

Heritage Designation Brief



Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational Institute

201 McDonnell Street

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

April 2014

HERITAGE DESIGNATION STATUS SHEET

Street Address: 201 McDonnel Street

Roll Number: 040061011000000

PIN Number:

Short Legal Description: TOWN PLAN 1 PT LOT 3 PT LOT 4
PT LOT 5 PT LOT 6 S MCDONNEL W
GEO REG 87552.00SF 456.00FR
192.00D

Owners' Mailing Address: Education Centre
1994 Fisher Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 6X6

Owners' Concurrence:

PACAC Application Review Date:

On Site Evaluation Date:

Evaluation Category: A

Evaluators: Erik Hanson

Heritage Type: Built Structure

Designation Type: Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV

Designation Brief Completion Date: May 25, 2014

PACAC Application Approval Date:

Designation Brief Completed by: Erik Hanson

Submission Date:

Objections Noted:

Comments:

"The short statement of the reason for the designation, including a description of the heritage attributes along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief constitute the "Reasons for the Designation" required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Heritage Designation Brief is available for viewing in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours."

SHORT STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Heritage Evaluation Criteria Note

Category A: The properties in this category are individually outstanding and have the broadest heritage significance in the City by virtue of architectural, historical, and environmental criteria along with overall integrity of design and construction. "Category A" properties generally hold provincial and/or national significance.

ORIGINAL OWNER: The Peterborough Public School Board

DATES OF CONSTRUCTION: 1907-08, 1927-28, 1966

ARCHITECTS: 1908 Building- John Belcher, supervising architect working to provincial design

1927 Addition- W.R.L Blackwell

1966 Gymnasium- Craig, Zeidler and Strong

BUILDERS: 1908 Building- Langford and Sheehy

1927 Addition- Unknown

1966 Gymnasium- Mortlock Construction

History

In May of 1826 the Reverend Samuel Armour opened the first school in Peterborough. The Peterborough Government School was located on grounds to the west of the site on which Central Public School (now converted to apartments), would later be built. The Government School divided the students into two groups: common, for applied subjects and grammar, for academic subjects. The Reverend Armour taught both groups in a single building heated with open fireplaces. Within a few years the population of school age children in

the town had grown such that it was necessary to move the common students to separate space.

By 1854 the school trustees had leased a church to hold the growing number of common students. This arrangement proved unsatisfactory and in 1859 the Union School (later Central Public School), large enough for all grades, was built to the south of the original Government School on Murray Street facing Victoria Park. In 1871 legislative changes abolished the term grammar school as a reference to academic streaming and the Union School became the Peterborough Collegiate Institute (PCI). The school doubled in size with the construction of a second building to the west when, in 1876, the trustees began admitting girls.

By the turn-of-the-century overcrowding made it necessary for the collegiate to have its own building. The Town agreed to the sale of a section of Central Park (now Confederation Square) to the School Board at the same time that a section was being sold to the federal government for a new armoury. The school, designed by John Belcher picks up many of the design elements of the armoury building. On July 31, 1907 the cornerstone was laid and, with a budget of \$61,000 the contractors Langford and Sheehy completed construction in time for classes to begin in September of 1908. In 1927, at a cost of nearly \$300,000 a vocational school wing was added to the west of the original building, and PCI became Peterborough Collegiate and Vocational Institute (PCVS). The addition included a gymnasium, library and additional classroom space. In the 1970s, a cafeteria was created from a central light well in the interior of the building.

At the time that the school ceased operating as a collegiate and vocational institute in 2012, it was one of the longest continuously operating secondary schools in Ontario. Over the years a number of unique traditions grew within the school. These included having a photographic portrait of each principal installed above the balcony doors of the auditorium, at the end of their tenure. The school also contains a comprehensive collection of original Canadian art. A tradition arose in the 1940s of having the student council purchase pieces of art for the enjoyment of the students. Artists represented in the collection, now on permanent loan to the Art Gallery of Peterborough, include: Andre Bieler, A.J. Casson, Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer, Manley MacDonald and Henri Masson.

In the course of its history the school has graduated nationally and internationally renowned artists, business leaders and politicians including Serena Ryder, Evelyn Hart, Sean Cullen, Jim Balsillie and Lester B. Pearson. Nearly 1000 students served on active duty during the two World Wars and 152 died in action. A limestone plaque, carved by noted sculptor Frances Loring, is inscribed with the names of 94 staff and students of the school who died during the Second World War. The plaque was commissioned in 1947 and is mounted next to the entrance to the main office.

Architectural Description

PCVS is architecturally significant as an expression of collegiate architecture rendered at a time of rapid growth and economic optimism for the City of Peterborough. The building's design represents a transition from the formidable presence of the Romanesque Revival style in the late Victorian era to a lighter, more refined expression of progress presented by the Beaux Arts or Classical Revival style which came to characterize Edwardian design in Canada.

This transitioning was less deliberate on the part of John Belcher than enforced by the school board's demand that the new school's design carry on the authoritative traditions represented by the Romanesque Armoury and Drill Hall to the south. The result is a series of odd juxtapositions like the heavy crenellated pilasters that flank the Romanesque main entry surmounted two storeys above by a large Palladian window, a distinctly classical feature, set in a shallow roof dormer. Belcher's original proposal shows an edifice that is more unified in its design with an integration of elements characteristic of Edwardian architecture and even hinting at the Prairie School of design popular in the United States at the time. The cost of his design however greatly exceeded the construction budget and a pair of two storey wings balancing the mass of the main block was lost in the final work. Overall the detailing on the building is subdued with little of the ornamentation that characterizes other Classical Revival buildings on the Square like the 1911 Carnegie Library (now the City Hall Annex).

The building has a slightly unusual orientation in that it faces east towards Confederation Square, not the street. Originally a sidewalk ran the length of the west edge of the park and a walkway from it led to the entrance of the school.

The 1907 three storey, three bay building sits on a raised foundation of rusticated limestone. The structure is essentially rectangular in form with the central sections of the north and south elevations recessed to give the effect of four corner pavilions. A hip roof covers the central portion of the building with separate, smaller hip roofs covering the corner pavilions. Four massive chimneys rise from the intersections of the main and pavilion roofs flanking large gable-roofed dormers centred in the north and south elevations.

An arched entry of dressed limestone with a semicircular transom is flanked by heavy ornamental crenellated pilasters. On either side of the entry bay are two storey bow windows with semi-conical roofs. The building's window sills are limestone and continuous limestone string courses delineate the storeys. A shallow wall dormer rises from the central bay and is anchored at its corners by a pair of short decorative posts. Rising into the dormer from the third storey is a large Palladian window with rusticated limestone voussoirs.

The 1927 addition is a two storey square structure on a fully raised basement storey. The basement level on the addition is executed in brick referencing and aligning with the raised stone foundation on the original building but reading as the ground floor of this section of the school. This is reinforced by the two courses of limestone foundation stones that extend across the base of the addition and partially frame a series of classroom windows that match those on the floors above in height and width. The effect is completed by a heavy, pedimented Romanesque entry in limestone that is entered at grade. The addition has a flat roof with a low brick parapet wall above the second storey capped with limestone and punctuated at regular intervals by small drainage openings.

Overall the addition is subdued in its ornamentation with limited use of limestone on the facades, even on the north, front elevation. The addition is four bays by four bays with the main entrance offset to the easternmost bay of the north elevation. A fifth bay to the east of the entry acts as a connection to the original school and belies the symmetry of the addition's footprint.

The west and south elevations are simple and unadorned, carrying over the detailing of the north elevation- slightly recessed arches over the top floor windows, brick string courses and the rhythm of slightly projecting wall sections between banks of windows. The west elevation is particularly utilitarian with loading doors providing access to the workshop areas.

The 1966 Gymnasium by Craig, Zeidler and Strong is a stark representation of their early exploration of international modernism in Ontario. A windowless one storey red brick block rises from a stark white concrete foundation that references the height of the raised basement level of the original building. The building is devoid of any ornamentation and is a clear expression of the modernist philosophy that function, not extraneous detail dictates form. The structure is offset from the original school and is accessed by a short one story hallway.

CONTEXT- SITE AND SETTING:

PCVS is located on the south side of McDonnell Street mid-block between George and Aylmer Streets. The front façade of the original building faces Confederation Square and the school is a prominent and integral part of an assembly of monumental late 19th and early 20th century civic buildings which frame the park. PCVS is comprised of three distinct but connected structures all of which are built on land originally used as the town's first burial ground.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES TO BE DESIGNATED

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations and the roof including all facades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials including but not limited to: wood, brick, stone, plaster parging, metal and glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features:

Exterior Elements:

1907 School:

Crenellated pilasters flanking main entrance

Romanesque main entry

Window openings

Large Palladian window above main entry with rusticated limestone voussoirs

Shallow roof dormer above main entry

Eastern orientation of building towards Confederation Square

Raised foundation of rusticated limestone

Rectangular form of three storey structure

Recessed central section of north and south elevations

Roof system

Four massive chimneys

Large gable-roofed dormers centred in the north and south elevations.

Arched entry of dressed limestone with a semicircular transom

Two storey bow windows with semi-conical roofs.

Limestone detailing including, but not limited to window sills and string courses

Pair of short decorative posts anchoring east elevation wall dormer.

1927 Addition:

Limestone entry including entry doors

Limestone detailing including, but not limited to window sills and coping stones

Three storey projecting entry bay with stepped parapet

Window openings and existing windows and frames

Crenellated parapet roof line

Arched entries and projecting entry bays on west elevation

Interior Elements:

All original woodwork including, but not limited to:

- Original wooden passage doors with glazing including transoms

- Decorative woodwork including door and window jambs, casings, cornice mouldings, plinth blocks and applied features.

- Original cabinetry in classrooms halls and offices

- Wainscoting in halls, stairwells, classrooms and offices

- Wooden stair rails including handrails, newels and balusters

- Wood capped steel stair railings including newel posts with polished brass finials

- Glass and wood partitions in hallways and classrooms

- Stained glass in door transoms

- Interior window units in hallways

- Skylight in third floor classroom

- Wood partition in small gymnasium including track system

All plaques, commemorative features and artwork permanently affixed to interior walls including, but not limited to:

- Carved marble panel over the auditorium entrance

- “Our Un-returning Brave” 1914-1918 Plaque in main hall

1939-1945 memorial carving

All architectural finishes including, but not limited to:

Run in place plaster cornice moldings

Hardwood and terrazzo flooring

Scoring pattern on walls in hallways simulating cut stone walls

Marble clad entrance arches at 1927 main entrance including inlaid tiles framing archways

Marble wall cladding at 1927 main entrance and stairs

Tin ceilings in hallways, offices and classrooms

All fixtures in the auditorium and projection room

School bells

Freight elevator in basement

