

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:  
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)  
150 LAIRD DRIVE

The property at 150 Laird Drive is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets the criteria stated in Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the three categories of design, associative and contextual values.

Description

The former Durant Motors of Canada, Ltd. office headquarters at 150 Laird Drive is located at the west side of Laird Drive between Markham Avenue and McRae Drive. Built in 1928, the building is a two-storey office building with a flat roof, clad in brick with cast stone details. The property was listed on the Heritage Register in 2007.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The (former) Durant Motors of Canada, Ltd. building has design value as a fine representative of the Late Gothic Revival style typical in the first thirty years of the twentieth century in Canada. However, it is rare in its application for an automobile headquarters building in Toronto. Its design value is further evident in the high degree of both craftsmanship and artistic merit. These qualities are seen in the composition of the building and the articulation of its form with a regular series of window bays separated by buttress-like piers, the decorative Gothic elements and cast-stone details and the brick patterning.

The property has an associative value for its direct association with the evolution of the industrial development of Leaside following World War I and in particular with the Canadian automobile industry, as represented by Durant Motors of Canada, Ltd. and Dominion Motors Ltd., between World War I and II.

The building has contextual value as it is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the Post World War I Town of Leaside as it grew from a railway junction to an independent town. Built in 1928, it is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked with its surrounding on Laird Drive. Its setback and landscaped setting, fine architectural form, details and scale make it an important landmark and a significant contributor to the character of the neighbourhood today.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes on the exterior of the property at 150 Laird Drive are:

- The location as built of the building on the west side of Laird Drive between Markham Avenue and McRae Drive
- The landscaped set-back and the stairs to the main entry facing Laird Drive

- The form and massing of the two-storey volume on a raised basement with a flat roof
- The south, east and north elevations
- The regular rhythm of brick piers and window bays
- The brick cladding including:
  - the standard brick cladding of the elevation
  - the stepped brick piers flanking the windows on all four elevations
  - the decoratively patterned brick panels below the windows and in the parapet
- The cast stone details including:
  - the cast-stone double storey frames of the windows and their sills and headers on all four elevations
  - the square bosses with their floral motifs carved in relief above the second storey windows
  - the cast-stone entry portal in the east elevations with its flattened pointed arch and elaborately moulded opening, vertical panels above with the stepped parapet and pair of shields
  - above the main east entry, the cast-stone tablet set into the parapet and causing a step in its profile
  - the decorative cast-stone band with decorative brick panels below the first storey windows
  - the sloping cast-stone drip-moulds and the cruciform details on the brick piers
- The window well on the east elevation for the raised basement

Please note: later additions to this property, the fire escape stairs and metal clad addition on the west side of the property are not included as part of the heritage attributes.