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**FINAL REPORT** 

## **Cultural Heritage Assessment**

Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool, 1099 King Street East, City of Hamilton, Ontario

JIMMY THOMPSON MEMORIAL POOL

Submitted to:

#### **City of Hamilton**

Tourism & Culture Planning & Economic Development 71 Main Street West, 5th Floor Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

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# Acknowledgements

**City of Hamilton** 

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# **Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary highlights key points from the report only, for complete information and findings as well as limitations, the reader should examine the complete report.

In May 2018, the City of Hamilton (the City) retained Golder Associates Ltd. (Golder) to conduct a Cultural Heritage Assessment for the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool at 1099 King Street East in the City's Ward 3. The City initiated the assessment after relatives of Mr. Thompson requested in 2013 that the property be considered for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The property is listed in the *Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest Section B-1 – Non-Designated Properties*.

Based on a preliminary cultural heritage assessment of the property by Golder in 2013, City staff recommended further cultural heritage assessment, and this was assigned to Golder in 2018 as part of the City's low priority workplan under the City's Roster of Professional Consulting 2016-2017 (Category 27: Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage Landscapes).

Following guidelines provided in the City's *A Framework for Evaluating the Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of Property for Designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act* (2016) and the *City of Hamilton Cultural Heritage Assessment Report Outline* (n.d.), this document provides: an overview of the property's geographic and historical context; an inventory of its landscape and built features; an analysis of the structural sequence, construction and architectural style of built features on the property; an evaluation of the property's cultural heritage value based on criteria developed by the City and those prescribed under *Ontario Regulation 9/06;* and conclusions and recommendations for future action.

Golder's cultural heritage assessment concluded that:

The property at 1099 King Street East (Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool) be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

# **Study Limitations**

Golder Associates Ltd. has prepared this report in a manner consistent with guidance developed by the City of Hamilton, the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and Canada's Historic Places, subject to the time limits and physical constraints applicable to this report. No other warranty, expressed or implied is made.

This report has been prepared for the specific site, design objective, developments and purpose described to Golder Associates Ltd. by the City of Hamilton (the Client). The factual data, interpretations and recommendations pertain to a specific project as described in this report and are not applicable to any other project or site location.

The information, recommendations and opinions expressed in this report are for the sole benefit of the Client. No other party may use or rely on this report or any portion thereof without Golder Associates Ltd.'s express written consent. If the report was prepared to be included for a specific permit application process, then upon the reasonable request of the Client, Golder Associates Ltd. may authorize in writing the use of this report by the regulatory agency as an Approved User for the specific and identified purpose of the applicable permit review process. Any other use of this report by others is prohibited and is without responsibility to Golder Associates Ltd. The report, all plans, data, drawings and other documents as well as electronic media prepared by Golder Associates Ltd. who authorizes only the Client and Approved Users to make copies of the report, but only in such quantities as are reasonably necessary for the use of the report by those parties. The Client and Approved Users may not give, lend, sell, or otherwise make available the report or any portion thereof to any other party without the express written permission of Golder Associates Ltd. The Client acknowledges the electronic media is susceptible to unauthorized modification, deterioration and incompatibility and therefore the Client cannot rely upon the electronic media versions of Golder Associates Ltd.'s report or other work products.

Unless otherwise stated, the suggestions, recommendations and opinions given in this report are intended only for the guidance of the Client in the design of the specific project.

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In May 2018, the City of Hamilton (the City) retained Golder Associates Ltd. (Golder) to conduct a Cultural Heritage Assessment for the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool at 1099 King Street East in the City's Ward 3. The City initiated the assessment after relatives of Mr. Thompson requested in 2013 that the property be considered for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The property is listed in the *Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest Section B-1 – Non-Designated Properties*.

Based on a preliminary cultural heritage assessment of the property by Golder in 2013 (Golder 2013), City staff recommended further cultural heritage assessment, and this was assigned to Golder in 2018 as part of the City's low priority workplan under the City's Roster of Professional Consulting 2016-2017 (Category 27: Built Heritage and Cultural Heritage Landscapes).

Following guidelines provided in the City's A Framework for Evaluating the Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of Property for Designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (2016) and the City of Hamilton Cultural Heritage Assessment Report Outline (n.d.), this document provides:

- An overview of the property's geographic and historical context;
- An inventory of the property's landscape and built features;
- An analysis of the structural sequence, construction, and architectural style of built features on the property;
- An evaluation of the property's cultural heritage value or interest (CHVI) based on criteria developed by the City and those prescribed under *Ontario Regulation 9/06;* and,
- Recommendations for future action including draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (CHVI).

### 2.0 SCOPE AND METHOD

To assess the property, Golder undertook:

- Archival and secondary source research;
- Field investigations to document and identify any cultural heritage resources within the property, and to understand the wider built and landscape context; and,
- Resource evaluation using municipal, provincial, and federal government guidance.

Several primary and secondary sources, including historic maps and plans, aerial imagery, photographs, and newspaper and research articles were compiled from the McMaster University Lloyd Reeds Map Collection and Digital Archives, Ontario Land Registry, and online sources. The City's Development Planning, Heritage & Design Section also provided a number of documents to aid in this study.

Field investigations were conducted on May 24, 2018 and included photographing all exterior and interior features on the property and wider context with Samsung Galaxy S6 and Apple iPhone digital cameras. Architectural features were documented with a *Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings Recording Form* (Parks Canada 1980).

From the collected information, the property was evaluated using the City's *A Framework for Evaluating the Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of Property for Designation under Part IV of the* Ontario Heritage Act (2016)

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and Ontario Regulation 9/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. Other widely used and recognized manuals relating to evaluating cultural heritage resources were also consulted including:

- Ontario Heritage Tool Kit series (5 vols., Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries [MHSTCI] 2006);
- Well-Preserved: The Ontario Heritage Foundation's Manual of Principles and Practices for Architectural Conservation (Fram 2003);
- Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (Canada's Historic Places 2010);
- The Evaluation of Historic Buildings and Heritage Planning: Principles and Practice (Kalman 1979, 2014); and,
- Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation (Clark 2001).

### 3.0 PROPERTY LOCATION

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool at civic address 1099 King Street East was originally within Part of Lot 7, Concession 2 of the former Barton Township, Wentworth County, now in the southeast portion of Ward 3 in the single-tier municipality of the City of Hamilton (Figure 1). It is approximately 3 km east of downtown Hamilton, and on the southeast corner of a block bounded on the north by Cannon Street East, on the south by King Street East, on the south by King Street East, on the east by Balsam Avenue North and on the west by Melrose Avenue North.

A right trapezoid in shape, the parcel measures approximately 32.9 m on the north, 34 m on the south, 53.1 m on the east, and 43 m on the west. Overall, the property encloses approximately 0.16 hectares (0.4 acres), with the 1,300 square metre footprint of the building centred on the lot.





### 4.0 PHYSIOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The property is within the Iroquois Plain physiographic zone, an area of rolling terrain encompassing much of the Lake Ontario shoreline from Cobourg to Niagara. The property's physiographic context can be further defined as within the Ontario Lakehead subsection of the Iroquois Plain, and is composed of well-drained, stone-free and sandy loam soil plains (Chapman & Putnam 1984:190). Approximately 1 km to the south is the Niagara Escarpment physiographic region, a massive limestone and dolostone outcrop running from the Niagara River to the Bruce Peninsula and Manitoulin Island. The topography of the lot is flat and at an elevation of 86 metres above sea level.

## 5.0 SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

## 5.1 Barton Township, Wentworth County

Following the Toronto Purchase of 1787, today's southern Ontario was within the old Province of Quebec and divided into four political districts: Lunenburg, Mechlenburg, Nassau, and Hesse. These became part of the Province of Upper Canada in 1791, and renamed the Eastern, Midland, Home, and Western Districts, respectively. The property is within the former Nassau District, then later the Home District, which originally included all lands between an arbitrary line on the west running north from Long Point on Lake Erie to Georgian Bay, and a line on the east running north from Presqu'ile Point on Lake Ontario to the Ottawa River. Each district was further subdivided into counties and townships. In 1816, Wentworth County was created within the Gore District from the southwest portions of York County in the Home District, and the west portion of the Niagara Districts. Of Wentworth's eight townships (later eleven) the Study Area is within Barton Township.

Barton Township was initially surveyed by Deputy Provincial Land Surveyor Augustus Jones, who completed the work in 1796 (Gentilcore & Donkin 1973:42). Jones employed the single-front method, where only the concessions were surveyed and lots of 120 to 200 acres were delineated to be five times as long as they were wide (Schott 1981:77-93) (Figure 2). In Barton Township, the concession lines were oriented east to west and numbered north to south, while the side roads crossed the township running north to south (McIlwraith 1999:54).



Figure 2: The single front survey system, used from 1783 to 1818. As depicted here, each lot is 200 acres (Ac.), created from surveying 19 chains by 105.27 chains (1 chain = 66 feet / 20.12 metres) (Gentilcore 1969:61)

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Similar to most counties along the north shore of Lake Ontario, initial European settlement was by soldiers and refugees displaced by the American War of Independence, but the settlement of Barton Township appears to have begun well before Augustus Jones' survey. Early American immigrant Richard Beasely had established a post to trade with Mississauga and other western Ojibwa groups at the 'Head-of-the-Lake', or Burlington Heights, as early as 1785 (Triggs 2004:159), and Robert Land was believed to have squatted on land near Barton and Leeming Streets (Freeman 2001:13). Once the survey was complete, European settlement of the township accelerated, although the system of land allocation disproportionately favoured those with social status. James Kirkpatrick and Samuel Ryckman, both of whom had aided Jones on the land survey, were generously compensated for their labour: Ryckman received 11,042 acres and Kirkpatrick 4,147 acres, which together comprised 6.3% of Barton Township (Widdis 1982:447).

Nevertheless, the population grew exponentially. In 1815 Barton Township had 102 ratepayers and 72 one-storey houses, yet just under a decade later in 1823, the township had three sawmills and one grist mill, and close to 4,978 acres of improved land, with 2,841 acres above the 'mountain' and 2,137 acres below. The 1832 assessment for Barton Township shows that growth in the area had more than doubled since the end of the War of 1812, with almost 6,500 acres made arable, and 152 framed or log houses under two storeys, 42 houses with two storeys, and two brick or stone houses had been erected. There were also sixteen merchant shops and six storehouses, while farm animals included 314 horses over the age of three, 149 oxen, 547 milk cows and 140 young cattle (Page and Smith 1875).

Smith's *Canadian Gazetteer*, published in 1846, recorded the cultivated land of Barton Township as extending over 8,993 acres and quoted the 1841 census, which enumerated 1,434 inhabitants living in the township (Smith 1846:8). By this time Hamilton —named for early merchant George Hamilton, who had laid out the town in 1813— was the district town for Gore District and regarded as the 'key to the west' for its strategic position at the head of Lake Ontario (Smith 1846:65, 75). Incorporated as a town in 1833, by 1845 it could boast an urban population of 6,475 that supported a thriving roster of 'Professions and Trades', a stone jail and courthouse, a brick market house, and eleven churches for the Catholic and Protestant denominations, including Baptist and Methodist African-Canadian congregations. Daily stagecoach and steamboat service to the other major towns of southwestern Ontario was also available (Smith 1846:75-76).

Hamilton's development during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marred by a failed investment in the Great Western Railway and the depression of 1857-58, but the town eventually recovered and by the 1870s had emerged as a manufacturing centre, earning the moniker of being the 'Birmingham of Canada', then later 'Steeltown' (Palmer 1979:15). This had a knock-on effect for the building industry, which increased 92% between 1850 and 1871 (Palmer 1979:16). Hamilton continued to grow through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, becoming the fifth largest city in Canada with a population of 150,000 by 1930 (Phillips & Boucher 2003:394). However, despite playing a leading role in supporting the war effort during both the First and Second World Wars, its textile industry would falter in the 1960s, and by the 1980s significant manufacturing and steel plant employers such as International Harvester and Stelco were forced to institute major layoffs.

In 1974, the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth replaced Wentworth County, and in 2001 the Regional Municipality and its six constituent municipalities were amalgamated into the City of Hamilton. Population growth since then has been modest. In 2006, the population numbered 504,560 while in 2011 it had grown to 519,950 (Stats Canada 2011).

## 5.2 Property History to 1928

The property was originally at the centre of the 112-acre Lot 7, Concession 2 North of King Street East, Barton Township, Wentworth County. In 1797 the lot was granted by Crown patent to Walter Butler Sheehan, who was a nephew of Colonel John Butler, a Connecticut Loyalist who led his irregular force the Butler's Rangers during the American War of Independence and settled in the Niagara region after the war (Bowler and Wilson 1979). Sheehan owned several lots in Hamilton at the time of the patent plan, and it is unclear if he built on the lot.

By 1859 the lot was bisected by King Street East, and the north two-thirds was owned by James Philip Gage (Figure 3) of the locally prominent Gage family, namesake to Gage Avenue, two streets to the east of the property and Gage Park, approximately 460 m to the south. Just over a decade and a half later, the 1875 township map lists George Gage as owning the lot's northern two-thirds, as well as a portion of an adjacent lot (Page and Smith 1875) (Figure 4). A building is also depicted on the township map, possibly surrounded by an orchard.

Four structures, two of which were masonry, are indicated on the 1907 national topographic series map (Figure 5) but by 1911 the index to Goad's Fire Insurance Plan shows that nearly the entirety of the north half of the lot had become a 'City Park' (Figure 6). This park, later named Scott Park, had been established by the Board of Park Management along with Gage Park; while the latter was planned as landscaped pleasure grounds, Scott Park from 1919 onward was a sports facility (Terpstra 1985:123). Tyrrell's 1924 *Atlas of Hamilton* shows unknown features (possibly related to athletics) in the area of the property, with a lawn bowling green to the north, and a cricket pitch to the west (Figure 7). Four years later it would be selected as a venue for the inaugural British Empire Games.



Figure 3: Detail of the 1859 Wentworth County Map, with red arrow indicating the location of 1099 King Street East (Gregory 1859).



Figure 4: Detail of the 1875 Barton Township Map (Page and Smith 1875).



Figure 5: Detail of the 1907 Topographic Map of Grimsby (Department of Militia and Defence 1907).



Figure 6: Detail of the index for the 1911 Fire Insurance Plan (Goad 1911).



Figure 7: Detail from Tyrrell's 1924 Atlas (Tyrrell 1924: 18)

## 5.3 The British Empire Games & Hamilton Municipal Pool

The first indoor pool in Hamilton was built for the YMCA in 1890, by then based at the intersection of James and Jackson Streets (YMCA 2006:4), and after 1919 the municipality supported free swimming instruction there for children brought in from across the city (Bouchier & Cruikshank 2011:323) (Figure 8). However, at that time most residents swam at the beaches in Burlington Harbour, but these were increasingly polluted and there were increasing calls to create public facilities.

Public pressure for a municipal pool coincided with lobbying by Melvin Marks 'Bobby' Robinson for a Britishempire wide sporting competition (Figure 9). A sports editor for the *Hamilton Spectator*, Robinson had managed the Canadian track and field team at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics and had the energy and connections to capitalize on the increasing level of imperial sentiment in Canada as well as Hamilton's goal to become a 'world class' city (Phillips and Bouchier 2014:399). The genesis of a British Empire Games can be traced to a proposal by arch-imperialist and Hamilton resident Clementina Fessenden for an 'Empire Day' in 1897 and the 'Festival of Empire' held for the coronation of King Edward V in 1911, as well as the idea forwarded in 1924 by Norton Crowe, national secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, to hold an Empire games every four years and on a cycle two years apart from Olympics (Gorman 2010:616). Robinson believed Hamilton to be the ideal host city as it called itself the 'geographical centre of empire', and in 1928 had been selected for the Canadian Olympic trials (Gorman 2010:616). The same year, Thomas McQueston, chair of the Public Works Committee, helped to draft an 'omnibus' style bylaw (By-law No. 3728) that funded both construction of a municipal pool but also beautification of the north-western entrance to Hamilton, a project of McQueston's that found far less public support than that for a public pool (Bouchier & Cruikshank 2011:324).

After the \$110,000 cost for the pool was secured from Council, work to design and build the municipal pool could begin. Architect for the project was Reginald Edwardes McDonnell, an English emigrant who arrived in Montreal to work with firm Brown and Vallance in 1911, then moved to Calgary the following year, where he began work for the Merchants Bank of Canada, eventually designing over thirty branches in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario (Hill 2021a). He also won the commission in 1914 for Calgary's Ranchmen's Club, which stands at 710 13th Avenue S.W. After moving to Hamilton in 1923, he partnered with Frederick W. Warren, but by 1928 was working independently (Hill 2021a; Archeion 2012, OAA n.d.). The extent of McDonnell's role for the municipal pool is unknown, and it may have been limited to the façade and interior decoration. Although his name is included in the caption for a photograph published in the December 14, 1929 *Hamilton Spectator* (Figure 10), only the pool's engineer Ernest Howard Darling is credited in a 1929 *Hamilton Herald* article of the same date and on a sign erected outside the building during construction (Darling 1933:423) (Figure 11); Darling's (1933) later account of the pool's features also makes no mention of McDonnell.

A Hamiltonian, E.H. Darling had originally partnered with local architects Stewart Thomson McPhie and B. Frank Kelly between 1913 and 1916, during which he designed the Crooks Hollow Dam, then entered "private practice as a consulting engineer on bridges, buildings, reinforced concrete, structural steel and industrial engineering" (Hill 2021b; *Engineering Institute of Canada* 1919:128). Darling's 1933 account of the construction outlined the wide range of considerations involved with the pool's design, from preventing cracks in the concrete to controlling humidity and ensuring adequate lighting. The latter was probably the contribution of firm Cockburn & Son, listed in the 1929 *Hamilton Spectator* caption as "Electrical Designers". The task of building these designs fell to local firm J. Earle Smith Construction Company, who are known from other municipal projects such as the Jarvis Public and Continuation School (1936) and the Charles H. Bray School in Ancaster (1953) (*Jarvis Record* 1936; Joe Flickr Photostream 2011).

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The photograph published in the December 14, 1929 *Hamilton Spectator* suggests the pool's exterior was substantially complete by that date, but it was not officially opened until January 29, 1930<sup>1</sup> (Wilson 2010). Seven months later it was the swimming venue for the 'British Empire Games' that Robinson had been instrumental in organizing (Figure 12). Between 16 and 23 August 1930, Hamilton welcomed 450 competitors from eleven nations (Newfoundland, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Bermuda, British Guiana, and Canada) and attracted a crowd of over 20,000 to the opening ceremonies (Phillips & Boucher 2014:399).

Advertisements hyperbolically billed the municipal pool as 'one of finest in the Western Hemisphere', although Boucher & Cruikshank (2011:325) note this may have some grounding in truth. For the previous eight modern Olympics all swimming events were held in rivers and lakes, while the 1924 Paris Olympics was held in an artificial facility, yet one open to the elements (Comité Olympique Français 1924:439) (Figure 13). The Hamilton pool was 'considered to be a progressive marvel of engineering and public hygiene', 'regularly inspected by board of health', had 'well-drained floors, clean dressing rooms and toilets, laundered and sterilized bathing suits and towels', and there was 'a supervisor trained to oversee bathers at all times' (Boucher & Cruikshank 2011:325-326). During the Games, Canadian records were broken in the men's 100-yard backstroke but more importantly in the women's 400-yard freestyle relay; at these inaugural games, which later became the Commonwealth Games, swimming events were the only competitions open to women. These swimming events were a spectator favourite, and when 1500 people pushed through the doors they had to be restrained by police. England won the games with 61 medals, one of which had been won in the pool by Joyce Cooper (Williams 2014:480).

After the games, the pool returned to its public function, and in 1932 James 'Jimmy' Thompson was hired by the city to manage the facility, and he led both learn to swim and competitive programs (Figure 14 and Figure 15).

The 1938 topographic map (Figure 16) indicates two smaller buildings west of the pool, possibly remnants of the games, and in 1944 Scott Park was proposed for a sports complex to honour Canada's war service (Boucher & Cruikshank 2011:327-328). This was never undertaken although in 1950 the former British Empire Games site to the north was redeveloped for the Hamilton Tiger Cats as Ivor Wynne Stadium (Figure 17). In 1966, Scott Park Secondary School was added to the property to the west of the pool (Figure 18) and construction of other municipal swimming facilities, which had been postponed by the Second War, now took off with 66 built by 1971 (Boucher & Cruikshank 2011:330). The same year, the original municipal pool was renamed to honour the memory of Jimmy Thompson.

Ivor Wynne Stadium was replaced by Tim Hortons Field in 2012 and Scott Park Secondary School was demolished in 2015; the new Bernie Custis Secondary School to the west, and the adjoining Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre to the north were under construction at the time of Golder's field assessment.

<sup>1</sup> Darling (1933:421) incorrectly states the pool was built in "1932" for the first British Empire Games.



Figure 8: Circa 1930 photograph of the Hamilton YMCA pool (reproduced in YMCA 2006:8).



Figure 9: Melvin Marks 'Bobby' Robinson at the British Empire Games, 1930 (reproduced in Bradburn 2015).



Figure 10: Photograph of the pool published in the December 14, 1929 *Hamilton Spectator* (courtesy Inventory & Research Working Group of the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee).



Figure 11: Front façade of the pool, presumed while the building was still under construction since there is a board leaning against the wall that names the J. Earle Smith Construction Company and E.H. Darling. This photo also appears to pre-date December 1929 as the "Municipal Swimming Pool" sign below the cornice had yet to be added (see Figure 10, from Darling 1933:423)



Figure 12: 1930 photograph from the British Empire Games programme showing the pillars with 'Corinthian' capitals, skylights, dome lighting over the bleachers, and a tall diving board (reproduced from Boucher & Cruikshank 2011:325).



VUE DE LA PISCINE VIDE

Figure 13: Pool constructed for the 1924 Paris Olympics (Comité Olympique Français 1924:439)



Figure 14: Children swimming in the Hamilton Municipal Pool (undated, *Hamilton Spectator* archives http://thespecstories.com/2015/01/29/flashback-pool-days/).



Figure 15: Hamilton Aquatic Club members posing on a diving board (Hamilton Archives, 1955).



Figure 16: Detail of the 1938 topographic map, showing the location of 1099 King Street East (Department of National Defence 1938).



Figure 17: Detail of the 1950 aerial photo of east Hamilton, with 1099 King Street East indicated by a red arrow (McMaster Archives 1950).



Figure 18: Detail of the 1966 aerial photo of east Hamilton, with 1099 King Street East indicated by a red arrow (McMaster Archives 1966).

## 5.4 James (Jimmy) Gilmore Thompson, 1906-1966

James 'Jimmy' Thompson was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1906 and had emigrated to Toronto with his parents as a teenager. He entered swimming competitions in his local pool at Harrison Bath and for the YMCA teams at 15, and set records for the Humber River Swim and Hamilton Cross-the-Bay Swim (Spectator 1966; Swim Ont). Selected for the 1928 Canadian Olympic mission to Amsterdam, Thompson took home bronze with the 880-yard freestyle relay team and when he returned began coaching at the Harrison Baths, primarily underprivileged youths (Spectator 1966). Two years later, in the pool that now bears his name, Thompson won gold with the men's freestyle 4 x 200-yard relay team at the British Empire Games (Anon. n.d.).

In 1932 Thompson moved to Hamilton and joined the Delta Aquatic Club, which soon changed its name to the Hamilton Aquatic Club and appointed Thompson as its first coach (Lovegrove 1982). He would coach at the club based at the Municipal Pool for the next 33 years, and is credited for the successful careers of swimmers George Larson, Jack McCormick, Den Gazell, Dan Sherry and Patty Thompson, as well as leading the club to 92 national and 205 provincial swimming titles, and eleven straight national titles of the Hamilton Water Polo Club, which Thompson established and served as first coach (Lovegrove 1982; City of Hamilton 2017). He also coached

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synchronized swimming, but is perhaps best known for teaching an estimated 60,000 children of all backgrounds and abilities to swim, a feat that earned him the moniker 'Mr. Swimming' (Figure 19). He actively took on maintenance of the pool, which he ensured was 'scrubbed every day with hard bristle brushes' and boasted had water 'purer than the city's drinking water' (City of Hamilton 2017).

Four-hundred and fifty people turned out for Jimmy Thompson Appreciation Night Dinner at the Royal Connaught Hotel on Nov. 14, 1957, and in 1959 Thompson was named Hamilton's Citizen of the Year (*West Hamilton Journal* 1982; *Hamilton Spectator* 1966:22). A year before his retirement after 33 years at the Hamilton Aquatic Club he was named Canada's Swimming Coach of the Year in 1964. Thompson passed away on January 26, 1966 and despite his modest obituary in the local paper, he was mourned by thousands in both Hamilton and Toronto. The Municipal Pool was renamed in his honour in 1971, and Thompson was since inducted into the Ontario Aquatic Hall of Fame (1990), the Hamilton Sports Hall of Fame, and the Canadian Aquatic Hall of Fame.



Figure 19: Jimmy Thompson and young students in the pool (undated, *Hamilton Spectator* archives http://thespecstories.com/2015/01/29/flashback-pool-days/).

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## 6.0 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

This section provides an inventory of the landscape and built heritage features on the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool.

### 6.1 Setting

The property is located at the northwest corner of King Street East and Balsam Avenue North (Figure 20). The setting of the property can be characterized as urban residential. Structures within the immediate area are primarily residential, consisting of several three-story multi-family brick apartment buildings and one-half-storey single family detached dwellings directly south, southeast and southwest of the property, and one-half single family detached dwellings to the east (Figure 21 to Figure 25). The residential buildings fronting King Street East and Balsam Ave are contemporary in age and massing to the Pool. The lands directly to the north and west of the property were under redevelopment in 2018 and today are the Bernie Morelli Recreation and Bernie Custis Secondary School, respectively. A large sports arena (Tim Hortons Field) is located north of the Pool. Access to the property is through the front doors on the south façade of the structure from King Street East.

One street tree stands on southeast corner and the setback from the right-of-way on the south and east is relatively minimal. Like much of the surrounding area, the topography of the property is relatively flat with a slight decrease in elevation towards the west.

From the front entrance of the Pool are unobstructed views to the residential areas south, west, and east, as the structure is sited at the corner of the intersection.



Figure 20: Looking northwest at the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool from the southwest corner of King Street East and Balsam Avenue South.



Figure 21: Looking north along Balsam Avenue at the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (left) and its immediate surroundings.



Figure 22: Looking west along King Street East at the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (right) and its surrounding.



Figure 23: Looking south along Balsam Avenue North at the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (right) and residential dwellings (left) within the Pool's vicinity.



Figure 24: Looking east along King Street East at the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (centre left) and its surroundings. Note several three-story multi-family brick apartment buildings along King Street East that are contemporary in age and mass of the Pool.

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### 6.2 Built Heritage

#### 6.2.1 Exterior

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool was constructed using elements of Edwardian Classicism (Figure 25). The low-pitched hipped roof with projecting eaves is a common feature on Edwardian Classicism structures, as are the white-washed walls on the north, east, and west facades of the structure. While the hipped roof of the frontispiece and its wings has red shingles (originally red tiles) and plain projecting eaves and verges, the main roof of the pool is hipped, covered with metal, and has plain flush eaves and verges (Figure 27). The south façade (frontispiece) features large Romanesque arches with a stone keystone on each, above translucent glass-block windows (Figure 25). The arches previously extended further down the façade of the structure but are now obscured by the addition of the 1974/75 bathroom and entrance block (Figure 26). The building has a cement foundation with a concrete plinth. The entire frontispiece and its wings are constructed from red brick in Flemish bond, with a stone course running across the building, just above the keystones, and a second course in line with the top of the glass-block windows. These courses continue onto the wings, which extend to the east and west from the south façade and are recessed slightly. Both wings have a glass-block window at a first storey height on the south façade and one at the second storey height on the east and west facades.

The east and west façades of the Pool feature two tones of off-white paint, and a series of small rectangular single sash windows with translucent glass-blocks providing light to the interior (Figure 28-Figure 31). The fenestrations are organized asymmetrically between the two stories of the structure. The ground level of the east façade of has 10 window openings and the second level has 14 window openings. One of the ground-floor windows has been replaced with an air vent and some of the windows have a centre opening with a single-hung window. The ground level of the west façade has 11 window openings, and the second level has 12 window openings. Five of the ground-floor windows have been boarded, one has been replaced with an air vent, and the remainder are fitted with centre openings with a single-hung window. On the second level of the west façade, four of the windows have centre openings with a single-hung window.

The second level and a portion of the ground level of the west half of the north façade is obscured from the construction of an extension to the new Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Secondary School. Two window openings with translucent glass-blocks and an air outtake vent are visible along the second level, and a series of window openings fitted with air vents and one fitted with translucent glass-blocks is visible on the ground level. A large emergency exit door is located at the northeast corner of the façade.

A chimney extends from the side of the west façade, painted white on the bottom and left as exposed red brick above the roof of the structure (Figure 28 - Figure 29). This façade, like the north and east, has sets of glass-block windows with lug sills, broken into even sections by brick pilasters. Several of the ground storey windows have been altered or boarded up.

Extending from the south façade is an additional brick structure, one storey in height that was added to the Pool to provide public washrooms. This addition has the same concrete foundation as the Pool, with a flat roof and double doors in the centre, in line with the central arch on the south façade. The main entrance has a flat structural opening with plain trim within and outside the structural opening. The main doors are metal and consist of two leaves with two glass panels per leaf and includes a side light transom. Another set of doors follows the main doors creating a vestibule. The secondary doors are also metal and consist of two leaves with two glass panels per leaf and includes are also metal and consist of two leaves with two glass panels per leaf and includes a side light transform on either side. There are no windows in the addition.



Figure 25: Looking north at the south facade of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool and the 1974/75 addition.



Figure 26: Sill and glass block of the west window as seen from inside the 1974/75 addition.



Figure 27: Projective eaves and verges, looking at the south east corner of the frontispiece.



Figure 28: Looking northeast at the south and west facades of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool.



Figure 29: Looking southeast at the west facade of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool.



Figure 30: Looking northwest at the east façade of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool.



Figure 31: Looking southwest at the east and north facades of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool.

#### 6.2.2 Interior

#### 6.2.3 Overview

The interior of the building is described in site plans as having two floors: ground floor and pool floor (Figure 32 - Figure 33).

The ground floor is split level, with a lobby area at grade and the remainder of the floor partially below grade. The front entrance of the building leads into the lobby of the ground floor. From the lobby, there are short stairs leading down to the lower level of the ground floor, as well as stairs leading up to the pool floor.

The original construction of the building included an attic space within the frontispiece of the building. Furthermore, the building was also originally fitted with central skylights, which permitted natural light to flow into the pool floor. These skylights were removed in 1974/75 and re-roofed with metal. A dropped ceiling is now hung from the metal trusses of the former skylights, thus creating an extension north from the original attic space.



Figure 32: Plan of Ground Floor, 2004.


Figure 33: Plan of Pool Floor, 2004.

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## 6.2.3.1 Ground Floor

#### 6.2.3.1.1 Lobby Level

The lobby level of the ground floor sits at the same elevation as the street level entrance from King Street East (Figure 34). In 1974/1975, to provide public washroom facilities, an addition was construction onto the main entrance at the lobby floor level. This addition now functions as the main entrance to the building with a centre vestibule, female's washroom on the west side of the addition and a male's washroom to the east side of the addition. The original south façade, which is covered by the 1974/75 addition appears to remain intact (Figure 35).

Access to the lobby level can be gained from the main entrance. At the east and west ends of the lobby level, there are stairs to the lower level of the ground floor, as well as a set of stairs to the pool floor (Figure 36). The staircases are original, but the railings appear to be later additions.

Directly north of the main entrance and between the two sets of staircases is a large office room as well as an additional smaller room likely utilized as a secondary office (Figure 37 & Figure 38). The configuration of the two offices was established by 1974 but based on the style of some of the concrete blocks within the partitions of the office suggest that the offices were likely created in the 1960s (Golder 2013). A set of staircases are present from the smaller office room to the ground floor.



Figure 34: Looking south at the main entrance and vestibule associated with the 1974/75 addition.

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Figure 35: Looking southeast at the intact original south facade located behind the 1974/75 addition.



Figure 36: Looking west along the lobby floor at stairs leading up to the pool floor.



Figure 37: Looking northwest at entrance to office rooms and stairs leading up to the pool floor and stairs leading down to the ground floor.



Figure 38: Looking west at the large office space in the foreground, as well as the small office space and stairs to the ground floor in the background.

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The lower level of the ground floor consists of various storage rooms, male and female check and change rooms, lifeguard change room, a pipe tunnel, a mechanical/ filtration room and furnace room.

The male and female staffed check rooms, located at the south east and south west corners of the lower level, respectively, were significantly altered during the 1974/75 additions. Both rooms were subdivided in a similar configuration, resulting in smaller male and female check rooms, and the construction of male and female lifeguard changerooms (Figure 39 - Figure 42).

The male and female change rooms are located directly north of their respective check rooms and along the east and west sides of the lower level, respectively (Figure 43 - Figure 59). Both change rooms occupy the same area as per the original construction, except for the northern third of the male change room, which has been converted into an electrical/storage utility room in 1974/75, as well as the conversion of parts of the change rooms into small utility/janitorial rooms within both change rooms. The configuration of the change room amenities (toilets, showers, and lockers) was modified in 1974/75, and fixtures have been modernized over time. The ceramic tiles within the male change room and its associated utility/janitorial room and corridor appears to be from the 1974/75 updates to the building. With the exception of the service/janitor sink within the utility/janitorial room, the ceramic tiles within the female change room and its associated rooms has been replaced since 1974/75. There are stairs at the south ends of both change rooms that lead to the pool level. Additionally, at the north end of both change rooms, there is a corridor with stairs leading to the pool level (Figure 60).

Three additional utilities rooms are located in the north and north west parts of the lower level (Figure 61 -Figure 70). The furnace room is directly north of the female change room, and in its original configuration; although the equipment appears to have been replaced over time (Figure 63 - Figure 64). The original heating systems was likely a coal furnace that has been replaced with a gas furnace system. The chute cover to the original coal furnace remains (Figure 65). The central air conditioning room is located at the north west corner of the lower level. This room was originally a storage room, which has been converted to house the central air conditioning (Figure 66 - Figure 67). The mechanical/filtration room is in its original configuration at the north end of the lower level (Figure 69 - Figure 70). It appears that all the equipment has been replaced over time. The mechanical room provides access to the pipe tunnel that surrounds the perimeter of the pool. The pipe tunnel's remains in its original configuration. The pipe tunnel provides access to the pool's light fixtures, as well as its pipe and electrical systems, which have been replaced over time (Figure 71 - Figure 73).

A storage room is located under the south end of the pool deck. This area was inaccessible at the time of the site visit. However, according to Golder (2013), the room has low ceilings and provides access to changing the four pool lights at the south end of the pool. Additionally, the walls of the room were graffitied with the names of former pool staff from 1967.

The main emergency exit was constructed at the north east corner of the ground floor. This exit connects to the pool level by a wide staircase, as well as to the male change room through a corridor. An additional exit was constructed at the north west corner; however, there was no direct access to this exit of the main emergency exit from the female change room unit 1974/75. It was at this time that an opening was created at the north end of the corridor north of the female change room to provide direct access to an exit (Figure 59, Figure 68).

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Figure 39: Female lifeguard change room (1974/75), looking southwest.



Figure 40: Male check room, looking south. Room was reconfigured in 1974/75.



Figure 41: Female check room, looking north into female change room. Room was reconfigured in 1974/75.



Figure 42: Looking south into the female check room. Room was reconfigured in 1974/75.



Figure 43: Male change room, looking north. Floor tiles appear to be from 1974/75. Note slope in ceiling from pool bleachers.



Figure 44: Male change room, looking north.

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Figure 45: Utility room (1974/75) withing male change room, looking east.



Figure 46: Male change room, looking south.

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Figure 47: Male change room, looking north.



Figure 48: Janitorial room (1974/75) within male change room, looking north east.

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Figure 49: Corridor north of male change room, looking north. Reconfigured in 1974/75.



Figure 50: Electrical room, looking south. Enclosed in 1974/75 to create a designated electrical room.



Figure 51: Electrical room, looking north.



Figure 52: Female change room, looking north. Note slope in ceiling from pool bleachers.

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Figure 53: Female change room, looking south.



Figure 54: Utility room (1974/75) within female change room, looking west.

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Figure 55: Air vent within utility room of the female change room, looking west and up.



Figure 56: Female change room, looking south west. Air vents installed during 1974/75 updates.

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Figure 57: Female change room, looking north west.



Figure 58: Janitorial room (1974/75) within female change room, looking south west.

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Figure 59: Corridor north of female change room, looking north. Wall at north end was opened and a door installed in 1974/75 for access to an emergency exit.



Figure 60: Stairs from the corridor north of the female change room to the pool floor.

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Figure 61: Stairs from corridor to a/c room, emergency exit and mechanical/filtration room. Note, stairs from corridor to subsequent rooms were constructed in 1974/75 when the wall was opened, looking north.



Figure 62: Stairs (1974/75) from opening at the north end of the corridor to subsequent rooms, looking north east.

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Figure 63: Furnace room, looking south west. All equipment has been updated over time.



Figure 64: Furnace room, looking south. All equipment has been updated over time.

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Figure 65: Chute to the original coal furnace.



Figure 66: Air conditioning room, formerly employed as a storage room.

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Figure 67: Ground floor: covered window within a/c room along west wall, looking west.



Figure 68: Rear exit, which was utilized as an emergency exit from the female change room after 1974/75, looking north.

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Figure 69: Mechanical/filtration room, looking east. All equipment has been replaced over time.



Figure 70: Mechanical/filtration room, looking west. All equipment has been replaced over time.

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Figure 71: Pipe tunnel that runs around the perimeter of the pool. Note, electrical and pipes within pipe tunnel has been updated.



Figure 72: Under water pool light; this light appears to be original. Note, marks of the board forms are visible on the cement.

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Figure 73: Updated under water pool light.

### 6.2.3.2 Pool Floor

The configuration of the pool floor appears to be original and unaltered. The pool floor is symmetrical in design, with the pool centred on the north-south axis of the floor plan. The east and west sides of the pool floor consist of five rows of bleachers divided into three sections by stairs (Figure 74). The north end of the pool floor consists of five rows of bleachers divided into two sections by stairs. The south end of the pool floor consists of four rows of bleachers divided into two sections by stairs. The south end of the pool floor consists of four rows of bleachers divided into two sections by stairs. The south end of the pool floor consists of four rows of bleachers divided into two section by stairs, as well as galley and judge's booth (Figure 75). The bleachers are concrete and finished with wooden board for seating. The wooden boards have been replaced over time. The judge's booth was constructed likely during the 1974/75 updates to the Pool and centre over the gallery area. The stairs between the bleachers and the upper walkway around the outer perimeter of the pool floor are furnished with handrails, which are not original.

All sides of the pool floor have glass-block window, which have been replaced over time (Figure 76). Some of the windows have centres that can be opened, and some windows are blind. The larger windows are located on the front (south) elevation within the arches (Figure 77).

The ceiling is supported by four columns on both sides (east and west) of the pool (Figure 74). The shafts of the columns are square and were originally finished with a Corinthian capital and decorative base. The Corinthian capital and decorative base have since been removed.

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The bleachers and pool deck are separated by a low, concrete wall (Figure 77). The pool side of the wall is finished with small, white ceramic square tiles with black ceramic tile bordering, which appear to be original. The lettering on the tiles were coloured onto the tiles by hand at a later date (Figure 78). Entrance to the pool deck from the bleachers is accessed by stairs at the corners of the pool (Figure 79).

Additionally, the deck level of the pool is connected by staircases at all four corners to the change rooms on the lower level of the ground floor, thus, connecting to the respective ends of the male and female change rooms (Figure 80 - Figure 81). Over each staircase, there is decorative semi-circular platform finished in small, white ceramic square tiles that extend out from the edge of the columns.

The gutters of the pool are located along the east and west sides of the pool. The pool is primarily finished with small, white ceramic tiles, and the swimming lanes. The lane numbers and distance markers are ascribed in black ceramic tiles that have been replaced over time. The shallow end of the pool is located on the north end of the pool, and the deep end is located at the south end of the pool. The shallow and deep ends of the pool are delineated by red ceramic tiles and appears to be a later addition. The pool depths are ascribed by hand on the east and west sides of the pool. The pool is fitted with four underwater lights at the south end, two at the north end and seven lights on the east and west sides.

The emergency exit located at the north east corner of the ground floor is accessible by a set of wide stairs at the north east corner of the pool floor; these stairs are original (Figure 82). In 2004, an emergency escape from the pool floor was constructed on the north wall at the west end; this exit has since been removed to accommodate the construction of the new Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Secondary School.

A link to the former Scott Park Secondary School was formerly present on the west wall at the north end of the pool floor. This link was removed with the demolition of the school in June 2015.



Figure 74: Bleacher rows along the west side of the pool, looking north. Note, the absence of the Corinthian capitals and decorative base on the columns. Roof columns are evident. The drop ceiling over the former skylight is visible.



Figure 75: South side of the pool, looking east. The judge's booth, gallery, south bleachers, and stairs to the lobby floor are visible.



Figure 76: Updated glass-block windows along west side of pool. Note, some of the windows are fitted with a centre single-hung opening.



Figure 77: Wall separating bleachers from the deck level, looking south. Gutters are visible between the deck and pool.



Figure 78: Letters are ascribed by hand; a later addition likely to meet health and safety requirements.



Figure 79: Entrance to the pool deck from the bleachers, looking east.



Figure 80: Pool floor, looking south. Stairs to the change rooms, Romanesque arches along the south, pool lights, gutters along the east and west limits of the pool, and drop ceiling covering the former skylights are visible.



Figure 81: Pool floor, looking north. Stairs to the change rooms, gutters along the east and west limits of the pool, and drop ceiling covering the former skylights are visible.



Figure 82: Access to the emergency exit from the pool floor, looking north.

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#### 6.2.3.3 Roof Level

The south end of the building (frontispiece) consists of a timber-framed hipped-roof that includes an attic space, which is original to the building (Figure 83 - Figure 88). The attic is accessible by ladder from the pool level through an opening above the judge's booth. The east and west walls of the attic are constructed of brick, and the north and south walls are constructed of a combination of brick and cinder blocks (Figure 83 - Figure 85). All four walls have a timber wall plate. A single window is located on the north wall at the east end (Figure 83). The roof deck appears to be constructed with tongue and groove timber (Figure 87).

The original construction of the building included central skylights, which permitted natural light to flow into the pool floor. These skylights were removed in 1974/75 and re-roofed with metal. The original metal trusses remain, from which a dropped ceiling is hung (Figure 88). This now enclosed area is accessible from the north wall of the attic.



Figure 83: Looking east within the attic space of the frontispiece. The arrow points to red roof tiles, which may be the original to the frontispiece.



Figure 84: Looking south east within the attic space of the frontispiece.



Figure 85: Looking south west within the attic space of the frontispiece.



Figure 86: Timber-framed hipped roof of the frontispiece.



Figure 87: Roof deck on the frontispiece appears to be constructed in tongue and groove method.



Figure 88: Original metal trusses of the skylight, looking northwest.

## 6.3 Interpretation

#### 6.3.1 Structural Sequence

Like many historic buildings in Hamilton, the number of alterations and structural sequence evident in the physical elements of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool are relatively few. However, from a combination of field investigations and historical data, there are at least 2 phases that can be defined for the property.

#### 6.3.1.1 Phase 1: circa 1930 - 1973

The first phase represents construction of the Hamilton Municipal Pool in 1930, and its elements. Elements from this phase include:

- Frontispiece;
  - Two-storey massing of brick with a cement foundation;
  - Low-pitch, hipped roof with projecting eaves and verges;
  - Red roof tiles
  - Romanesque arches;
  - Band courses of stone and decorative red brick in Flemish bond;
- Large brick chimney from the furnace room on the west façade;

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- Coal chute;
- Single sash, eight pane windows with lug sills;
  - Replaced with translucent glass-block windows, some with centre openings, prior to 1974;
- Seven-lane ceramic tiled pool and tiled pool barrier wall (Figure 89);
- Pipe tunnel and pool lighting system;
- Concrete bleachers fitted with wooden seating;
- Corinthian-style columns;
- Central skylights;
- Gallery;
- A diving board;
- Footprint and room layout prior to 1974 (Figure 90)



Figure 89: "The Pool" (from Darling 1933:424).



Figure 90: "Plan of the Municipal Swimming: Pool, Hamilton, Ontario" (from Darling 1933:422). North is oriented to the bottom of the page.

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#### 6.3.1.2 Phase 2: 1974/75 - Present

The second phase represents alterations to the Hamilton Municipal Pool, then called the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool from 1974 onwards (Figure 91 to Figure 94). Elements from this phase include:

- Removal of the skylights, re-roofed with metal and addition of dropped ceiling;
- Removal of Corinthian capital and decorative base from interior columns;
- Construction of the south entrance and washroom addition;
- Reconfiguration of check rooms and construction of lifeguard change rooms;
- Addition of judge's booth within the gallery area;
- Removal of diving board;
- Opening of corridor wall to provide access from female's change room to rear exit;
- Replace red roof tiles from frontispiece;
- Addition and later removal of rear emergency escape and connection to Scott Park Secondary School.

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Figure 91: Ground floor showing existing conditions in 1974 (Golder 2013).


Figure 92: Pool floor showing existing conditions in 1974 (Golder 2013).

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Figure 93: Front (King Street) elevation showing plan for new addition, 1974 (Golder 2013).

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Figure 94: East/west half sectional view through centre of building showing bleachers and skylight roof truss.

#### 6.3.2 Architectural Analysis

It is notable that an architect or engineer for the pool was not named in the promotional material for the British Empire Games, as at the time it was 'considered to be a progressive marvel of engineering and public hygiene' (Bouchier & Cruickshank 2011:325). Although controlled, indoor water facilities designed specifically for swimming (as opposed to bathing) developed under the Greeks before 500 BC, then sustained by the Romans until around the fifth century AD (Pick 2010:7-14), this technology did not re-emerge on a significant scale until the Baths and Wash Houses Act was passed in Britain in 1846, and even then their primary purpose was for bathing, not swimming. The oldest known example of a purpose-built swimming pool dates to only 76 years prior to the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool and was for a school in the West Yorkshire town of Halifax (Gordon & Inglis 2009). Chlorination for pools had not been refined until the first decade of twentieth century, and not regulated until the 1920s. Recirculation too was a recent invention of the early 20th century, although many pools before 1930 were 'fill and draw', requiring the water be completely changed every 12 hours or less (Olsen 2007:132).

Standardization in pool profile and dimensions was another component only adopted a few years before the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool was built. The 'spoon-shape' selected for its bottom was recognized as the safest and most multi-purpose of types by the late 1910s (Pick 2010:71), and its 75-foot length was the maximum pre-metric dimension for international competition. At 45-feet wide it could accommodate 9 lanes using the international standard 5-foot width, although its original construction had eight lanes at a 5-foot-6-inch width, seen

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in the lines marked in black tile. It was further reduced to seven lanes —the divisions marked by single black tiles and numbering— to meet the nearly 7-foot standard established after 1950 (Ramsey & Sleeper 1994:685).

It is uncertain if the pool design also included innovation or idiosyncrasy compared to other pools of the same period. In the plans and elevations the bleachers appear similar to the pools used for the 1924 Paris games, which also has what may be sub-floor passages (Figure 95). This passage was not to provide access to the pool wall lights in the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool; different coloured tile around their circumference, as well as their position 'cutting' through original line marks, indicate these were added later. Skylights had long been a feature of public pools, as seen in the 1904 Bramley Baths in Leeds, and its 'kicked' hip roof supported by pillars in an outer parapet appears similar to the 1925 Crystal Gardens pool in Victoria BC (Figure 96 and Figure 97). It also shares with this latter building a red brick outer wall and contrasting detailing (Figure 98).

In overall architectural style the pool is within the Edwardian Classicism tradition and not, as reported in Golder's 2013 report, built in the Mediterranean Revival or Italian Renaissance Revival styles. While these styles were popular in the 1920s and 1930s, this was primarily across the former Spanish colonies in the southern United States and found little expression in Canada apart from scattered exceptions such as the concrete Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion in Toronto (Massey & Maxwell 229). The hip roof, red brick with contrasting string courses, as well as lesenes or pilaster strips and even the semi-circular headed windows on the principal facade all point to an Edwardian or inter-war aesthetic. The architect or engineer responsible for the design evidently took inspiration from the residential buildings surrounding Scott Park by that time, which are primarily red brick and built in the Edwardian Classicism style. Later 20th century municipal pool construction in the City was less inclined to mirror the local built environment, with some having an entirely functional exterior design.

The neo-classicism of the exterior extended to the interior, where Corinthian capitals graced the pillars surrounding the pool. This reference to the classical world may have been to link the sports facility with the Greek and Roman sporting traditions yet may have also been intended to link the British empire celebrated at the Games with the ancient Roman empire, a connection often explicitly made by imperialists in the years after the First World War to legitimize British power over its Commonwealth dominions.



Figure 95: Section of Le stade nautique des Tourelles, France (Comité Olympique Français 1924:438).



Figure 96: Bramley Baths in Leeds (Leeds Digital Magazine Ltd. 2013).



Figure 97: Interior of the Crystal Gardens circa 1926 (McCord Museum MP-0000.158.148, http://collections.museemccord.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/MP-0000.158.148).



Figure 98: The Crystal Gardens today (from http://tanglewoodconservatories.com/heritage/crystal-garden/).

## 7.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE EVALUATION

The following evaluation follows the City's guidance category for built heritage and references the *Ontario Regulation 9/06 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest.* 

## 7.1 Historical or Associative Value

## 7.1.1 Thematic

In relation to established heritage themes, the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool could be linked to the 'Modern Ontario' segment of the Political theme identified in *A Topical Organization of Ontario History*, and the 'Citizens, Engagement and Protest' and 'Built Form' themes defined in the 'A Story of Us/ A Story of Place' report submitted as part of the City's Cultural Plan. Although neither reference the British Empire Games or first municipal pool, the Cultural Plan does note the City's 'vigorous tradition of amateur sports in the 1920s and 1930s [that] has contributed to the city's identity as a place of athletic achievement'. The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool is directly associated with this athletic achievement, as well as a site of civic engagement through recreation, learn-to-swim programs, and spectating at swimming events.

Another significant thematic association is with the history of women's international sports. Swimming was the only sport open to women in the 1930 British Empire Games and these were held exclusively within the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool. For women athletes, the restricted opportunity at the British Empire Games somewhat reversed the increasingly level of involvement women had gained in Olympic competition, yet nevertheless the medals won by Joyce Cooper of England, Valerie Davis of Wales and Sarah Stewart of Scotland in Hamilton were pivotal to the development of women's sport in Britain and subsequent British Empire and later Commonwealth Games saw increasingly larger numbers of female participants and events (Williams 2014:480).

## 7.1.2 Event

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool is directly associated with the British Empire Games between August 16 to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1930, a 'mega-event' or large-scale international sporting event that 'aim to attract thousands of visitors and the attention of the world's media to the host city, giving this city a high international profile and favourable image during the event and hopefully name recognition afterwards' (Phillips and Bouchier 2003:390-391). This mega-event was the first ever to be hosted in a Canadian city (Phillips and Bouchier 2003:390-391).

## 7.1.3 Person and/or Group

The strongest direct association with a person or group significant to the community is with Jimmy Thompson, who for 33 years served as instructor and coach within the building, but who also took an active role in maintaining its physical condition. 'Mr. Swimming's' career and legacy is widely recognized and respected in the sporting community as well as the public, a high number of which learned to swim under Thompson's direction.

The genesis of the pool can also be directly associated with Bobby Robinson and his successful planning and execution of the first British Empire Games, and indirectly to Thomas B. McQueston, then chair of the Public Works Committee, and later a provincial cabinet minister.

A group with significant association with the pool is the Hamilton Aquatic Club, which has produced an impressive number of high performing athletes and won titles while representing Hamilton at the national and international level. Jimmy Thompson was a leading figure in the club, but support in subsequent years came from other recognized individuals such as Jack McCormick and Brian Bond, and athletes and club ambassadors such as Patty Thompson and Irene Macdonald.

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Although there is an association with architect Reginald Edwardes McDonnell, who was recognized for his work across Canada and high-profile projects such as the Calgary Ranchmen's Club, the Pool is not mentioned as one of his key works and in some reports his role was omitted (Hill 2021a; Archeion 2012, OAA n.d.). Engineer Ernest Howard Darling appears to have had a greater influence on the pool's design, but while he was a respected member of the Canadian engineering community (*Engineering Institute of Canada* 1919), he is not considered to have a significant legacy or influence on the engineering profession at a local, provincial, or national level.

## 7.2 Architecture and Design

## 7.2.1 Architectural Merit

Architecturally the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool is a rare and well executed example of a competition and public indoor pool and the last surviving structure of the 1930 British Empire Games 'mega-event'. Only five other public indoor pools are listed in the national Canadian Register<sup>2</sup> with some no longer in use as pools, and the date of construction for Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool prior to 1945 makes it relatively rare globally —in the UK there are only 117 public pools built before the end of the Second World War (Gordon & Inglis 2009).

That its exterior style has been interpreted in two contrasting ways (i.e., initially as Mediterranean then as Edwardian Classicism for this report) gives an indication of its architectural uniqueness, while its materials, decoration, fenestration, and massing give it a prominence from the street front, yet at the same time a balance with surrounding architecture. Like other classically influenced structures in the City there is a 'permanence and stability' in the building's architecture, while on the interior there is a lightness that comes from the tiling, open plan and pool, and natural light, even if this is less pronounced today than it was originally when the Corinthian capitals and the skylights were visible. In its construction is demonstrated a high level of competence to lay the dichromatic tiling on the interior, as well as the exterior Flemish bond brick work, decorative courses and double order voussoirs of the semi-circular arched windows and the string courses and cornices. Despite its long use history, internal alterations, and the front lobby added between 1974 and 1975, the architectural merit of the pool remains high.

## 7.2.2 Functional Merit

The functional merit of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool is high considering its age and the infancy of pool technology when it was constructed. Its 75-foot length and spoon-shape basin anticipated internal competition and safety standards still in use today, while its surrounding access passageways have allowed it to be modified for lighting and heating conversion from coal. As a facility to learn swimming it exceeded the conditions of the contemporary YMCA pool (Figure 8) as it afforded more natural light, larger changing rooms, and could accommodate beginner to advanced level instruction. For competition it could accommodate the projected number of spectators for the British Empire Games but was not oversize as a local competition venue in subsequent years.

#### 7.2.3 Designer

The pool's design was shared between architect Reginald Edwardes, engineer Ernest Howard Darling, and possibly electrical designers Cockburn & Son, with Darling assuming what appears to be the leading role. As mentioned above, Darling was a respected engineer but not considered influential, and the pool was not representative nor showcase the high level of talent that architect Reginald Edwardes McDonnell applied to other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> YMCA Building (Winnipeg) (built 1911-13); Crystal Gardens (1925); Sherbrooke Pool (1930) the Beatty Pool (1930), Swimming Pool RR22A (1959).

commissions such the Calgary Ranchman's Club. No biographical information could be found on Cockburn & Son.

## 7.3 Integrity

## 7.3.1 Location Integrity & Built Integrity

The tabular approach used below to judge heritage integrity (Table 1) combines the advice under 'Location integrity' and 'Built integrity' in the City's *Framework for Cultural Heritage Evaluation* with Kalman's *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings* (1979), and a method for determining levels of change in conservation areas proposed in a report commissioned by Historic England in 2004 (The Conservation Studio 2004). A rating on the survival of original machinery —an important consideration for industrial site integrity— has also been added. Although the scoring for each element is inherently qualitative, when tabulated as a whole the heritage integrity of a structure can be determined more quantitatively.

Element	Original Material / Type	Alteration	Survival (%)	Rating	Comment
Site Location	1099 King Street East	No change	100	Very Good	Original site
Footprint	Rectangular plan	The front lobby was added in 1974/75 and it is now connected to the Bernie Morelli Seniors Centre on the north	80	Very Good	The lobby is relatively compatible in materials and form, and the connection to the Seniors Centre has taken a minimal intervention approach
Exterior Walls	Brick	No change	100	Very Good	No further comment
Doors	Unknown, possibly wood	All replaced	0	Poor	All original doors were replaced, possibly during the 1974/75 addition.
Windows	Unknown	Many windows have been altered or made partially blind	55	Good	The rating reflects the removal of window framing and glazing, but also the survival of exterior window features and that no new window openings have been cut through in the original fabric.
Roof	Metal truss and glass; timber-	The skylights and red tiles removed	70	Good	The original roof form and trusses are intact, but the

Table 4. Leastion 9 Duilt Internity	Accession of fair the line	Thomason Memorial Deal
Table 1: Location & Built Integrity	y Assessment for the Jimm	y Thompson Wemorial Pool.

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Element	Original Material / Type	Alteration	Survival (%)	Rating	Comment
	framed and red tiles				skylights have been removed
Chimney	Brick	No Change	100	Very Good	The large brick chimney from the furnace room is still present on the west side of the structure.
Water Systems	Unknown	No new gutters or rainwater leaders	100	Very good	No potentially visually incompatible water systems have been added
Exterior Decoration	Cornice, string courses, keystones, double order voussoirs and decorative brick within windows	Portion of main façade obscured by addition, otherwise intact.	90	Very Good	The level of surviving architectural decoration is very good even though the decoration as designed was minimal.
Porches, Verandahs, or additions	None	None added except for lobby (see 'Footprint' above).	100	Very Good	Rating reflects that there were no porches or similar additions on the structure originally, to have been removed.
Interior Plan	Pool in centre with rooms and bleachers oriented around it	No significant alterations to interior room divisions	90	Very Good	Aside from some reconfiguration of existing rooms, there has been no significant alteration to the interior floor plan.
Interior Walls	Plastered	CMU exposed in some places	90	Very good	There have been no significant changes to the interior walls.
Interior trim	Columns with Corinthian capitals; tilework	Capitals removed and some changes to tilework	50	Fair	All Corinthian capitals have been removed.
Interior features	Access stairs and bleachers	Lights added to pool walls, enclosed officials' room	80	Very good	The bleachers and majority of the stairs have been retained, and some pool

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Element	Original Material / Type	Alteration	Survival (%)	Rating	Comment
(e.g., hearth, stairs, etc.)					lights have been replaced over time.
Landscape	Open ground to north and west.	New construction on north and west since 2000	65	Fair	The landscape to the south and east remains consistent to the original landscape but to the north and west, the landscape has been altered recently through new construction.
AVERAGE OF RATE OF CHANGE / HERITAGE INTEGRITY			78%	Very Good	Rating of Very Good is based on original element survival of between 75- 100%

## 7.4 Environmental Context

#### 7.4.1 Landmark

Its two-storey height and unusual massing and architectural style, combined with its siting on an intersection, minimal setback, and orientation facing drivers as they travel along a one-way street, makes the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool a visually conspicuous local landmark. Views of the building are only partially obscured by mature trees.

#### 7.4.2 Character

In its lack of stark contrast to surrounding buildings the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool contributes to the local architectural character. Its two-storey height transitions the elevation between the three to four storey buildings on the south side of King Street East with the two-storey housing on Balsam Avenue North (all of which are visible in view planes facing west on King Street East, due to the open space on the northeast corner of Balsam Avenue North and King Street East). The Pool is also constructed of comparable textured red brick as surrounding buildings, and its string courses, hip roof, and other Edwardian Classicism decoration and composition mirrors or complements the style of the nearby single-detached residential and apartment block structures.

#### 7.4.3 Setting

As the last remaining structure of British Empire Games, the integrity of the setting has obviously been diminished, although the Pool was not oriented to face the other venue structures to the north, and in addition to the continued recreation and sport land use to the north, many of the surrounding buildings either predate or are approximately contemporaneous with the Pool. In keeping with its function as a municipal pool, it is still centred within residential neighbourhoods, and yet visually prominent on the east-west artery of King Street East.

## 7.5 Social Value

#### 7.5.1 Public Perception

Quantifying the symbolic importance of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool through interviews or questionnaire survey was beyond the scope of this assessment, but it can be inferred that the building has a high level of social importance, possibly for residents across the City. This is reflected in the memories and sentiments recorded in the City's newspapers about Jimmy Thompson and learning to swim (eg. Wilson 2010) as well as the strong opposition to plans to demolish the building. These suggest that the public perception of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool is as a valued local community asset and one with historical importance for the City as a whole.

## 7.6 Ontario Regulation 9/06 Evaluation

For the reasons stated above, 1099 King Street East meets criteria of O.Reg 9/06:

1) The property has *design or physical value* because it:

Criteria	Evaluation
Is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	Meets criterion. See Section 7.2.1.
Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	Meets criterion. See Section 7.2.1.
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	Meets criterion. See Section 7.2.2.

2) The property has *historic value or associative value* because it:

Criteria	Evaluation
Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community.	Meets criterion. See Section 7.1.
Yields, or has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	Does not meet criterion.
Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community	Does not meet criterion.

## 3) The property has *contextual value* because it:

Criteria	Evaluation
Is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	Meets criterion. See Sections 7.4.2 and 7.4.3.
Is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	Meets criterion. See Section 7.4.3.
Is a landmark.	Meets criterion. See Section 7.4.1

# 8.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 8.1 Recommendation

This cultural heritage assessment of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (1099 King Street East) concludes that the property is of cultural heritage value or interest since it meets all eleven of the City's heritage evaluation criteria for built heritage, and seven of nine criteria of *Ontario Regulation 9/06*.

Golder therefore recommends that:

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (1099 King Street East) be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

To articulate the cultural heritage value of the property, a revised Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (CHVI) is proposed below:

#### 8.1.1 Statement of CHVI

Since 1099 King Street East was determined to be of cultural heritage value or interest, Golder have prepared a draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest:

#### 8.1.1.1 Description of Property – 1099 King Street East

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.

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

Conceived as a municipal pool in 1928, the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool opened in January 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.

#### 8.1.1.3 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:

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- 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;
- 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.

## 9.0 SUMMARY STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following guidelines provided in the City's A Framework for Evaluating the Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of Property for Designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (2016) and the City of Hamilton Cultural Heritage Assessment Report Outline (n.d.), this Cultural Heritage Assessment of the Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool has investigated the property's geographic and historical context, and has inventoried its landscape and built features and determined the structural sequence, construction and architectural style of built features on the property. From this information, the property's cultural heritage value based on criteria developed by the City and those prescribed under Ontario Regulation 9/06 was evaluated, and concludes that:

Golder's cultural heritage assessment concluded that:

The Jimmy Thompson Memorial Pool (1099 King Street East) is of cultural heritage value or interest and should be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

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