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DRAFT NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

On _____, 2020, Oakville Town Council resolved to pass a Notice of Intention to Designate the following property under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, as amended, as a property of cultural heritage value and interest:

Bronte Harbour and Bluffs

(Legal Description to be inserted)

Description of Property

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is an organically evolved harbour landscape that was initially the natural mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek (Bronte Creek) at Lake Ontario. The landscape began its long evolution as a purpose-built harbour in 1856. The cultural heritage landscape is an approximately 21.26 acre (8.6 hectare) area comprising the Inner Harbour, Bronte Bluffs and Berta Point.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest:

Design and Physical Value:

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape has physical/design value as a representative example of an organically evolved harbour landscape dating from the mid-19th century. The current harbour reflects an evolution from continuous improvements and additions over time to the natural landscape of Bronte Creek and Bronte Bluffs to accommodate commercial/industrial uses and recreational activities. Typical of organically evolved harbour landscapes, the Harbour retains features related to its past industries (i.e., Oakville Harbours Building), as well as design features that reflect its recreational use (i.e., treed slope of the Bluffs with trails and recreational boating infrastructure). Bronte Creek was dredged and the channel was widened by removing part of the wetlands. The two-headed creek mouth was changed to a single opening into Lake Ontario. Two piers were added and a lighthouse was built on the east side. The Bronte Harbour Company, established in 1846, completed the harbour in 1856.

A unique stone hooking fleet of ships developed at Bronte Harbour. At its peak in the late 19th century, there were over 40 schooners working the waters in Bronte Harbour. The practice of stone hooking began in the early 19th century and developed into an important industry in Ontario by the mid- to late-19th century. It involved gathering stone slabs from the lake bed using long rakes with hooks. Stone hookers from Bronte Village (as well as Port Credit, Oakville and Frenchman's Bay) supplied stone, sand and gravel for buildings in Ontario before the establishment of inland quarries and sand pits.

Within Bronte Harbour, a grist mill and harbour warehouses were built to support the fleets of grain-laden schooners. As demand for wheat and flour in England and Western New York State increased in the 1850s, the County of Halton became a major wheat producing area in Ontario. By 1858, there was a decline in shipping. In the latter half of the 19th century, fishing shanties began to appear along the east side of Bronte Creek within the Inner and Outer Bronte Harbour. For many decades to follow, fishing was an important local industry supporting both area fishermen and local ship builders.

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape contains a rare, remaining example of mid-20th century shipbuilding shed. Bronte Harbour was a shipbuilding centre. Melancthon Simpson was a builder of iron-hulled vessels, which were in high demand during the 1850s. Bronte was the ideal location to centralize ship-building, taking advantage of local tradesmen, the lumber trade, and local sawmills. At least four schooners were built by Melancthon Simpson in the Bronte Harbour area between 1852 and 1854. Around 1945, the Northern Shipbuilding and Repair Company owned by John A. McCleary built the Bronte Marine Building (present-day Oakville Harbours Building). For the first few years of its existence, the building was used to help construct and repair boats that were connected with the war effort, possibly for use by the Coast Guard. Between 1945 and 1954, 29 boats were constructed inside this large, two-storey shed. Most of the crafts were all-welded steel tugboat style vessels that served various purposes from logging to fishing and tanking. This type of building is rare and unique in Oakville and Bronte, as few surviving industrial buildings associated with the historic ship-building industry remain in each area. In 1955, it was purchased by Harry Greb who established the Metro Marine business in the building, which served the recreational boating market.

The use of Bronte Harbour shifted to recreation with the decline of the fishing and shipbuilding industries in the 1950s. In the 1930s, the harbour was dredged, creating a beach along the shore of Lake Ontario (currently Federally-owned land). Bronte Beach Park became a summer recreation destination for its beach, open spaces with shade trees and activities. Following the establishment of the beach, a change on the subject landscape occurred, resulting in the construction of small cottages on Bronte Bluffs and the Berta family property (present day Berta Point). By 1960, boat slips for recreational uses lined the north section of Bronte Harbour.

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape also contains a representative Georgian style building, the Sovereign House. The Sovereign House was constructed for Charles Sovereign. The rear wing may date to 1834, and the Georgian portion on the building likely dates to 1846. Typical of the Georgian style is its symmetrical three-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by windows as well as the symmetrical two-bay side elevations. The side gable roof has a chimney at both gable ends and the rear elevation features a one-and-a-half storey wing with a gable roof. The interior wood floors and staircase appear to be original.

Historical and Associative Value:

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape has historical/associative value due to its direct association with the Indigenous land-use of the area. The Bronte Bluffs and Harbour has been identified as an area of importance to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN). The property was a prime location used for the Mississauga people to harvest food resources . The Mississaugas also located their villages on the flats of the Creek. Further, MNCF representatives stated that “reverence of water as a spiritual being that must be accorded respect and dignity. Water is also vital to the survival of the MCFN and all other forms of life.”

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is associated with key figures, companies and organizations related to the development of the harbour and the local history of Bronte Village. In addition to Melancthon Simpson, the Northern Shipbuilding and Repair Company owned by John A. McCleary, and Metro Marine established by Harry Greb, Joyce family members were early owners of properties on the bluffs and contributed to its recreational development. In particular, Thomas “Tom” Joyce, a fisherman, purchased all of the lots between West River Street and the eastern point of the Bluffs by 1893. The Joyce family continued to own the area and develop it as a cottaging destination. Alvin

Bumby, a grandson of Thomas Joyce, ran the popular summer holiday destination “Lake Point Camp” from the 1930s through to 1950s. At one point there were 40 tent-sites located on the bluffs and the beach.

The land on the bluffs was purchased by the Town of Oakville in 1976 for use as a park, continuing the area’s recreational use. In 1988, the Town of Oakville moved the historic Sovereign House to the property. The house is historically tied to early pioneer Philip Sovereign who arrived in 1814 from Sussex County, New York. He established a farm on a large property that extended along the lakefront west of the reserve lands and is considered a “founding father of Bronte Village.”. Local boat builder Dalt McDonald (1878-1975) also resided in the house. McDonald was responsible for building local fishing boats around the turn of the century. From 1911-1914 the home became the inspiration and residence of Mazo de la Roche, the internationally renowned author of the Jalna series. The house is now used by the Bronte Historical Society and its garden, maintained by the Bronte Horticultural Society since 1995, are a favourite place for gatherings.

Lemuel “Lem” Dorland is another local figure historically linked to the harbour. He was a stone hooker who owned a steamboat called Chub. He constructed the harbour’s replacement piers in 1890 and owned property within the harbour (present day Berta Point). The Collins’ were another family integral to maintaining the recreational uses of the harbour. They operated the “Riverside Snack Shop” on present-day Berta Point, and prior to 1931 they built an open-air pavilion on land leased from the Federal government. The Collins’ also rented space on their property to tourists with recreational trailers. The current recreational activities are supported by local organizations including the Bronte Harbour Yacht Club founded in 1960. In addition to formal membership, this club also provides seasonal sailing lessons within Bronte Harbour.

Contextual Value:

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. The harbour’s situation at the mouth of Bronte Creek (Twelve Mile Creek) where it meets Lake Ontario is functionally linked to its development. In turn, the development of the harbour in 1856 spurred growth within Bronte Village as it was the site of many businesses that contributed to its early economy. The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs is also valued by the community for its ecological functions and habitat it provides for plant life, bird and animals.

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape continues to be integral to the village of Bronte as a community landmark. Evidence of the Harbour’s recognition as a landmark can be seen in the presence of commemorative structures in the Harbour including memorial plaques on benches, trees and gardens and the Harbour’s continuous use as a site of festivals and celebrations. In addition, the Oakville Harbours Building is a highly visible landmark within the landscape. Its white shingles make it visually distinct from the surroundings and it is clearly visible from the nearby shorelines and two principal thoroughfares in Bronte Village: Lakeshore Road and Bronte Road.

Description of Heritage Attributes:

Key attributes of the organically evolved cultural heritage landscape include:

- Oakville Harbours Building’s contribution to the landscape through its two-storey massing, orientation of the building and its 20’ x 24’ doors on the north and south gable ends that open to the harbour

- Sovereign House's contribution to the landscape, particularly its situation on the Bronte Bluffs and its associated gardens
- Steep and rocky treed slope of the elevated Bluffs, the low-lying Harbour area, and man-made single channel created from Bronte Creek through to Lake Ontario
- Open spaces and treed canopies at the top of the Bluffs and within Berta Point
- System of foot paths and trails that connect the landscape and provide views to the inner harbour, outer harbour and the lake
- Views to/from heritage attributes including:
 - View 1 – View from the Bluffs at the break in vegetation to the lake and to the lighthouse looking northeast
 - View 2 – View of the Sovereign House from the trails on the Bluffs looking west from the end of Seneca Drive
 - View 3 - View of the Sovereign House from Seneca Drive looking east;
 - View 4 – View from the Bronte Beach Park side of the channel to the Oakville Harbours Building looking north and to the end of the channel looking southwest.
 - View 5 - View from the end of the channel at West River Street to the Oakville Harbours Building
 - View 6 – View from Berta Point to the Oakville Harbours Building and channel looking northeast
 - View 7 - View of the Bronte Cenotaph and General Chris Vokes Memorial Park looking east
 - View 8 – View from the path in front of the Oakville Harbours Building to Bronte Beach Park looking east, to Bronte Bluffs looking southeast and toward the outer harbour looking northeast
 - View 9 – View from Bronte Road to the inner harbour and bluffs looking southwest.
 - View 10 – View from Bronte Road looking south to the outer harbour.
 - View 11 – View from Fisherman's Wharf to the inner harbour and Oakville Harbours Building looking west
 - View 12 – View from Fisherman's Wharf to the outer harbour and lighthouse looking east

Oakville Harbours Building's key exterior attributes include its:

- Rectangular plan and one-and-a-half storey addition on the west elevation of the building, excluding altered windows and entrances
- Exterior shingle cladding
- Medium pitched gable roof
- Historic wood sash and fixed pane windows on the west and east elevations
- Original twin-leaf swing door, where each leaf is bi-fold on the north elevation

Oakville Harbours Building's key interior attributes including its:

- Interior open space from ground to interior of roof, excluding exposed interior framing
- Interior catwalk located at the same height as the second floor to the west addition

Sovereign House's key exterior attributes include its:

- Two-storey construction and rear elevation one-and-a-half storey wing

- Symmetrical three-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by windows as well as the symmetrical two-bay side elevations
- Side gable roof with a chimney at both gable ends

Sovereign House's key interior attributes including its:

- Interior wood floors
- Interior wood staircase

Any objection to this designation must be filed no later than _____. Objections should be directed to the Town Clerk, 1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, Ontario L6H 0H3.

Further information respecting this proposed designation is available from the Town of Oakville. Any inquiries may be directed to Susan Schappert, heritage planner at 905-845-6601, ext. 3870 (TTY 905-338-4200), or by email at susan.schappert@oakville.ca.

The last date to file a notice of objection is _____.