

Staff Report

Report To: Council
Report From: Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space
Meeting Date: April 27, 2020
Report Code: CS-20-047
Subject: Potters Field Monument Design and Next Steps

Recommendations:

That in consideration of Staff Report CS-20-047 respecting a proposed donation of a monument to recognize the more than 1200 people interred at Potters Field at Greenwood Cemetery, Council:

- 1) approves the design included as attachment 1;
- 2) authorize staff to pour a monument foundation for the project at a cost of \$800.00 in materials and \$500 in kind in labour and equipment costs from the approved 2020 operating budget for Greenwood Cemetery; and
- 3) amend the Greenwood Cemetery Bylaw to permit the monument dimensions detailed in the design.

Strategic Initiative:

3. Leverage our City's assets to enhance tourism opportunities;
6. Promote and enhance Owen Sound's built heritage;
7. Encourage and promote participation in cultural activities and active lifestyles;
8. Support community safety and social inclusion;
10. Maximize revenue sources and funding opportunities;
14. Maintain, improve and promote the use of our local parks and trails;

Background:

On September 19, 2018, Aly Boltman made a [deputation](#) to Community Services Committee bringing forward the potential donation of a monument to be placed at Potters Field in Greenwood Cemetery. The goal is to recognize the over 1100 people interred there.

At the November 21, 2018 Community Services Committee meeting, report [CS-18-150](#) outlined a process and next steps for the project.

The steps include a provision for an open house to consult the public and receive feedback on the preliminary monument design. Given the current and ongoing global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, an open house is not possible. However, on May 25, 2019 Aly Boltman hosted a community information seeking session at Grey Roots Museum. An online survey was conducted and that feedback was used to inform the proposed design. The comments and feedback received via those public engagement strategies were used to inform the proposed design.

The chart below shows the steps taken to date, and their current status:

<p>Soft launch of project and survey introduction. This step would introduce the project and launch a survey geared to obtain public input and feedback. The survey would remain open for input until the end of January 2019.</p> <p>The City will provide a Survey Monkey tool and website for the survey, do social media for the project, and have a presence of the survey on the City's website.</p> <p>Aly Boltman will prepare the information for the website, assist with content for social media, draft the survey questions, and review the survey questions with the donor prior to the launch.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>An open house would be held to discuss the feedback that has been received and the sharing of ideas.</p>	<p>May 25, 2019 Community Information Seeking Session at Grey Roots Museum.</p>
<p>Design of monument to be presented to Committee by Aly Boltman on behalf of the donor.</p>	<p>April 27, 2020, via this report. Deputations are not permitted under current social distancing restrictions.</p>
<p>Manufacturing of monument, installation, and public unveiling of the monument.</p>	<p>Pending City Approval.</p>
<p>After the monument has been designed, installed and unveiled, the City would pay for the development and creation of an interpretive plaque that would "share the story" of the monument and of the Indigent Section. The cost of the interpretive plaque would be borne by the City and is included for consideration as part of the 2019 capital budget.</p>	<p>To be submitted in the 2021 Capital Budget as an item for consideration.</p>

A dedicated page on the City's website was established following the November 21, 2018 meeting. A public engagement survey was hosted on the City's website and attracted 125 responses. The survey results are summarized below and aggregate responses are included as attachment 3.

There were 4 questions on the survey:

Question	Responses
1. Did you know that Greenwood Cemetery Held a Potter's Field?	Yes – 38% No – 62%
2. Check All that Apply: I would prefer to see a...	Classic Monument – 51 Artistic Monument – 57 No Preference – 29
3. What types of design elements would you like to see in a monument to honour those in Potter's field?	Identified Themes: - Stone/Limestone/Granite -Dignity/ Elegance/ Humble/ Traditional/ Respectful - History/ Context/ Story behind Potter's Field/ OS history/ Informative - Positivity - Underground Railroad ties and elements i.e. quilt patterns - Representations of young to old - Doors or windows to represent passing from one world into the next, freedom - Religious - Requests for a bench and shrubbery - Cultural diversity, acceptance - Figural mothers and children - Uplifting, conciliatory - Trees/trees of life - "Gone but not forgotten"
4. Other Monument Suggestions	Photos on Attachment 3 pages 4-8.
5. Themes	Artists Competition Suggested, Low Maintenance Product, Others Could Donate.

A condition of approval is that the proposed design would be presented to Council for approval. The proposed design (attachment 1) is comprised of a window frame inset in granite with the inscription:

*"We Honour and Dignify the Memories of the More Than 1000 disadvantaged Women, Men and Children Who Were Buried Here Between 1858 and 1978
May They Rest in Peace"*

The proposed monument dimensions are taller than is currently permitted by the Greenwood Cemetery Bylaw.

The current maximum monument dimensions of all components (base, tablet and plinths) at Greenwood Cemetery are 60 inches long, 14 inches wide and 38 inches tall.

The dimensions of the proposed design are 96 inches long, 10 inches wide and 64 inches tall including base and tablets.

Analysis

Design

The design elements of the monument are explained in Aly Boltman's letter received via email April 3, 2020, included as attachment 2. An excerpt from the letter provides context for the design as submitted:

The monument pays homage to the Black History Cairn located in Harrison Park through its inclusion of a window, without being an exact copy. The design we have incorporated is intrinsically linked, however not identical in shape or size. While it is intended to evoke an image of the original British Methodist Episcopalian Church windows, this version is intended to impart a sense of moving through time and space, from one world to another, from obscurity to dignity. The window also allows for the natural beauty and the landscape of Greenwood Cemetery to be on display, through the openness in the design. The pointed featured in the monument is also intended, if at all possible, to aim north, because in considering the City's unique status as the terminus of the Underground Railroad, north has historically represented freedom.

The window is cast bronze and the monument is made from an almost black, lightly flecked stone to bring some textural depth.



Staff have also provided feedback requesting the number 1000 be altered to 1100 to better reflect the actual number of people recorded to be interred in Potter's Field. It is recognized that this number is purposefully imprecise, and meant to be a generalization to illustrate the significance of the site.

Installation

A monument this size requires a 56 cubic foot reinforced concrete foundation. This can be done in house by Cemetery staff at a cost of \$800.00 in materials funded via the approved 2020 operating budget for Greenwood Cemetery and \$500 in kind in labour and equipment costs.

Bylaw Amendment

The proposed monument design dimensions are larger than what are currently permitted by schedule A of the [Greenwood Cemetery Bylaw](#) . In order to allow the monument to be donated and placed at Greenwood Cemetery, staff recommend Schedule A be amended to include a qualifying statement that:

- monuments approved by resolution of Council to commemorate a group of merit or event of historical significance are exempt. Any monument exempt from schedule A shall conform to the design guidelines set by the [Ontario Monument Builder's Association](#).

Financial/Budget Implications:

Plaque - \$2,000.00 to be submitted as an item for consideration in the 2021 capital budget;

\$800.00 in materials for the construction of a monument foundation from the approved 2020 Greenwood Cemetery operating budget;

\$500 in kind in equipment and labour costs for the installation of the plaque and monument foundation.

Communication Strategy:

This Report

[Potters Field Monument and Interpretive Plaque Website](#)

Consultation:

Aly Boltman, Project Liaison

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Kristan Shrider, Senior Manager of Property and Parks

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Proposed Potter's Field Monument Design

Attachment 2- April 3, 2020 Letter from Aly Boltman- Potter's Field Memorial Design Approval

Attachment 3- Potter's Field Monument Survey Aggregate Responses

Prepared by: Adam Parsons Signature on File

Reviewed by: Kristan Shrider Signature on File

Supported by: Pam Coulter Signature on File

Submitted by: Wayne Ritchie Signature on File



Potter's Field Memorial Dimensions (all width x depth x height except window measurements)

Left tablet: 3 ft. 6 in. x 8 inches x 4 ft. 2 inches Right tablet: 11 inches x 8 inches x 2 ft. 6 inches

Sub base: 6 ft. 6 inches x 1ft. 2 inches x 4 inches

Base: 8 ft. x 1 ft. 8 inches x 10 inches

Cast bronze window: Overall 1 ft. 9 x 4 ft. Outside frame 1 1/4 inches Inside frame 3/4 inch

Request to Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Spaces
Re: Potter's Field Memorial Design Approval

Dear Mr. Parsons (and Owen Sound City Council via the Staff Report)

Thank you for your attention to this design approval and by-law amendment request to help move the Potter's Field Monument project to completion as soon as possible. I am aware of the constraints experienced by the City in light of the challenges posed by COVID 19. I am pleased to have this request considered through any available channels during this unusually difficult time.

Working closely with a local monument maker recommended to our volunteer team by you, Mr. Parsons, we have developed a design for the Potter's Field Memorial with Sanderson Monuments, a local monument maker in business since 1872.

We have tried to incorporate suggestions provided to us through input received via a public survey, and in consultation with key stakeholders with ties to Potter's Field. In particular, as approximately half the burials at Potter's Field are estimated to have come from Owen Sound's historic Black community, we have tried to be responsive to existing related cultural spaces while ensuring the monument is welcoming and meaningful to everyone.

Below you will find the design proposal for your consideration. You will note that the monument pays homage to the Black History Cairn located in Harrison Park through its inclusion of a window, without being an exact copy. The design we have incorporated is intrinsically linked, however not identical in shape or size. While it is intended to evoke an image of the original British Methodist Episcopalian Church windows, this version is intended to impart a sense of moving through time and space, from one world to another, from obscurity to dignity. The window also allows for the natural beauty and the landscape of Greenwood Cemetery to be on display, through the openness in the design. The pointed feature in the monument is also intended, if at all possible, to aim north, because in considering the City's unique status as the terminus of the Underground Railroad, north has historically represented freedom.

The window is cast bronze and the monument is made from an almost black, lightly flecked stone to bring some textural depth. Please note that the flecking in the illustration is far more pronounced than the actual flecking on the physical stone. The graphic limitations of the illustration software used by Sanderson Monuments makes the mock-up appear almost snowy, when indeed, the stone is almost completely black when viewed in person. This applies to the flecking in the grey base, as well.

We have taken great pains to ensure that the dates represented on the stone are accurate by working directly with you, Mr. Parsons, to verify publicly available information. We have also been intentionally cautious with the language chosen for the monument, in particular, in reference to the number of people who are buried in Potter's Field. We are very conscious that it is likely nearly impossible to get an exact accounting of individuals buried in this space, as record-keeping techniques have changed greatly over time and there are bound to be gaps in information, and irregularities we cannot explain. By keeping the number vague, we allow for the potential for errors, while keeping the monument meaningful, and reasonably representative based on the information we do have.

This monument size proposed is considerably larger than what is currently allowable for monuments based on The City of Owen Sound's existing bylaws. As the monument represents approximately 1000 person or more, and serves as a community memorial space, we feel that a larger sized monument is appropriate. We ask for a bylaw variance at this time to allow for the installation of this monument at Potter's Field at the earliest convenience.

We also request that the concrete foundation that needs to be poured be an expense incurred by The City of Owen Sound, rather than the donor. All of the available budget will have been spent purchasing the design as proposed. It is my understanding that the cemetery's staff undertake the base pouring, so it is likely that the only expense to The City is the cost of supplies. We hope that you agree that this may be a reasonable expense for The City of Owen Sound to take on, in exchange for the creation and installation of such a substantial, meaningful monument which has been long-awaited by many in the community who have not had the means to properly honour their families since 1858.

Regarding the placement of the monument, the Donor has suggested that the first choice is the triangular, landscaped area at the front of Potter's Field, an area with some existing trees and shrubs that you, Mr. Parsons, have expressed a previous interest in improving. That said, if there is any evidence to suggest that human remains may be located in this space, the other option is to place this monument near the western edge of Potter's Field, overlooking Nine Bends Trail. It has been suggested that although we do not know the exact location of most of the human remains in Potter's Field, but they are likely congregated towards the centre of the space, rather than its margins. Placement at the back would allow us some measure of comfort knowing we have not trespassed on any remains. It would also allow the monument (in either of these suggested locations) to have a broad sightline to those walking or driving through the cemetery, if entering through the main gates.

Approval of this design, of the bylaw amendment to allow its larger size, and agreement to take on the expense of the base-pouring would allow us to move forward with this project as soon as possible. Despite the closure of many businesses due to COVID 19, it is still our hope that this monument, which will take a bare minimum of two months to construct, can be unveiled before the winter of 2020.

In consideration of the unanticipated expense we have asked you to take on through the base pouring, it may hearten the City of Owen Sound to hear that a Federal funding application tied to Potter's Field was recently successful. Acting on her own volition, York University Professor Naomi Norquay (known for her work with the Old Durham Road Cemetery) recently applied in partnership with Grey Roots, for Federal Funding to allow up to three post-secondary students to research the lives of those buried in Potter's Field to contribute to a future website devoted to the project. This application was successful, and over the next year, under Naomi's guidance in partnership with Karin Noble, Grey Roots Archivist, this project will take place. The data they collect will allow for the creation of a website and a living archive to honour those buried in Potter's Field, a website that will be prominently displayed on a future interpretive plaque to be installed at the site, an expense previously discussed with The City. The monument, the website and the accompanying plaque will be marvelous additions to the cultural heritage of the City of Owen Sound in keeping with its cultural planning goals and guiding documents.

On a final note, it was hoped that the design of the monument could be kept from public view until it was formally unveiled at a community event this fall, for maximum community impact. The submission of this proposal through the staff report (moved to the Council's agenda) likely makes that wish impossible. However, if anything can be done to facilitate this request, our volunteer team would be grateful.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience that this design is acceptable, and that our work may proceed.

On behalf of the donor and the volunteer tied to this project, we thank you for your consideration.

Aly Boltman (via email), Volunteer
Potter's Field Monument Project
April 2, 2020

Design: Potter's Field Memorial



Monument Size Specifics

Left tablet: 11 in. (L) x 8 in. (D) x 2 ft. 6 in.

Right Tablet: 3 ft. 6 in. (L) x 8 in. (D) x 4 ft. 2 in. (H)

Sub-base: 6 ft. 6 in. (L) x 1 ft. 2 in. (D) x 4 in. (H)

Base: 8 ft. (L) x 1 ft. 8 in. (D) x 10 in. (H)

Bronze Window: Overall – 1 ft. 9 x 4 ft. Outside Frame: 1 ft. ¼ in. Inside Frame: ¾ in.

Overall height (from base to highest point): 94 in. (or 7.83 ft)

Overall width: Base: 8 ft.

Monument proper: 74 in. (or 6.17 ft.)

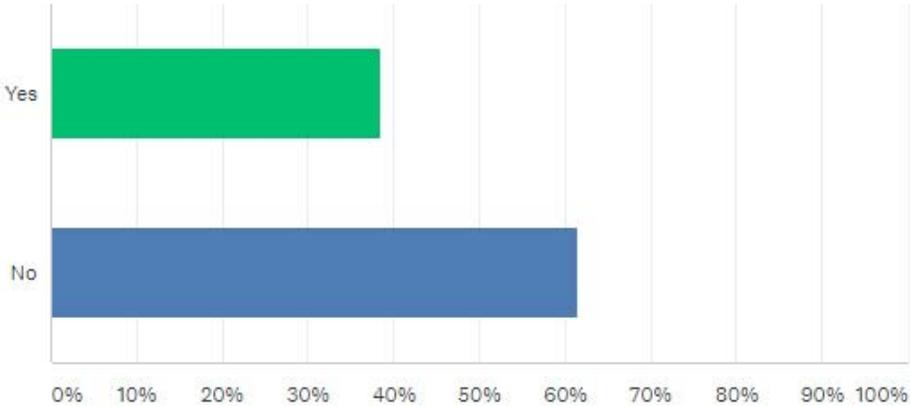
Potter's Field Monument Survey

Q1



Did you know that Greenwood Cemetery held a Potter's Field?

Answered: 125 Skipped: 0



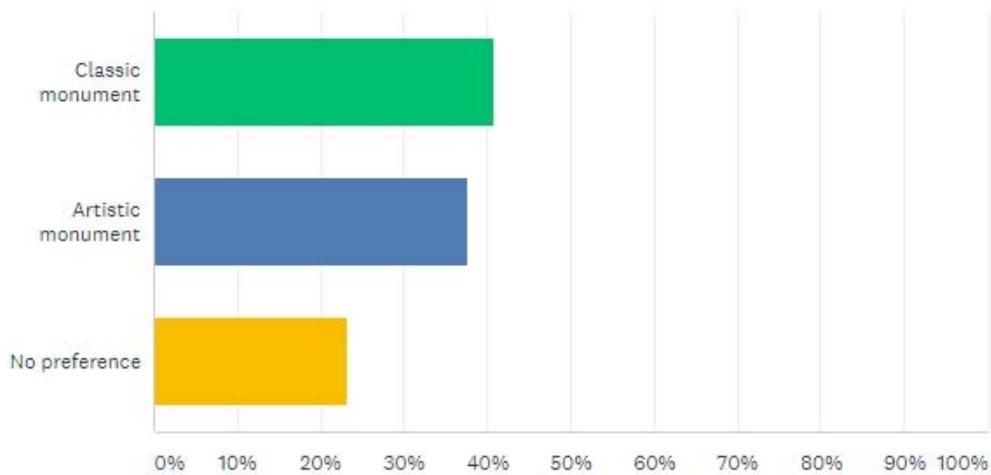
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.40%	48
No	61.60%	77
Total Respondents: 125		

Q2



Check all that apply: I would prefer to see a...

Answered: 125 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Classic monument	40.80%	51
Artistic monument	37.60%	47
No preference	23.20%	29
Total Respondents: 125		

Classic beat out artistic, especially if you add the no preference survey takers (total 64%)

Q3



What types of design elements or features would you like to see in a monument to honour those in Potter's Field?

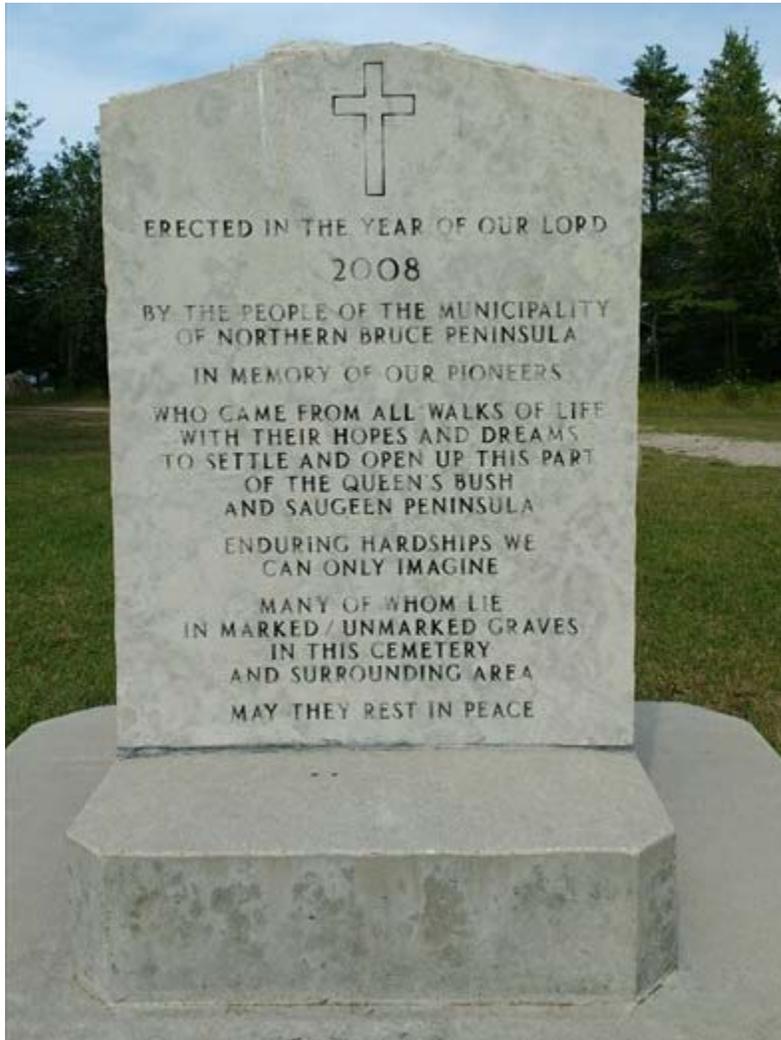
Identified themes:

- Angels/protectors (lacking in real life for those in Potter's Field)
- All names, death dates on a monument or on site

- Stone/Limestone/Granite
- Dignity/Elegance/Humble/Traditional/Respectful/
- History/Context/Story behind Potter's Field/OS history/Informative
- Positivity
- Underground Railroad ties and elements i.e. quilt patterns
- Representations of young to old
- Doors or windows to represent passing from one world into the next, freedom
- Religious
- Requests for a bench and shrubbery
- Cultural diversity, acceptance
- Figural mothers and children
- Uplifting, conciliatory
- Trees/trees of life
- "Gone but not forgotten"

Q4. Other monument suggestions:

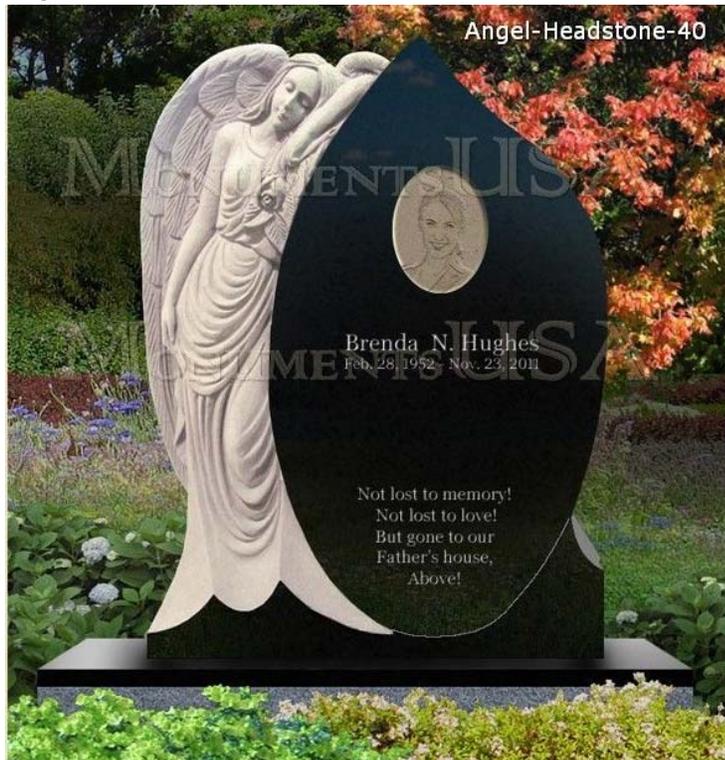
Dunks Bay Pioneer Monument



Delaware Potter's Field Monument



Angel Headstone



Battery Park Immigrant Monument



Hart Island Potter's Field Monument (NYC)



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Eberfeld Relief Monument



George Rodenbach, Pere Lachaise Cemetery, Paris, France



Ireland Park Memorial (Toronto)



Home for the Friendless, Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa



A plaque commemorates the men, women and children buried in the Protestant Orphans' Home, Protestant Home for the Aged and the Home for Friendless Women plots. Between the establishment of the Homes and their burial plots, those who died were buried in the "pauper's ground."

War memorials, unknown soldier images, Stonehenge not reasonable

Q6: Themes

Artist competition suggested, Low maintenance product, Others could donate