

Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant Pumping Stations (1911 and 1971)

Description

The property at 1091 Eastern Avenue is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value. Located in Pump House Park near the southwest corner of Eastern Avenue and Coxwell Avenue, the pumping stations at the Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant that were designed in 1911 and 1971 have cultural heritage value.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Historically, the property at 1091 Eastern Avenue is associated with the development of the City of Toronto's public works department and wastewater treatment program. While Toronto's first sewers were in place by the mid 1800s, the waste was ultimately discharged into Lake Ontario without treatment. With the growth of the city, the increased demand for sanitation services was balanced by concerns for public health. In 1908, City Council authorized the construction of the first municipal sewage treatment facility at Ashbridge's Bay. The area was chosen for its relative isolation and the availability of open space for the tanks and storage beds that received and separated wastes. With the first pumping station (now known as Building M) under construction in 1911, the Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant remained the City's sole sewage treatment facility until 1926. During World War II, City Council approved an addition to the existing pumping station at Ashbridge's Bay and extended the site southwest of present-day Lake Shore Boulevard East where additional structures were constructed. This expansion was continued by the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, which was created in 1953 to oversee public works and other services shared by the City of Toronto and its neighbouring municipalities. Built directly southwest of the 1911 pumping station, the Mid-Toronto Interceptor Pumping Station (now called Building T) was constructed according to 1971 plans prepared by Gore and Storrie Limited, consulting engineers.

The two pumping stations at the Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant in Pump House Park have individual design value and illustrate the evolution of designs for public works buildings during the 20th century. The 1911 structure displays features associated with Edwardian Classicism, the most popular style of the period before World War I where the symmetry, somber brick cladding with stone highlights, and classical detailing of the building expressed its importance as a public edifice. The 1971 pumping station is a unique example of 1970s Modernism applied to a public building in Toronto. While earlier pumping stations favoured square or rectangular plans, Building T features a visually striking circular shape that is enhanced by engaged concrete arches.

Contextually, with its location in Pump House Park, the large expanse of parkland northwest of Lake Shore Boulevard East and Coxwell Avenue, the 1911 and 1971 pumping stations at the Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant are neighbourhood landmarks.

Heritage Attributes

1911 Pumping Station (Building M)

The heritage attributes of the 1911 pumping station related to its design and contextual value as a well-crafted example of Edwardian Classicism applied to a public building that is a neighbourhood landmark are:

- The scale, form and massing
- The brick cladding with brick and stone trim
- The rectangular plan, rising two stories under a flat roof with a stone cornice along the north end and a brick chimney on the east side
- The principal (north) façade, which is organized into three bays by brick piers with stone banding
- The main (north) entrance, which is elevated in the first floor and features a large flat-headed opening with stone detailing and a nameplate
- The fenestration on the principal (north) facade, with flat-headed window openings with stone detailing and, in the second storey, brick arches and stone keystones
- The detailing on the north façade, with stone band courses and a datestone marked “1911”
- The side elevations (east and west), where the stone band courses and the design of the window openings is continued from the north facade
- The rear (south) wing, which reflects the design of the original structure in its scale, form, massing, cladding, fenestration and detailing
- The setting of the building in open space and facing Eastern Avenue to the north

1971 Pumping Station (Building T)

The heritage attributes of the 1971 pumping station related to its design and contextual value as a unique example of Modern design applied to a public building that is a neighbourhood landmark are:

- The scale, form and massing
- The pre-cast concrete, stone and aluminum finishes
- The circular plan, rising one extended storey on the exterior
- The design, which has engaged inverted catenary arches in the lower wall (some of which contain entrances to the facility) with taller engaged catenary arches above, the tips of which extend as fins above the original roofline
- The setting of the building in open space, southwest of the 1911 pumping station

The recent penthouse addition to the 1971 pumping station is not included in the Reasons for Listing.