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ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

AUG 14 2013

RECEIVED

Public Notice

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Town of Essex intends to designate property lands situated at 25 Walnut Street, Harrow Centre, in the Town of Essex, in the Province of Ontario, as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18.

Description of Property

The Harrow British Methodist Episcopal Cemetery site, RCP 1645 Lot 80 RP, 12R5789 Part 2, is located at 25 Walnut Street, Harrow Centre, just south of the Sanford & Son Supermarket and adjacent parking space. It contains a series of tombstones set back from a wrought iron fence with eastward facing gate and stone pillars.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 25 Walnut Street is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value. The property meets the criteria for designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the categories of historical and contextual significance.

The Harrow British Methodist Episcopal Cemetery (BME) site began as an African Methodist Episcopal Church gathering place with many early congregants coming from the United States in the early 19th century as refugee slaves and oppressed free Blacks. A church building was eventually built on the corner of the property and was utilized until the mid-20th century when it was torn down. The church gave Black congregations the opportunity to worship freely, organize civic meetings, and improve their segment of the community without fear of persecution.

The site is unique in its importance to the social history of the area, serving as a reminder of our distinctive past. Along with other remaining Black churches and cemeteries in the region, the Harrow BME Cemetery serves as an important reminder of the American-Canadian story of slavery, abolition and the Underground Railroad.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the Harrow BME Cemetery:

- Burial place of early Black pioneers and refugee slaves
- Municipal connection to the international Underground Railroad.
- Location of a number of prominent buried persons.
- Original location of cemetery, former location of church.

- Well maintained and refurbished headstones which are upright and legible.
- Aesthetically pleasing grounds with flowers, fencing, and well-maintained lawn.
- Bronze historical placard on gate added in 2007.

For further information, contact Jeremy Parsons, Heritage Research Student, at jparsons@essex.ca or Heather (Ross) Jablonski, Town Planner, at hjablonski@essex.ca or 519-776-7336 ext. 12. Any persons having objections to this proposed designation may serve a notice of objection to the Town Clerk, setting out the reason for objection and all relevant information, no later than thirty (30) days of the publication of this notice.

DATED at the Town of Essex: June 5, 2013

Cheryl Bondy, Clerk
33 Talbot Street South, Essex, ON N8M 1A8
Phone: 519-776-7336 ext. 32 (fax) 519-776-8811
cbondy@essex.ca