



*Grace Church-on-the-Hill at 350 Russell Hill Road*

Architect Eden Smith

While Eden Smith is considered one of Toronto's most influential architects of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, details of his early life and education in Birmingham, England were unknown until the publication of the book, Eden Smith: Toronto's Arts and Crafts Architect by W. Douglas Brown in 2003. Brown documents the influence of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement on the design principles that were expressed by Eden Smith in his architectural practice and writings. Following his arrival in Canada in the mid 1880s, Eden Smith joined the Toronto office of Strickland and Symons as a draftsman who rose to become an architect with the firm. Eden Smith embarked on a solo career in 1891 before forming a brief partnership with architect Eustace C. Bird (1895-1899). He practiced with one or both of his two sons beginning in 1906.

Co-founder of the Toronto Architectural Eighteen Club (which, among other roles, provided a forum for architectural writing) and the Arts and Crafts Society of Canada, Eden Smith introduced Arts and Crafts principles to the city in his plans for the Church of St. Thomas on Huron Street in 1892. His design aesthetic was applied in his early residential commissions, many for fellow artists, in the High Park neighbourhood and Wychwood Park (the latter is designated as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*). In those settings, he introduced the careful orientation, distinctive roofs, mixtures of materials, asymmetrically placed entrances, and casement type windows that are associated with his practice.

Approximately 50 buildings designed by Eden Smith are currently recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. They include the Lawren Harris House (1912) at 18 Clarendon Avenue, "Garthmore" (1909) at 5 Clarendon Crescent, the Peacock Building (1902) of Upper Canada College at 220 Lonsdale Road, Gundy House (circa 1915) at 43 Russell Hill Road, and the D. T. Symons House (1912) at 6 Warren Road, which are located in the Forest Hill and Poplar Plains neighbourhoods bordering St. Clair Avenue West. This report recommends the inclusion on the city's heritage inventory of fourteen additional properties in Forest Hill and the Poplar Plains area as the first in a planned series of Eden Smith Surveys. The properties contain house form buildings, apart from Grace Church-on-the-Hill at 350 Russell Hill Road.

While Eden Smith designed many local landmarks, including the Studio Building (1913) associated with the Group of Seven and the Wychwood, High Park and Beaches Branches of the Toronto Public Library (1916), his residential projects are among his most recognizable commissions. In particular, Eden Smith is credited with developing "an original Arts and Crafts house appropriate for Toronto and southern Ontario – a process that influenced domestic architecture in Ontario over the next quarter century and helped provide the groundwork for twentieth century housing design" (Brown, 1).