

## Frederick Connell House

The property at 10 Buchan Court is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

### Description

Located in the area northeast of the intersection of Sheppard Avenue East and Leslie Street, the property at 10 Buchan Court contains a two-storey house form building (completed 1938) that was commissioned by Frederick Connell on farmland formerly occupied for over a century by members of the pioneering Mulholland family. Toronto architects Mathers and Haldenby prepared the architectural plans, and landscape architect Edwin Kay designed the gardens to the south. Beginning in 1943, for over two decades the house was the centrepiece of “Wynyates,” the country estate of Colonel W. Eric Phillips, whose heirs sold the site to North York General Hospital. With the severance of part of the lands, the house form building sits The property at 10 Buchan Court (formerly identified as 1400 Sheppard Avenue East) was listed on the former City of North York’s heritage inventory and, following the amalgamation of the current City of Toronto, included in the Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register).

### Statement of Significance

The Frederick Connell House has design value as a well-crafted example of the Georgian Revival style applied to a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century country estate house. Georgian Revival was popular for residential architecture in Canada during the interwar era and identified by its classical features inspired by earlier prototypes. While symmetry was one of the identifiers of the style, some Georgian Revival buildings, including the Frederick Connell House, feature an overall asymmetrical plan (addressing the orientation of the building on the site and its interior arrangement) while displaying symmetrically arranged features on the individual elevations. On the Frederick Connell House, the distinctive low-scaled asymmetrical plan is created by the projecting frontispieces (north and south) and wings (northwest and southwest), with the extended south elevation and terrace designed to integrate with the adjoining garden. The classical detailing introduced on the exterior, with the elaborate surround on the main (north) entrance and the pedimented gables, is continued inside where original features remain in the first-floor dining room and the stairhall adjoining the reception room inside the north entrance.

The Frederick Connell House is valued for its association with two prominent Canadian entrepreneurs. The house was commissioned by Frederick Martin Connell (1883-1980), an acclaimed mining explorer and developer associated with silver and gold strikes northwestern Ontario in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Connell was awarded the Order of the

British Empire for his service as Canada's Controller of Metals during World War II, and afterward received the International Nickel Company of Canada's Inco Medal (1973) with the citation "placing his name in the foremost rank of those whose names and accomplishments will always be associated with laying broad and firm foundations to one of Canada's greatest industries." In 1943, Connell sold his North York estate known as "Macron Farms" with the subject house to Colonel W. Eric Phillips (1893-1964), who renamed the property "Wynyates Farms." Phillips was a highly decorated soldier in World War I who, as the head of Duplate Canada Limited, became an industry leader in glass production through his partnerships with American and British manufacturers before diversifying and expanding the company. Phillips was named a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his service during World War II as the head of Research Enterprises Limited, an initiative of the Canadian government to produce high optical glass for specialized military equipment. For two decades as the chair of the University of Toronto's Board of Governors, Phillips directed the institution's post-war expansion and, among his innumerable business interests, was a co-founder with E. P. Taylor and other prominent entrepreneurs of Argus Corporation, the powerful investment holding company. Phillips occupied the property at 10 Buchan Court for two decades and, after his death, the property was acquired by North York General Hospital.

The property at 10 Buchan Court has associative value for its design by the Toronto architectural partnership of Mathers and Haldenby. Founded after World War I by Alvin S. Mathers and Eric W. Haldenby, for over 70 years the firm was noted for its adept handling of a succession of architectural styles, the collection of institutional buildings it designed at the University of Toronto's St. George Campus, as well as its high-end residential commissions in Toronto and beyond that included the Frederick Connell House.

Contextually, the property at 10 Buchan Court is historically, visually and physically linked to its setting in the area northeast of the intersection of Sheppard Avenue East and Leslie Street. The Frederick Connell House is historically connected to Oriole, the North York hamlet that originated as a milling community adjoining the Middle Don River that was settled by members of the Mulholland family, who also farmed the land where the subject property stands. As a small part of the large estate formerly known as "Macron Farms," the Frederick Connell House remains in its original hilltop location where it is placed in landscaped grounds with an open lawn, mature trees and stone steps and retaining walls that are important remnants of the original landscape design, along with the views to and from the garden (south) elevation of the house and the south end of the site.

## Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Frederick Connell House on the property at 10 Buchan Court are:

### Exterior Attributes

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building in its original setting on the west side of Buchan Court, north of Sheppard Avenue East
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey house form building above the raised base with the window openings
- The materials, with the buff brick cladding (which was originally painted white), and the brick, stone, wood, metal and glass detailing
- The gable roof with the enclosed end gables (east and west) and the brick chimneys on the ends (east and west) and in the centre
- The brick band course that divides the first and second stories and extends across all of the elevations
- On all of the elevations, the flat-headed window openings with the brick voussoirs and stone sills, which are reduced in height in the second storey and contain multi-paned sash windows (the louvered wood shutters have been removed)
- On the principal (north) elevation, the organization of the wall around the projecting three-bay frontispiece with the enclosed pediment containing the louvered lunette
- At the base of the frontispiece, the main (north) entrance where the panelled wood door and the flat transom with the tracery are placed in the wood surround with the sidelights and the classical detailing
- On the north elevation, west of the frontispiece, the oversized multi-paned stairhall window, the bull's eye window and, above the north service wing, the diminutive flat-headed window opening
- At the west end of the north elevation, the 1½-storey north service wing, which complements the main body of the house with the buff brick cladding, the gable roof with the returned eaves, and the flat-headed window openings with the brick and stone trim and the multi-paned sash windows
- The rear (south) elevation, which was designed to overlook the garden and complements the north elevation in its design with the projecting frontispiece with the enclosed pediment and the louvered lunette
- On the south elevation, east (right) of the frontispiece, the south entrance with the classical wood surround with the sidelights and transoms (the transoms have been altered), the tripartite window opening in the second storey above the entrance and, at the east end, the single-storey curved bay window with the cornice
- On the south elevation, west (left) of the frontispiece, the single-storey wing with the flat roof that contains an entrance to the terrace (east) and the tripartite flat-headed window opening (south) (on the roof, the original wood balustrade has been removed)

- On the east elevation facing Buchan Court, the door and window openings, and the open single-storey verandah that is supported on posts with latticework (the transoms have been altered and the original wood balustrade on the balcony has been removed)
- The west elevation with the fenestration
- Extending along the entire south side of the house where it is accessed from the south entrance, the southwest wing and the east verandah, the original flagstone terrace with the iron railing and the stone steps on the south and east ends

#### Interior Attributes

- On the interior, the first-floor dining room and the reception hall inside the north entrance with the adjoining stairhall
- The interior details, with the square staircase with the balusters and banister (which has been altered) and, in the dining room, the classically-detailed mouldings, wall niches and the fireplace surround and mantel

#### Landscaping and Views

- South of the house, the garden that retains the landscaped space with the open lawn, the mature trees and, at the south end, the recessed area with the stone retaining walls and steps
- The views to and from the rear (south) elevation of the house and the south end of the garden

At the west end of the service wing, the single-storey flat-roofed extension with the red brick cladding is not identified as a heritage attribute.