

285 Cummer Avenue: St. John's Convalescent HospitalDescription

The property at 285 Cummer Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design or physical value, historical or associative value, and contextual value. The core components of St. John's Convalescent Hospital (now known as St. John's Rehab Hospital) consist of the Scadding Wing, adjoining Chapel, landscaped driveway to the north, and terraced garden to the south.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The cultural heritage value of St. John's Convalescent Hospital is related to its design or physical value as a representative example of Modern Classicism, the style popularized for institutional buildings in the 1920s and 1930s that features restrained Classical detailing. The Scadding Wing (opened in 1937) is distinguished by its bell tower, entrance, and the treatment of its rear (south) elevation overlooking the garden. The adjoining Chapel of Our Lady and St. John (dedicated in 1953) features stylized Gothic detailing with its combination of diminutive and oversized pointed-arch openings and a scaled down steeple.

The cultural heritage of St. John's Convalescent Hospital also relates to its historical or associative value because of its direct associations with an institution that is significant to Toronto. Founded in 1884 as the first Canadian religious order associated with the Anglican Church, the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine established a hospital that specialized in the care of women. In 1889, the hospital and convent moved to Major Street, where the surviving Chapel is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Sisterhood began specializing in convalescent care and, in 1937, officially opened St. John's Convalescent Hospital on Cummer Avenue as the first hospital in Ontario to focus on rehabilitation.

St. John's Convalescent Hospital has historical or associative value as it demonstrates the work of significant Toronto architects and landscape architects. The Scadding Wing was designed by the architectural partnership of Mathers and Haldenby, whose practice included such well-known landmarks as Upper Canada College, the David Dunlop Observatory, and numerous buildings at the University of Toronto. The notable landscape architects, Dunnington Grubb and Stensson, who designed the landscaping for St. John's in the 1940s, are recognized for their garden design work throughout Ontario, including the Shakespearean Gardens in Stratford, Oakes Garden Theatre in Niagara Falls and McMaster University in Hamilton.

The cultural heritage value of St. John's Convalescent Hospital is also connected to its contextual value as the property is physically, functionally and visually linked to its

surroundings. The entrance driveway, extending south from Cummer Avenue to the facility, and the terraced garden south of the Scadding Wing not only provide an appealing setting for the hospital, but are integral to the institution's approach to health care and the role of the surroundings in fostering rehabilitation.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of St. John's Convalescent Hospital related to its design or physical value as a representative example of Modern Classicism are found on the exterior walls, roof and interior of the Scadding Wing as described below, consisting of:

- The three storey plan with a bell tower (east) and Chapel wing (west)
- The red brick cladding, with red brick applied for the flat arches on the window openings
- The square tower at the east end with a hipped roof and an open bell turret
- West of the bell tower, the treatment of the principal (north) façade under a flat roof with coping; the division of the wall into three sections with a central frontispiece; at the base of the frontispiece, the entrance with its multi-paned transom that is protected by a metal-clad canopy with brackets; and, the organization of the flat-headed window openings, with three-part windows in the upper stories of the frontispiece
- The organization of the rear (south) wall, where a covered verandah that shelters the lower floor is enclosed as a sunporch in the centre of the second storey with a balcony above; and, the placement, size and shape of the French doors with transoms, flat-headed window openings, and octagonal windows
- On the interior, the foyer with its detailing reminiscent of Art Deco styling, including the staircase railing
- And, on the adjoining Chapel (attached to the northwest end of the Scadding Wing), with its stylized Gothic detailing; the application of red brick for the cladding and trim; the extended single-storey rectangular plan under a gable roof with a steeple; the placement and size of the pointed-arched window openings along the east and west elevations; and, the enclosed porch on the west wall

The heritage attributes related to the contextual value of the property consist of:

- The driveway leading from Cummer Avenue to the hospital buildings, where a wide boulevard is flanked by trees and landscaping
- The terraced garden south of the Scadding Wing that is defined and separated by stone stairs, walls and plantings

The remaining buildings and landscaped open spaces are not included in the Reasons for Designation.