

Meeting Date: February 7, 2022

Subject: Recommendation to Rename Bolton Mill Park, Ward 5

Submitted By: Sally Drummond, Heritage Resource Officer, Strategic Policy Planning

RECOMMENDATION

That 'Bolton Mill Park' be renamed 'George Bolton Park' in commemoration of George Bolton for his historical role in being the original mill owner and founder of the Village of Bolton.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Bolton Mill Park is located on the north side of the Humber River in downtown Bolton, between the bridge at Queen Street North and Humber Lea Road, in Ward 5.
- The linear, riverside park is a naturalized area that encapsulates aspects of the two former Bolton family grist mill operations that were the successive economic mainstays of the village from the early 1820s to 1951.
- Known originally as Mill Park or Rotary Park, it became Bolton Mill Park in 2002 when the Town installed park signage.
- In commemoration of the fundamental role that George Bolton played as the founder of the village of Bolton, and in celebration of the village's bicentennial in 2021, it is recommended that 'Bolton Mill Park' be renamed 'George Bolton Park'.
- Replacement of the two park entrance signs was not considered as part of the 2022 budget.
- Replacement of one entrance sign will be funded jointly by the Bolton Bicentennial Committee and the Albion Bolton Historical Society. The cost of replacing the second entrance sign will be funded by Parks Operations 2022 operating budget.
- Sign replacement will be managed by Town staff in Community Services.

DISCUSSION

Background

Bolton Mill Park is located on the north side of the Humber River in downtown Bolton, extending between the bridge at Queen Street North and Humber Lea Road, in Ward 5. The linear park entails a naturalized area of flood plain and valley slope with a hard surface path running along the riverbank, accessed at the Queen Street North bridge and Humber Lea Road (Schedule A). The park is part of Lot 9, Concession 7 Albion Township.

The riverside park encapsulates the former dam and mill pond of George Bolton's original grist mill operation as well as the former mill race of the family's second grist mill, which was built on the north side of the river in 1846. Operating in succession, the two mills were the economic mainstays of the village from the early 1820s until 1951.

The second Bolton grist mill was demolished in 1968 to make way for Humber Lea Road, built in 1969 to access a new residential subdivision on the north hill. As home building commenced, soil from basement excavations was used to fill in the former mill race and level the surrounding area. Local residents soon began using the riverside space for recreational purposes and by the mid-1970s it had developed into a formal park, largely through the efforts of The Rotary Club of Bolton.

Originally, the park was known locally as Mill Park or Rotary Park, in recognition of its adjacency to the two former Bolton family mill sites as well as the role of The Rotary Club of Bolton in establishing the path and lighting through the park. In 2002, the Town installed signage at the east and west entrances of the park, at which time it became known as Bolton Mill Park (Schedule B). The inclusion of the name 'mill' in the park name has been misleading because neither of the former grist mills was contained within the park boundaries.

The Town is currently exploring various revitalization plans for the park as part of the Downtown Bolton Revitalization Project.

George Bolton – Village Founder

In 1819, the area around what is now Bolton was surveyed as part of Albion Township by Provincial Land Surveyor James Chewett, who was given 2,635 acres as payment for his services. On June 5, 1821, he sold Lot 9, Concession 7, a 200-acre lot in the Humber River valley, to British immigrant George Bolton (age 22) who recognized the location's potential for water-powered industry.

After building himself a house, George cleared a mill site on the riverbank at what is now the curve in Mill Street. He was guided by his older brother, James, a skilled millwright who had immigrated to the area two years earlier. Together, the brothers built a dam across the river and erected a grist mill, which was operating by 1824. The mill site gradually attracted other development, and the settlement became known as Bolton's Mill or Bolton Hollow.

In 1830, George provided the area's first school. The following year, he opened the first store at the corner of what became King and Mill streets. In 1832, George was appointed postmaster of the Albion Post Office, which he located in his store.

By 1840, the hamlet comprised 16 buildings including blacksmith shops, shoemaker shops, a cooperage, tannery, distillery, tavern and hotel. George continued to support the community, providing land for the Congregational Church north of the river and the Primitive Methodist Chapel, which still stands today at 21 King Street East.

In 1845, after 23 years as miller, George retired and sold the mill, house and other property to his assistant and nephew, James Bolton Jr. He died on November 16, 1869 in Glenville, near Newmarket, on the farm of James Bolton Jr. and his wife Ellen.

Recommendation

In commemoration of the fundamental role that George Bolton played as the founder of the village of Bolton, and in celebration of the village's bicentennial in 2021 (deferred to June 2022), it is recommended that 'Bolton Mill Park' be renamed 'George Bolton Park'.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Renaming of Bolton Mill Park will require the complete replacement of one older park sign and the replacement of the panels on a newer park sign. This was not considered in the 2022 budget.

Based on current Town design standards, the cost to completely replace the older sign is approximately \$4,000. The Bolton Bicentennial Committee and Albion Bolton Historical Society have committed to jointly fund replacement of the older park sign. The Historical Society will pay the Town \$2,000 (Schedule C) and the Planning Department's Bicentennial grant funding of \$2,000 can be held as the Bolton Bicentennial Committee's share.

The cost of replacing the panels of the newer park sign will be funded by Parks Operations operating budget (GL account 01-08-385-71020-365-62335) in the amount of approximately \$2,400. Replacement of the signs will be managed by Community Services staff.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Connected Community

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule A: Location Map – Bolton Mill Park

Schedule B: Photographs – Historic Mill Race and Existing Park Entrance Signs

Schedule C: Albion Bolton Historical Society Funding Commitment Letter



40 Humber Lea Road
Bolton Mill Park

LOCATION MAP



Date: January 21, 2022

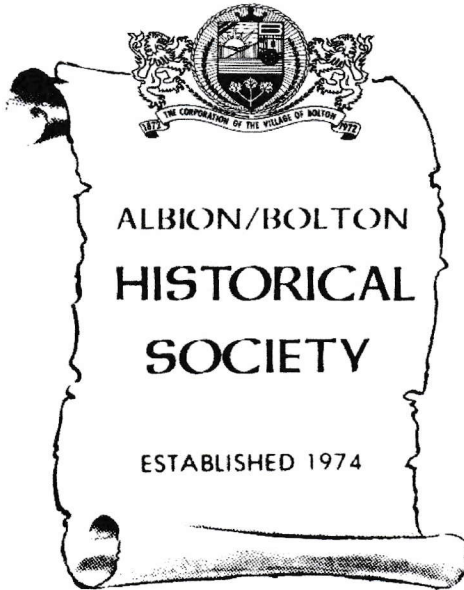
Staff Report: 2022-0042



East Entrance



West Entrance



Albion Bolton Historical Society
c/o P.O. Box 584
Bolton, Ontario L7E 5T4

January 19, 2022

Town of Caledon
6311 Old Church Road
Caledon East, ON L7C 1J6

Attention Sally Drummond:

The Albion Bolton Historical Society (ABHS) will contribute \$2000 towards the cost of replacing ONE park sign for the proposed George Bolton Park in Bolton.

Sincerely

Valerie Mackie
Treasurer