

**Region of Queens Municipality
Hearing
Designation of Milton Douglas House
as a Municipal Heritage Property
Tuesday, October 26, 2021
6:00 p.m.**

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Purpose

The purpose of this hearing is to allow opportunity for the owners of the Milton Douglas House (North Queens Heritage House Museum) to make comment on the proposed inclusion of the Milton Douglas House in the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties for the Region of Queens. As set out under the Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act, the owners of a property being considered for heritage designation must be notified and given the opportunity to come before Council to express any comments or concerns that they may have.

Please note that this hearing is to allow Council to consider comments from the owners of the Milton Douglas House on the proposed designation, not public comments.

The reasons for this proposed designation are:

- The dwelling was constructed circa 1854 and is situated on part of the lands granted to John Douglas in 1825.
- The Douglas family are well known business owners and employers.

- Increase public awareness regarding the significance of heritage in our communities.

3. Remarks from North Queens Heritage House Applicants

4. Closing Remarks

5. Adjournment

Region of Queens Municipality Staff Report

6.5

To: Council

From: Mike MacLeod, Director of Planning and Development

Date: September 14, 2021


Re: Municipal Heritage Designation – North Queens Heritage House

Background

The owners of property located at 25 West Caledonia Road in Caledonia have made application to have the property designated under the municipal register of heritage properties. Refer to Appendix A.

Details





The Milton Douglas House, and current home of the North Queens Heritage House Museum, was constructed circa 1854 by the Douglas' and is situated on part of the lands granted to John Douglas in 1825. The Douglas family has a long history in the Caledonia area and are well known business owners and employers. Refer to Appendix B. The house is a good example of those constructed during this era throughout the south shore of Nova Scotia.

The Region's Heritage Advisory Committee met on August 19, 2021 to discuss the application and had little hesitation in recommending the property for municipal heritage designation. While the architectural style of the structure is good example of those homes typically constructed during this era, the Committee felt that the role of the Douglas family in the community was of even greater significance for heritage designation.

Applicable Legislation


Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act; Region of Queens Municipality Bylaw No. 17 – A Bylaw Respecting Heritage Properties.

Budget Impacts

Registration of the property would involve purchase and installation of a brass heritage plaque. Council has approved funds under the 2021 / 2022 budget to accommodate such requests.

Recommendation

THAT Council of Region of Queens Municipality serve Notice of Recommendation upon the owners of property identified as PID# 70151147 and located at 25 West Caledonia Road in Caledonia, regarding the registration of the property (known as Milton Douglas House) in the Municipal Registry of Heritage Property;



AND THAT a hearing be scheduled for October 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building, 249 White Point Road in Liverpool to provide opportunity for the property owners to make comment on the proposed designation.

Communications

The applicants will be advised of Council's recommendation.

Appendix A



APPLICATION TO REGISTER A MUNICIPAL HERITAGE PROPERTY

A. Property Information

Name of Property: North Queens Heritage House
Museum

Location of Property: 25 West Caledonia Rd.
Caledonia, NS B0T 1B0

Civic Address: Same as above

Present Owner(s): North Queens Heritage Society

Owner(s) Mailing Address: 25 West Caledonia Rd.
Caledonia, NS B0T 1B0

Is the Property a Provincial Heritage Property? NO

(Please attach photographs showing exterior elevations of the property.)

B. Evaluation Information

When was the property erected? Estimated or based upon what references? 1854
from Douglas family history

What is the physical condition of the property? Good to excellent

Is the property associated with individuals of local historical note? The Douglas family; an important business and employer in the area for over 150 years. Businesses include farming, gold mining, lumber, saw milling, and general merchants.

Is the property associated with events or themes of local historical note? Built by an early settler and business owner of the area.

Currently operated as a museum

Do you believe the architectural style or construction technique of this property to be rare or unique within your community? Please describe it. Not rare; it is a good example of the styles of homes built during this time period which are getting rare. See attachment 1.

Please note any sources of historical information regarding this property (e.g. books, articles, or local individuals). Was a private home until it was donated by

Finis Douglas to be a museum. Contains photos, genealogies, local folklore, books on local history, archives, documents, scrapbooks, etc.

Is there any other information which you believe should be considered when evaluating the heritage significance of this property? (Provide attachments if necessary) An important

center for community history; both objects and archives, see attachments 2, 3, 4, 5.

C. Submissions

Application submitted by: Linda Feail
(If an organization, please also note a contact person.)

Mailing Address: Box 88, Caledonia N.S. 600100

Telephone Number (daytime): 902-682-2989

Fax: _____ e-mail: nqheritagehouse@gmail.com

Signature of Owner: L. Feail Date: Aug 14/2011

Or, has owner been advised of application: Yes

Please return application to: Region of Queens Municipality, 249 White Point Road, Inverness, Nova Scotia, B0T 1K0 - C/O Planning Department. Phone: 354-3425 Fax: 354-3470



John Douglas was one of the first seven settlers in Caledonia in 1917.
He helped his son Milton Foster Douglas to build the house in 1854.

2

HISTORY OF THE MILTON DOUGLAS HOME

Prepared for North Carolina
Historical Society
By: BRUCE M. JONES
1980

(4)

HISTORY OF THE MILTON DOUGLAS HOME

Milton Douglas, in a hand written document in the possession of Ruth Baxter (typescript enclosed) titled "My Father's People" says:

"In the spring, my father John Douglas, left Scotland in the company of Richard Telfer and came to Halifax, landed in June and worked a while in Halifax... In December, 1817, he married Abigail Foster... (They moved out to Caledonia where John had taken up land.) They had eight children."

John Douglas 1793 - 1870 and Abigail (1796-1889) had 3 sons and 5 daughters. By 1819 he was involved with William Burke and some others in a mill business in Brookfield (Mill Privilege, Registrar, Liverpool, Book 7 p. 272, Appendixes).

In book L, p. 46 at the Registrar of Lands (Dept. of Lands and Forests, Halifax) is recorded the grant to John Douglas and others of 1,000 acres at Caledonia, dated 26th April, 1825. The description and attached map (in appendixes) show that Douglas received 200 acres, including the site of the house presently belonging to the North Queens Heritage Society. He built his home on the south side of the New Caledonia Road (now Telfer Street) back of the present High School (Annie Parker's notes, N.F. Douglas, pers. comm.) This house apparently burned on Dec 29th 1837, according to the Aug. 9th, 1940 edition of the Gold Miner (Annie Parker Scrap book), "The house of Mr. John Douglas, carpenter went almost in a flash."

It must have been rebuilt, because Ruth Baxter talks of John Douglas' house burning "long after his death".

... 17 ...

Meanwhile, about 1865 (Annie Parker's notes and Arbitration, Richard Telfer and John Douglas, 1861), the New Caledonia Road (called the old Caledonia Road by this time) has been abandoned as a main highway, and the present West Caledonia Road was created. John Douglas helped his son Milton (1826-1899), who was named for his mother's father, Milton Foster, to build a house on this new road. Annie Douglas Parker in some hand written notes on the back of a wedding invitation, entitled This may be of interest sometime and dated 1945, says,

"The old shop (opposite the Anglican Church) built by my father Milton Foster Douglas 1873. He kept store for several years. He built his house (now owned by Laurie Douglas) in 1866. This coincides with the recollections of Ellen Douglas (C.I.T. 95-137, appended):

"We think Milton built the house himself. From what grandfather (Richard) told me... near as I can come to when the house was built would be around the middle 1850s. I remember my grandfather saying he was born here. He was born in 1857."

It is not clear when the title of that piece of land passed to Milton, but he apparently owned some land in his own name before 1867, because in John Douglas will dated in Caledonia, March 9th, 1867, he bequeaths "unto my son Milton Douglas... parts of my farm lot bounded... (also by)... the said Milton Douglas land..."

The important point of this document is that it shows Milton already owned land at this time. Nelson Douglas had in his possession (copy in Appendix) a plan of the south-east corner of the original Douglas 200 acre grant subdivided into 10 lots in 1866. Two of these were already apparently sold to...

Parker and H. Middlemass) at this time. So the original grant was already well split up.

Milton married Eliza Tolfer (1826- 1914), daughter of Richard, who had come to Caledonia with John Douglas. They in turn had eight children...

Nelson, Adelaide, Richard, Jane, Mary, Annie, William and Abbie.

Milton Douglas seems to have been handy at a variety of trades. According to Lillian Douglas (C.I.T.#7), and Nelson (K.O.H.#17), he was a carpenter and farmer, and he inherited half of John Douglas' tools. However he also kept store (see note from Annie Parker above) and the following story is from Ruth Baxter.

"Aunt Jane (Wolfe) remembered as a small child being in her father's store when her grandmother Abigail Douglas came in. 'Milton, I want a dishpan' she said to her son. 'Alright, Mother' he answered, 'they're 30 cents.' Abigail was getting old and hard of hearing. 'Milton, I'll never pay you 30 cents for a dish pan,' she quickly answered. Milton spoke more loudly. 'Not 30 cents Mother but 30 cents. You know, the new money.'

"That was different. She got her dishpan and went happily home."

According to Nelson (K.O.H.#47), Milton Douglas had invested in the Bank of Liverpool in the 1870's when it collapsed (see Raddal, Mersey Quarterly). He went broke and his son took over his debts. Nelson, his son took over the store and some of the property, while Richard got the family home his father had built.

Richard Douglas (1857- 1946) was born in the new house about three years after it was built. Perhaps that's why the wing was built on the back just after the house was finished (Eunice Douglas; C.I.T.#5, 006).

Richard had married Ethel Luxton (1873-1937) from Kempt, and they had three children: Laurie, Lillian and Chester.

Lillian Douglas (C.I.T. #7) describes growing up in the house, the furnishings and decorations. "We were a happy family just a happy family" (Douglas, loc. cit., 234).

Eunice Douglas (C.I.T. #5) says that the back part that was built on just after the house was finished was used as a summer kitchen, and the range was moved back and forth. Sometime after the turn of the century the bay window was constructed (c.1920). Eunice Douglas (C.I.T. #5). Other structural changes are discussed by Mrs. Douglas in the same interview.

Lillian Douglas (C.I.T. #7-197) describes her father Richard as a farmer and labourer who worked off the farm at times.

Eunice McBride married Laurie Douglas and moved into the house in 1927. In 1931 Richard Douglas and his wife Ethel, granted "an undivided half" of the property to Laurie E. Douglas their son. At the same time Laurie posted a bond promising to maintain Richard and Ethel for the rest of their lives (Register of Deeds, Liverpool; BK. 68, p. 653).

Eunice describes her husband, Laurie, as a farmer and woodsman, and discusses at length (C.I.T. #5) the life they led in the house.

On the 21st. of March, 1956, Laurie E. Douglas and Eunice, his wife, transferred the property to Mac Ellis Douglas and Gene Elliot Douglas, two of their four children.

From these two sons, it passed to the North Queens Historical Society.

James Douglas of Marfield, in parish of Eckford, Roxburghshire, Scotland, married Jane Mill. At least three of their six children emigrated to Nova Scotia. (16)

John Douglas (1794-1870) came to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in June 1815. He married Dec. 1817 Abigail Perkins Foster (1796-1885), dau. of Milton Foster of Port Medway. They took up land inland and helped found Caledonia.

Milton Foster Douglas (1827-1899) married 20 Oct. 1852 Eliza Jennie Telfer (1825-1914), dau. of Richard Telfer. They had 8 children.

Adelaide Douglas (1855-1928) married 20 Sept. 1877 Harbert Freeman (1852-1891), son of Siphorus Freeman. They had 5 children.

Lennie Mae Freeman (1880-1929) married 24 Sept. 1902 Arthur Franklin Straffin, Jr. of Brookton, Mass.

Philip Douglas Straffin (1907-1974) married 3 Sept. 1938 Mary Eleanor Whitehead (1916-____), dau. of Edwin Hill Whitehead, of Richmond, Va.

This book, owned by James Douglas, and his son John Douglas, one of the founders of Caledonia, was inherited by Philip Douglas Straffin. It was presented, in his honor, to the North Queens Historical Society to be displayed in the Caledonia Museum, by his loving wife and four children:

Eleanor Whitehead Straffin
Philip Douglas Straffin, Jr.
Anne Stuart Straffin Hall
Mary Alden Straffin Horner
Edwin Whitehead Straffin

*This was
out of the family
Bible given by
family in
Scotland
Now on exhibit
here at the
North Queens
Heritage House.*

Douglas Saw Mills

Nelson F. Douglas was involved in logging and driving logs as early as 1908 (see a note in 1908 Almanac). Logs were driven down the Mersey River to be sawn in Milton.

At one time N.F. Douglas owned and operated a water powered mill at the brook from the lake in Hibernia (second Christopher Lake) - close to the present road. N.F. Douglas had a long illness before his death and he sold this mill prior to his death (1918-18). This was known as the Douglas Lumber Company and was probably sold and operated under this name by Heymouth interests. It is not known how long this mill operated.

At N.F.'s death the N.F. Douglas Co. Ltd. was owned by his family and run by his sons Perry and Lee Douglas. At one time they owned, with Adelbert "Del" Freeman, a water powered mill at the Mill Pond in Caledonia, known as the Caledonia Lumber Co. There had been an up and down mill there but this may have been changed before the Douglas' ran it. Del Freeman was the "woods boss" for the mill and built his home across the street from it. It ceased to operate several years before its sale. Thadous Freeman operated a furniture company (benches, chairs, tables) at this site. In 1924 it was sold to Bradford Freeman (Baff) and Edward Freeman (Ned).

In the years preceding W. War II, N. F. Douglas Co., was involved with shipping "pit props" or pulpwood from Digby. This was used mostly in the Annapolis and Digby area and was in competition with F. Kempton and Clarence Mason.

After that they operated portable mills under N. F. Douglas Co., and managed by Clarence Mason. The first mill was in Maitland & somewhere near the brook going into Frozen Ocean. This ran about one year.

Other mill sites followed and mills were operated by this company at Grafton Lake, at Kejimukujik Lake and in the Tobetic area: Poplar Lake (4-5 years), Little Tobetic Lake (2 mills there), Roseway River and then Poplar Lake again.

These were engine driven, portable mills and were at times rented rather than owned, and the logs were not taken any great distance. The cut was started, the mill was set up and a rough bunkhouse and cookhouse were built. When the available logs in the area were all sawed the mill was moved to the next site with available logs. In the more remote sites the men came out during the week ends - or less often depending on the weather and the state of the roads. The sawn boards were "dipped" to prevent discoloration, and brought out to the railway station for loading in cars. Most of this lumber went to Canadian markets and markets in Quebec were firmly established. Stewart Paden was yardman in these mills. There were a number of sawyers.

At times the mills were located on the Tobetic Game Reserve.

with no guns allowed. The bears became a great problem in the cook house. They caused considerable damage to the building as well as stealing all the food they could get hold of. Since the morale and efficiency of the whole operation depended on food and lots of it, the bears were not popular. They really enjoyed the ham. One story of bear chasing pictures Billy Douglas chasing a bear with a peavey - Billy was in the usual nightwear of "long johns" - being one piece underwear.

In 1951, N. F. Douglas Co purchased the existing, but not operating, mill across the road from Lake Nancy. This was a portable mill purchased from Clarence Mason. This was operated intermittently. A cut of logs would be accumulated and kept in the nearby pond. Men would be hired and the mill operated until the logs were gone. The mill operated 1-2 times per year. There was no bunkhouse or cookhouse.

After Perry Douglas' death, N. F. Douglas (2nd) ran this mill and woods operation.

In 1992 Caledonia Woodworkers mill on Lake Nancy and Lake Mary closed its doors, and Nelson & Blair Douglas entered into negotiations to buy this mill. At Nelson's death, Blair continued these negotiations and in 1992 the mill was reopened and has operated under the name of N. F. Douglas Lumber Ltd.