

Bell Estate (Thornbeck-Bell House)

Description

The property at 679 Warden Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value or interest, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, historical and contextual value. Setback on the east side of Warden Avenue, south of St. Clair Avenue East in Scarborough, the property historically known as the Bell Estate contains a two-storey house form building (circa 1840s with later additions). The property is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties, and City Council granted authority to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement in 2004.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Bell Estate is historically significant as an early farmhouse in former Scarborough Township. Archival research indicates that portions of the building date to the mid-19th century when it was constructed for members of the Thornbeck family. In the late 1800s, William Bell acquired the site and, following a fire, added a second storey. Bell's descendants occupied the property for a century. Architecturally, the house is an important early example of Georgian styling that was updated with Gothic Revival features.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Bell Estate (Thornbeck-Bell House) related to its cultural heritage value as an early 19th century Scarborough farmhouse with features of Georgian and Gothic Revival styling are found on the exterior walls, roof, west addition, and interior as described below, consisting of:

- The two-storey rectangular plan above a raised base with window openings in the basement level on the north and south sides
- The gable roof with end chimneys (not original) and, on the south slope, a central gable with decorative wood bargeboard
- The fieldstone cladding, which is laid in regular courses on the south façade and randomly placed on the remaining walls
- The window openings that feature stone lintels and sills (some granite and others limestone) and louvered wood shutters
- The principal (south) façade, which is organized into five bays with symmetrical openings
- The main entrance, raised and centred on the south façade, where a panelled wood door is flanked by three-quarter-length sidelights and surmounted by a three-part transom
- The pairs of flat-headed window openings with six-over-six double hung sash windows flanking the entrance
- In the upper storey of the south façade, the single opening positioned in the upper storey beneath the gable

- On the east elevation, the pair of flat-headed window openings symmetrically placed at the second floor level
- The west elevation, where window openings similar to those on the east wall are found in the upper floor
- Concealing the lower part of the west wall of the house, the single-storey stone-clad addition with a shed roof and a dormer
- The rear (north) wall with flat-headed window openings, two of which are irregularly sized and placed
- On the interior, the basement fireplace and adjoining bake oven

A 1½-storey wood frame addition that was attached to the north side of the west addition was not identified in the Heritage Easement Agreement and is not included in the Reasons for Designation.