

## Heritage Designation Brief



**The Copping Garage**

**214 Aberdeen Avenue**

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

July 2020

## Heritage Designation Status Sheet

Street Address: 214 Aberdeen Avenue

Roll Number:

Short Legal Description: PART LOT 21 PLAN 101; PART LANE PLAN 101 (CLOSED BY R292727) AS IN R516306 PART 3, 45R16964; CITY OF PETERBOROUGH

PACAC Application Review Date: July 7, 2020

Heritage Type: Built Structure

Designation Type: Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV

Designation Brief Completion Date: July 2020

Designation Brief Completed by: Jennifer Guerin

Comments:

## STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets **any one** of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. Staff have determined that 214 Aberdeen Avenue has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

### 1. The property has design value or physical value because it:

#### **i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method:**

214 Aberdeen Avenue is a representative example of early masonry garage construction.

#### **ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:**

The property displays a typical degree of craftsmanship for a building of this type.

#### **iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:**

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

### 2. The property has historical value or associative value because it:

#### **i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community:**

The property has direct associations with the popularization of the automobile in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century among the upper class. The property also has direct association with the Copping House, located at 788 Aylmer Street. The garage was constructed at the same time as the house between 1914-1915 as part of the estate.

#### **ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:**

The property yields additional information about the popularization of the automobile during the early twentieth century, specifically regarding its storage and status in relation to the residential dwelling.

**iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community:**

The designer of the building is not known, but it is speculated that Toronto architect John Francis Brown could be the designer of the house at 788 Aylmer Street and by extension the garage.

**3. The property has contextual value because it:**

**i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:**

The property is an important part of the original estate that the Copping house occupied. It is a visual reminder of the size of the original lot, its siting demonstrates the role of the garage as a subordinate structure to the main house during the period of its construction.

**ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings:**

The property is functionally, historically and visually linked to its surroundings generally and specifically to the Copping House at 788 Aylmer Street North. It offers information about the development of the area and operations of the estate in its original form when it encompassed much of the west half of the block bounded by Wolseley, Aylmer, Aberdeen and Benson Streets. The Garage is located on what was the north-easternmost portion of the original property, as far from the main house as possible and accessed by a long driveway off the secondary side street. Its relationship to the main house is significant, as its design details reflect the conscious effort made during this time period to conceal the function of the garage.

**iii. is a landmark. O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).**

The property is not a specific landmark.

## Design and Physical Value

214 Aberdeen Avenue is an excellent, intact example of a garage constructed on a large estate in the early 20th century. Although Henry Ford had introduced the Model T in 1908, prior to the First World War the automobile was still predominately a luxury for the wealthy. Early automobiles were not particularly resilient and storing them outdoors could result in significant damage from the elements.



By 1914, the garage was beginning to find its way into residential construction. The visual impact on the neighbouring environment was an important design consideration and garages were built to blend into the neighbourhood and reflect the architecture of the house with a

simplified yet complementary design. Most early garages had the exclusive purpose of inconspicuously storing the automobile. The Copping Garage was built at the end of a long driveway off Aberdeen Avenue, a side street to the main house where there was very little residential development at the time of its construction. This location maintained the pedestrian-only zone between the front of the main house and the street, concealing the function of the garage from public view.



## Historical and Associative Value

The garage at 214 Aberdeen Avenue has good historical and associative value as an early service structure whose design integrated with the primary dwelling on the Copping estate. Constructed contemporaneously with the main house, the Garage yields information about the residents of the original home, and the emerging prominence of the automobile. By 1913, when George Copping

purchased the vacant lot on which the house later was built, there were about 17,000 vehicles registered in the province of Ontario. The popularity of the automobile steadily grew as cars became more efficiently produced and affordable to the average Canadian. By the 1920s, the number of vehicles registered in Ontario had already grown to 562,000. It was not until 1927 that a license was required to operate an automobile.

George and Emma Copping were residents of Rosedale in Toronto when they purchased the large vacant lot in 1913. They had the house at 788 Aylmer Street built between 1914-1915 shortly after Copping, a successful industrialist who founded the Toronto-based Reliance (Reliable) knitting Company, had invested in the Brinton Carpet Company, a Peterborough based manufacturer.

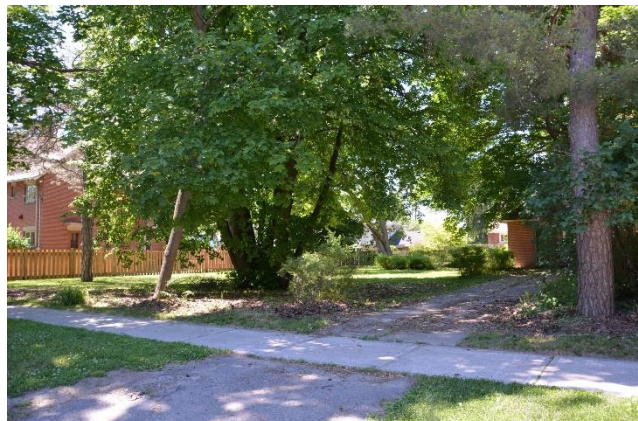
Unfortunately, George and Emma Copping died when the Lusitania sank in 1915 and never lived in the house. After his death, George's son Russell moved to Peterborough and lived in the house from 1916-1921 while he was the superintendent of the Brinton Carpet Company. In 1921 he moved back to Toronto to oversee operations of the family business and the estate was sold to Keith Gustave Lech, part of the Lech Family who owned the successful Peterborough based furrier business, William Lech and Sons for over 140 years. The Lech family owned the property from 1921 to 2007.

### **Contextual Value**

The garage at 214 Aberdeen Avenue is visually linked to 788 Aylmer Street North through its use of similar materials and a complementary design. Although now on a separate parcel, the garage is physically linked to the main house as a subordinate but contributing structure in the context of the original estate, built to shelter a single early version of the automobile.



In the early 20th century, cars were typically “open top” models and did not fare well in the elements. Car manufacturers recommended storing them indoors; preferably in a heated space.



Before the First World War, residential architecture design

focused on the relationship between the front of the house and the street entrance; front porches and formal living rooms at the front of the house were primary social spaces. By 1930s and 1940s, casual social spaces emerged as a result of the influence of the now ultra-popular automobile. The front porch was replaced by an attached garage, which allowed for a side entrance to the house into more informal space such as a kitchen.

In time, many early garages and secondary buildings were lost since they were removed or replaced as cars became more resilient to the elements, and greater premiums began to be placed on the privacy of leisure space at the rear of homes. As such the garage at 214 Aberdeen is a rare survivor providing a greater understanding of residential design of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*"The short statement of reason for 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 DESIGNATION**

Constructed in 1914-1915, the Copping Garage at 214 Aberdeen Avenue has cultural heritage value or interest as a representative example of an intact early residential garage constructed on the estate of a large home for the wealthy. The Garage has similar design elements to the house located at 788 Aylmer Street, and its relationship to the house is significant.

The Copping Garage has the potential to yield additional information about social and economic history as well as the evolution of residential design in the city during this period. It further yields information regarding the growing popularity of the early automobile and the care required in maintaining them. It yields information regarding the relationship between secondary structures as complementary but subordinate elements in estate design. Garages would later become more prominent in architectural design with the emergence of suburban, automobile-oriented development. The intact early 20th-century Copping Garage at 214 Aberdeen Avenue contributes to the character and history of the site and is a character-defining feature on the landscape.

## **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 façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster parging, metal, and glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features:

### **Exterior Features**

- One storey solid stretcher-bond brick construction
- Poured concrete foundation
- Hipped roof with visible exterior rafters
- Single bay door with wooden surround and including the three multi-paned glazed doors, associated hardware and the straight brick voussoirs forming the flat header above
- West elevation "person" door (also called "escape door")
- Fenestration including:
  - Original wooden windows
  - Original window openings
  - Associated brickwork



- Rock faced concrete sills
- Position of the structure on the lot
- View of the structure from Aberdeen Avenue