Report No: CP 2026-322
COMMUNITY PLANNING
Land Division Committee: November 5, 2026

To: Chair and Members of Oxford County Land Division Committee

From: Spencer McDonald, Development Planner, Community Planning

Application for Consent
B26-40-5 – R.M. Matheson Farms Limited

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Application for Consent proposes to sever an existing surplus dwelling from agricultural lands. The applicant is proposing to retain the resulting agricultural lot as part of a larger, non-abutting farm holding while severing the surplus farm dwelling as a non-farm rural residential use.
- It is proposed that approximately 0.7 ha (1.7 ac) will be severed for non-farm rural residential purposes. The proposed lot to be retained will be approximately 84 ha (208 ac) in size and contains a single detached dwelling and a number of agricultural buildings (barn, grain bin and manure tank).
- Planning staff are recommending approval of the application as it is generally consistent with the policy criteria of the Provincial Planning Statement and maintains the intent and purpose of the Official Plan with respect to agricultural lot creation and non-farm rural residential development in prime agricultural areas.

DISCUSSION

Background

OWNER: R.M. Matheson Farms Limited c/o Ian Matheson
316381 31st Line, Embro, ON, N0J 1J0

AGENT: Paul William Robinson
556 Huron St, Stratford, ON, N5A 5T9

LOCATION:

The subject lands are described as Part Lots 27-28, Concession 13 (East Nissouri), in the Township of Zorra. The lands are located on the west side of 27th Line between Road 92 and Road 96, and are municipally known as 276719 27th Line, Township of Zorra.

OFFICIAL PLAN:

Schedule "Z-1"	Township of Zorra Land Use Plan	'Agricultural Reserve'

TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA ZONING BY-LAW 35-99:

Lot to be severed:

Existing Zoning:	'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'
Proposed Zoning:	'Rural Residential (RR)'

Lot to be retained:

Existing Zoning:	'General Agricultural Zone (A2)'
Proposed Zoning:	'Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)'

SERVICES:

Lot to be severed and retained:	Existing private well and septic system

ROAD ACCESS:

Lot to be severed:	Gravel, Township Road (27th Line)
Lot to be retained:	Gravel, Township Road (27th Line)

PROPOSAL:

	SEVERED LOT	RETAINED LOT
Area	0.70 ha (1.7 ac)	84 ha (208 ac)
Frontage	70 m (213.2 ft)	1,180 m (3,871 ft)
Depth	100 m (328 ft)	695 m (2,280 ft)

The Application for Consent proposes to sever a surplus farm dwelling as a result of farm consolidation, while retaining 84 ha (208 ac) for continued agricultural purposes. The lot to be severed will be approximately 0.70 ha (1.7 ac) in size and contains a single detached dwelling (circ. 1870). The lot to be severed would have approximately 70 m (229.6 ft) of frontage on 27th Line.

It is proposed that the lot to be retained will be approximately 84 ha (208 ac) in area with approximately 1,180 m (3,871 ft) of frontage on 27th Line. The lot to be retained would contain an existing single detached dwelling (circ.1870), an existing barn, a grain bin and a manure tank.

Should the proposed consent be approved, the applicant will be required to submit a Zone Change Application to rezone the lot to be severed from 'General Agricultural Zone (A2)' to 'Rural Residential Zone (RR)' to recognize the change in land use that will result from the proposed

severance. The required zone change application would also have the effect of rezoning the agricultural lot to ensure that no additional dwellings can be established on it in the future, in accordance with the requirements of the Provincial Planning Statement and Oxford County Official Plan policies.

Surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural on a variety of lot sizes and configurations, as well as natural heritage features. Existing aggregate operations are located in close proximity to the east of the subject property.

Plate 1, Location Map and Existing Zoning, shows the location of the subject lands and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity.

Plate 2, Aerial Map (2025), provides an aerial view of the subject lands and surrounding area.

Plate 3, Applicant's Sketch, shows the configuration and dimensions of the lands to be severed, as prepared by the applicant.

Application Review

2024 Provincial Planning Statement

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, where a municipality is exercising its authority affecting a planning matter, such decisions shall be consistent with all policy statements issued under the Act.

Section 4.3 (Agriculture) of the PPS directs that prime agricultural areas shall be protected for long term agricultural use.

Further, Section 4.3.3 (Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments) discourages the creation of new lots in prime agricultural areas and provides only four instances where such lot creation may be permitted, as summarized below:

a) for agricultural uses, provided the lots are of a sufficient size for the type of production common in the area and are sufficiently large enough to maintain flexibility in adapting the operation in the future;
b) for agricultural-related uses, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;
c) one new residential lot per farm consolidation for a residence surplus to an agricultural operation, provided that:
    1. the new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and
    2. the planning authority ensures that new dwellings and additional residential units are prohibited on any remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings or additional residential units are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objective; and
d) infrastructure, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights of way.

The policies of the PPS also direct that lot adjustments in prime agricultural areas may be permitted for legal or technical reasons, which are defined to mean consents for the purpose of

easements, corrections of deeds, quit claims and minor boundary adjustments that do not result in the creation of a new lot.

Official Plan

The subject lands are located within the 'Agricultural Reserve' designation according to the Township of Zorra Land Use Plan in the Official Plan.

According to Section 3.1.1, the goal of the Agricultural Reserve policies is to ensure prime agricultural lands are preserved for food and fibre production by avoiding the fragmentation of the land base, by minimizing conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, and by supporting the needs of the agricultural community by permitting land uses which are complementary to, and supportive of, agriculture.

A strategic aim of the Agricultural Reserve policies is to prevent situations of land use conflict in the agricultural designation by careful management of non-farm uses, including rural residential development, recreational uses, commercial and industrial uses, and aggregate resource extraction.

The policies of Section 3.1.5.3 (Creation of Rural Residential Lots) apply to the evaluation of non-farm rural residential development proposals in the following land use designations and overlays: Agricultural Reserve, Environmental Protection Area, Open Space, Future Urban Growth, and Quarry Area.

Non-farm rural residential development shall be considered to include both the severed and retained lots, in the case of consent, and lands subject to rezoning for residential purposes, in the case of zoning by-law amendment applications. The enlarged agricultural lot that would result from a proposed non-farm rural residential development through farm consolidation shall comply with the applicable policies of Section 3.1.4.2.

Notwithstanding the policies of Section 1.5, Interpretation, for the purposes of the application of the policies in Section 3.1.5.3, the numerical references and measurements are intended to be absolute.

Section 3.1.5.3 outlines that the creation of non-farm rural residential lots outside of a settlement shall be prohibited except in accordance with the following:

- A proposal to rezone an existing industrial (with the exception of aggregate or limestone industrial), commercial, or institutionally zoned lot to a residential use, provided such lot does not exceed 1 ha (2.5 acre) in area. Where such lot is larger than 1 ha (2.5 acre) in area, consideration may only be given to rezoning for agricultural use, in accordance with the policies of Section 3.1.5.1; or,

- A proposal to create a lot for a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of farm consolidation, provided that:

    - The proposal is to retain an existing permanent, habitable dwelling that was constructed prior to December 13, 1995, where such dwelling is contained on an agricultural lot that is to be legally consolidated with an abutting agricultural lot, to form one larger agricultural lot under identical ownership;

      or,

- The proposal is to retain an existing permanent, habitable dwelling, where the farm owner owns multiple agricultural lots which may or may not abut, and providing:
    - The lot containing the surplus dwelling proposed to be severed contains a minimum of 2 existing dwellings, and all such dwellings were constructed prior to December 13, 1995;
    - The resulting agricultural lot is owned by the farm owner; and,
    - The resulting agricultural lot is rezoned to prohibit the future construction of a new residential dwelling of any type and an agreement for such prohibition is also registered on the property title. The requirement for the Zoning By-law amendment and agreement, as noted above, shall be implemented through conditions imposed by the County's Land Division Committee at the time that provisional consent approval is given.

- The proposal shall not result in the severance of the only dwelling from an agricultural lot, except in the case of a farm consolidation involving the merger of abutting agricultural lots as one larger lot under identical ownership, where one of the agricultural lots to be consolidated is vacant, but the existing zoning would permit the construction of an accessory dwelling on that lot.

- The lands subject to the application must be zoned for agricultural use.

- The proposed rural residential lot shall not be located within the Quarry Area designation, or an area identified as a Limestone Resource or Sand and Gravel Resource Area.

- The proposed residential lot shall not be located within a Future Urban Growth Area.

- Non-farm rural residential lots shall be as small as is practical in order to preserve the County's agricultural land base. Severance proposals to create new or expanded lots for non-farm rural residential development will generally not exceed 0.8 ha (2 acres).

- Existing or proposed individual on-site water services and individual on-site sewage services are demonstrated to be adequate to serve the proposed non-farm rural residential use.

- A proposal for non-farm rural residential development shall satisfy the requirements of MDS I or not further reduce an existing insufficient setback.

- The proposed rural residential development shall have direct frontage on a permanent public road maintained year-round at a reasonable standard of construction. New vehicular access to any road shall be in accordance with the requirements of authority having jurisdiction over the road, including the applicable policies.

- To recognize and conserve heritage resources in the agricultural areas of the County.

For the purpose of considering the creation of a non-farm rural residential lot where a landowner owns multiple non-abutting farms in Oxford County, staff are to ensure that the owner is a bona fide farmer. The Official Plan contains a definition of a "farm owner" which is defined as:

An individual, partnership, or corporation which

a) Owns, is employed on, and manages an agricultural operation consisting of one or more agricultural lots;
b) Earns a majority of their income from farming (the scale of the agricultural operation should be capable of generating reasonable operating profit under "normal" economic conditions);
c) Spends a majority of their workday in the day-to-day operation of the farm on a full-time, year-round or extended seasonal basis;
d) Demonstrates a continuing commitment to the farm operation and long-term farming, such as through sustainable farming practices, on-going farm maintenance and improvement (i.e., drainage, erosion control, soil improvement, fencing etc.), and direct investment in equipment, buildings, and crops; and,
e) Must have a valid Farm Business Registration Number.

Zoning By-law

The subject lands are currently zoned ‘General Agricultural Zone (A2)’ in the Township of Zorra Zoning By-Law. The lot to be severed is proposed to be used for non-farm rural residential purposes and will be rezoned to recognize the use of the lands accordingly.

The ‘Rural Residential Zone (RR)’ requires a minimum lot area of 2,800 m² (30,139 ft²), a minimum lot frontage of 35 m (114.8 ft), and a minimum lot depth of 80 m (262.5 ft). The lot to be severed would appear to the meet the requirements of the ‘RR’ zone provisions, per the Township Zoning By-law.

The ‘A2’ zone permits a variety of agricultural uses, including a farm, a regulated farm, and a single detached dwelling if accessory to a farm or a regulated farm. The ‘A2’ zone requires a minimum lot area of 30 ha (74.1 ac) and a minimum lot frontage of 100 m (328.1 ft). The lot to be retained appears to meet the requirements of the ‘A2’ zone provisions, per the Township Zoning By-law.

Should the subject Application for Consent be approved by the Land Division Committee, the applicant will be required to submit a zone change application to rezone the lot to be retained from ‘General Agricultural Zone (A2)’ to ‘Rural Residential Zone (RR)’ while also rezoning the lot to be retained from ‘A2’ to ‘A2-sp’. The special provision of the ‘A2-sp’ zone would prohibit any additional dwellings on the lot to be retained. The zoning would still retain the ability to have one single detached dwelling accessory to a farm on the lot to be severed.

Agency Comments

The Oxford County Public Works Department, Hydro One, Enbridge, Canada Post, and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), Township of Zorra Fire Chief, Township Public Services and Township Director of Corporate and Protective Services have indicated no concerns with the proposal.

Township of Zorra Chief Building Official / Drainage Superintendent commented that drainage reapportionment may be required as a condition of approval.

Public Consultation

Notice of the public meeting for the proposal was circulated to neighbouring landowners on October 22, 2026 in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. As of the date of this report, no comments or concerns had been received from the public.

Planning Analysis

The Application for Consent, which proposes the severance of a surplus non-farm rural residential lot and the retention of agricultural lands, has been reviewed under the policy direction of the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) and the Oxford County Official Plan.

The applicant has provided documentation confirming ownership of additional farms within the Township of Zorra. The subject lands contain two single detached dwellings, both of which were constructed prior to December 13, 1995, and which are accessory to a cash crop operation. Staff are also satisfied that the applicant complies with the definition of a farm owner as per the Official Plan.

It is proposed that approximately 0.70 ha (1.7 ac) of agricultural land containing an existing single detached dwelling will be severed. The lot to be severed will be used for non-farm rural residential purposes, will not result in further fragmentation of agricultural land, and the resultant retained lot will remain sufficiently large to continue to allow flexibility for future changes in the type of farm operation beyond its current use. The retained agricultural lot size and configuration is consistent with the PPS and Official Plan direction of maintaining farm parcels of adequate size to adapt to changing agricultural conditions.

The lot to be retained will be approximately 84 ha (208 ac) in area and will be used for agricultural purposes. As previously outlined, the creation of a lot for a surplus residence is permitted provided that the owner owns multiple farms within Oxford County. Given the lot size, staff are generally satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the policies of the PPS regarding non-farm rural residential uses and lot creation in prime agricultural areas. Regarding the existing livestock operation (beef cattle) on the retained lands, the proposed rural residential lot would appear to meet the required setback from the existing manure storage facility (227 m / 744.7 ft).

The lot to be severed will require a zone change from ‘General Agricultural Zone (A2)’ to ‘Rural Residential Zone (RR)’ to recognize its proposed use as a non-farm rural residential lot. In addition, the lot to be retained will be required to be rezoned from ‘General Agricultural Zone (A2)’ to ‘Special General Agricultural Zone (A2-sp)’ with the special provision for the lot to be retained being used to prohibit additional dwellings on the lands and would apply to all dwellings, including a second single detached dwelling, an additional residential unit, and a converted dwelling. The lands would retain the ability to have one single detached dwelling that is accessory to the farm and would allow the ability for the existing dwelling to be replaced in the future, if required.

In light of the above, it is the opinion of this Office that the proposal to sever a surplus dwelling for a non-farm rural residential use and retain an agricultural parcel is consistent with the policies of the PPS and generally maintains the intent and purpose of the Official Plan. As such, Planning staff are satisfied that the proposal can be supported from a planning perspective, subject to the recommended conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Whereas the application for consent is consistent with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement and complies with the County of Oxford Official Plan, we are of the opinion that the application is acceptable from a planning perspective, and should be granted, subject to the following conditions:

1. **The lot to be retained and the lot to be severed be appropriately zoned.**

2. **The Owner shall enter into an agreement with the County of Oxford, to be registered on title of the property, to prohibit the construction of a new residential dwelling of any type, including additional residential units, on the agricultural lot to be retained, to the satisfaction of Land Division Secretary-Treasurer.**

3. **If required, a drainage assessment reapportionment be undertaken, pursuant to Section 65 of the Drainage Act, R.S.O., 1990, at the owners' expense, to the satisfaction of the Township of Zorra.**

4. **The Clerk of the Township of Zorra advise the Secretary-Treasurer of the Land Division Committee that all requirements of the Township, financial, services and otherwise, have been complied with.**

SIGNATURES

Authored by:	*"Original Signed By"*	Spencer McDonald, MCIP, RPP Development Planner
Approved for submission:	*"Original Signed By"*	Heather St. Clair, MCIP, RPP Senior Development Planner

Oxford County
Growing stronger together

Plate 1 - Location Map and Existing Zoning
File No. B26-40-5 - RM Matheson Farms Limited
276719 27th Line, Township of Zorra



Legend

Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Assessment Boundary
- Road
- Unit

Zoning Floodlines Regulation Limit
- 100 Year Flood Line
- 30 Metre Setback
- Conservation Authority Regulation Limit
- Regulatory Flood And Fill Lines

Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000 to 1:500)

Notes



map it

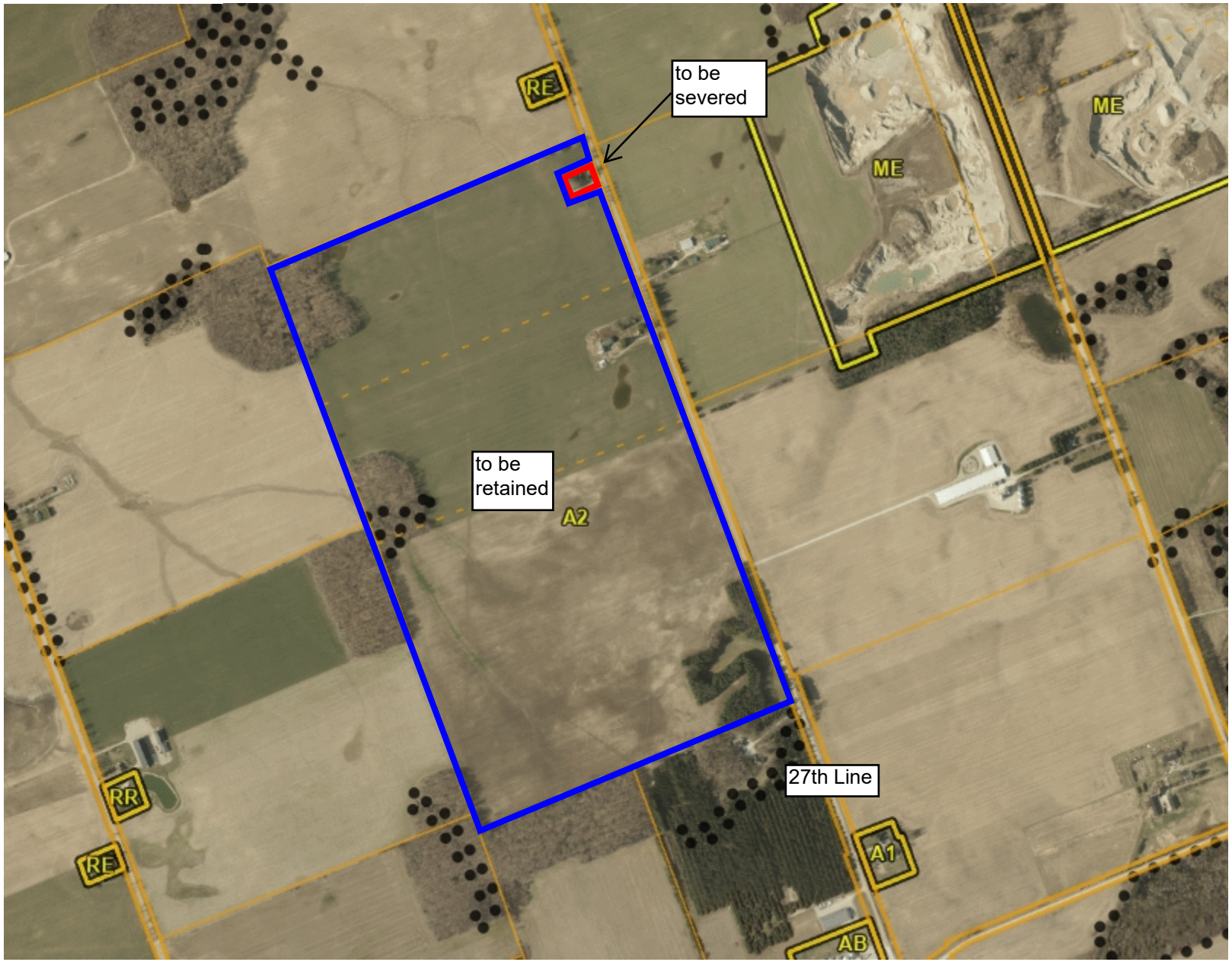
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NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable. This is not a plan of survey

September 1, 2026

Plate 2 - Aerial Map (2025)
File No. B26-40-5 - R.M. Matheson Farms Limited
276719 27th Line, Township of Zorra



Legend

Parcel Lines
- Municipal Boundary
- Property Boundary
- Assessment Boundary
- Road
- Unit

Zoning Floodlines Regulation Limit
- 100 Year Flood Line
- 30 Metre Setback
- Conservation Authority Regulation Limit
- Regulatory Flood And Fill Lines

Land Use Zoning (Displays 1:16000 to 1:500)

Notes

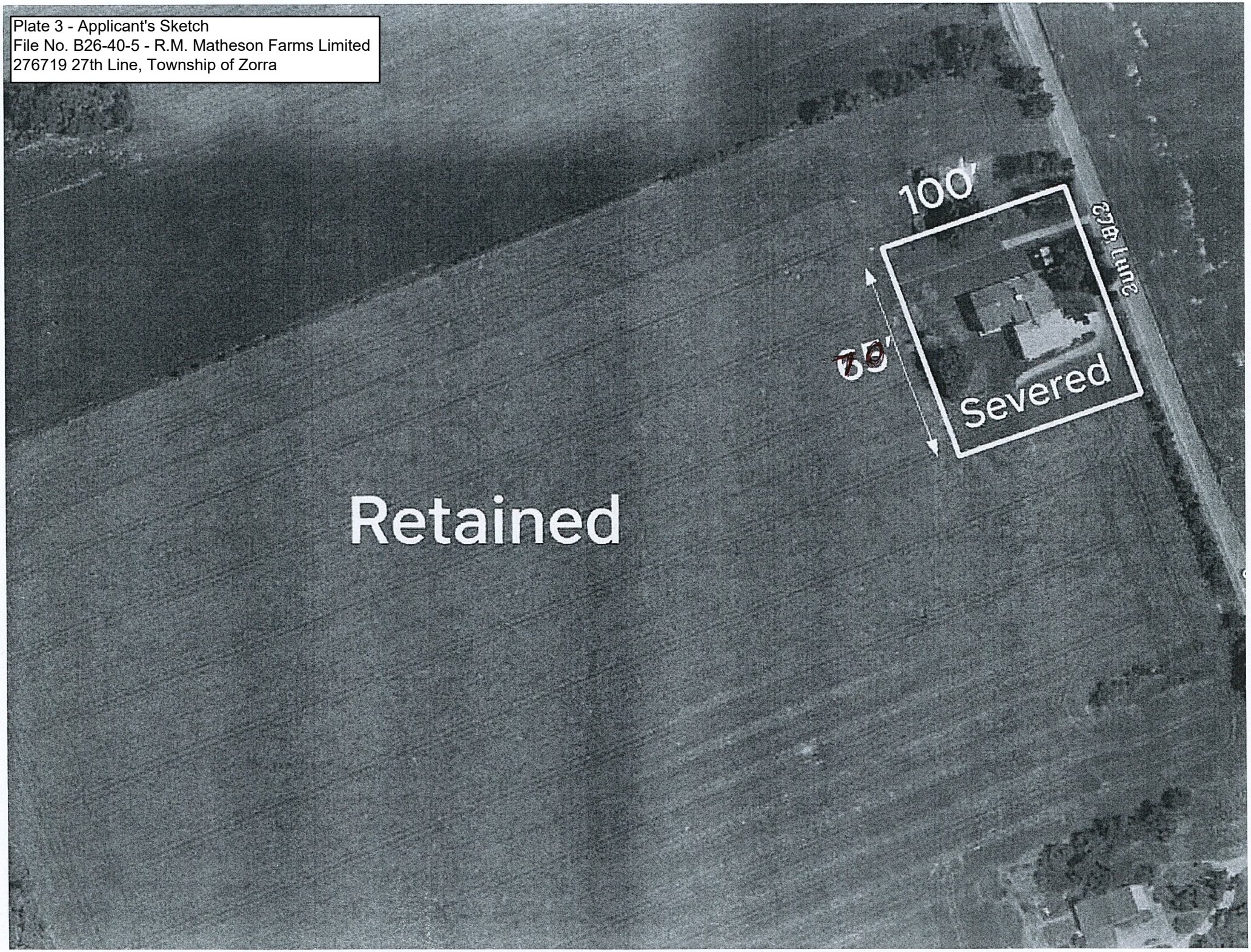


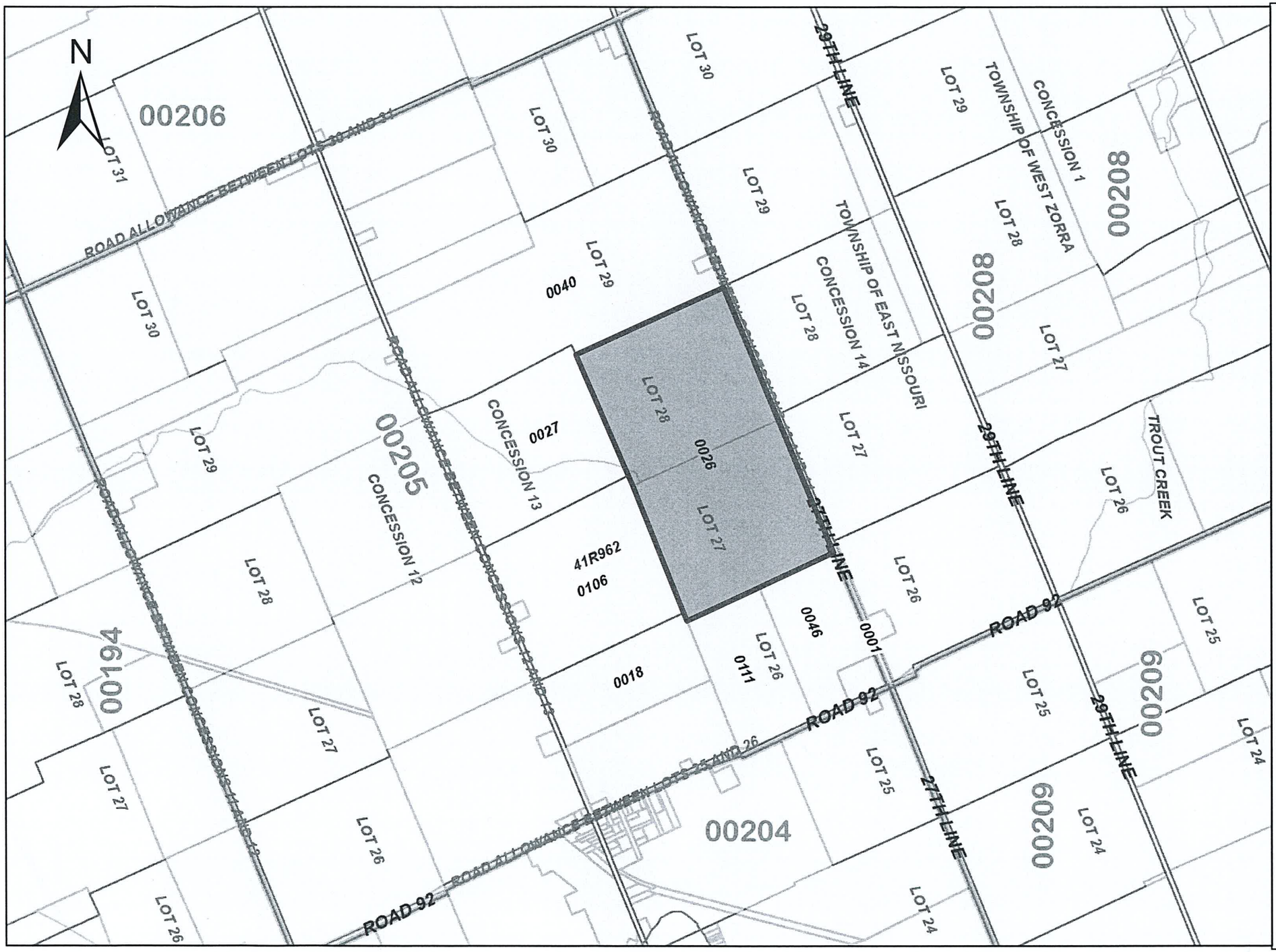
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NAD_1983_UTM_Zone_17N

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September 1, 2026


Plate 3 - Applicant's Sketch
File No. B26-40-5 - R.M. Matheson Farms Limited
276719 27th Line, Township of Zorra
100'
65'
Severed
Retained
27th Line



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SCALE

0 240 480 720 960 meters

PROPERTY INDEX MAP

OXFORD(No. 41)

LEGEND

FREEHOLD PROPERTY	
LEASEHOLD PROPERTY	
LIMITED INTEREST PROPERTY	
CONDOMINIUM PROPERTY	
RETIRED PIN (MAP UPDATE PENDING)	
PROPERTY NUMBER	*0449*
BLOCK NUMBER	08050
GEOGRAPHIC FABRIC	——
EASEMENT	- - - -

THIS IS NOT A PLAN OF SURVEY

NOTES

REVIEW THE TITLE RECORDS FOR COMPLETE PROPERTY INFORMATION AS THIS MAP MAY NOT REFLECT RECENT REGISTRATIONS

THIS MAP WAS COMPILED FROM PLANS AND DOCUMENTS RECORDED IN THE LAND REGISTRATION SYSTEM AND HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR PROPERTY INDEXING PURPOSES ONLY

FOR DIMENSIONS OF PROPERTIES BOUNDARIES SEE RECORDED PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

ONLY MAJOR EASEMENTS ARE SHOWN

REFERENCE PLANS UNDERLYING MORE RECENT REFERENCE PLANS ARE NOT ILLUSTRATED

Ontario

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