

164 Kensington Avenue North, Hamilton
Constructed circa 1920



Preliminary Evaluation of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest:

(in accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22)

Design / Physical Value

1. The property is a representative example of an early-twentieth century vernacular building constructed as a place of worship. The one-and-a-half-storey building features red brick construction, laid in running bond, a front gable roof, radiating brick voussoirs, segmentally-arched window and door openings, a rough-faced concrete block foundation, two chimneys, and rock-faced sills. The modest, simplified design is reflective of the values of the former congregation's beliefs.
2. The property does not appear to demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship.
3. The property does not appear to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

Historical / Associative Value

4. The property is associated with the former Kensington Gospel Hall Assembly, and with the theme of Hamilton’s industrial growth during the twentieth century. This property was home to the Kensington Gospel Hall Assembly from the structure’s construction in 1920 to the move to a larger structure elsewhere in 2009. This Christian congregation was part of an independent Christian movement which has been unnamed by its members but is known by outsiders as the Plymouth Brethren. This Christian group was found in 1825, in Dublin, Ireland, and is known for its rejection of other established Christian Faiths, adhering to a literal interpretation of the bible and a desire to separate themselves from the wider world. The Brethren were present in Ontario as early as 1845 and established a group in Hamilton in 1875. By 1904 the congregation was located in a former Baptist Church at 140 MacNab Street North, but with many of the members moving to the east end of the City’s limits, it was decided that a new, additional Gospel Hall would be established on Kensington Avenue. At the turn of the twentieth century, many new industrial plants were being constructed at the eastern edge of the City of Hamilton, attracting thousands of workers to these new factories. In response to these worker’s need for nearby housing, new neighbourhoods, focused around Barton Street East and Ottawa Street North, began to spring up. Other buildings, meant to serve the commercial, recreational, and spiritual needs of the workers soon followed.
5. The property does not appear to yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property does not appear to demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.

Contextual Value

7. The property maintains, supports and defines the mixed-use streetscape along Cannon Street East with its one-and-a-half storey height and brick construction.
8. The property is visually and historically linked to its surroundings, having been built to service the spiritual needs of the Plymouth Brethren as the City of Hamilton expanded eastward, which saw the transition of the area known today as Crown Point West from an agricultural to suburban and industrial community at the turn of the twentieth century.
9. The property is not considered to be a local landmark.

Sources:

"History — Nash Road Gospel Hall." Nash Road Gospel Hall
www.nashroadgospelhall.com/history.

Inventory of Significant Places of Worship in the City of Hamilton, 1801-2001. 2012.

Vernon, Henry. "1922 Vernon's City of Hamilton Directory." Hamilton: The Griffin & Richmond Co., 1922.

Weaver, John C. "Hamilton: An Illustrated History". James Lorimer and Co., Toronto, 1982.

"The History of the Brethren Assemblies Worldwide" Hilltop Bible Chapel.
<https://www.hbctoronto.ca/brethren-history>