

Elizabeth White House

Description

The property at 82 Lowther Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. The 2½-storey house form building is located on the north side of Lowther Avenue, east of Huron Street. According to archival sources, the house was completed in 1895 for Elizabeth White, an unmarried woman who occupied the site for 20 years. The property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1974.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Elizabeth White House has design value as an excellent example of the Queen Anne Revival, one of the most popular styles for residential architecture at the close of the 19th century. The style is recognized by its application of different types and textures of materials, the range of window and roof shapes, and the mixture of rich decorative elements. On the Elizabeth White House, the style is demonstrated in the asymmetrical plan that focuses on the southeast corner where a round tower with a distinctive conical roof projects. Typical of the Queen Anne Revival are the combination of rough and smooth surfaces, including the banding on the tower, the mixture of round, arched and oriel windows, and the dormers with their different sizes, shapes, placement and detailing.

The property is associated with the career of Frederick Henry Herbert (1865-1914), an English architect who established a solo practice in Toronto in the late 1800s. During this period, he accepted commissions for a range of buildings, including Consumers' Gas Company complexes and industrial buildings in the King-Spadina neighbourhood, many of which are recognized on the City's heritage inventory. His numerous residential projects focused on the Rosedale and Annex neighbourhoods. The Elizabeth White House was the first of several dwellings that he designed along Lowther Avenue. Its appearance reflects the description in his obituary, that "Herbert designed many elaborate Queen Anne style residences with corner towers, steep roofs and fanciful decoration, setting a new standard in residential architecture in the city."

Contextually, the Elizabeth White House supports the residential character of Lowther Avenue in the East Annex neighbourhood. The area was outside of the City of Toronto in the late 1800s when realtor Simeon Heman Janes laid out a residential subdivision north of Bloor Street West and east of Spadina Road. After the municipality annexed the district in 1887, development began in earnest and resulted in a homogeneous collection of house form buildings, with many reflecting the prevalent Queen Anne Revival and Romanesque Revival styles. The section of the neighbourhood east of Bedford Road has

been designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as the East Annex Heritage Conservation District.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Elizabeth White House related to its cultural heritage value as a well-crafted example of the Queen Anne Revival style that is linked to the East Annex neighbourhood are:

- The scale, form and massing
- Above a rubblestone foundation with window openings, the 2½-storey irregularly-shaped plan
- The red brick cladding with brick, stone, terra cotta, wood and metal detailing
- The steeply-pitched hipped roof, with tall brick chimneys, roof and wall dormers and, on the east slope, a projecting gabled jetty
- At the southeast corner, the three-storey round tower with a conical roof
- On the principal (south) façade and the side elevations (east and west), the different-sized round-arched, flat-headed and pointed-arched window openings, including an oriel window with a tent roof on the south façade and a round window on the east elevation
- The round-arched enclosed porch and entrance on the south facade
- The decorative detailing on the window and door openings, dormers, east gable and corner tower, including brackets, keystones and corbelled brickwork

The single-storey additions on the east and rear (north) walls are not included in the Reasons for Designation.