

Recommendation

**Concerning the proposed designation of the grain elevator located at PT SW-27-8-8-W2
Blk/Par X Plan No. 84R53884 Extension 0 as a Municipal Heritage Property.**



January 15, 2015

Background:

On March 21, 2014 the Rural Municipality of Tecumseh #65 advised Crop Production Services Ltd of their intention to designate the grain elevator located at PT SW-27-8-8-W2 Blk/Par X Plan No. 84R53884 Extension 0 as a Municipal Heritage Property. As Crop Production Services Ltd objected to the proposed designation, the matter was referred to the Saskatchewan Heritage Property Review Board.

A public hearing was scheduled for August 25, 2014, but postponed at the request of Crop Production Services as they required more time to complete their written submission to the Board. The hearing was re-scheduled and occurred on January 9, 2015 at the Royal Canadian Legion Hall in Stoughton, Saskatchewan. During this hearing Review Board Members heard submissions on behalf of the Rural Municipality of Tecumseh, Crop Production Services Ltd and representations by local residents.

Authority and Scope of Decision Making:

The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation has authority under Section 5.1(f) of the *Heritage Property Act (2014)* to “review public objections to proposed heritage designations... by convening public hearings and reporting on its findings and recommendations,” following the process outlined in Section 14 and 15. This may, and has, been delegated to the Saskatchewan Heritage Property Review Board as per Sections 6.1(1)(B) and 6.3 of the *Act*. The Review Board interprets its authority to extend only to the assessment of the property’s architectural, historical, cultural, environmental, archeological, paleontological, aesthetic and/or scientific value, and cannot make a recommendation based on other circumstances or considerations.

Findings of Fact:

It is the determination of the Saskatchewan Heritage Property Review Board that the former Pioneer grain elevator located in the Rural Municipality of Tecumseh has heritage value to both the local community and the province of Saskatchewan.

This elevator represents an important chapter in the evolution of grain handling in this province. A wooden crib grain elevator constructed at the end of an era of wooden elevator construction, the elevator in question features numerous innovations that overcame the limitations and safety issues of earlier wooden crib grain elevators, including:

- Dust reduction technology;
- The ability to ship and receive grain simultaneously;
- Dual weigh scales;
- The ability to handle an entire B Train at one time;
- One of the few elevators to be constructed on a floating slab foundation.

These innovations represent changes to the way grain was handled, and increased the efficiency in safely processing large quantities of product.

The innovations and enormity of the former Pioneer wooden crib elevator rivaled the next generation of concrete inland grain terminals. The structure itself was designed for the ease and convenience of producers, as well as efficiency in loading rail cars. Constructed by Jacobson Elevator Builders, a renowned firm in both Canada and the United States, the structure is also remarkable for the exquisite quality of the hand-selected construction materials evident in the choice of knotless cribbing boards along the elevator's drive lane and the hardwood floors in the seed shed. The level of craftsmanship demonstrates that this elevator was intended to be an anchor facility designed to stand the test of time.

The elevator's association with the James Richardson Company has significance given the long important role that Pioneer grain elevators played in the history of Saskatchewan. The iconic orange colour of the elevator is emblematic of this heritage. Furthermore, Pioneer grain elevators are currently underrepresented in heritage designations across the Province of Saskatchewan thereby increasing the heritage value of this structure.

Given the elevator's size, massing and position it has become iconic to the community of Stoughton, achieving the status of landmark and forming part of the community's identity. This is reflected by the representation of the elevator in a variety of artistic works and mediums.

Finally, the elevator is an important element of a larger cultural landscape that spans the distance between Regina and Stoughton along the longest straight section of operational rail line in North America (from Richardson to Stoughton) and the second longest section of straight rail line in the world. This rail corridor is dotted by other smaller elevators that, in their own right, represent the evolution in the technology and architecture of grain handling facilities in Saskatchewan. The former Pioneer elevator in Stoughton is at the terminus of this rail line, and its story is at the terminus of wooden crib grain elevator construction in Saskatchewan.

Recommendation:

The Review Board recommends that the grain elevator located at PT SW-27-8-8-W2 Blk/Par X Plan No. 84R53884 Extension 0 be designated Municipal Heritage Property by the Rural Municipality of Tecumseh #65.

The story of grain elevators is central to Saskatchewan's heritage. Wooden crib grain elevators are currently under threat in Saskatchewan, as many are located along interprovincial railway lines and therefore cannot be designated under the *Heritage Property Act (2014)*. Given the challenges associated with the conservation of grain elevators, a concerted effort to preserve a

representative example of various types of elevators, thereby documenting the evolution of grain handling technology, architecture and grain handling companies, should be undertaken.

The best way to ensure the ongoing conservation of a Municipal Heritage Property is to ensure it has a viable role to play in the community. It is therefore recommended that following the designation of the former Pioneer grain elevator at Stoughton, Crop Production Services should work with the local communities to determine the best manner in which to use and celebrate the grain elevator for the cultural benefit of both the local community and the people of Saskatchewan.

It is further recommended that the RM of Tecumseh #65 include a Statement of Significance as part of the designation bylaw, and that the bylaw clearly articulate the reasons this structure has historical significance.

Information and Knowledge Taken into Account in making this Recommendation:

The Rural Municipality of Tecumseh #65, Crop Production Services Ltd. and other interested parties had the opportunity to make oral representations, written representations or both to the Saskatchewan Heritage Property Review Board. In total, Review Board Members received one written submission and heard verbal testimony from the following people (in order of appearance):

1. Reeve Zandra Slater (Rural Municipality of Tecumseh #65);
2. Mr. Jordan Hardy (Legal Counsel for Crop Production Services);
3. Mr. Marcel van Stavern;
4. Mr. Taylor Phillips;
5. Mr. Curtis Donnelly;
6. Mrs. Kim Ingram;
7. Mayor Bill Knous (Town of Stoughton).

The Saskatchewan Heritage Property Review Board interprets its authority to extend only to the assessment of the property's architectural, historical, cultural, environmental, archeological, paleontological, aesthetic and/or scientific value, and cannot make a recommendation based on other circumstances or considerations. This means that of all the objections put forward (contractual obligations, commercial interests, undue financial hardship, risk mitigation, etc), only one was within the Review Board's jurisdiction: "The elevator is not particularly historically significant." Based on the Findings of Fact outlined above, the Review Board finds that the grain elevator is historically significant.