

St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church

Description

The property at 611 St. Clair Avenue West is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value. Historical records indicate that St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church was constructed in 1915 on the southeast corner of St. Clair Avenue West and Wychwood Avenue.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church has design value as a well-crafted example of Neo-Gothic styling, which was popular for religious architecture in the early 20th century. The church incorporates stained glass windows, including a commission by noted artisan Yvonne Williams. Additions to the structure in 1928 and afterward were sensitively done and contribute to the aesthetics of the overall design.

St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church is associated with the development of the Wychwood neighbourhood. The origins of the area date to the late 19th century, when artist Marmaduke Matthews acquired acreage within the boundaries of St. Clair Avenue, Bathurst Street, Davenport Road and Christie Street where he constructed a residence named “Wychwood.” The property evolved into an artists’ enclave around Wychwood Park. With the encroachment of residential subdivisions, Wychwood remained an unincorporated area that was annexed by the City of Toronto in 1909.

With the growth of the Wychwood area and improvements to transportation along St. Clair Avenue West, various religious denominations constructed churches. The congregation of St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church was founded in 1907 and the present church constructed in 1913. Since its inception, the church has served people in distress from the surrounding community.

St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church is related to the practice of the Toronto architectural firm of Eden Smith and Son, which prepared the plans for the church. Regarded as one of Toronto’s most influential architects during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Eden Smith introduced Arts and Crafts principles to the city with his plans for the Church of St. Thomas on Huron Street in 1892. He practiced with one or both of his two sons beginning in 1906. Apart from his prolific career as an architect, Eden Smith co-founded the Architectural Eighteen Club and the Arts and Crafts Society of Canada. Grace Church-on-the-Hill (1913) in Forest Hill is among the numerous projects designed by Eden Smith that are recognized on the City’s Heritage Inventory.

Contextually, St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church is a landmark on St. Clair Avenue West. It contributes to the religious enclave around the intersection of St. Clair

Avenue West and Wychwood Avenue, with Wychwood-Davenport Presbyterian Church on the northeast corner opposite St. Clair Avenue Baptist Church.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church related to its design, associative and contextual value as an example of Neo-Gothic styling that is an institutional landmark on St. Clair Avenue West are:

- The scale, form and massing of the rectangular plan that rises one extended storey with the long walls aligned parallel to St. Clair Avenue
- The red brick cladding with stone trim
- The steeply-pitched gable roofs on the nave, transepts and entrance porches
- The roof detailing, with stone coping on the gable ends, a brick chimney at the east end, a gabled dormer on the south slope and, over the northwest entrance, a diminutive steeple
- The pointed-arch window openings with stone surrounds, quoins and tracery that are found on the porches, transepts, and the long north and south walls between brick buttresses with stone coping
- The northwest entrance porch with a stone sculpture, where a pair of paneled wood doors and a multi-paned transom are recessed inside a Tudor-arched opening with a stone surround
- On the north elevation, the secondary entrance that is placed in a Tudor-arched surround with stone detailing and contains double wood doors beneath a stained glass transom
- The west façade on Wychwood Avenue, which is flanked by buttresses and rounded towers
- The fenestration on the west elevation, where a monumental pointed-arched window opening with a stone label, sill and tracery is found above a recessed arcade of window openings with trefoil heads
- The entrance porch on the west wall, where a door opening on the west face and a window opening on the south face are recessed in Tudor-arched surrounds with multiple mouldings
- On all elevations, the flat-headed window openings set in stone surrounds with quoins