



## City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

**To:** Chair and Members  
Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee

**Date:** February 28, 2025

**Report No:** PED25033

**Subject/Title:** Recommendation to Designate 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton (Memorial Public School), under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

**Ward(s) Affected:** Ward 3

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### Recommendations

- 1) That the City Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to give notice of Council's intention to designate 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton (Memorial Public School), shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25033, as a property of cultural heritage value pursuant to the provisions of Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, in accordance with the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and Description of Heritage Attributes, attached as Appendix B to Report PED25033, subject to the following:
  - (i) If no objections are received to the notice of intention to designate in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*, City Council directs staff to introduce the necessary by-law to designate the property to be of cultural heritage value or interest to City Council;
  - (ii) If an objection to the notice of intention to designate is received in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*, City Council directs staff to report back to Planning Committee to allow Council to consider the objection and decide whether or not to withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property.

## Key Facts

- This Report recommends designation of the significant built heritage resource located at 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton, known as Memorial Public School, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- The subject property is currently listed on the City's Municipal Heritage Register and is a high priority on the City's list of candidates for designation.
- Staff have completed an evaluation of the subject property using Ontario Regulation 9/06 and determined that it has sufficient cultural heritage value or interest to warrant designation, as per the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and Description of Heritage Attributes attached as Appendix B to Report PED25033.
- The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has been consulted in the preparation of this Report and recommendation to designate Memorial Public School.

## Financial Considerations

Not applicable

## Background

The subject property located at 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton, shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25033, is comprised of a two-storey brick school constructed in 1919. The property was first surveyed for potential heritage interest in the 1980s as part of the former Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee's inventory of historic pre-1940 Hamilton Board of Education schools.

In 2014, Council directed staff to conduct preliminary heritage evaluations of 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton (Memorial Public School) and 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton (W.H. Ballard Public School), to determine if the properties were worthy of potential designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. In September 2014, staff prepared Report PED14175, which found the subject property to be of cultural heritage value or interest and recommended that staff be directed to complete a comprehensive Cultural Heritage Assessment of Memorial Public School and that the subject property be added to staff's designation workplan as a low priority. The recommendations were approved by City Council as part of Planning Committee Report 14-014 in September 2014.

As a result of the recent Bill 23 changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the former staff workplan for designation was rescinded and replaced with a new public list of Candidates for Designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (see Report PED22211(a)), at which time 1175 Main Street East was reprioritized for review for designation by January 1, 2025. In a letter dated July 26, 2023, staff notified the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board of the changes to the City's heritage

designation process and the reprioritization of staff's review of the property for designation.

## **Analysis**

The intent of municipal designation, under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, is to enable a process for the management and conservation of significant cultural heritage resources. Once a property is designated, the municipality can manage change to a property through the Heritage Permit process to ensure that the significant features of the property are maintained. Designated properties are also considered to be "protected heritage property" under the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), which shall be conserved through the *Planning Act* development application process.

Section 29(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* permits the Council of a municipality to designate property to be of cultural heritage value or interest where property meets two or more of the Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest prescribed in Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22, which identifies nine criteria in three broad categories: Design / Physical Value; Historical / Associative Value; and Contextual Value. The evaluation of cultural heritage value or interest of the subject property was completed by Cultural Heritage Planning staff based on a site visit of the exterior of the property conducted on March 13, 2024 (see photographs attached as Appendix C to Report PED25033) and available secondary and primary research sources (attached as Appendix D to Report PED25033). As outlined below, based on staff's cultural heritage evaluation, it was determined that the subject property meets eight of the nine criteria contained in Ontario Regulation 9/06 in all three categories.

### **Design / Physical Value**

1. The two-storey brick-clad structure at 1175 Main Street East, known as the Hamilton Memorial Public School, was constructed in 1919. An annex was built on the property in 1921, known as the Manual Arts Building, which was later connected to the main structure with a gymnasium constructed in 1970 and a single-storey addition constructed in 1994. The 1919 school structure has design value as a representative example of the Collegiate Gothic style of architecture as applied to an urban elementary school. Features typical of this style include brick facades with stone moulding, banding, and quoining; brick parapet with crenelations, carved stone spindles and stone relief sculpture; windows in groups or pairs with stone surrounds; dichromatic brickwork with floral stone accents on the south elevation; blind end pavilions; and central and side entrances with elaborate carved stone decorative elements and relief work. The 1921 Manual Arts Building structure also has features typical of the Collegiate Gothic style, including: brick facades with stone accents; crenelated parapet with dichromatic brick decoration and carved stone spires over former entrances; horizontal stone banding; stone window surrounds; and brick pilasters.

The property also has design value as a rare example of a public school in Hamilton designed with a central auditorium with covered skylight with only the former Princess Elizabeth School (1922) and W. H. Ballard Public School (1922) sharing this design feature in Hamilton. The property is also a rare surviving example of a school built to commemorate the dead of the First World War.

2. This property displays a high degree of craftsmanship through the: carved stone decorative elements; decorative dichromatic brick on blind end pavilions; stone relief plaque reading “1914- Memorial School -1918”; crenelated brick parapet; central entrance with stone parapet with carved stone spindles; pointed arch with elaborate stone moulding bearing legend, “We gave our today for your tomorrow/ We died that you might live”; four projecting side entrances with pointed arches, stone moulding, stone relief work and brick pilasters supporting a parapet with stone spindles and plaques, each plaque bearing the name of a different famous Canadian soldier including Major-General Sir Edward W. B. Morrison, General Sir Arthur Currie, Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, and Lieutenant-Colonel William A. Bishop; and, stone window surrounds.

Interior features which display a high degree of artistry include the: coffered ceiling supported by Composite order capitals on brackets; mural banner over the stage reading, “That our youth may ever remember the valiant men of Hamilton who died in the Great War, this school is a memorial”; moulded proscenium over the stage; seventeen painted plaques bearing the names of First World War battles in which Canadian troops participated located under the arched openings of the second storey gallery; the alternating coat of arms of Canada and the United Kingdom between the painted plaques on the columns supporting the gallery; and, sixteen bronze plaques bearing the names of the Hamiltonians who died in the First World War beneath the coat of arms.

The 1921 Manual Arts Building displays a high degree of craftsmanship through the: brick parapet with dichromatic brick decoration featuring stone accents and spires; stone plaque reading “Manual Arts” and, stone window surrounds.

3. The property does not appear to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

### **Historical / Associative Value**

4. This property has historical value as it is associated with the theme of Hamilton as an industrial centre and with the desire of Hamiltonians to memorialize the First World War. At the beginning of the twentieth century, large new industrial plants began to be constructed in what is now known as Hamilton’s East End. These huge plants, bearing now familiar names like Canadian Westinghouse, International Harvester, Stelco or Dofasco, required vast numbers of workers, who in turn need housing close by. As a result of this vast industrial expansion,

East End neighbourhoods like Crown Point West were developed rapidly in the years immediately before the First World War, going from farm fields beyond the City's boundary to settled suburbs in the span of little more than a decade. As these residents, often newlyweds, settled into their new homes, they soon began their own families.

The area bound by Ottawa Street North, Roxborough Avenue, Belmont Avenue and Main Street East was a 1912 survey called 'Kensington', developed by prominent Hamilton real estate entrepreneur J. Walter Gage (died 1927). Kensington was just one of the fourteen surveys registered by Gage between 1904 and 1911. A portion of the land on which the subject property stands was purchased directly from Gage in 1918.

Despite the recent construction of several schools nearby, including the Queen Mary School (1913), the Adelaide Hoodless School (1911), and the former King George School (1912), the continued growth of East End neighbourhoods meant that the Board of Education was constantly playing catch up as the student population increased. A school located at the corner of Main Street East and Ottawa Street North had been in the planning stages through the spring and summer of 1918, but, as the Hundred Days Offensive (August 8, 1918, to November 11, 1918) was making clear, the collapse of Germany and the end of the First World War were soon approaching. By October of 1918, Hamilton's Board of Education decided that this new East End school, on which construction was slated to begin shortly, would be also a memorial to the Hamiltonians who had died in the First World War.

Memorial Public School was officially opened on Saturday, October 18, 1919, by Edward, Prince of Wales (1894-1972) as one of the main events of the Prince's visit to Hamilton that year. Evidently impressed by the ceremony, which involved a choir of one thousand children, Prince Edward requested that the school children be given a holiday the following Monday.

Despite having opened for the 1919 school year, the commemorative aspects of Memorial Public School were not installed until 1925. These consist of sixteen bronze plaques bearing the name of 132 Hamiltonians who died in the First World War, seventeen painted placards bearing the names of battles in which Canadian troops played an important part, and the coats of arms of the United Kingdom and of Canada. These elements were installed in the school's central auditorium, which was dedicated November 18, 1925, during a service in which General Sir Arthur Currie (1875-1933) was the guest of honour.

5. The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the community of Crown Point West. A long-standing educational facility built when the surrounding residential neighbourhoods were

still new, this school has been a focal point for generations of local students and their families.

6. This property demonstrates the work of prominent Hamilton architect Gordon J. Hutton. Gordon Hutton (1881-1942) was born in Hamilton. After training in Chicago with American architectural firm Adler & Sullivan, Hamilton architect Charles Mills (1860-1934) hired Hutton as an assistant in 1905, making him full partner in 1908. This partnership lasted until Mills retired from the architectural practice in 1914, leaving Hutton to continue on alone for several years, during which time he designed the subject property. In 1920, Hutton would partner with W. R. Souter (1893-1971), who had been a junior architect under the partnership of Mills and Hutton. Hutton and Souter would design a number of prominent Hamilton landmarks including the Otis-Fensom Elevator Company office at 440 Victoria Avenue North (1929), the Delta Secondary School (1923), the Cathedral Boy's School at Emerald and Main (1928), and the Basilica of Christ the King (1932).

### **Contextual Value**

7. The property is important in defining the character of Crown Point West as a long-established residential neighbourhood. Crown Point West was developed rapidly in the early-twentieth century in response to the demand for housing for the workers in the sprawling industrial plants which were just taking root in the East End. As the inhabitants began to settle down and raise families in this newly formed neighbourhood, Memorial Public School was built to supply the need of local educational facilities. The construction of this school filled in the last undeveloped portion of the Kensington survey and marked the transition of Crown Point West from a new development to an established neighbourhood.
8. The property is historically, visually, and functionally linked to the surrounding area. Sited on its original location at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, in the midst of the residential neighbourhood it was built to serve. The subject property was built not only to be a focal point for the surrounding residential areas, but to commemorate the Hamiltonians who never returned from the First World War.
9. This large and visually distinctive structure on a prominent corner lot, having been part of the education and childhood of generations of East End Hamiltonians, is considered to be a local landmark.

The recommendations of this Report are consistent with Provincial and Municipal legislation, policy, and direction, including:

- Determining the cultural heritage value or interest of a property based on design / physical value, historical / associative value, and contextual value criteria (*Ontario Heritage Act*, Ontario Regulation 9/06);
- Implementing proactive strategies for conserving significant built heritage resources (Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, Sub-section 4.6.4(b)); and,
- Designating properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (Urban Hamilton Official Plan, Section B.3.4.2.3).

Staff have determined that 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton is of cultural heritage value or interest sufficient to warrant designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and recommend designation according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and Description of Heritage Attributes, attached as Appendix B to Report PED25033.

## **Alternatives**

Under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the designation of property is a discretionary activity on the part of Council. Council, as advised by its Municipal Heritage Committee, may decide to designate property, or decline to designate property.

### **Decline to Designate**

By declining to designate, the municipality would be unable to provide long-term, legal protection to this significant cultural heritage resource (designation provides protection against inappropriate alterations and demolition) and would not fulfil the expectations established by existing municipal and provincial policies.

Without designation, the property would not be eligible for the City's financial incentives for heritage properties, including development charge exemption and grant and loan programs. Designation alone does not restrict the legal use of property, prohibit alterations and additions, nor does it restrict the sale of a property, or been demonstrated to affect its resale value. However, designation does allow the municipality to manage change to the heritage attributes of a property through the Heritage Permit process. Staff does not consider declining to designate any of the properties to be an appropriate conservation alternative.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

- Priority 1: Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development
  - 1.2: Facilitate the growth of key sectors.
- Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency
  - 3.2: Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving.

## Previous Reports Submitted

- [Requests to Designate 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton \(Memorial School\) and 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton \(W.H. Ballard Public School\) Under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act \(PED14175\) \(Wards 3 and 4\)](#)

## Consultation

On March 7, 2024, staff met with representatives of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to discuss the proposed designation of the subject property. On March 13, 2024, staff, along with representatives of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, visited the subject property to photo-document the interior and exterior of the property (see photographs attached as Appendix C to Report PED25033). A McMaster University student also attended the site visit on March 13, 2024, as part of their History 4HP3: History Practicum Course, and subsequently provided City staff with a copy of their course project researching the heritage value of the property.

In a letter dated October 15, 2024, sent via email, staff advised representatives of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board that staff were moving forward with the recommendation to designate the property. In a subsequent email sent January 28, 2025, staff provided the representatives with a copy of the proposed Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and advised them of the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee meeting date that the recommendation would be considered.

Planning staff have emailed the Ward Councillor (Councillor N. Nann) for Ward 3 and provided an overview of the reasons for designation and the process for designating a property.

## Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Location Map

Appendix B: Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and Description of Heritage Attributes.

Appendix C: Photographs

Appendix D: Research Sources

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