



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee

Date: March 28, 2025

Report No: PED25070

Subject/Title: Recommendation to Designate 200 Main Street East, Hamilton (First-Pilgrim United Church), under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

Ward(s) Affected: Ward 2

Recommendations

- 1) That the City Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to give notice of Council's intention to designate 200 Main Street East, Hamilton (First-Pilgrim United Church), shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25070, 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 PED25070, 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 200 Main Street East, Hamilton, known as First-Pilgrim United Church, 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 PED25070.
- Representatives of First-Pilgrim United Church congregation have been consulted in the preparation of this report and the recommendation to designate the subject property.

Financial Considerations

Not applicable.

Background

The subject property located at 200 Main Street East, Hamilton, shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25070, is a two-storey buff brick church constructed in 1913. The property was first surveyed for potential heritage interest in the 1970s as part of the Hamilton Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee's inventory of the Corktown neighbourhood.

In 2014, the subject property was surveyed as part of the Downtown Built Heritage Inventory project. In August 2014, staff prepared Report PED14191, which identified the subject property as a "Significant Built Resource" of cultural heritage value or interest and recommended that 200 Main Street East be listed on the Municipal Heritage Register and added to staff's designation workplan as a medium priority. The recommendations were approved by City Council as part of Planning Committee Report 14-013 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 200 Main Street East was reprioritized for review for designation by January 1, 2025. In a letter dated July 26, 2023, staff notified the congregation of First-Pilgrim United Church 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 January 20, 2025 (see photographs attached as Appendix C to Report PED25070) and available primary and secondary research sources (attached as Appendix D to Report PED25070). 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 buff brick church located at 200 Main Street East was constructed in 1913. It has design and physical value as a representative example of the Beaux Arts architectural style as applied to a place of worship, and as a rare example of a Beaux Arts style church in Hamilton. The features typical of this style include the: symmetrical front elevation; monumental size and scale; central entrance with elaborate decorations; and the eclectic use of classical architectural elements like the composite order columns, palmette acroterion and Roman latticework windows.
2. This property displays a high degree of craftsmanship through the: composite order columns and fluted Corinthian order pilasters supporting the plain cornice and frieze; carved stone palmette acroterion on the peak and corners of the plain pediment; central entrance flanked by secondary entrances with carved stone surrounds; moulded stone surround on the central entrance with oval decorations flanked by ornate carved brackets supporting the cornice; Roman latticework windows in transoms and windows on the front elevation; double moulded cornices; square pilasters supporting cornices; and, recessed window bays with dentils on the side elevations separated by square pilasters.

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

Historical or Associative Value

4. This property has historical value as it is directly associated with the long-standing First-Pilgrim United Church, known originally as the First Congregational Church. Congregationalists are a Protestant Denomination who believe that each congregation is an autonomous, self-governing body, independent of any other religious authority. A small number of Congregationalists had gathered in Hamilton by 1834 and formed a church together the following year, though a permanent building, a frame structure at the corner of Hughson and Cannon Street, was not complete until 1839. This frame building was replaced by a brick structure erected on the same site in 1859, evidence of the growth of the congregation and its resources. By the early years of the twentieth century, the First Congregational Church again contemplated building a new church for itself, purchasing the subject property in 1912 and beginning construction on the current church building that year. This new place of worship was to be based on the Emmanuel Congregational Church in Montreal (2085 Drummond Street, Montreal).

In 1925, the members of First Congregational Church voted unanimously to join the United Church of Canada, a merger of the Canadian Methodist Church, many Congregationalist churches, and a majority of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. At this time the church members renamed themselves the Pilgrim United Church. By the 1970s, Pilgrim United, along with many other downtown churches, was experiencing declining attendance and revenue, leading to talk of amalgamation between local United churches. Discussions began with both Centenary United Church and First United Church regarding the possibility of joining together into a single church to serve downtown Hamilton.

In 1980, a decision was made to close and sell Pilgrim United Church, the congregation moving to worship jointly with the members of First United Church in their new chapel in First Place, which stood where the First United Church had until its destruction by fire in 1969. In 1982, these congregations amalgamated, becoming the First-Pilgrim United Church. Having been unable to find an interested buyer of the subject property and becoming aware of the shortcomings of their new location, the congregation returned to 200 Main Street East in 1984. A rededication ceremony was held that year, and First-Pilgrim United Church reopened.

5. The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture. As a church with a long-standing presence in the local community, and as the amalgamation of three once

separate congregations, this property may yield information that contributes to an understanding of the history of the United Church in Hamilton.

6. This property demonstrates the work of noted Hamilton architect Stewart McPhie (1874-1934). McPhie, a local Hamiltonian, was raised and educated in the city, gaining his architectural training through the office of William Stewart (1832-1907), whose son Walter (1871-1917) was one half of the prominent Hamilton architectural team Stewart and Witton. McPhie designed residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial structures; his residential designs drawing inspiration from American architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan. This inspiration is evident in McPhie's use of long, thin buff bricks, which he purchased from his brother, Norman McPhie. McPhie designed a number of churches, including the Stanley Avenue Baptist Church (115 Stanley Avenue), major additions to the Trinity English Lutheran Church (18 Victoria Avenue South) and MacNab Street Presbyterian Church (116 MacNab Street South), the no longer extant St. James Presbyterian Church (270 Locke Street South) and the First Church of Christ Scientist (616 Main Street East).

Contextual Value

7. The property helps support the historic character of Corktown, being one of the oldest residential neighbourhoods in Hamilton.
8. The property is historically linked to the surrounding area, being sited on its original location along the historic transportation corridor of Main Street East.
9. This property, due to its size, use of materials and architectural style, is a visually distinctive structure which is differentiated from the surrounding area of parking lots and commercial buildings. Set close to the public right-of-way along a major thoroughfare, this highly visible building dominates its immediate surroundings 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 200 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 PED25070.

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 City of Hamilton 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

- [Implementation of the Recommendations of the Downtown Built Heritage Inventory Project \(PED14191\) \(as amended in Revised Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee Report 14-009\(a\)\)](#)

Consultation

In a letter dated October 10, 2024, sent by registered mail, staff advised the owners of the subject property that staff were moving forward with the recommendation to designate the property. Staff were contacted by the owner of the subject property on

November 5, 2024, to arrange a meeting to discuss the upcoming designation of the subject property.

On January 20, 2025, staff met with representatives of the First-Pilgrim United Church congregation, the owners of 200 Main Street East, to discuss the proposed designation and the potential adaptive reuse of their property. Staff also advised the owner of the financial incentives that would be available to them once the property is designated, to help facilitate the retention, conservation, and adaptive reuse of the heritage features of the subject property.

In a subsequent email sent February 14, 2025, staff provided the representatives from the congregation 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 notified the Ward Councillor (Councillor C. Kroetsch) for Ward 2 by email 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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