

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

Description of Property

The properties located at 54 and 56 Hess Street South are comprised of a semi-detached two-and-one-half-storey stone building constructed circa 1852, located at the southwest corner of Hess and Main Streets in the Durand Neighbourhood, within the City of Hamilton.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The cultural heritage value of the semi-detached stone building lies in its design value as an early and representative example of the Second Empire architectural style in Hamilton, displaying a high degree of craftsmanship, as demonstrated by its concave Mansard roof with octagonal dichromatic slate tiles, pressed metal window hoods and keystones, wood cornice with dentils, decorative brackets and moulded frieze.

The historical value of the properties lie in their direct association with prominent Hamiltonian, Robert McElroy (1810-1881), the original owner. McElroy, a contractor by trade, owned a stone quarry on the Mountain and in the 1850s was awarded a contract to construct a section of the Great Western Railway. McElroy served as an alderman in the mid-nineteenth century and as mayor of Hamilton between 1862 and 1864, and resided in the southern half of the semi-detached dwelling during that time. The properties remained in the family for 70 years until 1929. This continuous ownership is significant and has played a part in maintaining the historic integrity of the building over time.

The contextual value of the properties lie in their role in defining the historic character of Hess Street South, standing out from the surrounding mid-twentieth century mixed use streetscape. The semi-detached building is visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the surviving mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century residential streetscape that was redeveloped for commercial purposes in the late-twentieth century. The properties are considered to be local landmarks due to their prominent location on the corner of Hess Street South and Main Street West, with a shallow setback and at the high point of Main Street.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The key attributes that embody the cultural heritage value of the properties as early and representative examples of the Second Empire style of architecture with a high degree of craftsmanship, and their historical association with prominent Hamiltonian, former Mayor Robert McElroy include:

- The front (east), side (north and south), and rear (west) elevations and roofline of the semi-detached two-and-one-half-storey stone building, including its:
 - Concave Mansard roof with its:
 - Dichromatic octagonal slate tiles;
 - Corbelled brick chimneys;
 - Brick parapet with decorative stone end bracket;
 - Segmental dormers with pressed metal window hoods and keystones;
 - Wood cornices with dentils, decorative brackets and moulded frieze;
 - Cut-stone even-course facades;
 - Flat-headed window openings with one-over-one hung wood windows, stained glass transoms and plain lug sills;
 - Belt course between the first and second storeys;
 - Symmetrical four-bay front (east) elevation with its:
 - Flanking two-storey window bays with wood trim, second-storey stained glass transom and first-storey casement windows;
 - Flanking entrances with shared porch, double-leaf doors with glass and decorative wood panels, and decorative glass transom;
 - One-and-a-half storey rear (north) stone addition with its:
 - Mansard roof;
 - Shed roof dormers with hung windows;
 - Gabled stone end parapet;

- Rear rubble-stone façade; and,
- Stone foundation.

The key attributes that embody the contextual value of the properties as defining features of the historical character of Hess Street South, and as local landmarks include their:

- Location at the southwest corner of Hess and Main Streets; and
- Shallow setback from Hess Street South.