

Nobleton hall improvements get green light; new tenants to foot the bill

By Mark PavilonsEditorLocal JournalismInitiative Reporter

The Nobleton Community Hall will get several improvements, thanks to an agreement between the Township and the building's new tenants. Council approved the work, falling within a heritage permit application. Upgrades will include the replacement of the exterior stairway leading to the upper-storey door bay at the south end, and expansion of the doorway to facilitate accessibility entrance and lift. The existing ventilation at the rear of the building will be removed or relocated. Damaged portions of the concrete block wall will be repaired, and lighting added to the soffits. New signage will be put up, along with a new awning. Shingles will be replaced on the roof as well. The property is "Designated" under the Ontario Heritage Act and the owner, the Township of King, is seeking to permit proposed alterations and restorative works on the Nobleton Community Hall on behalf of the future tenants. Staff noted the cultural heritage value of the Nobleton Community Hall primarily relates to its long standing association with community-based service organizations and its role as a civic meeting place. Staff recommend the proposed works be approved as they do not have an adverse impact on the heritage attributes of the hall. The Nobleton Community Hall was designated as a heritage site and included on the Township's Municipal Heritage Register in 2007. In 1935, the Nobleton Women's Institute Board of Trustees arranged for the design and construction of a community hall. This was completed in 1936 at a material cost of \$3,587 with labour donated by local farmers. It has since served as the hub for the Nobleton Women's Institute, the scene of community jamborees, dances, fundraising and church bazaars, wedding and funeral receptions, craft shows, youth groups, severe weather refuge, and since 1962 has been the meeting place of the Nobleton Lions Club. In 2023, architects were retained by the Township to prepare a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment for the subject property. The Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA provides a detailed analysis of the property's cultural heritage value and character-defining elements, which continue to inform current decision-making processes and support the evaluation of the proposed alterations and restorative measures under this current application. The Township of King has submitted a heritage permit application, on behalf of the prospective tenants, seeking to facilitate the upgrades. Plans are to replace the existing eavestroughs and soffits, as well as paint the window frames and siding of the structure. Those works do not require a heritage permit as they are considered maintenance in accordance with the Township's Heritage Property Alteration Guidelines. The prospective tenant will be undertaking and financing the proposed works and all parties are aware of the need for the heritage permit prior to the alterations. The design, staff said, aims to integrate seamlessly with the existing façade, preserving the existing appearance while improving functionality and ease of access for all. The replacement of like with like along with accessibility enhancements represents an alteration with minimal adverse impact to the heritage attributes of the structure while addressing accessibility standards. As the proposal respects original materials, scale, and appearance, it aligns with recognized conservation practices and is consistent with the objectives of the Ontario Heritage Act. The proposed removal/relocation of the existing ventilation units at the rear of the structure is intended to improve mechanical efficiency while maintaining the visual and material consistency of the structure. The work will involve the creation of several new discreet penetrations to accommodate updated ductwork, with all redundant openings to be in-filled using architectural block and mortar that match the existing in texture, size, and colour. As the proposed alteration is limited to the rear façade and does not pose major adverse impacts to character defining elements of the structure, the proposal is consistent with conservation practices and is considered a reversible, low impact alteration that is compatible with the heritage attributes of the structure. The proposed restoration of damaged portions of the structure's concrete block exterior walls would be carried out using concrete parging, applied with a spackle and trowel technique. The proposed finish being colour-matched to existing materials ensures a cohesive appearance that avoids disruption and negative impact on the heritage character of the structure. Staff said this proposed restorative approach would address deterioration while preserving the material character and integrity of the façade, aligning with accepted conservation methods for heritage masonry. As it is a like-for-like repair using compatible materials and finishes, the proposed alteration is considered an appropriate low-impact restorative measure. The new lighting within the soffits of the Nobleton Community Hall contemplates downward-facing, dark sky compliant fixtures designed to provide appropriate illumination while minimizing light pollution. This proposed alteration would significantly upgrade operational and safety aspects during evening use of the structure and is strategically positioned to avoid adverse visual impact on the character defining features of the structure. Several residents came to council back in June, with the proposal to turn the hall into a restaurant and pub, hoping it becomes the community's social hub. Rick Minicucci, Robert Forletta

and Tom Dovgala are leading the project. The vision, according to Minicucci, who's also a local member of the Knights of Columbus, is to create the "Lions Den Sports Bar." They will preserve the building's charm and unique physical qualities, while undertaking the necessary improvements. The pub will not only be a local gathering place, but will showcase King's sports history. The proposed signage for the principal elevation of the Nobleton Community Hall consists of individual large black letters spelling out "The Lions Den Sports Bar." This design pays tributes to the historic use of the structure as the meeting place of the Nobleton Lions Club, reinforcing the cultural narrative while introducing a new contemporary identity. The use of standalone letters maintains visual clarity without overwhelming the façade, allowing the underlying architecture to remain prominent. As the sign is contemplated to be affixed in a respectful manner, scaled appropriately to the elevation, and design with historical sensitivity, it is consistent with heritage conservation principles and contributes to the ongoing adaptive reuse of the structure. The replacement of the existing asphalt shingles on the Nobleton Community Hall involves a "like-for-like" substitution using the same material, with the intention of extending the lifespan of the roof while preserving the historic character of the structure. As the existing shingles are recognized as a heritage attribute, their replacement with the same material aligns with the Township's support for restoration efforts that maintain original materials and construction methods. The proposed awning wrapping around the north and west façade of the Nobleton Community Hall is intended to provide weather protection, enhance usability of outdoor spaces and support the building's evolving community function. The awning will allow for a more cohesive integration with the architectural form, minimizes ground-level obstructions and maintains open circulation along adjacent pathways. The design is proportioned to respect the scale of the facades and utilizes finishes that compliment the existing materials. In response to inquiries from the HAC members regarding the "Women's Institute" sign on the principal façade of the structure, the prospective tenants advised that the sign would be retained in some fashion, and that in the event it cannot be retained in-situ, it will be put on display in the interior of the building. Councillor Mary Asselstine said the renovations are "exciting." However, she said she's not a fan of soffit lighting and asked whether an alternative can be found. Minicucci said they're happy to work with staff and council when the details are addressed.