

Evaluation Chart

Property Address:

12981 Keele Street

PLAN 85 S PT LOT 19

Size: 13894 square feet (1290 square metres); 0.31 acres, 0129 hectares

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE/INTEREST	
A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if it meets two of more of the following criteria. Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22	
Architecture 1. Is the property a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method?	Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office is a representative example of a vernacular 19 th century commercial property with a false façade. Boom-town architectural style which was a typical architectural style of small rural commercial buildings. The boom-town architectural style was characterized by a decorative false front covering a more humble, gabled building behind it, typical of many buildings in the North American west at the turn of the 20th century.	
Craftsmanship/Artistic merit 2. Does the property display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
There is no evidence that the property the property displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	
Context 3. Is the property physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings?	Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
The property is historically and functionally linked to the Village of King City and the remnants of the early settlement of King can be found in the buildings that were constructed and have survived in the downtown core area. These include but are not limited to the Hogans Inn, The Bakery Building, the Milton Winter Store, and the remaining various commercial and residential nineteenth century buildings in the vicinity. The property forms part of the main street landscape on Keele Street and its surroundings through shared historical use. The structure at 12981 Keele Street is physically and historically linked to its surroundings fronting King Road within King City as one of the earliest buildings in the village.	

Technical/Scientific merit 4. Does the property demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement?	Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.	
Historical Associations 5. Does the property have direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community?	Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The property has direct associations with the theme of being used as a commercial merchant and general store for over 150 years from its original construction through the transfer of many ownerships over the years.</p> <p>The General Store and Post Office was built in King City circa 1863 by Benjamin Lloyd after purchasing a ¼ acre of the south part of Lot 19 from Robert J. Arnold. Lloyd would own the property for 33 years and was listed as a merchant in the York County Directory and Gazetteer of 1881 on Lot 5, Concession 3. In 1900, James A. and Geo. F McDonald would come to be the new owners of the property and continue the use of the property for a general store. The store would later be owned and operated by their son, John A. McDonald until his death in 1914. The store would be operated after his death by his wife Elizabeth McDonald and later by their son, Wells (Topsy) McDonald and a nephew Crawford Wells. In 1954, Crawford Wells, who was involved in the store for a number of years purchased the business and continued to run the general merchant store to serve the community.</p> <p>The property is most recently known to the community as the Crawford Wells General Store, where one could purchase fabric, clothing, literature, household items, food. A post office was also established in the general store in the one storey wing of the building, where John McDonald would act as postmaster while Crawford Wells would manage the retail and merchandise of the general store. The home of the Wells Family was located on the west side of Keele Street where it is currently used as a coffee shop.</p> <p>The property also contains a drive shed at the rear of the property which was used for storage of goods associated with the building's use as a general store and the post office and was constructed at around the time of when the general store was built.</p> <p>The general store has acted as the nucleus and hub of the community since its erection in the mid 19th century and has continued to serve the community as a general store and post office for over 150 years. Today it continues that trend of its use as a commercial use in the form of a restaurant.</p>	
Community History 6. Does the property yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture?	Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Through generations, the property has been associated with the theme of commercial general and merchant stores that sold commercial goods within the community. It	

also acted as a post office for the community. The property has the potential to yield and contribute to an early understanding of the community and culture through the building.

Representative Work

7. Does the property demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, building, designer or theorist who is significant to a community?

Yes No

The builder of the general merchant is assumed to be Benjamin Lloyd, but the property is not known to demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community.

Community Character

8. Is the property important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of the area?

Yes No

The area surrounding the subject property is dominated by the earliest buildings and structures from the 19th century within the Village of King City. The property is important in maintaining and supporting the historic character of the Village's historic core and main street. As one of the oldest buildings in the community, the general merchant store and post office is an example of early community life existing in this area and was constructed to serve the needs of the residents in the area. As such, the subject property maintains and supports the historic early character of the area.

Landmark

9. Is the property a landmark?

Yes No

The property is a well-known local landmark as one of the oldest buildings in the Village and as the former general store and post office. It is a well known and recognizable landmark in the community.

Statement of Significance

Address: 12981 Keele Street

Property Identifier Number (PIN): 03373-0005

Legal Description: PT LT 19 PL 85 KING AS IN R506332 ; KING

The property at 12981 Keele Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value as described in the following Statement of Significance.

Description of Property

Located on the west side of Keele Street, south of King Road, the building is known municipally as Crawford Wells General Store, 12981 Keele Street, in the Village of King City, Township of King and is approximately 0.13 hectares in size.

Historical/Associative Value

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office was built in the Village of King City on land granted in 1833 by the Crown to James Lloyd. In 1863, Benjamin Lloyd, bought the present lot. It is believed that Benjamin Lloyd built the store shortly after he bought the land. Lloyd owned it for 33 years and was a general merchant and postmaster in King until 1885. In 1889, the property is sold to James C. Stokes, who would become the new postmaster in King City until 1901. In 1900, Stokes sold the property to James Archibald McDonald, who purchased it for his two sons, John and Frank McDonald. The property would remain in the McDonald family and continue its use as a general store and post office until 1914 when John passed away. John's son Wells (Topsy) and a nephew, Crawford Wells would later run the business. In 1954, Crawford Wells, who had been involved in the store for numerous years purchased the business to continue its commercial operation.

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office has served the community of King City for over 100 years as a commercial general store and post office. It provided goods for sale such as fabric, clothing, literature, gifts, household items and food. It acted as a Post Office, which was located in the south wing of the building. As well as being the centre of business in King City, the Store also provided a social meeting place for the community to gather. A post office was also established in the general store in the one storey wing of the building, where John McDonald would act as postmaster while Crawford Wells would manage the retail and merchandise of the general store. The home of the Wells Family was located on the west side of Keele Street where it is currently used as a coffee shop and known as the Roost Café

As well as being a General Store and Post Office, the building was the residence of the store keeper and his family for many years. The second storey provided a kitchen, bedrooms and living area for the Wells and numerous families before them. This second storey was used as a "tearoom" and shoppers would be able to go upstairs and sit down to a cup of tea and biscuits.

To the rear of the lot stands a large drive shed assumed to have been built the same time the store was. Store owners would have stored their wares and carriages here. When mail and delivered goods came to King City, it is likely that they would have been delivered to this building. A number of years after its construction, the building was possibly used by the community as a

dance hall. Both buildings have historical significance because they formed as a nucleus in the Village of King City and served as a gathering place for early community life.

Design/Physical Value

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office is a representative example of a vernacular 19th century commercial property and rests on a stone foundation. The building consists of two sections: the two (2) storey wing which was used for the general store and the 1 storey addition to the immediate south, which was used as the post office.

The building also has architectural value as a representative and rare example of a surviving “boom-town” architectural style in the former post office wing of the building. The Boom-town architectural style was a typical architectural style of small rural commercial buildings and was characterized by a decorative false front façade covering a more humble, building behind it such as one with a typical gable roof. This architectural style was typical of many commercial buildings across Ontario in the 19th century.

A verandah extends across the front of the building with steps for access on either side and is supported by columns. The building has a triangular pediment and large commercial windows at the front of the building which was common for commercial general stores in the 19th century. The building features ship lap horizontal clad siding and a chimney.

Contextual Value

The property has contextual value as it contributes to the dominant 19th century early settlement village buildings and structures, which forms the historic character of the surrounding area. As one of the original buildings built in the early settlement days of the Village, the property is historically linked to the community and the early buildings and structures which existed at the early formation of the community and village life. These include but are not limited to the Hogan’s Inn, Crawford Wells House, Harvey J. Davis Building, and the remaining 19th century residential, institutional and commercial buildings and structures in the immediate area. Located along Keele Street, the property has contextual value as a long-standing local landmark and a well-known historic building in the community as a commercial general store, post office and community gathering place. The building continues to serve as a prominent visible local landmark in the Community.

Description of Cultural Heritage Attributes

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office at 12981 Keele Street is a representative example is a representative example of a vernacular 19th century commercial property. The property contains the following heritage attributes that reflects these values:

- “Boom-town” front south wing addition facing Keele Street
- Triangular pediment
- Gable Roof
- Front verandah with columns
- Placement of the windows on the building
- Large commercial display windows on the front façade

- Dual chimneys
- Ship lap horizontal clad siding
- Rectangular shaped building
- Corbels on the front façade

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office at 12981 Keele Street has direct associations with a theme and person that was significant to the community by way of the following attributes:

- Historical association with the long standing theme of early commercial use in King as a result of the arrival of the Northern Railway in the mid 19th century.
- Historical association with general merchants and postmasters Benjamin Lloyd, John A. McDonald and Crawford Wells;

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office at 12981 Keele Street displays contextual value and is historically linked to its surroundings by way of the following heritage attributes:

- Location in the Village of King City and surrounding 19th century buildings and structures;
- Placement on the subject property and orientation towards Keele Street.

The Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office at 12981 Keele Street displays contextual value and is a local landmark to its surroundings by way of the following heritage attributes:

- The property is a significant and long standing local landmark that is well known to the community as the the Crawford Wells General Store and Post Office.



CRAWFORD WELLS GENERAL STORE

by Sue Iaboni

"A classic anachronism that won't quit" Such is the description of Crawford Wells General Store, in a 1950's article written by John Gault. If Mr. Gault were to visit the King City store today, he might well say the same thing.

General Stores began to spring up in rural Ontario in the mid 1800's, in response to the surplus of crops and other goods that was suddenly available. These stores were where the action was. Customers would come in for harnesses, oil-cloth, molasses, soap, flour or penny candy. But they would also come to find out about the latest births and deaths, to seal a business deal, to talk politics, to get advice about an ailment, to hear the weather forecast.

In King City, then known as Springhill, an enterprising young man named Benjamin Lloyd took a brave step in 1863 and constructed our general store at the main intersection of the town. Jesse Nunn was the first shopkeeper. In 1900 James Macdonald bought the store for his two sons, and the business stayed in the Macdonald/Wells family for almost 75 years. When the railroad came to town in 1853 and a post office was established in the store, son John Macdonald became the postmaster. His son, Topsy Wells carried on as postmaster until the post office moved out in 1953. Meanwhile cousin Crawford Wells took on the retail side and after his death, the store was run by niece Dorothy Bayliss until 1974.

During those 74 years the store was the

customer for Crawford Wells when he was off sick sums it up: ".....none of us can get along without you so don't think you can go on taking a holiday like this, or the whole damn town will fall apart." Another archival note talks about how the store had the first TV set in the community back in the early '50s, and neighbours came from far and wide to watch Hockey Night in Canada every Saturday.

Gradually the retail business lost customers to nearby shopping plazas and big city malls, but it wasn't until 1974 that the store left the family entirely. It was bought by three enthusiastic young ladies, Stephanie Paulson, Lynne Aimers, and Gail Rowe Sharkey. A transition began. The store was lovingly restored and the merchandise was updated to include antiques, handcrafts, and gourmet foods. A tea room selling items from baker Sheena (of Sheena's Kitchen) was created upstairs.

Later still, in 1987, George Webster and his business partner fell in love with the heritage building and bought it. George's wife Cathy ran the store as a fine china shop. The upstairs was rented out as a bookstore, a biscotti bakery was nestled into a small nook downstairs, and a jewellery counter was located in another downstairs corner. Despite a loyal and supportive clientele, they could not attract enough customers to sustain their business, as the traffic whizzed through on the newly widened King Road.

Finally, in 2006, Denny Starritt stepped in as the new merchant of Craw-

ford Wells with a vibrant retail outlet while operating the store as a not-for-profit business with the proceeds going to the Regional Cancer Program at Southlake Hospital in Newmarket. Over time, the store once again evolved into a community hub, where local artisans were showcased, and book talks, cultural presentations and group meetings were welcomed. The cafe in the store expanded to include full breakfast and lunch menus as well as specialty coffees, teas and pastries.

But times changed and today Denny and her staff have shifted their philanthropic focus to L'Arche Daybreak's \$1.6 million campaign, "Signs Of Hope," by featuring their handcrafted items for sale in the store. All proceeds raised from these sales will be matched and donated back to L'Arche.

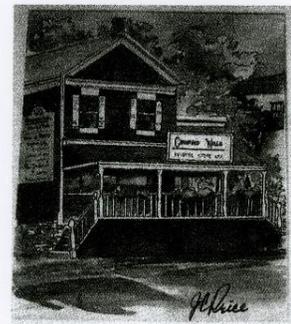
If you drop into Crawford Wells today you will see remnants of the 1863 store: the old wooden floors creak as you wander through the merchandise, the cast iron grates around the outside walls send out blasts of heat in winter, and the original brass plaque from the front of the building hangs on the wall. Climb the original staircase to the second floor and you will see the fireplace and the door to a room that was once the kitchen for the storekeepers who lived there. Although the original cash register is lost, the old safe is still there, hidden away in a back room.

But what you do not see are enough customers to sustain the business. Cars still whiz by on King Road, barely stop-

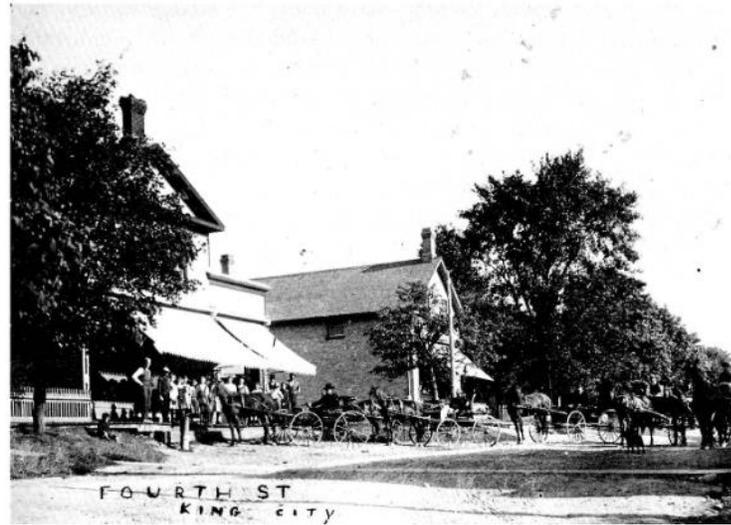
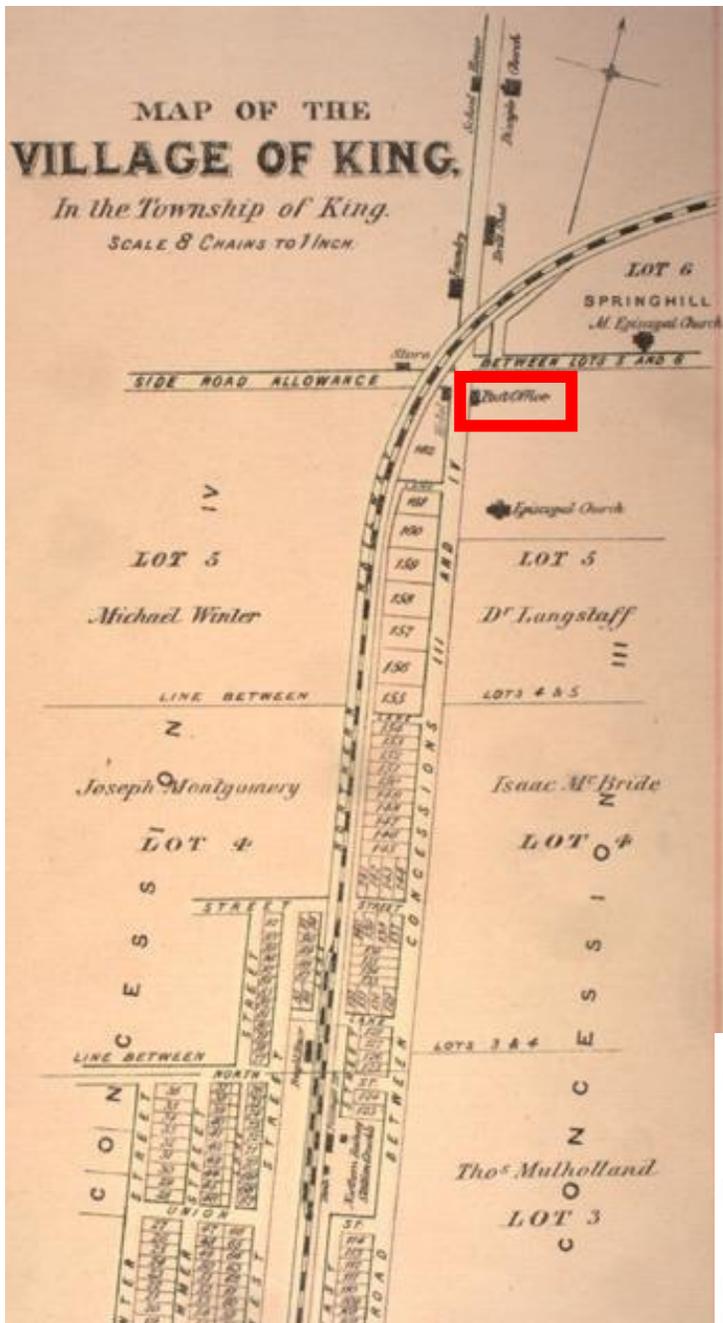
ping in the city, shop at the big box stores and the large malls as they head home at night. People catch up on the news on their flat-screen TV. They gossip on Facebook. They play bridge with virtual partners. They grab their meals at the drive-through. They do their Christmas shopping online.

And today the fate of Crawford Wells General Store is unknown. Holiday sales are planned for December as Denny and her staff prepare to make way for change. What will the new year bring for this grand old gent? We all have remembrances of our visits to the corner of King and Keele. Perhaps remembrances will conjure up plans...plans to promote and sustain this magnificent anachronism rooted in our local heritage. ●

Sue Iaboni (in conversation with Cathy Webster and Cathy Wellesley)



watercolour by Judy Price



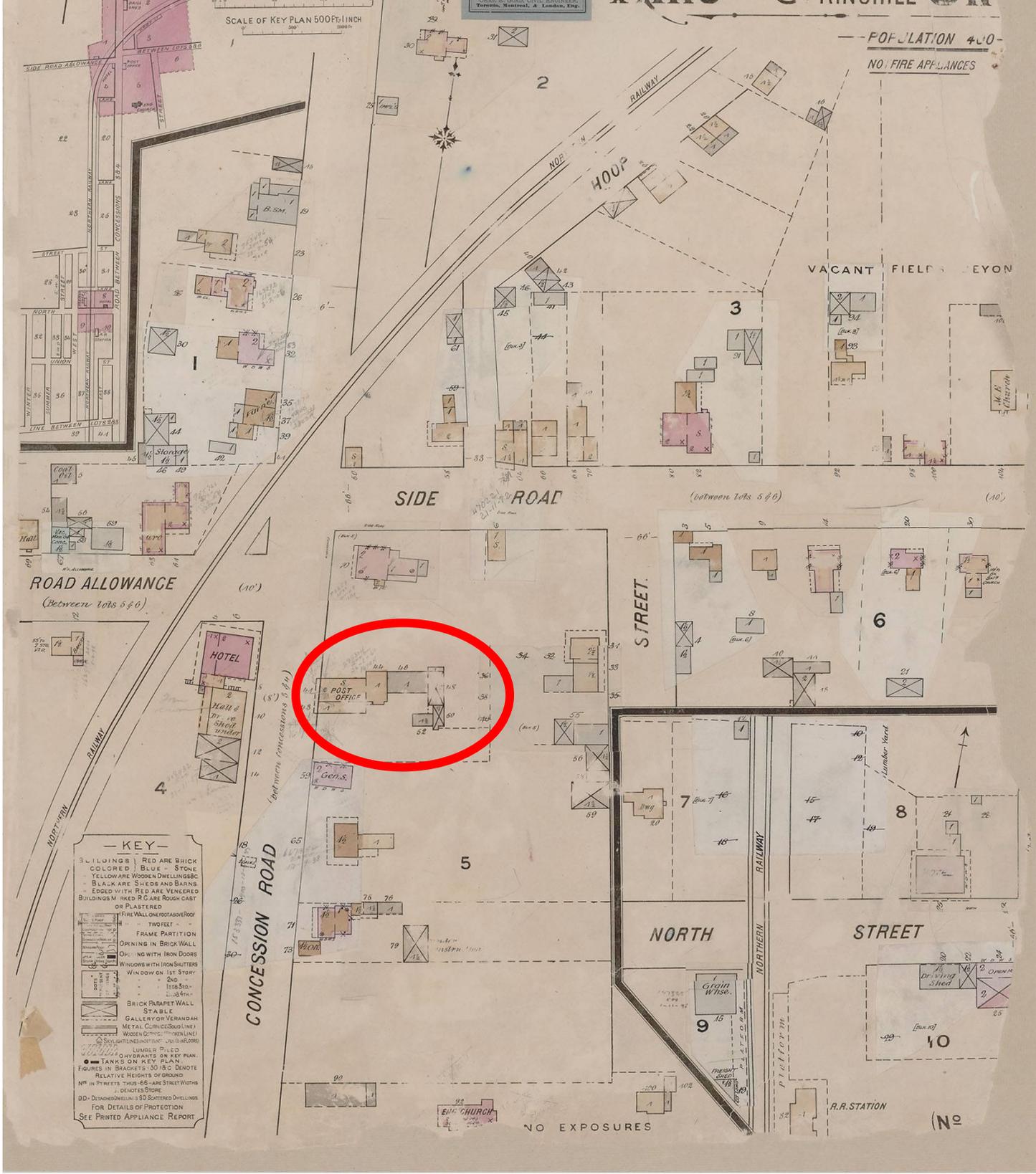
Fire Insurance Map - 1904

CHAS. E. GOAD C.E.-MONTRE.
 Oct. 1884
 SCALE 50 FT. = 1 INCH
 SCALE OF KEY PLAN 500 FT. = 1 INCH

KING, of SPRINGHILL, Ont.
 Surveyed Oct. 1884
 REVISED TO JAN. 1894.
 POPULATION 200
 No Appliances.
 Claim of fire insurance, either on property, and real estate, are not valid unless covered by a contract with CHAS. E. GOAD, CIVIL ENGINEER, Toronto, Montreal, & London, Eng.

KING OR SPRINGHILL ON

POPULATION 400
 NO FIRE APPLIANCES



KEY

BUILDINGS: RED ARE BRICK COLORED; BLUE - STONE; YELLOW ARE WOODEN DWELLINGS; BLACK ARE SHEDS AND BARN; EGGED WITH RED ARE VENEERED BUILDINGS; MARKED R.C. ARE ROUGH CAST OR PLASTERED.

FRAMES: TWO FEET - FRAME PARTITION; OPENING IN BRICK WALL; OPENING WITH IRON DOORS; WINDOWS WITH IRON SHUTTERS; WINDOW ON 1ST STORY; 2ND; 1ST & 2ND.

BRICK PARAPET WALL; STABLE; GALLERY OR VERANDAH; METAL CORNICE (SOLID LINE); WOODEN CORNICE (DOTTED LINE); SHED (SOLID LINE); SHED (DOTTED LINE); LUMBER PILE; DOYDRANTS ON KEY PLAN; TANKS ON KEY PLAN; FIGURES IN BRACKETS 50 TO 100 DENOTE RELATIVE HEIGHTS OF ROOFS; N.P. IN SQUARES THUS 56 ARE STREET WIDTHS; DENOTES STORE; D.D. - DIMENSIONS; S.D. - DISTANCES; FOR DETAILS OF PROTECTION SEE PRINTED APPLIANCE REPORT.

Fire Insurance Map -
1904

KING CITY-ONT.
-APRIL, 1910.-

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