

## **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

**679 Main Street East and 85 Holton Avenue South, Hamilton**

**(Former St. Giles United Church)**

### **Description of Property**

The former St. Giles United Church property consists of a vertically oriented red-brick and stone place of worship, a small portion of which was constructed in 1908 and the majority in 1912-1913. A smaller one storey addition constructed in 1958 that replaced the majority of the 1908 building exists on the rear of the church building. The property is municipally addressed as 85 Holton Avenue South and 679 Main Street East, Hamilton and is located on the north east corner of Holton Avenue South and Main Street East.

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

#### *Design or Physical Value*

The property has design value as it is a representative example of Neo-Gothic architecture. Neo-Gothic features of the former St. Giles Church includes but is not limited to its red brick and stone exterior, Gothic shaped arched windows, stone parapet details, battlement details, and bell tower. The symmetrical entrance with carved stone features and embattled parapet is a common feature of Neo-Gothic architecture and an example of the high degree of craftsmanship. Other features that display the high degree of craftsmanship are the carved stone caps with varied patterns including trefoil and trefoil arches, and the memorial stained glass windows.

#### *Historical or Associative Value*

St. Giles United Church was originally founded as St. Giles Presbyterian Church and was the first church in Hamilton to convert to the United Church of Canada in 1925.

The property is significant in its historical associations with the former St. Giles congregation whom over the years in this location had a significant impact on the local community. In the 1960s the church congregation made specific efforts to get involved in the local community through efforts such as games nights, United Church Christian Expo, Festival of Christianity and the Arts, a nursery school for intellectually disabled children, Alcoholics Anonymous, Happy Gang (for physically disabled adults), and a drop in centre for sex workers. The church's level of involvement with each event or organization varied, but most of these organizations were provided space free of charge which suggests the St. Giles congregation was committed to being involved with the local community.

Construction of St. Giles United Church began in 1908 with the construction of the Sunday School. Only a small portion of this 1908 building remains providing the rear arched entrance along Holton Avenue South, most of the addition was demolished for the 1958 Christian Education Centre. The architects of the 1908 portion of the building

are unknown. The majority of the church, built in 1912-1913, was the work of local Hamilton architectural firm Stewart & Witton. Comprised of Walter Wilson Stewart and Willaim P. Witton, as partners they were responsible for a number of significant buildings in Hamilton such as King George School, Central Fire Station and the Herkimer Apartments.

The bells in the bell tower are reflective of the work of the McShame Bell Foundry of Maryland, Baltimore, a company that has provided bells across the world to places of worship since 1856.

The stained glass window on the front façade is the work of Robert McCausland, completed in 1959. Robert McCausland Limited, based out of Toronto, is a longstanding stained glass company, founded in 1856 and responsible for the designing, producing, restoration and repair of stained glass windows around the world.

Lastly, the property has two tributes to congregation members that fell in WW1 and WW2 suggesting there may be more information to yield form this community's involvement in the World Wars. The WW1 cairn is located outside the west entrance on Holton Avenue South and the WW2 memorial is the addition built on the east elevation c. 1945.

### *Contextual Value*

When the Former St. Giles Church was constructed, there were very few dwellings around it and the context was largely rural, it stood and still stands as a local landmark along Main Street East. The neighbourhood however, began to grow up around the church shortly after its construction, and now the former St. Giles Church defines, maintains and supports the character of the area along Main Street East and Holton Avenue South. The property is also considered historically linked to its surroundings as it remains in the location where it served the local community for a hundred years.

### **Cultural Heritage Attributes**

The heritage attributes of the property at 85 Holton Avenue South and 679 Main Street East, Hamilton that display its cultural heritage value are limited to the 1908, 1912-1913 building and include:

Front Façade (including all elevations of the two storey projections flanking the entrance):

- Symmetrical three-bay façade with vertical massing;
- Red-brick, rough-cast stone foundation, concrete banding, wall niche, concrete capping and parapet features, and all decorative concrete details such as trefoil patterns;
- Varied roofline including gable shape, and parapet details;

- All wood windows including window surrounds, drip moulds, frames, and leaded and stained glass;
- Symmetrical front entrance feature including:
  - o All smooth concrete and decorative concrete details (parapet, drip moulds, window surrounds, etc);
  - o Windows including wood frames and stained glass;
  - o Door opening and stained glass transom window;
  - o Concrete steps; and,
  - o Light fixtures.

West Elevation (including all elevations of: side entrance, transept and bell tower):

- Red-brick, rough-cast stone foundation, concrete banding, wall niches, concrete capping and parapet features, and all decorative concrete stone details such as trefoil patterns;
- All wood windows including window surrounds, drip moulds, frames, leaded and stained glass;
- Projecting side entrance including:
  - o One storey massing;
  - o Gable shaped parapet;
  - o Red-brick, buttresses and rough cast stone foundation;
  - o Open wood window frames with concrete window surrounds;
  - o Concrete entrance surround; and,
  - o Wall niche.
- Bell tower including:
  - o Red-brick, buttresses, concrete banding, concrete capping, decorative concrete details, and battlement parapet;
  - o All wood windows including window surrounds, drip moulds, frames, leaded and stained glass; and,
  - o Louvered windows.

East Elevation (including all elevations of: side entrance, transept, and memorial addition):

- Red-brick, rough-cast stone foundation, concrete banding, wall niches, concrete capping and parapet features, and all decorative concrete stone details such as trefoil patterns;
- All windows including concrete window surrounds, drip moulds, frames, leaded and stained glass;
- Projecting side entrance including:
  - o One storey massing;
  - o Gable shaped parapet;
  - o Red-brick, buttresses and rough cast stone foundation;
  - o Open wood window frames with concrete window surrounds;
  - o Concrete entrance surround; and,
  - o Wall niche.
- Memorial addition (c.1945):
  - o One storey massing;
  - o Gable roofline with concrete parapet;
  - o Red-brick, buttresses, rough cast stone foundation, wall niche and concrete capping;
  - o All windows including concrete window surrounds, frames, leaded and stained glass.

North Elevation (excluding 1958 addition):

- Red brick
- Varied roofline, including gable shape, and battlement.

Landscape:

- Open space along Main Street East and Holton Avenue South;
- Mature maple tree on Holton Avenue; and,
- WWI cairn.

Interior Features:

- Chancel including:

- Interior window including frame, and stained glass; and,
- All carved wooden features.
- Second floor balconies in sanctuary, east and west transepts including all carved wooden features and stairs;
- Wooden trusses including decorative wooden corbels in sanctuary;
- Trefoil carvings in wooden pews in sanctuary;
- Wooden pendant lights with stained glass in sanctuary;
- Wooden staircases on either side of the front entrance leading to the sanctuary balcony; and,
- The bells including the bell ringing apparatus.