



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee

Date: April 25, 2025

Report No: PED25071

Subject/Title: Recommendation to Designate 252 Caroline Street South, Hamilton (Central Presbyterian 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 252 Caroline Street South, Hamilton (Central Presbyterian Church), shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25071, 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 PED25071, 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 252 Caroline Street South, Hamilton, known as Central Presbyterian 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 PED25071.
- Representatives of the Congregation of Central Presbyterian Church were consulted in the preparation of this Report and recommendation to designate the subject property.

Financial Considerations

N/A

Background

The subject property located at 252 Caroline Street South, Hamilton, shown in Appendix A attached to Report PED25071, is comprised of a one-storey brick church constructed in 1908, known as Central Presbyterian Church. The property is also comprised of an attached two-storey brick Sunday School building, municipally addressed as 165 Charlton Avenue West, constructed in 1908. The second storey was added to the Sunday School building in 1960. The property was first surveyed for potential heritage interest in the 1970s as a part of the Hamilton Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee's inventory of the Durand Neighbourhood. In 1991, the Ontario Heritage Trust erected a plaque on the subject property commemorating the cultural heritage value of the subject property.

In 2016, the subject property was surveyed as part of the City's Durand Neighbourhood Built Heritage Inventory project. In May 2017, staff prepared Report PED17092, which identified the subject property as a "Significant Built Resource" of cultural heritage value or interest and recommended that 252 Caroline Street South be listed on the Municipal Heritage Register and added to staff's designation workplan. The recommendations were approved by City Council as part of Planning Committee Report 17-004 in May 2017.

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 252 Caroline Street South was reprioritized for review for

designation by January 1, 2025. In a letter dated July 26, 2023, staff notified the property owner 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 December 4, 2024 (see photographs attached as Appendix C to Report PED25071) and available primary and secondary research sources (attached as Appendix D to Report PED25071). 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 one-storey brick church located at 252 Caroline Street South was constructed in 1908. It has design and physical value as a representative example of a place of worship influenced by the Beaux-Arts and Colonial Revival architectural styles, and as an early example of a Colonial Revival style building in Ontario.

The features typical of the Beaux-Arts style include the: monumental size and scale of the structure; the symmetrical front elevation; the eclectic use of Classical elements including the entablature with cornice, modillions and dentils, portico with segmented pediment and carved stone head; and the round-headed window openings.

The features typical of the Colonial Revival style include the tower and spire over the main entrance inspired by the historical examples provided by James Gibbs' (1682-1754) church at St. Martins-in-the-Fields and by New England meeting

houses; the use of modern materials including steel and artificial stone; and the greater level of ornamentation compared to historical prototypes.

The attached brick Sunday School building, addressed as 165 Charlton Avenue West, was built concurrently in 1908 and the second storey was added in 1960.

2. This property displays a high degree of craftsmanship through the steeple, including its: brick tower with stone accents supporting an open belfry with round-headed stone arches supported by brick piers; stone Ionic pilasters supporting entablature with dentils; and moulded cornice and stone balconies supported by brackets. The belfry supports a lantern with stone oculus openings with carved floral motifs, Doric pilasters, and corner niches with decorative elements. The lantern is topped by an octagonal brick spire with stone accents.

Other elements which display a high degree of craftsmanship include the: entablature with projecting cornice, modillions and dentils; round-headed window openings with brick voussoirs and stone keystones and end stones and stone lug sills with moulded cornice and supporting carved brackets; oculus windows with brick voussoirs and stone keystones; main entrance in projecting base of steeple tower with moulded stone door surround with floral motif and carved stone head in Classical style; main entrance portico with segmental pediment with dentils supported by entablature with dentils and plain frieze and architrave on top of Ionic columns and pilasters; entrances flanking main entrances with moulded stone surround with moulded flat pediment supported by carved brackets; and, projecting rounded side entrances with half-dome roof and moulded cornice with moulded stone door surround, transom and triangular pediment supported by carved brackets.

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 Central Presbyterian Church. Formed in 1841, the congregation now known as Central Presbyterian first met in a small wooden schoolhouse at the corner of Jackson Street East and James Street South. A small group initially, the congregation grew rapidly in the late 1840s and 1850s, necessitating several moves before settling on a site at the corner of Jackson Street West and MacNab Street South in 1858 (now the site of the Superior Court of Justice). A large Gothic Revival church was built on this site which would be home to the Church until 1906. On June 21, 1906, the Central Presbyterian Church caught fire. Blamed on faulty overhead electrical wires, the 1858 building was devastated. While the congregation had decided to rebuild, they had set their sights on a new location southwest of their former church, in the Durand Neighbourhood.

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, this property may yield information that contributes to an understanding of the Presbyterian Church in Hamilton.
6. This property demonstrates the work of famed Canadian architect John McIntosh Lyle (1872-1945). Lyle, born in Belfast, Ireland, came to Canada with the rest of his family when he was six years old. His father, Reverend Samuel Lyle (1841-1919), became the minister of Central Presbyterian Church in 1878, a position he would hold until 1910. Lyle was educated in Hamilton, before receiving training at Yale and the famed Ecole des Beaux-Arts of Paris. Returning from Paris, Lyle worked for several New York architectural firms before returning to Canada, setting up his own architectural practice in Toronto in 1906. An advocate for the Beaux Arts style, Lyle was also a proponent of the idea of a national style of architecture, one that would be uniquely “Canadian” through the incorporation of natural and Indigenous motifs. Lyle designed prominent buildings throughout Canada, including the Royal Alexandria Theatre (1907) and Union Station (1927) in Toronto, the Bank of Nova Scotia building in Halifax (1929) and the Memorial Arch at the Royal Military College in Kingston (1921). The subject property represents one of the earliest works attributed to John McIntosh Lyle, though he also designed a number of other structures in Hamilton, including “Gateside” at 135 Aberdeen Avenue (1905), the Gage Park Fountain (1926), “Wynnstay” at 437 Wilson Street East, Ancaster (1926), and the York Street High Level Bridge (1927).

Contextual Value

7. The property is important in defining the historic character of the Durand Neighbourhood. Durand, one of Hamilton’s oldest residential neighbourhoods, was home to many of Hamilton’s wealthy through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These residents built the large and architectural impressive homes for which Durand is known for today. The subject property, being a large and impressive church built in what was once a novel architectural style, is an important part of this historic character.
8. The property is visually and historically linked to the surrounding area, being sited on its original location in a sympathetic streetscape featuring many dwellings constructed in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.
9. This property, due to its size, height, prominent corner lot location and architectural style, is a visually distinctive yet still sympathetic structure which dominates the local streetscape while still seeming part of it. This well-known structure has been featured on local walking tours 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 252 Caroline Street South, 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 PED25071.

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

- [Durand Neighbourhood Built Heritage Inventory \(PED17092\) \(Ward 2\)](#)

Consultation

In a letter dated October 10, 2024, sent via registered mail, staff advised the owner of the subject property that staff were moving forward with the recommendation to designate the property. Staff were contacted by representatives of the congregation of the subject property on November 11, 2024, to arrange a meeting to discuss the upcoming designation of the subject property.

On December 4, 2024, staff met with representatives of the congregation 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.

On March 21, 2025, staff met with representatives of the congregation to discuss the recommendation to designate the property. The representatives expressed some concern with the Sunday School building being included in the Description of Heritage Attributes, as the congregation anticipates the potential redevelopment of the Sunday School to maintain the financial viability of Central Presbyterian Church. As a result of this discussion, staff removed the Sunday School building from the proposed list of heritage attributes. Staff determined that the removal would not compromise the cultural heritage value or interest of the subject property, and that any potential impact of the removal of these chimneys would be studied as part of the Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment which would be required as part of the any future development of the site.

In a subsequent letter dated April 1, 2025, sent via email, 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 C. Kroetsch) for Ward 2 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

Prepared by: Scott Dickinson, Cultural Heritage Planner
Planning and Economic Development, Planning Division

**Submitted and
recommended by:** Anita Fabac, Acting Director of Planning and Chief Planner
Planning and Economic Development, Planning Division