneurs. This report will focus on four members of the Wallace family, namely, Nathaniel Wallace, his second son Thomas Frazier, his third son Nathaniel Clarke, and his youngest son Robert Tucker, in an effort to highlight their contribution to the early development of the Village of Woodbridge (formerly known as the Village of Burwick).

Nathaniel Wallace arrived to the Vaughan area from Carney, Ireland in 1834 at age twenty-four. His wife Ann Belinda, from the same place, arrived a year earlier in 1833. They were married in Woodbridge in 1835, known at the time as the Village of Burwick. Their marriage produced several children, with seven in total living to adulthood: George, Matilda, Thomas Frazier, Nathaniel Clarke, Charles, Annie (Ann) Jane, and Robert Tucker.

### ***Commercial/Entrepreneurial Contributions***

From the 1850's to the 1880's, Woodbridge was a thriving economic centre. It was home to one of the largest manufacturers of agriculture implements in the area, *Abell Agricultural Works*, a company that employed over one hundred people at the time. Milling operations were located to the north and south of the Village: Pine Grove to the north (Islington Avenue and Langstaff Road) and Brownsville to the south (Highway 7 and Islington Avenue). The existence of these neighbouring industries provides evidence of the community's strong economic base at the time.

Nathaniel Wallace, operated the Inkerman Hotel from the 1860s to the 1880s (present day address is 166 Woodbridge Avenue). By 1871 Nathaniel Wallace is listed in the Canada Census as the proprietor of five village lots, all containing various businesses. Although Nathaniel is recorded as the owner of these lots, further investigation shows that these properties were occupied by Nathaniel's sons: Charles, Thomas Frazier, Nathaniel Clarke, and his youngest son Robert Tucker.

Thomas Frazier Wallace and Nathaniel Clarke Wallace attended Weston Grammar School, and subsequently taught there from the time of their graduation until 1867. In this same year, with the assistance of their father, the two brothers opened a general store at the southeast corner of Woodbridge Avenue and Wallace Street. The store was known as the *Dominion Exchange* (present day address is 167 Woodbridge Avenue) which they operated very successfully for many years. In reference to the brothers as business partners, a 1902 newspaper notice remarked: "Thomas Frazier and Nathaniel Clarke had been in business for 34 years together without one angry word ever having passed between them."

The *Dominion Exchange* was one of the first shopping emporiums in the Village of Burwick. In 1875 the business was expanded to include a millinery shop at the top level of the building. As the name implies, local farmers brought produce to the store such as eggs, poultry, dairy goods, butter and prepared meats, in exchange for items which could not be made domestically, such as sugar, teas, coffees and candy. An 1879 advertisement for the store indicated marriage licences could also be obtained there. The *Dominion Exchange* was eventually taken over by Nathaniel Clarke Wallace's sons, Leonard and Thomas, after their father's death in 1901.

In 1878, the Wallace brothers (Nathaniel Clarke and Thomas Frazier), opened the Woodbridge Flour Mill at the south end of Wallace Street, just north of Highway 7. This business was very successful and employed approximately eight to ten individuals at one time. It was operated and managed by members of the Wallace family until 1923.

The youngest of the Wallace brothers, Robert Tucker Wallace, opened a post-office on the north side of Woodbridge Avenue in 1883 (first post-office in Woodbridge was opened in 1855). After his death, his wife Hannah continued to operate the post-office and delivered the mail, via horse and carriage, to the area.

#### *Political Contributions*

In the political realm, Wallace family members served their local community effectively, holding political office at various levels of service. Nathaniel Wallace served as Treasurer for the Village of Woodbridge from 1882 to 1883. His son, Robert Tucker Wallace, would also serve as Treasurer for the Village from 1883 to 1892. Thomas Frazier Wallace was elected to the first Council for the Village of Woodbridge in 1882 and later served as Reeve of Woodbridge between 1886 and 1901.

Perhaps the most notable of political careers was that of Nathaniel Clarke Wallace who was the first Deputy Reeve of Vaughan between 1874-1878. In 1878, he also served as Warden of York County and that same year was elected to represent the West Riding of York in the House of Commons. He stayed in this Federal seat until 1882 and was re-elected in 1887, 1891, and lastly elected as Controller of Canadian Customs in 1892. Nathaniel Clarke Wallace's son, Thomas, later ran in his father's former political seat and won. Thomas Wallace represented this Riding (Centre-York) in the House of Commons from 1908 until his sudden death in 1921.

Other noteworthy contributions by members of the Wallace family include the donation of the lands establishing a church, Christ Church Anglican, and adjoining cemetery, located today on the east side of Islington Avenue, north of Woodbridge Avenue. Additionally, as Irish-Protestants, they were involved in the founding of the Woodbridge Orange Lodge No. 28. In 1866, Nathaniel Clarke Wallace became the secretary of the Lodge and in 1891 he was elected President of the Great Council of the Orangemen of the World by an international assembly.

Lastly, Thomas Frazier Wallace and Robert Tucker Wallace were both actively involved in the Woodbridge Agricultural Fair and Agricultural Society and sat on its executive committee for many years.

The substantial legacy left by these early Wallace family members is also inherent in the built heritage associated with their properties, which still remain along the historic Woodbridge streetscape. There are approximately six structures built for the Wallace family, which still remain in Woodbridge.

These buildings include those found at the following municipal addresses: 137 Woodbridge Avenue (Nathaniel Wallace House), 185 Woodbridge Avenue (Thomas Frazier Wallace House), 166 Woodbridge Avenue (Inkerman Hotel), 167 Woodbridge Avenue (Dominion Exchange Building) and 249 Clarence Street (Nathaniel Clarke Wallace House). The building at 137 Woodbridge Avenue, was built in 1873 for Nathaniel Wallace. Prior to the construction of this building, records show Nathaniel Wallace resided in the Inkerman Hotel with his family. His youngest son Robert Tucker Jr. inherited the Nathaniel Wallace House after his father's death in 1885 and Robert Tucker Wallace's granddaughter, Ruth Wallace, was the last Wallace to live in the house. The structure was purchased by the City of Vaughan from the Ruth Wallace Estate in 1994.

## ***Architectural Significance***

The Nathaniel Wallace House, located at 137 Woodbridge Avenue, Woodbridge, was the first of three residences constructed for members of the Wallace family.

This building has maintained its original architectural integrity, as few changes have been made to the structure since its construction.

The location of the house on Woodbridge Avenue with its double gable and bay window façade exemplifies the Gothic Revival style of the Victorian period during which it was erected. Built in 1873, the Nathaniel Wallace House is a two storey brick house constructed on a stone foundation. The Nathaniel Wallace house was built using red brick with yellow brick accents delineating the building's exterior features such as its voussoirs, quoins and belt coarse. These decorative features are found on the facade of the building (north elevation).

The structure has an ell-shaped plan, with a wraparound verandah extending the lengths of the north-east, east and south elevations.

The entranceway is found on the ell extension of the house at a right angle to the main portion of the house. The entranceway is segmental in shape as are all structural openings at the facade. The front door is composed of four vertical panels with the top panels being longer and forming a semi-circular shape. The entranceway supports a multi-pane transom with sidelights found on either side of the door.

Along the ell (eastern) portion of the façade, a yellow brick, belt course with a cross motif runs below the eaves, interrupted only by a gable window found on this elevation.

The westerly part of the north face has a three-sided bay, each with yellow brick voussoirs. The yellow brick voussoirs (as found on all windows at the façade) provide a frame for the top area of the windows, extending downward and tapering to a point. The brickwork outlining the highest part of the voussoirs is moulded to form a chevron pattern across this portion of the window area. All windows have a two-over-two pane arrangement (except for the side windows of the bay).

Above the bay window of the façade is an entablature which supports a wrought iron railing forming a balcony. The ironwork on the balcony features a curvilinear design with scroll and rosette motifs throughout. A walkout doorway provides an entrance to the balcony. Above this door, a stone is embedded in the brickwork containing information on the date and builder of the house: "Burwick, erected by Capt. Wallace, 1873."

The exterior woodwork, as does the brickwork, provides additional ornamentation to the exterior of the building. Decorative bargeboard is found along the eaves of the gable roof and gable dormer at the face of the building.

The wraparound verandah encircling the ell portion of the building has a bell-cast roof, supported by treillage columns composed of geometric arches and squares. These columns are crowned with brackets having a scroll motif.

Overall, the design of the structure conveys a harmonious balance between the use of simplistic form (massing, scale, plan) and ornamental additions (treillage columns, bargeboard trim, chevron motif in its brickwork, wrought iron balcony). As such, the Nathaniel Wallace House is one of the finest examples of the Gothic Revival style in Woodbridge and is significant as a main component of the historic streetscape along Woodbridge Avenue.

## ***Notes***

1. The Woodbridge Agricultural Fair, first held in 1847, was an integral component in the promotion of the local farming community. The Agricultural Fair is still held today on the Thanksgiving Weekend in the month of October.
2. The other residential buildings built for the Wallace brothers include the structure at 185 Woodbridge Avenue (Thomas Frazier House) and the structure at 249 Clarence Street (Nathaniel Clarke Wallace House). The structure at 185 Woodbridge Avenue is similar in plan to the house at 137 Woodbridge Avenue, only the former has a board and batten exterior. The structure at 249 Clarence Street is the largest of the three structures.
3. Although the stone identifies Nathaniel Wallace as a "Capt.", it is unknown where/how such a title was acquired by him as no record refers to its origin.

### **Reference Sources**

Sawdon, H. Herb. *The Woodbridge Story*, 1961  
1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, Canada Census  
Cemetery Records, Christ Church Anglican, City of Vaughan Archives, (microfilm)  
*The Mary Wood Collection*, City of Vaughan Archives, (M990.30)  
*Village of Woodbridge Collection*, City of Vaughan Archives, (RG4)  
*The Weston Times, 1890-1950*, City of Vaughan Archives (microfilm)