



Economic and Development Services Department

**Date:** October 18, 2024

File: 12-03

**To:** Heritage Oshawa

**From:** Harrison Whilsmith, Planner A  
Economic and Development Services Department

**Re: **Wording for Plaque Commemorating the Cowan House  
39 Athol Street West****

The purpose of this memo is to provide Heritage Oshawa with draft proposed wording for the plaque commemorating the Cowan House at 39 Athol Street West (the "Subject Site").

On February 23, 2023, Heritage Oshawa considered a presentation regarding a Zoning By-law Amendment Application at the Subject Site and recommended the following:

- “1. That the proposed building be reduced in height from the current 12 stories to 6 stories to protect the sight lines of the Anglican Church next door; and,
2. That a plaque be installed to the side of the proposed building to reflect the previous home on the site; and,
3. That Heritage Oshawa be consulted and approve regarding the contents and location of the plaque.”

Pursuant to the aforementioned recommendation of Heritage Oshawa, the applicant agreed to install a plaque commemorating the Cowan House as a condition of site plan approval. The location and wording of the plaque are to be selected in consultation with Heritage Oshawa.

On June 27, 2024, Heritage Oshawa considered a presentation regarding a Site Plan Application at the Subject Site and provided their preferred location for the commemorative plaque.

Draft proposed wording for the commemorative plaque is affixed to this memo as Attachment 1.

**Recommendation**

That, pursuant to Report HTG-24-54 dated October 18, 2024, Heritage Oshawa endorse the Cowan House plaque wording as shown in Attachment 1 of said Report.

If you have any questions please contact Harrison Whilsmith at 905-436-3311, extension 2697 or by email to [hwhilsmith@oshawa.ca](mailto:hwhilsmith@oshawa.ca).

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H Whilsmith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H".

Harrison Whilsmith, Planner A  
Planning Services

Attachment

### **Cowan House**

39 Athol Street West once contained a two-storey dwelling, constructed c. 1858 in the Georgian style with Italianate elements, commonly known as the Cowan House. It was likely built just after 1858 for Elizabeth Sutton and her husband Walter J. Sutton. On May 23, 1868, the property was sold to Susan Cowan, the wife of William F. Cowan, and was the birthplace of their son Frederick W. Cowan.

Born in Ulster, Ireland, William F. Cowan and his older brother, John, arrived in Toronto with their parents and younger siblings in 1841. Brothers William and John both served as mayor of Oshawa. They also served as trustees for the children's shelter, Oshawa General Hospital, Board of Education, and Public Library. The Cowans are recognized as a notable family in Oshawa's history for their involvement in business ventures including the Cedar Dale Works and the Ontario Malleable Iron Company, and for their commitment to the wellbeing of Oshawa.

The property was donated in 1920 by Frederick W. Cowan and his wife Lily, daughter of Thomas and Louisa McMillan, to the Incorporated Synod of the Diocese of Toronto. Prior to its demolition in 2022, the Cowan House was used by the St. George's Memorial Church as an office for the parish clergy and secretarial staff.