

**Ministry of Tourism,
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Conservation Review Board

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**Ministère du Tourisme,
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CONSERVATION REVIEW BOARD

**RE: THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MICHIPICOTEN, ONTARIO;
INTENTION TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS “THE EAGLE’S
NEST” AND MUNICIPALLY AS ASSESSMENT ROLL NUMBER: 5776-000-
017, PARCEL 23603-0000; MC DJ24PT, CHABANEL TOWNSHIP (0.92 AC)**

Stuart W. Henderson, Chair
Andrew S. Mathers, Member

February 8, 2001

This hearing was convened under Section 29(8) of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18 (as amended) for the purpose of reporting to the council of the Township of Michipicoten whether the property known as “The Eagle’s Nest”, MCDJ24PT, Chabanel Township, Ontario, hereinafter referred to as The Eagle’s Nest, should be designated by By-Law, under the Act, an objection having been raised by the owner of the property, Algoma Steel Inc.

Notice of this hearing was given under the Act and published in the Algoma News Review on January 24, 2001 by the Conservation Review Board. The relevant Affidavit by a member of the Board’s staff is Exhibit 1.

The Board, in accordance with its customary practice, had the opportunity to inspect the site and view the surrounding area prior to the hearing.

Present: Chris Wray, Administrator/Clerk, Township of Michipicoten
Johanna Rowe, Chair, Township of Michipicoten Heritage Committee
Brenda Grundt, local citizen
Howard Whente, Councillor, Township of Michipicoten
Andy Stevens, Acting Business Unit Leader Primary, Algoma Steel Inc.
(hereinafter referred to as Algoma)

The Corporation of the Township of Michipicoten was represented by Chris Wray, Administrator/Clerk, who called three witnesses: Johanna Rowe, Brenda Grundt, and Howard Whente.

Case for the Township of Michipicoten

The Township through Mr. Wray, provided the Board with a copy of a document entitled, “The Township of Michipicoten Summary of Legislative Requirements, Designation of The Eagle’s Nest” dated February 8, 2001 and accepted as Exhibit 2. Contained within this document were exhibits ‘A’ through ‘M’ which were photocopies of the required legal documentation including a copy of the Designation Proposal.

Mr. Wray briefly described and reviewed the process and exhibits for the Board.

Witness – Howard Whente:

Mr. Whente presented a number of items. A document (Exhibit 3) was provided entitled, “The Eagle’s Nest – A Historical Property of Canada,” dated at Wawa, Ontario, January 2001.

A video tape recording (Exhibit 4) was presented (however it was not played for viewing but was viewed by the Board in its review of all of the evidence). According to Mr. Whente the recording contains information concerning the highlights of Sir James Dunn’s achievements.

A photocopy of an article entitled, “The Eagle’s Nest,” which appeared on June 6, 1998 in the Sault Star newspaper was provided. The article describes the physical attributes of The Eagle’s Nest and its usage by Sir James and Lady Dunn. The article also briefly describes the interest of the local citizenry in preserving The Eagle’s Nest and its possible future uses.

Witness – Johanna Rowe:

Ms. Rowe is the author of an essay entitled the “Story of Algoma and Town of Wawa.” She reviewed the history of Algoma Ore and its effect on the Town of Wawa and Sault Ste. Marie. The witness stated that due to government regulations all other significant buildings owned by Algoma Ore Development in the Wawa area had been “levelled” save for The Eagle’s Nest. Ms. Rowe in her presentation at the hearing referred to her written document, noted at the hearing as Exhibit 7. This document described the history and the unique importance which both Algoma Ore and Sir James Dunn had for the Town of Wawa, the people of Sault Ste. Marie and the whole of the Algoma District for 100 years.

Witness – Brenda Grundt:

Ms. Grundt, formerly from the United States, has resided in Wawa since 1963. Her father-in-law was a commercial photographer who lived in Wawa. Ms. Grundt reviewed the early history of the discovery of iron ore in 1897 in the Michipicoten area and the subsequent developments leading from that discovery, i.e., the Algoma Central and Hudson Bay Railway, the Steel Plant in Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma Central Steamship Lines. The Lake Superior Power Corporation benefited greatly from the iron ore/steel making industry.

The witness reviewed the financial difficulties and the two subsequent reorganizations which Algoma Ore experienced between 1900 and 1945. During this period Sir James Dunn played a pivotal role in ensuring the survival of the Algoma mining and associated industries.

Referring to The Eagle’s Nest itself, Ms. Grundt described the house as a “mansion” when measured by Wawa standards, i.e., size and amenities. The house, built in 1949 at a cost of \$109,000, was at least twice the size of the average Wawa house and each of its three guest bedrooms had an ensuite bathroom, an unheard of luxury in Wawa. The front steps were heated to prevent icing and the built-in bell system throughout the house was another unique feature. When the bell was rung three times it meant silence in order that Sir James could sleep. The view from the property was its most priceless element.

The witness referred to Sir James Dunn's contributions to the allied war effort during World War I. These efforts were recognized through his knighthood by the British Government in 1921. He was also a member of the Canadian Hall of Fame.

Witness: Howard Whente:

Mr. Whente reviewed the letter of the Michipicoten Heritage Committee on February 4, 1998 to Algoma Ore Development requesting that The Eagle's Nest be preserved, and response that The Eagle's Nest would be preserved for a 30 month period ending in October 2000, thus providing Council time to develop and negotiate an arrangement satisfactory to Algoma and the Town.

The witness described the influence which Sir James Dunn exhibited through his significant personal friendships with many other notables: Lord Beaverbrook, Sir Winston Churchill, Lord Alexander and the Rt. Honourable C.D. Howe.

He described the fundamental importance of Sir James Dunn to the very survival of Algoma following the end of the World War I, the subsequent completion of the Transcontinental Rail Lines, the depression years of the 1930s and the effect of an ore body of lower quality than required for the making of steel.

Mr. Whente further described the creative ways Dunn employed to ensure his personal control over Algoma and the methodology of up-grading the existing ore through the new "sintering" process, notwithstanding that this new process lost the mine money during the period 1940-45 partly due to price controls on iron ore. Dunn's response to these controls was to change the name of the product he was selling from iron ore to maganese, of which the ore contained a high percentage, thus easing Algoma's financial burdens and allowing the mining operations to continue.

Following World War II, Dunn began a determined expansion; a new method, the "sink/float process" was developed, another pit opened and control was gained over Canada Steamship Lines, all of which ensured the foreseeable future for a company which was becoming an increasingly international firm.

The witness described the various contributions made to society by Sir James Dunn's estate after his death in 1956 including the \$30 million in seed funds for the Canada Council.

Mr. Whente, in response to a later witness, the Objector's representative, Mr. Andy Stevens, commented that the designation of The Eagle's Nest does not in itself mean that the public would have access to the site and thus raise the question of liability. The witness said that the municipality had recorded in a letter dated November 1, 2000 its willingness to accept liability and certain other costs associated with maintenance of The Eagle's Nest.

In summary, the witness stated that the issue of access could be controlled by the owner. He conceded that its architectural significance could be argued, but that its historical importance in the area was unparalleled.

Mr. Whente emphasized that Sir James Dunn was a significant and pivotal figure in the life and development of the Algoma Region and the steel industry in Canada and as such should be remembered through the designation of The Eagle's Nest.

Case for Algoma

Witness – Andy Stevens:

Mr. Stevens made a few brief remarks earlier during the hearing wherein he agreed with certain testimony of Ms. Grundt with respect to the technological advances in the mining and refining of iron ore by Algoma during Sir James Dunn's tenure.

Mr. Stevens reviewed his personal involvement with Algoma and the Town of Wawa citing his role as Mine Manager in 1970, his role as a member of the Heritage Committee and his efforts to engage the company with the Town of Wawa through various community events.

The witness described significant security measures taken by Algoma since the closure of the mine in 1998. Algoma erected six miles of chain link fence around the open pit excavation and sealed the entrance to the 3000 foot vertical shaft. Mr. Stevens said that the company was very concerned about any liability it might acquire as a result of designation and any attendant costs it might incur if designation were to proceed.

He said that Algoma had and continues to maintain the heating of The Eagle's Nest; however the water and sewage systems have been discontinued.

The witness told the hearing that the house, The Eagle's Nest, could be removed from Algoma property if proper arrangements were made.

In response to comments by Mr. Whente that designation does not necessarily allow public access and that Algoma Steel Inc. in its letter of September 10, 1999 offered to lease the property and the access road to the Township for an annual fee of \$1.00, Mr. Stevens indicated that despite the terms and conditions set out in the aforementioned letter Algoma still felt that it would carry significant risks.

In summary, Mr. Stevens said that the owner feels that the risk of liability is too great, as Algoma is no longer on the site.

Findings

The Board finds that The Eagle's Nest is of sufficient historical interest and value to merit designation for an abundance of reasons.

They include:

- The structure and surrounding stone fence and property is of a size and grandeur unparalleled in the community for the time and presently;
- Its builder and occupant, Sir James Dunn, was a remarkable figure in Canadian history leaving an indelible mark locally, provincially, nationally and worldwide, primarily influential in the development of iron ore mining and related industries and

community growth and prosperity in the region and after his passing instrumental in the promotion of Canadian culture;

- The placement, contextually, of The Eagle's Nest in the landscape of the Town of Wawa is of paramount importance. It is a landmark in the community and one of the last remaining vestiges of the era of economic development of the region relating to the mining of iron ore.

The evidence and valuable input presented by the proponents of designation was remarkably detailed, informative and of great assistance to the Board. Mr. Stevens' evidence was also well thought out and sensitive to the issues. The Objector however offered no tangible rebuttal to the overwhelming evidence for designation. Its objections related to liability and access, issues which are not within the purview and mandate of this Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore the recommendation of the Board that The Eagle's Nest be designated by By-Law under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

As a consequence of this property's considerable significance to the residents of the community of Wawa and its surrounding area it is the Board's sincere hope that the residents of Wawa and Algoma can continue to work together, to their mutual benefit, on the property's restoration and revitalization.

It would appear to the Board that productive dialogue has taken place in the past between the parties and the Board encourages that this foundation be capitalized upon. This property is a singularly significant reminder of the area's past.

Issues of access and liability do not appear to the Board to be insurmountable and it urges all parties to work towards a satisfactory result, which recognizes and celebrates the inherent historical components and value of this property.

(Original Signed by)

Stuart W. Henderson, Chair

Andrew S. Mathers, Member

Exhibits Numbers:

1. Affidavit of Notice of Hearing.
2. Summary of Legislative Requirements, dated February 8, 2001.
3. Publication Document – “The Eagle’s Nest - A Historical Property.”
4. Video Tape Recording of excerpts from the ceremony when Sir James Dunn was inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame.
5. Fax copy of a two-page breakdown concerning construction cost of the director’s lodge, latterly known as The Eagle’s Nest.
6. Newspaper article from the Sault Star on June 6, 1998 concerning The Eagle’s Nest.
7. Written presentation dated February 8, 2001 of Johanna Rowe, Chair, Township of Michipicoten Heritage Committee concerning The Eagle’s Nest.