

Strathavon Apartments

Description

The property with the confirmed municipal address of 1351 Bayview Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and interest, 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 northeast corner of Bayview Avenue and Airdie Road, the Strathavon Apartments were in place by July 1939 according to a photograph in the collection of the Toronto Reference Library. The garages at the rear (east) of the site were altered with the addition of second-storey dwelling units according to plans prepared by Toronto architects Chapman and Hurst in 1964 (the garages are not included in the Reasons for Designation).

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Design or Physical Value

The Strathavon Apartments have design value as a well-crafted example of an apartment complex from the World War II era that is distinguished by its low scale, placement on the sites, and Georgian Revival features. Based on late 18th and early 19th century English precedents, the Georgian Revival style (also known as Colonial Revival) was popular during the World War I period and afterward, where residential designs featured symmetry, decorative brickwork, and refined Classical elements.

The Strathavon Apartments are comprised of two buildings that anchor a corner lot. It is part of a group of three neighbouring apartment complexes at #1325, 1351 and 1365 Bayview that feature different configurations, but share a similar scale and architectural appearance.

Historical or Associative Value

With its position along Bayview Avenue at the northeast corner of Airdie Road, the Strathavon Apartments are associated with the evolution of Leaside as the community matured after World War I. In 1912, the directors of the Canadian Northern Railway commissioned the noted Montreal landscape architect Frederick G. Todd to lay out a model town on a 1000-acre tract southeast of Bayview Avenue and Eglinton Avenue East. The property, formerly owned by members of the Lea family, was the site of a Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) junction named “Leaside”. While Leaside was incorporated as a municipality in 1913, the development of its distinct residential and industrial sectors was largely delayed by World War I. During the conflict, the federal government established the Leaside Airfield for the training of Royal Flying Corps pilots, which brought recognition to the locality as the terminus of the first airmail flight in Canada in 1918. Following the war, access to Leaside was improved with the completion

of the Leaside Bridge across the Don River and the Millwood Road CPR Underpass, which attracted industry and housing to the area. Although not integral to the founding of the Town of Leaside in 1913, the Strathavon Apartments were completed at the outset of World War II.

The Strathavon Apartments are historically associated with Howard Talbot, a contractor and politician linked to the development of Leaside. Talbot established a construction business in the 1920s and, by the close of the decade, began assembling land in Leaside. His projects ranged from detached residences and duplexes to low-rise apartment buildings. According to the book, Leaside (Pitfield, 1999, 166), the apartment complexes on Bayview Avenue represented his most ambitious undertaking in Leaside. After serving as a municipal councillor, Talbot was elected as Mayor of Leaside in 1938, retaining the position until 1947. During Talbot's tenure, he was responsible for bringing new industries to the community, and initiated the construction of Leaside's first permanent municipal building (completed in 1949) at the corner of McRae Drive and Randolph Avenue. The latter property is recognized on the City's heritage Inventory.

Contextual Value

The Strathavon Apartments are highly visible on Bayview Avenue in Leaside, where the complex stands opposite Mount Pleasant Cemetery and anchors the northeast corner of Airdrie Road. With their placement and setback, the Strathavon Apartments and the complementary Glen-Leven and Kelvingrove Apartments provide a transition between Bayview Avenue and the houses on the residential side streets to the east, from which they are separated by laneways with garages.

However, the Strathavon Apartments are also historically, visually and functionally linked to the model community of Leaside. The three related apartment complexes at 1325, 1351 and 1365 Bayview Avenue were developed in concert with the detached and semi-detached houses in the area to offer a variety of accommodation in Leaside. With their position on the northeast corner of Airdrie Road, and in conjunction with the Glen-Leven Apartments on the southeast corner, the Strathavon Apartments provide a gateway from Bayview Avenue to the adjoining residential neighbourhood. The Strathavon Apartments share features with the Glen-Leven and Kelvingrove apartment complexes that are typical of Leaside houses, including a two-storey scale, gabled or hipped rooflines, traditional red brick cladding, and restrained Classical detailing.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Strathavon Apartments related to the complex's design value as a representative example of a World War II era apartment house with Georgian Revival detailing are found on the exterior walls and roof, consisting of:

- The pair of two-storey buildings facing Bayview Avenue and Airdrie Road, respectively

- The uniform red brick applied for the cladding, quoins, window detailing (flat arches and sills), and diamond patterns on the gabled frontispieces
- The steeply-pitched hip roofs with central brick chimneys
- The organization of each building into three sections with a gabled frontispiece facing the street
- On the frontispieces, the pairs of flat-headed window openings in each storey
- Flanking the frontispiece on each building, the placement of single entrances in the outer bays between single and three-part flat-headed window openings
- On the units facing Bayview Avenue, the entries featuring wood surrounds with stepped pediments and pilasters that highlight the paneled doors with single lights and flat transoms
- On the building facing Airdrie Road, the entrances set in round-arched wood surrounds with Classical detailing that contain paneled doors with single lights and flat transoms
- The continuation of the pattern of symmetrically placed flat-headed window openings on the side walls that are viewed from Bayview Avenue and Airdrie Road
- The shutters found on many of the window openings that are identified with the Georgian Revival style

The garage units at the rear (east) end of the property are not included in the Reasons for Designation.

(Revised December 2008)