

Kelvingrove Apartments

Description

The property with the confirmed municipal address of 1365 Bayview Avenue is worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value or 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 east side of Bayview south of McRae Drive, the Kelvingrove Apartments were first recorded in the city directories in 1939. 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 Kelvingrove 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 Kelvingrove Apartments incorporate the U-shaped plan popularized for apartment complexes since the 1920s. 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 south of McRae Drive, the Kelvingrove 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 apartment complexes at 1325, 1351 and 1365 Bayview Avenue were completed at the outset of World War II.

The Kelvingrove 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 Kelvingrove Apartments are highly visible on Bayview Avenue in Leaside, where the complex is located on the east side of the street opposite Mount Pleasant Cemetery and directly north of the Strathavon Apartments. With their placement and setback, the Kelvingrove Apartments and the complementary Strathavon and Glen-Leven 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, garages and (in the case of Kelvingrove) open space.

However, the Kelvingrove 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. The Kelvingrove Apartments, together with the Strathavon and Glen-Leven Apartments, provide a gateway from Bayview Avenue to the adjoining residential neighbourhood. The three apartment complexes share features that are typical of Leaside houses, including a similar two-storey scale, gabled and hipped rooflines, traditional red brick cladding, and restrained Classical detailing.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Kelvingrove 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 roofs, consisting of:

- The large two-storey U-shaped plan that is organized around a shallow and wide courtyard entered from Bayview Avenue
- The uniform red brick applied for the cladding, chimneys, quoins, stringcourses and window trim (flat arches and sills)

- The steeply-pitched gable roofs covering the north and south wings and the middle section of the centre block (where the outer bays are protected by flat roofs) and the brick chimneys
- The main entrances to the units, which are found on the walls facing the courtyard and consist of paneled wood doors with single lights and flat transoms in segmental-arched wood surrounds with Classical detailing
- Flanking the entries, the flat-headed window openings that are symmetrically placed in each floor, with large Venetian windows beside diminutive single openings
- On the north and south wings, the gable end walls facing Bayview Avenue featuring quoins, pairs of flat-headed window openings in each storey, and triangular motifs beneath the gables
- On many of the window openings on the building, the shutters that are features of the Georgian Revival style
- Along the west end of the site, the low brick wall with brick pedestals, stone trim and ironwork detailing marking the open end of the courtyard
- The rear walls of the north and south wings, which are visible from Bayview Avenue and feature flat-headed openings

The fire escapes on the wings and the garages at the east end of the property are not included in the Reasons for Designation.

(Revised December 2008)