



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee

Date: February 28, 2025

Report No: PED25034

Subject/Title: Recommendation to Designate 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton (W. H. Ballard Public School), under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 4

Recommendations

- 1) That the City Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to give notice of Council's intention to designate 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton (W. H. Ballard Public School), shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25034, 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 PED25034, 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 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton, known as W. H. Ballard 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, as directed by Council.
- 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 PED25034.
- The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has been consulted in the preparation of this Report and recommendation to designate the W.H. Ballard Public School.

Financial Considerations

Not applicable

Background

The subject property located at 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton, shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25034, is comprised of a three-storey brick-clad school constructed in 1922, known as the W.H. Ballard Public School. 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 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton (W.H. Ballard Public School) and 1175 Main Street East, Hamilton (Memorial 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 W.H. Ballard 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 801 Dunsmure Road 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 interior and exterior of the property conducted on March 13, 2024 (see photographs attached as Appendix C to Report PED25034) and available secondary and primary research sources (attached as Appendix D to Report PED25034). As outlined below, based on staff's cultural heritage evaluation, it was determined that the subject property meets nine of the nine criteria contained in Ontario Regulation 9/06 in all three categories.

Design / Physical Value

1. The three-storey school building at 801 Dunsmure Road, Hamilton, known as the W.H. Ballard Public School, was built in 1922 with a steel-frame construction, exterior brick cladding and concrete floors and roof. It has design and physical value as a representative example of the Collegiate Gothic style of architecture as applied to an urban elementary school. The features typical of this style include the: brick facades with stone moulding; shaped brick parapet with carved stone finials and decorative carved stone panels; blind end pavilions; dichromatic brick work; projecting front entrance of carved stone with rounded bay and elaborate decorative carvings; and side entrances with brick and stone decorative elements.

The property also has design value as a rare example of a public school in Hamilton designed with a central auditorium with a covered light well, with only

the former Princess Elizabeth School (1922) and Memorial Public School (1919) sharing this design feature in Hamilton.

A modern gymnasium added in 1978 has not been identified as having any cultural heritage value or interest.

2. This property displays a high degree of craftsmanship through the: brick parapet with cap stones and moulded cornice; main entrance on front (south) elevation with arched door opening with elaborate carved details; portico with plain Doric columns supporting entablature with triglyphs, carved legend reading "W. H. Ballard School", dentils, moulded cornice and elaborate finials; shaped brick parapet with stone finials and carved stone panel over a round stone bay supported by the portico with elaborate carved stone parapet; carved stone plaques on round bay, including the central plaque showing 1922 as the year of construction, flanked by plaques showing the former City of Hamilton crest and the crest of Ontario, on the left and right respectively; entrances on side (east and west) elevations with carved stone door surrounds reading either "BOYS" or "GIRLS" under a stone moulding, dichromatic brick decorations, brick pilasters supporting moulded cornice with carved crests topped by decorative carved stone panels flanked by finials; blind end pavilions with projecting brick panel with dichromatic bricks in lozenge pattern topped by moulded cornice with carved stone crests surmounted by a carved stone panel flanked by finials; and, horizontal and vertical stone banding with decorative carved inset stone plaques on front (south) elevation.
3. The property demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement as it is an early example of steel-frame construction as applied to a Canadian school building, and for the design of the third floor, which utilizes the space over the two-storey central auditorium for classrooms. To eliminate the need for structural columns which would interfere with the open space of the auditorium, the third-floor classrooms are supported by steel trusses that make up part of the school building's steel-frame skeleton, leaving the space underneath the classrooms open.

Historical / Associative Value

4. This property has historical value as it is associated with the theme of Hamilton's growth as an industrial centre in the twentieth century and with its namesake, well-known educator, and Hamiltonian Dr. William Henry Ballard (1845-1934).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, massive new industrial plants began to be constructed in what is now known as Hamilton's East End. As a result of this vast industrial expansion, East End neighbourhoods like Homeside were developed rapidly in the first two decades of the twentieth century, quickly transforming from farm fields beyond the City's boundary to settled suburbs. As

these residents, often newlyweds, settled into their new homes, they soon began their own families, generating a constant and growing need for more East End schools. Despite the construction of several schools nearby, including the Queen Mary School (1913), the Adelaide Hoodless School (1911), the former King George School (1912), and Memorial School (1919), the continued explosive growth of East End neighbourhoods meant that the school board was constantly playing catch up as the student population increased tremendously. In the early 1920s, the Board of Education set out plans for a new school on the subject property to meet the growing demand for schools.

This school represented an opportunity to commemorate the achievements of a long-serving local educator. W.H. Ballard was a trained educator who taught as an Assistant Master in the Whitby Grammar School before earning a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto, for which he won the Gold Medal in Mathematics, and a Degree of Master of Arts. Ballard held prominent education positions, including Headmaster of the Chatham High School and Mathematical Master of the Hamilton Collegiate Institute, was a Member of the Senate of Toronto University and served on the Educational Council. W.H. Ballard was appointed Inspector of Public Schools in the City of Hamilton in 1885. In June 1923, Ballard received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws at University of Toronto.

5. The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the community of Homeside. 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 architects Frederick Wilson Warren and Reginald E. McDonnell. F. W. Warren (1887-1959) was born and educated in Hamilton, and though not formally trained as an architect, gained experience by working for well-known firms including Mills & Hutton and Stewart & Witton. In 1912, Warren opened his own practice, designing a number of residential and institutional buildings, including the former Methodist Church at 279 Grosvenor Avenue North (1913) and the former Allenby School (1919), now the Allenby Lofts on Hunter Street East. Between 1922 and 1929, he partnered with British-born Reginald Edwardes McDonnell (1887-1963). McDonnell, after beginning his career in England, immigrated to Canada in 1911, working in Montreal and Calgary before settling in Hamilton by 1923. This partnership was also responsible for the design of the former Princess Elizabeth Public School (1922) at 235 Bowman Street, which was designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1992. Princess Elizabeth School and W. H. Ballard Public School represent two of three schools in Hamilton to have central auditoriums, the third being the Gordon Hutton (1881-1942) designed Memorial Public School (1919). After the dissolution of this partnership in 1929, he worked under his own name until partnering with Hamilton architect Charles Lenz in 1942.

Contextual Value

7. The property is important in defining the character of Homeside as a long-established, historic residential neighbourhood. The Homeside Neighbourhood 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, W. H. Ballard Public School was built to supply the need of local educational facilities. The construction of this school marked the transition of Homeside from a new development to an established neighbourhood.
8. The property is historically and visually linked to the surrounding area. Sited on its original location and occupying a full block in the midst of the neighbourhood it was built to serve, the subject property is a focal point for the surrounding historic residential area.
9. This large and visually distinctive structure is prominently placed on a lot which occupies a full block and has played a key role in the childhood education of generations of Homeside Neighbourhood residents. It dominates the local area through its size, height, and architectural style, which contrast with the scale of the surrounding historic residential neighbourhood and 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 801 Dunsmure Road, 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 PED25034.

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

In October 2023, staff were contacted by the Chair of the W.H. Ballard Public School Council, who indicated that the school was celebrating its 100th anniversary and was requesting a designation plaque for the property. Staff advised the Chair that the property was not yet designated, but was under review for designation, and that the property would be eligible for a plaque once a designation by-law was registered on title.

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 PED25034). 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 dated 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 met with the Ward Councillor (Councillor T. Hwang) for Ward 4 and provided an overview of the recommendations of this Report.

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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