

CORPORATION  
OF THE  
TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

BY-LAW NO. 2136-90

A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS THE BUTLER HOUSE, 285 SIMCOE STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE AND INTEREST.

WHEREAS Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 337, authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings, and structures thereon, to be of architectural or historic value or interest; and

WHEREAS notice of intention to so designate the Butler House, 285 Simcoe Street having been duly published and served and a notice of objection to such designation having been received, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake referred the matter to the Conservation Review Board for hearing and report; and

WHEREAS the Conservation Review Board, after due notice, conducted a public hearing and made a report to the aforesaid Council in which it recommended that the Butler House, 285 Simcoe Street be duly designated by by-law of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake pursuant to the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 337; and

WHEREAS the aforesaid Council has considered the said report; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "B" hereto;

THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake enacts as follows:

1. THERE is designated as being of architectural and historic value and interest the real property known as the Butler House at 285 Simcoe Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, more particularly described in Schedule "A" hereto.
2. THE municipal solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper land registry office.
3. THE Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served on the owner of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of the passing of this by-law to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks.

READ A FIRST TIME THIS 9TH DAY OF APRIL, 1990.

READ A SECOND TIME THIS 9TH DAY OF APRIL, 1990.

READ A THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS 9TH DAY OF APRIL, 1990.



LORD MAYOR S. IGNATCZYK



TOWN CLERK R. G. HOWSE

SCHEDULE "A"

TO BY-LAW NO. 2136-90

THE BUTLER HOUSE

285 SIMCOE STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

ALL AND SINGULAR that certain parcel or tract of land and premises, situate, lying and being in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, in the Regional Municipality of Niagara (formerly in the Town of Niagara, in the County of Lincoln) and Province of Ontario and being composed of part of Lot No. 140, Niven Plan 86 in the said Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which said parcel may be more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCING at the most southerly angle of said Lot;

THENCE North 34 degrees and 44 minutes East along the north-westerly boundary of Simcoe Street, 130.0 feet to the place of beginning of the herein described lands;

THENCE continuing North 34 degrees and 44 minutes East along the north-westerly boundary of Simcoe Street, 80.14 feet to the north-easterly angle of the said lot;

THENCE North 55 degrees and 28 minutes West, 208.9 feet to the north-westerly angle of the said Lot;

THENCE South 34 degrees and 44 minutes West, along the north-westerly boundary of the said Lot, 80.14 feet;

THENCE South 55 degrees, 28 minutes East, 208.9 feet to the point of commencement.

All previously set out in Registered Instrument No. 601088 (1989).

## SCHEDULE "B"

TO BY-LAW NO. 2136-90

## STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION

The Butler House, c.1815  
285 Simcoe Street  
Part Lot 140, Niven Plan 86  
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

Built c.1815, the Butler House is of superior architectural merit and has an important historical connection with one of Niagara's most notable founding families. It is recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons.

The Butler House was originally located on the south side of Niagara Stone Road in the vicinity of the Garrison Line which was the westerly boundary of the former Town of Niagara. Colonel John Butler of Butler's Rangers who administered the original Loyalist settlement in what is now the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, acquired land in this vicinity in 1784. In 1802 parcels of land in this area, known as the Butler Tract, were granted to Andrew, Thomas and William Johnson Butler and Deborah (Butler) Muirhead, children of Colonel John Butler. The house is thought to have been built and occupied by their descendants, including Johnson and James Butler.

Brigadier Willis Moogk moved the house to its present site in 1969 to ensure its preservation. The house was fully restored by Charlotte Ross Grant, beginning in 1970 through to 1973, at which time the basement was excavated and enlarged, and a drive-shed was built to complement the house.

A forerunner of the Ontario Cottage style of architecture, the Butler House features a formal yet simple neo-Classical design and delicate and rich interior detailing which is typical of the "Loyalist" period. The house is considered to be unique in Niagara.

This building is a one storey, 5 bay, symmetrical structure with a hip roof and horizontal clapboard finish. It has an unusual structure, a heavy timber barn-type frame filled in with a continuous walling of vertical planking (much of which is hand sawn) roughly three inches thick. The vertical walling is secured by notches cut in the sill and the plate and fastened with wrought nails. The roof is a conventional hipped form reinforced with king posts at either end of the ridge, which hold a shaped ridgepole between them. The interior of the planking is covered with thin vertical furring, over which expanded wood board lath is attached as a base for the interior plaster finish. The plaster survives, in most places, to this day.

So far as is known the planked frame of the Butler House has no other counterpart in Niagara, and, it would appear, it is an early form of this type of construction.

The house has a cornice gutter around the entire roof line which has been rebuilt into the eaves in a form which is common to a house of this period in this area. The building is set on a high foundation which has been reproduced at the Simcoe Street location, with an old hand-made brick facing at the above grade points to resemble the original foundation. Restoration of the building has resulted in the two interior chimneys being reconstructed to the original detail.

The exterior finish was originally square-edged pine clapboard fastened with hand-wrought, rose-head nails and where required the clapboard has been restored with similar material.

The house had a Greek Revival front added to the facade c.1850 which had seriously deteriorated by the 1970s, revealing the original white-painted clapboard below. The latter was restored. The architrave backboards to the original doorcase showed a paint outline of engaged colonette detail which was interpreted as a fluted form in restoration. The doorcase was completed with appropriate entablature which was guided by the interior treatment of the house. The six panel door and sash sidelights are original. The front steps and stoop are modern, and were built in part to accommodate some modern amenities.

The window sash on all the windows has been renewed to the original detail. The cellarway entrance vestibule which is located on the north side generally follows the outline of the previous structure but was reconstructed when the building was moved.

A trellis style porch with pagoda roof was added to the rear of the house in the early 1970s to mask the slightly off-centre position of the rear entrance. A separate detached garage was constructed in the late 1970s to a form and design compatible with the house.

Much of the interior trim still exists in the front hall including the wood cornice, the chairrail, the architraves and the baseboard as well as the reverse side of the entrance doorcase with its elaborate trim and entablature. The original doorcase to the back of the front hall room remains in place although some restoration work was undertaken to restore damaged parts such as entablature and sash which had been removed. The six panel, recessed, moulded doors in the hall are original although some hardware has been replaced with authentic period types.

The rear hall, located behind the front hall, retains all of its original trim except where restoration work has been necessary to repair damage resulting from the construction of later partitions. The staircase to the basement and the stair rail have been constructed to period detail.

In the drawing room (to the left of the front door) the original trim and joinery still exist, including the mantelpiece with twin colonettes, architraves and fanlights at the alcoves, architraves to all openings in the walls, the wood cornice, chairrail, baseboard and the bumper rail for hanging a mirror between the front windows. The window sash and alcove doors and shelves in the drawing room have been restored.

The frieze painting and wall painting in the drawing room, between the front windows above the chairrail, are very early and possibly contemporary to the original construction of the house or were applied shortly after the completion of the interior. The frieze painting and wall painting were restored by Maurice Strike, a noted theatre designer, in the early 1970s. Only the background colour of the walls was changed, from the original royal yellow to a more neutral soft olive green. All of the other original colours were restored. The fireplace in the drawing room was reconstructed to its original shape, complete with a double flue, utilizing brick salvaged from the original fireplace for the facing while the outer hearth was renewed with stone.

All of the original trim remains in the dining room (to the right of the front door), but in a slightly later design (1825-1830) than the rest of the house. The original complement of trim includes the wood cornice, symmetrical pilaster trim with corner blocks, spandrel panels below the windows, the chairrail, the baseboard and the mantelpiece and the six-panel doors to the hall and alcoves. The trim is believed to have been renewed as the result of a fire which is thought to have started in the kitchen fireplace located below. The fireplace has been rebuilt to the original detail following the relocation of the building.

The library or sitting room (located to the rear of the dining room) retains its original trim including the architraves, chairrail, baseboard, doors, the mantelpiece, and boxed posts. The fireplace has been rebuilt to the original design following relocation of the building.

The best bedroom, located to the rear of the drawing room, was heated by a stove rather than a fireplace and retains all of its original trim and joinery including baseboard, chairrail, architraves, door and boxed posts.

In the basement the kitchen cooking fireplace and the bakeoven have been reconstructed to their original pattern, as working models, using salvaged hand-made brick. Most of the rest of the trim and detail in the basement level has been newly constructed in period detail including the sash, mantelshelf, cupboard fronts and the door to the outside, to create an appropriate complementary finish to that of the rest of the house.

This designation includes the entire exterior facade of the house; its (original) interior floor plan including the entire envelope of each room, openings, ceilings and wall partitions; all interior features, trim and detail of the house as described above, including the colour scheme; and all lands known municipally as 285 Simcoe Street. Features of the house excluded from the designation are the side entranceway, the front stoop, the rear porch and the newly (1970-1973) excavated (west) section of the basement including the bar, the washrooms, the modern kitchen, the new bedroom and storage areas. The drive-shed is also excluded from the designation.