

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
840 BATHURST STREET

ATTACHMENT NO. 4E

The property at 840 Bloor Street West is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value.

Description

The property at 840 Bathurst Street contains St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, which was completed in 1925 according to the designs of Toronto architect, J. P. Hynes. Following the official organization of St. Peter's Parish in 1896, the current building replaced the first church (1906, on the east side of Bathurst Street, south of Bloor Street West) after the Paulist Fathers were invited to oversee the parish. St. Peter's Church is part of an ecclesiastical enclave on the east of Bathurst Street, north of Bloor Street West that extends west to Markham Street and includes St. Peter's Parish Hall (1928, at 659 Markham) and the Catholic Information Centre (1956, and more recently known as the Paulist Centre for Catholic Evangelization at 830 Bathurst).

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church has cultural heritage value as a well-crafted early 20th century church designed with the hallmarks of the popular Neo-Gothic style, particularly its scale with the oversized spireless tower, the expansive monochromatic surfaces, and the compressed pointed-arched openings.

The church is associated with its architect J. P. Hynes (1868-1958), a Toronto practitioner who specialized in the planning of churches, schools, convents and hospitals for the city's Roman Catholic community, including those he designed while a partner in the firm of Hynes, Feldman and Watson. St. Peter's Church was the last ecclesiastical building that Hynes completed in Toronto.

The property at 840 Bathurst Street is also linked historically to the Paulist Fathers (founded as the Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle in New York City in 1859), who were invited to Toronto in 1914 to oversee St. Peter's Parish along with the Newman Centre as the Roman Catholic chaplaincy for the University of Toronto. In 1938, the Paulist Fathers opened the Catholic Information Centre (most recently known as the Paulist Centre for Catholic Evangelization) at St. Peter's Church, relocating this service to a purpose-built facility at 830 Bathurst Street in 1956. The Paulist Fathers announced their withdrawal from the ministry of St. Peter's Church and the Paulist Centre in June 2015, ending over a century of service in Toronto.

Contextually, St. Peter's Church is historically, visually, physically and functionally linked to its setting on the west side of Bathurst Street directly north of Bloor Street on property that extends west to Markham Street. It forms the centrepiece of a significant institutional enclave that also includes the Parish Hall and Catholic Information Centre that adjoin and complement it.

With its location in a park-like setting that is part of an institutional enclave near the major intersection of Bloor and Bathurst Streets, St. Peter's Church is a local landmark in Seaton Village.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the building known historically as St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church on the property at 840 Bathurst Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the west side of Bathurst Street
- The scale, form and massing of the cruciform-shaped plan with the square tower at the east end, the shallow transepts (north and south), and the single-storey wings (northwest and southwest)
- The materials, with the stone cladding and the stone, wood and glass detailing
- The gable roofs covering the main body of the church and the transepts
- The roof detailing, with the stone coping, and the stone chimney on the rear (west) elevation
- At the east end of the church, the square tower with the corner buttresses with coping stones, the stone band courses and, above the east entry, the stone cross
- The main (east) entrance, which is placed at the base of the tower where three pointed-arched openings contain transoms and paneled wood doors, which are flanked by buttresses and surmounted by a stepped pediment
- The detailing on the tower, with the monumental pointed-arch opening above the east entrance and, near the top on all four faces, the trios of diminutive pointed-arch openings with louvers
- The side walls (north and south), where buttresses organize the pointed-arch openings that are repeated on the transepts
- On the rear (west) wall and the northwest and southwest wings, the segmental-arched and narrow flat-arched openings
- In some of the openings, the stained glass windows depicting the lives of the Saints
- On the interior, the trio of arched entrance doors leading into the nave, the vaulted ceiling in the nave with the decorative detailing on the arches that is repeated on the surrounds marking the sanctuary (west) and the balcony (east)
- The views of the east and south elevations of the church with the tower from Bathurst Street