

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: 194 DOWLING AVENUE ATTACHMENT NO. 3

Parkdale Mansions

Description

The property at 194 Dowling Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the southwest corner of Queen Street West and Dowling Avenue, the apartment building historically known as the Parkdale Mansions was constructed in 1912 and occupied by July 1913 when it was recorded in the tax assessment rolls.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Parkdale Mansions has design value as a well-crafted example of Edwardian Classical styling applied to an early 20th century apartment building. One of the most popular architectural styles of the early 20th century, Edwardian Classicism represented a return to symmetrical designs with detailing inspired by the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome. The apartment building at 194 Dowling Avenue was designed as a mirror image of its neighbour at 1501 Queen Street West (also named the Parkdale Mansions), with entrances on both dwellings facing Queen Street and the respective side streets.

The Parkdale Mansions are associated with the evolution of Parkdale in the 20th century. The area developed as a residential suburb along the north shore of Lake Ontario, west of Toronto. Parkdale was incorporated as a village in 1878 and a town in 1885 before it was annexed by the City of Toronto four years later. The increase in population in the early 1900s led to the development of previously vacant land and the replacement of single-family dwellings with apartment buildings. David Lavine, a Toronto developer, commissioned the apartment buildings at 194 Dowling Avenue and 1501 Queen Street West, naming both the “Parkdale Mansions.” The apartment building at 194 Dowling Avenue was renamed the Queensboro Apartments by 1930 to distinguish it from 1501 Queen Street West.

The site is associated with a tragic event in September 1998 when a deliberately set fire killed two residents and injured other occupants and firefighters. The incident was extensively covered by local media, which described the fire as “reminiscent of the 1989 blaze at the run-down Rupert Hotel that killed ten (and) sparked an inquest and a movement aimed at cleaning up Toronto’s most squalid rooming houses” (Globe and Mail, 30 September 1998).

Contextually, the Parkdale Mansions contribute to the character of Queen Street West in Parkdale. The apartment buildings at 194 Dowling and 1501 Queen Street West anchor the corners of the block on the south side of Queen Street West between Dowling Avenue (east) and Beaty Avenue (west). Together, they frame the central building at 1197 Queen

Street West and create a sense of symmetry in the block. The adjoining blocks contain the Parkdale Substation (1928) at #1457 Queen and Our Lady of Lebanon Church (1911) at #1515 Queen, which are recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties as local landmarks.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Parkdale Mansions at 194 Dowling Avenue related to the building's cultural heritage value as a well-designed example of Edwardian Classicism that contributes to the character of Queen Street West in Parkdale and complements the near-identical building at 1501 Queen Street West are:

- The scale, form and massing of the three-storey structure
- The mottled red and buff brick cladding with brick and cast stone trim
- The flat roofline, which is marked by a stone cornice moulding and a brick parapet
- The organization of the long principal (north) façade into seven bays, with the placement of the main entrance in the second bay from the right (west)
- The main entry, where a round-arched door opening with a transom is set in an Classical surround with a keystone, mouldings, pilasters, columns, an entablature, and a balustrade
- Flanking the entry and in the second bay from the east end, the three-storey bay windows with parapets, flat-headed window openings, and stone lintels, sills and quoins
- The flat-headed window openings with stone trim in the remaining bays
- In the first bay from the east end, the chimney with stone detailing that extends above the cornice line
- On the parapet above the entrance bay, a date stone (the numbers have been removed)
- The east elevation facing Dowling Avenue, where the central entry, bay windows and flat-headed window openings repeat the detailing introduced on the north façade
- On the west elevation, the orientation of the wall to the neighbouring building to the west
- On the rear (south) wall, the portion west from Dowling Avenue to the first row of window openings
- The relationship of the building to 1501 Queen Street West, which was designed as its mirror-image