

Heritage Designation Brief

“King George Public School”



220 Hunter Street East

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

February 2018

Heritage Designation Status Sheet

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| Street Address: | 220 Hunter Street East |
| Roll Number: | 040140001000000 |
| Short Legal Description: | PLAN 1A PT BLK V |
| Owners' Mailing Address: | Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board 1994 Fisher Drive Peterborough ON K9J 7A1 |
| PACAC Application Review Date: | March 1, 2018 |
| Heritage Type: | Built Structure |
| Designation Type: | Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV |
| Designation Brief Completion Date: | February 2018 |
| Designation Brief Completed by: | Emily Turner |
| 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 220 Hunter Street East 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:

King George Public School is an excellent example of a civic building constructed as part of the City Beautiful movement, in both its stripped classical aesthetic and its siting within a landscaped lot. The building features key classical elements including: rusticated masonry on the ground floor; a flat roof with classical balustrade; a bracketed metal cornice (since replaced); compositional symmetry on all elevations and H-shaped plan; and rounded arched windows on the east and west elevations. Its role as a monumental civic structure is emphasized through its prominent siting on Armour Hill, consistent with the principles of the City Beautiful movement.

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

The school displays a high degree of craftsmanship in the excellent use of structural polychromy in the stone courses, lintels, sills, and rusticated arches on the east and west elevations.

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

The school is highly significant for its technical achievement with regard to heating, ventilation, and sanitary facilities. When it was constructed, the school was fitted with complete indoor plumbing, including toilets and drinking fountains, as well as an early version of a forced air heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system. Rarely found outside major urban centres at this time, the system was state of the art in the early 1910s.

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:

King George Public School has cultural heritage value as a continuously operating public school serving East City since 1913. Until the opening of

Armour Heights Public School in 1953, it was the only public school serving the Ashburnham area of Peterborough. It is an important institution for the community, particularly for the many generations of students who attended it.

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

This building has the potential to yield additional information regarding the role of education in early twentieth-century Peterborough. In particular, its place as part of the wider City Beautiful movement has the potential to yield information on the interrelationship between architectural design of civic buildings and pedagogical philosophies in the early twentieth century.

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

The school was designed by Napanee architect Fred Bartlett in conjunction with William Blackwell, one of Peterborough's prominent late nineteenth and early twentieth century architects. After working in Napanee with Chief Dominion Architect Thomas Fuller on the Napanee Post Office, Bartlett relocated to Peterborough in 1892. Blackwell, who appears to have worked with Bartlett on the project, was the architect of many notable Peterborough buildings, including the former YMCA.

The school is also important as a product of the architectural theory of John D. Hodgins, the Deputy Head of the Ontario Department of Education. Hodgins's influential 1886 text, *Hints and Suggestions on School Architecture and Hygiene*, played an instrumental role in the development of educational spaces throughout Ontario that actively integrated ideas about hygiene, outdoor space, ventilation, and comfort into design practice.

3. The property has contextual value because it:

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

The school is a defining feature of the character of the neighbourhood on the Hunter Street East corridor which is composed primarily of nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings. It is one of the main civic buildings in the local area which maintains the historic character of the Ashburnham area.

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

The school is historically and visually linked to its surroundings as part of the wider late nineteenth and early twentieth-century landscape of the Ashburnham area of Peterborough. It forms an important part of the local community which includes many homes constructed during this period as well as other local features constructed to serve the East City area, including Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church, Mark Street United Church,

and the Hunter Street East commercial area. Taken as part of the wider landscape, King George Public School assists in defining the East City area as a cohesive neighbourhood with localized services and structures.

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

King George Public School is a significant landmark both in Peterborough as a whole and in Ashburnham. As one of the four “Royal” schools constructed in Peterborough in the early twentieth century as major civic projects, the school is a defining feature of the Hunter Street East landscape through its role as the main public school in the area, its distinctive architecture, and its prominent placement on Armour Hill.

Design and Physical Value

King George Public School is an excellent example of a school constructed as part of the wider City Beautiful Movement. This movement, which originated in the United States in the 1890s, sought to reform city planning by introducing schemes for beautification into urban spaces, particularly through the growth of



green space and monumental structures. This movement focused on large civic projects constructed in the Beaux Arts or Neoclassical styles alongside parks and green space with the goal of enhancing the livability and image of cities in the face of consistent and significant population increases in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The school, constructed in 1913 in a restrained neo-classical style using Hamilton brick and Indiana limestone, was built on a landscaped, hillside lot that emphasized its place as a significant civic structure in East City. It features key components of the style which include: rustication on the ground floor; a flat roof; a bracketed, galvanized metal cornice; compositional symmetry; and rounded arches on the east and west elevations. It is an excellent example of monumental classicism in early twentieth-century civic buildings, emphasized by its siting and H-shaped plan and its stripped interpretation of classical design. It is notable for its use of polychromy in the stone courses, lintels, sills, and rusticated arches on the east and west elevations.

The school is also significant for its heating, ventilation, and sanitary facilities. When it was constructed, the school was fitted with complete indoor plumbing, including toilets and drinking fountains as part of an overall emphasis on hygiene and convenience within the design. It was also fitted with an early version of a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system which employed forced air passing over radiations to circulate air throughout the building and to separate the warm air from the gasses produced by coal to prevent contamination. Air was changed within the classrooms four times per hour. This system was extremely modern for its time and rarely found outside major urban centres in the early 1910s. The school was also designed with fire safety in mind, in response to a 1908 fire in Collinwood, Ohio that killed 172 children.

Key safety features included the wide, central staircases and hallways which allow for children to rapidly evacuate the building in case of an emergency.

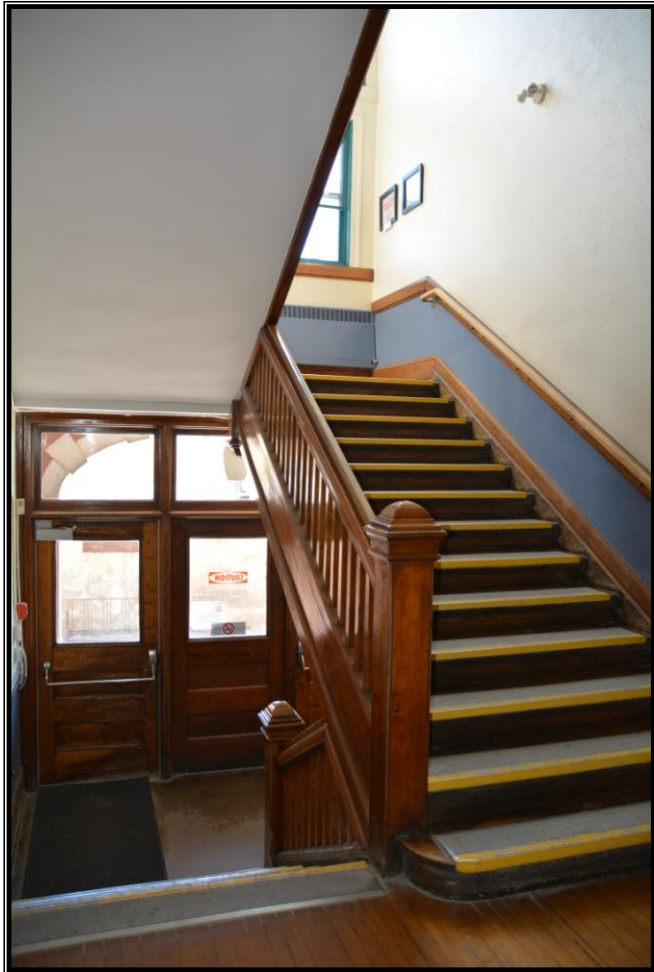


Historical and Associative Value

King George Public School has important historic and associative value on both a local and provincial level. The school was constructed in 1913 as part of a wider plan to update existing Peterborough schools and construct new ones to respond to the city's growing population and the resultant increase in public school attendance. King George was designed and constructed in conjunction with Queen Mary Public School, on Monaghan Road, as the new schools for the East and West Wards respectively. The schools were constructed on land which was, at that time, at the very edge of the city, to allow for the schools to be built on large lots in elevated locations. When it opened in 1913, King George became the sole public school facility in the Ashburnham area of Peterborough and remained so until 1953 when Armour Heights Public School was opened. The school has operated continuously for over 100 years and is a significant institution for local residents and the wider community, many of whom attended the school as children.

The school was designed by Fred Bartlett, an architect originally from Napanee who moved to Peterborough in 1892 and completed a number of commissions in the city. Bartlett is known primarily for institutional architecture, including churches and schools. He also worked with Chief Dominion Architect Thomas Fuller on the Napanee Post Office, completed in 1887. Bartlett was joined on the project by

Peterborough architect William Blackwell, one of the city's most prominent late nineteenth and early twentieth century architects. Blackwell's projects include: the former Peterborough YMCA; Nicholls Hospital; and the Ashburnham Town Hall.



As part of the wider City Beautiful movement, the school has the potential to yield additional information regarding planning ideals and the role of civic buildings in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Peterborough. The City Beautiful movement developed with the intent of increasing the livability of urban spaces and a major focus of this was the creation of new civic spaces. It was hoped that these new civic structures would be a key location of social reform through the creation of healthy, attractive spaces that would engage people in civic life and assist in the development of a moral and virtuous society. The movement emphasized ideas such as the creation of green space, increased sanitation, and aesthetically-appealing urban areas. Constructed as part of this movement, the school can yield important information about how public buildings were viewed in the early twentieth century as the foundation for the growth of a civil society.

Similarly, the school also has important historical value as a representative

example of educational architecture that drew from the principles of John D. Hodgins, the Deputy Head of the Department of Education in the late nineteenth century, and a close associate of Egerton Ryerson. Hodgins' role in the development of educational policy in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario was significant, but his primary achievement with regard to architecture was his 1886 text, *Hints and Suggestions on School Architecture and Hygiene*. This text, which influenced educational architecture in Ontario well into the twentieth century, advocated for new schools to be constructed with issues such as hygiene, ventilation, and comfort as primary foci in the design process. This included provisions for infrastructure such as interior plumbing and integrated ventilation systems, as well as the development of outdoors space and the placement of schools on hills to facilitate good drainage and clean air. Hodgins, like many of his contemporaries, had a holistic understanding of health and well-being which drew a correlation between cleanliness and the growth of a moral

and civil society. He integrated these ideas into his architectural thinking as schools were viewed as one of the primary places where society developed. King George Public School is an excellent example of the kind of school that Hodgins envisioned with its focus on health and comfort as physical requirements for a childhood education that imparted academic knowledge and laid the foundation for a virtuous community. These ideas are reflected in architectural features such as: the high ceilings; the large windows; the modern sanitation, heating, and ventilation facilities; and the siting on an open and airy lot.

Contextual Value

King George Public School is an integral aspect of the wider cultural landscape of the Ashburnham area of Peterborough. Located in an area with a significant collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings, the school is linked to the local community through its historical associations and architecture. It forms part of a collection of civic and commercial structures that serve the local neighbourhood



including two churches, Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church and Mark Street United Church, and the Hunter Street East commercial corridor. Taken alongside these buildings and the local residential areas, the school assists in defining Ashburnham as a holistic neighbourhood with localized services and structures, with a character and history unique from other areas of Peterborough.

Within this context, the school is a significant landmark as the historic educational facility for the local neighbourhood. Its monumental architecture and prominent siting on Armour Hill render it a visible architectural feature and a defining attribute of the Hunter Street East landscape. It is also a significant landmark when viewed as part of the Peterborough landscape as a whole because of its position as one of the four “Royal” schools constructed in the first two decades of the twentieth century to serve the city’s growing population and provide modern, functional educational facilities. These schools, of which only three survive, are architecturally similar to one another and form an important collection of landmark buildings in Peterborough.

"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

King George Public School has cultural heritage value or interest as an educational facility serving the Ashburnham area of Peterborough. Constructed in 1913, it is an excellent example of a school built as part of the wider City Beautiful movement and integrates important features of that movement including: its siting on a large, open and elevated lot; its integration of features to increase comfort, cleanliness and health; and its use of a classical architectural style. It boasts significant achievements in early twentieth-century hygiene, ventilation, and safety standards alongside excellent design and craftsmanship in its interior and exterior features. It is a significant landmark and defining building in the wider Hunter Street East landscape with important associations for the local community.

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, terracotta, plaster parging, metal, and glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features:

Exterior Elements:

- Three-story red brick structure
- Neo-Classical Style
- Construction on a landscaped, hillside lot
- Symmetrical composition, including:
 - H-shaped plan
 - Symmetrical arrangement of windows
 - Central entranceways on east and west elevations
- Decorative brickwork including:
 - Rustication on the ground floor
 - Pilasters
 - Dentils
 - Recessed forms above the east and west entrances
- Structural polychromy, including:
 - Stone courses
 - Lintels and sills
 - Rusticated arches above east and west entrances

- Rusticated limestone foundation
- Recessed east and west entrances
- Flat roof, including:
 - Parapet
 - Balustrade
 - Overhanging eaves
 - Brackets
 - Metal cornice
- Fenestration, including:
 - Original window openings, including size and proportion

Interior Elements:

- Original woodwork including, but not limited to:
 - Glass and wood partitions in hallways and classrooms, including doors
 - Original wooden trim, including door and window surrounds and cornice mouldings
 - Wooden stair rails including handrail, newels, and balusters
- Original lighting fixtures
- Interior classroom layout with high ceilings, large windows, and cloakrooms
- Wide hallways with high ceilings
- Original stairways