

CITY OF ST. THOMAS**BY-LAW NO. 96-2005**

A by-law to designate Pinafore Park, 95 Elm Street, in the City of St. Thomas, as a property of cultural heritage value or interest.

WHEREAS pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended, the Council of a municipality may by by-law designate a property including buildings and structures thereon to be of historic or architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS notice of intention to designate the property known as Pinafore Park, 95 Elm Street, St. Thomas, Ontario, has been duly published and served, and no notice of objection has been received to such designation;

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ST. THOMAS, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. There is hereby designated as being of historic and architectural value or interest the property known as 95 Elm Street in the City of St. Thomas, all of which is described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, for the reasons set out in Schedule "B" attached hereto.
2. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered upon the title to the property described in the aforementioned Schedule "A" in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in the St. Thomas Times-Journal.
4. This by-law comes into force on the day it is finally passed.

READ a First and Second time this 18th day of July, 2005.

READ a Third time and finally passed this 18th day of July, 2005.

Original signed by "Wendell Graves"
City Clerk

Original signed by "Jeff Kohler"
Mayor



Additional Property Identifier(s) and/or Other Information

Schedule "A"

Lt 1 E/S Frances St., 1 W/S Frances St., 2 E/S Frances St., 2 W/S Frances St., 3 E/S Frances St., 3 W/S Frances St., 4 E/S Frances St., 4 W/S Frances St., 5 E/S Frances St., 5 W/S Frances St., 6 E/S Frances St., 6 W/S Frances St., 7 E/S Frances St., 7 W/S Frances St., Pl 27 St. Thomas; Lt 2 S/S RDAL BTN CON. 7 & 8, Pl 27 St. Thomas; Lt 3 S/S RDAL BTN CON. 7 & 8, Pl 27 St. Thomas; Lt 4 S/S RDAL BTN CON. 7 & 8, Pl 27 St. Thomas; Ermatinger St., Frances St. Pl 27 St. Thomas; Lt 1 Pl 241 St. Thomas; N 1/2 Lt 4, CON 7 Yarmouth; N 1/2 Lt 5, CON 7 Yarmouth except Lt 2 to 11, 28 to 36, 38 to 43, Bell Av. Pl 241, Part 1, 11R7383, Pl 218, Pl 254, Pl 310, 11M-105; Lt 75-81, Pl 254 Yarmouth except Pl 297, Pt 1, 2 11R5102; E255048, E341171, E385546, E334688; S/T STH 71450; St. Thomas
BEING THE WHOLE OF THE P.I.N.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

HISTORY

For more than 100 years, the area known as **Pinafore Park**, has been recognized as an outstanding example of a natural setting, perfect for social, cultural, civic and recreational events. The City of St. Thomas purchased the park area in 1903 and since then has been responsible for its development and maintenance.

In its early years, the Park area hosted various community events including many school and Sunday school picnics, golf and baseball games, bicycling, and shooting ranges. There was even a zoo at the park for some years until public opinion forced it to close. Sundays at the park were always busy days and continue to be so, at this time.

Today, Pinafore Park is recognized as **the crown jewel** in the large park system within the City of St. Thomas. Its status as the crown jewel has been earned by countless years of meticulous maintenance and tender loving care. That care is evident as one wanders the park and realizes that many of the features enjoyed today are from the early days of the park.

Before the park was created, the area was known as the **"Mill Pond"** and had a varied history. The first land registry entry shows a grant by the Crown to the Baby family. It was a large grant of land along the north shore of Lake Erie, given to the Baby family that caused Col. Thomas Talbot to re-apply to the Crown in 1803, for another land grant in the townships of Dunwich and Aldborough, which eventually led to the formation of the Talbot Settlement.

In 1821, the land begins a varied journey that takes it from a wilderness ravine to an operating millpond that supported a growing community for more than 30 years. That journey sees the land or parts of it, owned by some very notable persons in the history of this city including Thomas and Benjamin Drake, Edmund Yarwood, Francis Ermatinger, Edward Horton, Freeman Ellison, Charles Roe, James H. Still, Colin Munroe, and James Bell.

Pinafore Park is also closely linked to the railway history of our city. In 1880, the millpond and its water rights were sold to the Canada Southern Railway to supply water for the steam engines housed at the shops on Wellington Street. In July 1898, the St. Thomas Street Railway marked its debut in the city with daylong celebrations at Pinafore Park. By 1902, with the Street Railway in financial trouble, James Bell purchased the area and held it for one year. He sold the land to the city of St. Thomas the following year for exactly the same amount (\$8,000) that he purchased the land for the year before.

There are many cultural and natural features listed later, which support the designation of this city owned property under the Ontario Heritage Act as "a significant and important part of the cultural and social landscape" of the City of St. Thomas.

1. Pinafore Park has been a **major site for social, cultural and outdoor** recreational events for more than 100 years. This park spans more than 3 centuries of this city's history, some of it is very colourful and at least one incident is very tragic.
2. Before the creation of the park, the area known as **the millpond** had been a working mill for years. The natural ravine area allowed for creation of the millpond by damming the hollow at the concession road on Elm Street. The foundation of the old mill can still be found on the western edge of the millpond known as Pinafore Lake. The lake covers almost 15 acres.
3. **The water rights** to Pinafore Lake were sold to the Canada Southern Railway to support the need for large amounts of water for the steam engines housed at the CASO shops on Wellington Street. Two large water funnels were installed at the northerly end of the pond to drain water into the Mill Creek pumping station and system that sent water through the pipelines to the shops. The break wall for the pumphouse can still be found along the edge of the lake. When the level of Elm Street was raised in 1950's new funnels were built, and it those that are visible today from Elm Street. In the 1950's the city purchased the rights to the water from the Michigan Central.
4. **The North Shelter**, located at the very north end of the park by the lake, had been the terminal for the St. Thomas Street Railway. It represents the heyday of Victorian "Sundays in the park", when the line looped out to the park and allowed everyone from across the city to access to the park by way of the street railway. The structure was moved from its original site, near the present day restrooms, to this position in 1926. The original course of the Street Railway can be traced along the east side of the present road to the intersection of the three current roads.

5. The park was the site of the **first golf course in the city**. The course lay to west of the front entrance and the middle road. The course was nine holes in length. This was the called "the sport of the elite" in the 1890's and was a major feature of the early days of the park. The course was frequented by many of our city's elite including Judge Charles Oakes Ermatinger and city treasurer S.O. Perry. The Pinafore Park course was one of the early courses in Southwestern Ontario, the London Hunt Club and others in Simcoe and Brantford being its counterparts. The course remained in operation until 1909 when it moved to Talbot Street.
6. **The Boat House** was located on the south shore of the lake, just to the west of the East Pavilion. Created in 1899, the boathouse stowed rowboats for rentals and excursions. The Canada Southern Railway employees had used the lake for their boating activities before the park opened. It may have been these employees who named the lake "Pinafore" after the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta of the same name. The boathouse closed in the early 1950's but the remains of the foundation can be pointed out today.

It was from this boathouse that the "**Swan boat disaster**" occurred on July 6, 1925. A combined Sunday school picnic of the Anglican churches in the city had brought countless families to the park to celebrate and enjoy the summer weather. As part of the day's activities, children and their parents took part in a water boat activity that included a ride on the paddle wheel propelled Swan Boat. At the time of the accident, 21 children and 3 adults were on the boat. A possible flooding of one of the smaller boats in the structure may have caused the children to panic and to stand up, causing the entire boat to capsize. Seven children and one woman perished in this accident, the second worse incident in the city's history.

7. **The East Pavilion**, located at the east end of the lake, was erected in 1898 by James Still, the owner of the Street Railway, as part of his effort to enlarge the scope of events at Pinafore Park. The building, which was constructed by J.M.Green, reflects the Victorian idea of an open-air structure. Built originally as a dance pavilion, at a cost of \$1,299.00 the East Pavilion is now largely used as a picnic shelter. It is the oldest structure still standing in the park. The original hardwood dance floor was replaced in 1968 and renovated again in 1987. The upper orchestra balcony had been removed during the 1920's. The low wooden railings form the "walls" of the building and are similar to the original railings that gave this structure its incredible open view to the lake and the park. The low roof of the pavilion is formed with four dormers, and along with the paint and trim used on the structure; give the building a very distinctive Victorian flavour.
8. **The West Pavilion** was built in 1917. Its creators were Neil Darrach, renowned city architect, and J.M. Green, city builder and contractor. This is one of the largest structures in the park and can be seen from most areas. Often referred to as the Main Pavilion, the upper floor of this two-storey structure was once home to summer dances and parties and was a very popular spot during the WWII and up to the late 1950's. The structure features a uniquely designed series of half moon arches and posts that support the weight of the building. The north half of the building was home for many years to ice cream and confections vendors. The building is now used as a picnic shelter, a place to hold large reunions and in late November and December hosts the annual Fantasy of Lights.
9. **The Centennial Cairn** just to the east and north of the West Pavilion was erected by the city in 1903 to celebrate the Centennial of the Talbot Settlement. The cairn holds 29 engraved stones that represent all the townships that formed the Talbot Settlement that stretched from the Long Point area to Windsor along Lake Erie. In 2003, the cairn was re-dedicated by members of the Talbot Bi-Centennial Committee, to the memories of the founder and pioneers of the settlement. A walkway and gardens were installed to commemorate the event.
10. **Emslie Field** is the home of St. Thomas' baseball history. Named after city native Robert Emslie, a pitcher for St. Thomas, London and Guelph baseball teams, who was best known for his 38 years of outstanding umpiring abilities in both the American and National Baseball Leagues. This is one of the longest continuously used baseball fields in Ontario.
11. **The Woodlot Pavilion**, located at the far south end of the park, was once the site of small overnight cottages for the "new motoring public" in the 1920-1930's. Established in the early 1920's by the Elgin Motor Club, the site could accommodate 30 people over-night. The area remained active until 1949, when motels took over the travel needs of the motorists. The Woodlot Pavilion is built on the foundation of the cookhouse for these cottages.
12. **The Canadian Jubilee Cairn** stands just north of the Emslie Field, near the far west gardens. It was installed in the Park, to represent the 60th Anniversary of Canada's Confederation in 1927. No celebrations occurred for the Golden Anniversary in 1917, as World War I caused the celebration to be forfeited. There is a time capsule buried here.

13. **The Wildlife Sanctuary and Aviary.** The sanctuary was started in the 1950's and has been home to many deer. The little dam at the north end of the pond (which is spring fed), allows for many species of water birds to live here. The area from the little dam to the lake was known as "turtle alley". There have been trumpeter swans at the park since 1912 when they were first introduced. Along with the deer, the swans are a special feature in the park for young and old alike. The aviary was established in 1977 and allows for close specimen watching of many different birds. 6.

14. **The Fundamental Bench Mark** is the only one of its kind in Elgin County. It is located 60 feet south of the south limit of Elm Street and 25 feet east of the westerly limit of Pinafore Park. The bronze tablet (3 inches in diameter in the center on top of the monument shows the No. 1644 and the elevation above sea level of 774.779 feet is stamped on the rectangular bronze plate attached to east side thereof. In 1925, these benchmarks were placed in every major city and most larger towns in the Dominion of Canada. By 1939, 144 fundamental benchmarks had been established including this example.

This example sits 1 foot above ground. The visible portion sits atop a piece measuring 1 foot and 6 inches square. From the top, the monument tapers 6 feet below ground level to 2 feet square at its lowest depth. This concrete pylon rests on a 2-foot horizontal 6-foot base that in turn extends to a further 1 foot in depth. On top of the 6 foot base is a bronze tablet called a "sub-surface bench mark". This benchmark is protected by two vertically placed conjoined glazed sewer tiles, recessed into the base and sealed with an iron cap. The whole of the mass is strengthened further by steel reinforcing rods.