

REVISED REASONS FOR LISTING (June 2014):  
51 PANORAMA COURT  
(STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)

ATTACHMENT NO. 4

The former Sick Children's Hospital (County Branch) Thistletown, now the Thistletown Regional Centre for Children, (built 1927-8 and opened 1928)

Description

The property at 51 Panorama Court is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value. Located on the south side of Panorama Court, east of Kipling Avenue, the main building of the former Sick Children's Hospital, now the Thistletown Regional Centre for Children (1927-8) is a three-storey brick and stone clad hospital structure designed on a T-shaped plan.<sup>1</sup>

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Hospital for Sick Children (Country Branch) now the Thistletown Regional Centre for Children and Adolescents is a fine representative and well-crafted example of a satellite rural hospital designed in the Georgian Classicism style in Toronto. The elements of the style are evident in the symmetry and hierarchy, brick cladding combined with cast stone elements such as the door and window surrounds, the string courses and cornices of the north façade and long colonnade of pilasters and loggia of Tuscan Doric columns on the south facade. An interior feature of special interest is the entry rotunda which is faced in Caen stone, with fluted pilasters, doorcases with pediments and a naturally lit domed skylight with tracery. The setting of the hospital with its curvilinear drive circling through the site as well as the groves of pine trees were significant landscape elements in the design of the "country" branch of the Sick Children's Hospital, and, with the latter, a part of the cure of tuberculosis which affected the majority of patients in the initial stage of the hospital's history. The south-eastern portion of the drive, which terminates just north of Finch Avenue, is part of the original Alexander Cade farm road which led from the homestead to the grist mill and runs parallel to the Humber River.

The design of the satellite branch for the Hospital for Sick Children (Country Branch) has historic and scientific value because it contributes to an understanding of the principles and evolution of healthcare, both physical and mental, for children and adolescents in Ontario and Canada when it opened in 1927-8. Addressing issues of long-term recovery, tuberculosis, polio and autism specifically, the practical care and research embraced a variety of concepts and methods which were increasingly focused on a holistic de-institutionalized approach that consistently encompassed the benefits of a natural landscape setting. The design of the main building adapted the T-shaped plan in order to maximize exposure to sunlight and fresh air needed for long-term recoveries and the treatment of tuberculosis. This was evident in the plan but in particular in the approximately 200' long south-facing patient dormitory wing, whose rooms opened directly onto a boardwalk and upper balcony so beds could be moved outdoors for therapeutic benefits and in the inclusion of pine trees in the planting of the site. The

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<sup>1</sup> The main building is identified as B12353 by current owners Infrastructure Ontario.

design of the building and the layout of the site with the circuitous drive emphasized the dignity and civic pride in the treatment that the hospital provided for their young patients.

The design of the Hospital for Sick Children (Thistletown Branch) is associated with the architects Sproatt and Rolph, partners in one of Toronto's leading firms from 1900-1934 with a reputation for its range of commissions for residential, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings. The practice extended its influence across Ontario and as far away as Manitoba and Nova Scotia. Important projects included the Birge Carnegie Library, Victoria College (1908-10), Hart House (1911-19), Upper Canada College (1923-4), Canada Life Building (1930-31), Royal York Hotel (1927-29 with Ross and Macdonald), and Eaton's College Park (1929-30 with Ross and MacDonald) and the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission Building (1934-5), now the Princess Margaret Hospital.

Contextually, the property at 51 Panorama Court maintains and supports the historical character of this portion of Thistletown as it evolved from a farm with a grist mill to a rural branch of Sick Children's Hospital which comprised 98 acres of countryside bounded by a branch of the Humber River and substantial tree planting, to its current character as an area of mixed use, partly institutional on the south side of the street with the adjacent Rexdale Community Legal Clinic and surrounded by apartment high rises of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century on the north side. Through its dignified Georgian Classical character the hospital building in its Picturesque park-like setting is visually linked to the 1920s history and character of the area and is a key component in the evolution of the neighbourhood's growth and development.

#### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 51 Panorama Court are:

#### The Main Building

- The placement, setting and orientation of the main building including the identified heritage attributes
- The scale, form and massing on a three-storey, T-shaped plan with a flat roof
- The materials, including brick and stone
- The arrangement of the north façade including the central projecting bay, central main entrance, paired windows at the first and second floors and triplet windows on the third
- The stone trim and details of the north entrance including that of the doors, the windows and the belt courses and cornice.
- The keystone on the north façade laid on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1927, by the Honourable G. Howard Ferguson, KCL, Premier of Ontario
- The treatment of the south façade, with its colonnade of pilasters and central loggia with 4 pairs of Tuscan Doric columns at the first floor and the stone window surrounds
- The upper level of the south façade with its stone pilasters supporting a continuous stone lintel and the keyed stone window surrounds

- The stone panels of triple arches and the cornice on the parapet of the south façade
- The rotunda in the entrance hall with its naturally lit skylight, the traceried dome of the skylight, the Caen stone details including pilasters, doorcases and other decorative stone elements

#### Landscape Features

- The circuitous driveway, which originally provided the main entrance access from Islington Avenue at the south-east corner of the site and extends from the south-east corner to the north-west corner of the north wing of the main building (Infrastructure Ontario Building No B12353) with a landscaped setback on either side
- The driveway to the north face of the north wing and the lawn between the driveway and the north face of the building
- The groves of pine trees on the south and west lawns surrounding the 1928 hospital building (Attachment 5 Image 25)

#### Key Views

- The views into the property as marked on Attachment 5 Image 17 including the view north-west to the south façade from the circuitous (former) entrance driveway at the south-east as marked on the aerial view
- The view north-east to the south-west corner of the south façade from the entrance from the circuitous (former) entrance driveway at the western side of the building as marked on the aerial view
- The views south to the north façade of the north wing of the main building across the open space of the lawn between the north façade and the north driveway.