

1099 King Street East, Hamilton

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST AND DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool at 1099 King Street East is situated on a 0.16 ha lot at the southwest corner of the intersection of King Street East and Balsam Avenue North in Ward 3 of the City of Hamilton.

Conceived as a municipal pool in 1928, the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool opened in January of 1930 and later that year served as the swimming events venue for the inaugural British Empire Games, later Commonwealth Games. After the Games it reverted to use as a municipal pool and home to the Hamilton Aquatic Club, and in 1971 was named for Jimmy Thompson, a former Olympic athlete and swimming coach and instructor.

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool is of cultural heritage value as a rare example of a pre-1950 indoor pool, and one built to a high degree of craftsmanship and incorporating the latest engineering, safety, and international competition standards of its time. It is associated with, and the last surviving structure of, the 1930 British Empire Games, and the swimming events of those games, which additionally were the only ones open to female competitors. It is also associated with James ‘Jimmy’ Thompson who from 1932 to 1965 is estimated to have taught 60,000 children to swim at the pool and coached many individuals and teams to regional, national, and international titles.

Through its siting, massing, and orientation the Pool is a visual landmark, but its contextual value also extends to its Edwardian Classicism style and construction in textured red brick, which contributes to the local architectural character. It is also physically and historically linked to use of the area to the north for recreation and sport, a land use that continues today.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The key attributes that express the design value or physical value of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool include its:

- Five-bay, two-storey south facade built in the Edwardian Classicism style with:
 - Semi-circular headed windows with two orders of gauged brick voussoirs and keystone, and filled with decorative brick;
 - Flemish bond masonry combined with stone string courses and strong cornice;
 - ‘Kicked’ hip roof with skylights; and,
 - Tall brick chimney on the west facade;

- Interior features including:
 - Roof trusses;
 - Spoon-shaped basin with di-chromatic tiling;
 - Tiled pool barrier wall;
 - Sub-floor access passages;
 - Ascending concrete bleachers;
 - Tiled changing rooms; and,
 - Iron coal furnace door;

Attributes that reflect the property’s contextual attributes include its:

- Continued use for a municipal pool and as part of a larger recreation and sport land use area;
- Orientation to the street with minimal setback; and,
- Landmark qualities from its siting and clear sightlines on King Street East.