



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To:	Council
From:	Andy Scott, Director, Strategic Initiatives & Business Development
Date:	July 18, 2022
Report No:	ES-011-22
Subject:	Willmott House - Future Use Options

Recommendation: THAT staff be authorized to proceed with a modified version of Option A - Stabilize and Adaptive Reuse, as described herein.

THAT a new capital project be created with a budget of \$276,000, with funding from the Project Variance Account.

THAT staff be directed to explore future uses for the site that will incorporate the heritage material salvaged from the Willmott House, and that any resulting funding required be presented for consideration as part of future budget processes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Willmott House is a Town owned property with local cultural heritage value.
- Staff have sought out options for utilization in line with the Town's Heritage Properties Business Strategy. None of these options have proven successful.
- The property has been subject to trespass and vandalism which is putting the property at risk for total loss.
- Staff sought the expertise of a third party consultant to identify options for future use.
- Staff are recommending that a modified version of the Stabilization and Adaptive Reuse option be endorsed which will permit staff to dismantle the structure and salvage any heritage material for future use.
- Staff are seeking direction to develop an Adaptive Use Plan, incorporating the salvaged heritage material from the Willmott House to ensure the local cultural significance is maintained.

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Background

The Willmott House is a Town owned property of local historical and architectural significance located adjacent to the Milton Sports Centre. Despite having local cultural heritage value, the property is not designated under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). In 2013 the Willmott House was included in a town wide Heritage Properties Business Strategy (HPBS) from which set forth a number of potential use options with accompanying levels of capital investment. The capital investment levels ranged from \$554,000 to \$956,000.

Since the development of the HPBS staff have sought out compatible use options which align with the suggested recommendations that would also retain the heritage elements of the property while also balancing costs. In 2019 the property was identified a surplus to requirements and in 2020 staff entered into a formal Request For Information (RFI) process to seek interest from the private sector to acquire the building at no cost and move to another site in Milton for renovation, servicing and preservation. The RFI process did not generate any viable interest despite proactive engagement with the development community.

Staff continue to perform ongoing assessments to building security as the property has suffered damage on a number of occasions as a result of trespass and vandalism. Work to remedy vandalism and reduce the risk of further damage is undertaken as necessary and reported as a budget variance.

Over recent years staff have seen an increase in the frequency and severity of trespass and vandalism to the point where there is now increased likelihood that the entirety of the building, including the heritage components are at risk of total loss.

Discussion

In late 2021, staff retained ERA Architects to undertake a heritage feasibility study on the Willmott House to consider the buildings cultural heritage and structural conditioning, and to explore a range of conservation strategies.

ERA considered the increasing vandalism and trespass activity, as well as ongoing maintenance to the building and surrounding vegetation as part of their addendum.

Cultural Heritage Value

ERA have found that the Willmott House has sufficient heritage attributes to received designation under Section 29 of the OHA. But with continued damage to the property, the heritage elements of the building are being lost gradually. Notwithstanding, much of the Willmott House's heritage value relates to its geographic location and relationship to the

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adjacent Sixteen Mile Creek, and the watercourse's impact on the initial settlement of the Town of Milton.

Options for future use

Through their study of the Willmott House, ERA Architects have provided a range of conservation strategies while taking into consideration the property's cultural heritage value, the property's potential as a community asset, and the financial feasibility of all options.

ERA have suggested based on their analysis the following four potential options for consideration:

- Stabilization and Adaptive Reuse
- Servicing
- Relocation
- Demolition

Both Servicing and Relocation were considered previously and ERA through their assessment matrix find both to be unfeasible. Neither are recommended. Total demolition, while feasible and the most cost effective, would result in the total loss of local cultural heritage value. As a result it is also identified as not a desirable option for consideration.

The remaining option for consideration is Stabilization and Adaptive Reuse. This would see the following work take place:

- Stabilizing and securing the original portion of the house
- Demolition of the rear addition of the outdoor pavilion
- Demolition of the two outbuildings
- Removal of the septic system

In an updated memorandum dated July 8, 2022, the consultants ERA suggest that the approximate cost for this option would be \$200,000 +/- 40% (\$80,000). This highly variable range is as a result of unusual market conditions and a further memo from Turner & Townsend outlining the rationale is incorporated into the reports appendix.

Staff Recommendation

Important to note is that the schedule of work outlined by ERA assumes the structure to be in stable condition. As previously outlined the stability of the structure has deteriorated over time due to vandalism and trespass. The ERA costing does not take into



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consideration the cost of installation of security measures to protect the Willmott House once stabilized. Given the degree of trespass and vandalism incurred to date, it is reasonable to assume future vandalism will occur until the site becomes a location of ongoing functional use.

Taking this into account, staff recommend a modification to the Stabilization and Adaptive Reuse option recommended by ERA. Staff recommend that in addition to the removal of the septic system, demolition of the outdoor pavilion and the two outbuildings, that staff be directed to dismantle the original building, with each element carefully assessed for its residual heritage value. All salvageable material be stored for incorporation into a future use project on the existing site of the Willmott House.

This staff recommendation will ensure that the ongoing risk of damage be mitigated while also allowing staff to consider Council's Strategic Objectives as they relate to Placemaking and Cultural Development as identified with the Towns Culture Plan and Economic Development Strategies respectively.

Although the cost for dismantling of the original building, including salvaging the elements that have residual heritage value, was not included in ERA's \$200,000 estimate, there are other elements of that estimate that may be reduced or avoided as a result of the dismantling. At this time staff anticipate that the \$200,000 may be sufficient for the revised scope of work that is recommended herein.

Should the recommendations contained in this report be approved by Council, staff expect to proceed with next steps in relation to the Willmott House in 2022.

Financial Impact

As noted above, the staff recommended approach currently has an estimated cost of \$200,000. After providing for a contingency at 20%, PMR at 15% and the Town's capital surcharge, the total capital project budget request amounts to \$276,000. Funding for this project will be provided from the Town's Project Variance Account. Should the cost fluctuate beyond the contingency provided (as noted by ERA their estimate was subject to a +40%/-40% range), staff will work within the existing Budget Management Policy (Policy 113).

This capital budget does not take into account any additional capital expenditures that may be necessary to upgrade the site once a desired future use is determined. Staff will consider as part of future budget processes the necessary capital expenditure to allow for the development of future use concepts, as well as the creation of a design and costing for future consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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For questions, please contact: Michael Launslager, Manager
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Attachments

Appendix A

- Page 1 - 9 Consultant expert opinion (2022)
- Page 10 - 12 Consultant costing rational (2022)
- Page 13 - 15 Consultant costing (2022)
- Page 16 - 21 Willmott House site analysis (2022)
- Page 22 - 125 Heritage Properties Business Strategy (2011)
- Page 126-127 Willmott House status update memo (2020)

Approved by CAO
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer

Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.