

**HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT**



**HIGH PARK-ALHAMBRA UNITED CHURCH**  
260 HIGH PARK AVENUE, TORONTO

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services  
City Planning Division  
City of Toronto

March 2016

## 1. DESCRIPTION



Above: archival photograph, High Park Avenue United Church, 1954 (Toronto Public Library, Item 2638); cover: current photograph, 260 High Park Avenue, 2016 (Heritage Preservation Services)

<b>260 High Park Avenue: High-Park Alhambra United Church</b>	
ADDRESS	260 High Park Avenue (southwest corner of Annette Street)
WARD	Ward 13 (Parkdale-High Park)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 795, Lots 1-4
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	West Toronto Junction
HISTORICAL NAME	High-Park Alhambra United Church <sup>1</sup>
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1908 (completed), church
ORIGINAL OWNER	Trustees, Annette Street Methodist Church
ORIGINAL USE	Church and Sunday School
CURRENT USE*	Vacant * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Burke, Horwood and White, architects <sup>2</sup>
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick cladding with brick, stone, wood & glass detailing
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Neo-Gothic
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	1925 (completed), Sunday School wing
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative and Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	March 2016

<sup>1</sup> The church building at 260 High Park Avenue was designed as Annette Street Methodist Church, opened as High Park Avenue Methodist Church, known as High Park Avenue United Church after 1925, and renamed High-Park Alhambra United Church in 1970 when it merged with Alhambra Avenue United Church. The history of the site is outlined in Section 2 of this report

<sup>2</sup> The church was designed in 1907 by Burke and Horwood, but completed the next year when the partners were joined by Murray White, who is credited in the program marking its official unveiling

## 2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 260 High Park Avenue, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in Section 4 (Summary).

### i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

<b>Key Date</b>	<b>Historical Event</b>
1883	In anticipation of the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway's West Toronto freight yard, Plan 553 is registered, subdividing the area southwest of Dundas Street West and Keele Street
1884	The West Toronto Junction Methodist Mission is founded under the direction of Davenport Road Methodist Church
1885	An unfinished church on Annette Street is acquired for the Methodist congregation
1887	The Village of West Toronto Junction is incorporated
1887	The Annette Street Methodist Church is built on the south side of Annette Street between High Park Avenue and Quebec Avenue
1888	Plan 795 is registered, subdividing part of Plan 553 and placing the subject property on Lots 1-4
1889	The Town of West Toronto Junction is incorporated, including the neighbouring villages of Carlton and Davenport
1902	The Methodist trustees purchase a house at 246 High Park Avenue as the manse (minister's residence)
1907 June	Architects Burke and Horwood prepare the plans for the new Methodist church
1907 Sept	The cornerstone is laid for the new church at 260 High Park Avenue
1908 Jan	The City of West Toronto is incorporated
1908 Oct	High Park Avenue Methodist Church is dedicated with Burke, Horwood and White named as architects (the 1887 church is retained as the Sunday School wing)
1909 Jan	The City of Toronto annexes West Toronto
1909 Sept	High Park Avenue Methodist Church is valued at \$65,000 according to the City's tax assessment rolls in the new Ward 7
1915	The church basement is renovated to provide additional Sunday School accommodation
1923	A building committee is established to plan and finance a new Sunday School building
1924 July	The church trustees mortgage the property for \$60,000 to fund a new Sunday School wing (requiring the demolition of the 1887 church)
1925 Jan	The new Sunday School building is opened at a ceremony attended by Toronto Mayor W. W. Hiltz
1925 May	The value of the church complex rises to \$120,000 (from \$65,000 the previous year) according to the tax assessment rolls and reflecting the addition of the Sunday School building
1925 June	The United Church of Canada is created, absorbing all Methodist congregations; High Park Avenue Methodist Church is renamed High Park

	Avenue United Church
1926 Nov	Victoria United Church (comprised of dissenting members of Victoria Presbyterian Church) amalgamates with High Park United Church (no name changes occurs)
1935	High Park Avenue United Church celebrates the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the congregation
1945	The congregation burns the mortgage (1925)
1957	The property at 246 High Park Avenue with the manse is sold, and a new manse is built beside the church (this property was sold in 1969)
1970	High Park Avenue United Church amalgamates with Alhambra Avenue United Church as High-Park Alhambra United Church at 260 High Park Avenue
1990	The property at 260 High Park Avenue is included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register)
1991	Trusteeship of the property at 260 High Park Avenue is transferred to the Hanuhl Congregation, a Korean/English speaking congregation of the United Church of Canada, which shares the premises with High-Park Alhambra United Church
1996	The congregation of High-Park Alhambra United Church disbands
2015	The current owners acquire the property at 260 High Park Avenue

## ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### West Toronto Junction

The property at 260 High Park is located in the West Toronto Junction community. This area remained farm land northwest of the City of Toronto until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Carlton Park Race Course opened as a popular recreational destination (Image 2). In the early 1880s, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) extended its transcontinental line through the area, acquiring two earlier railway lines that formed a junction near the intersection of present-day Dundas Street West and Keele Street (Image 3).<sup>3</sup> As the CPR developed its West Toronto freight yard north of Dundas, industries that included piano manufacturers Heintzman and Company opened near the tracks. With the demand for housing for railway and factory workers, entrepreneur D. W. Clendenan and his partners acquired the former race track lands where an expansive residential subdivision was registered as Plan 553 in 1883 (Image 6). West Toronto Junction became a village in 1884, followed by a town in 1889 when it absorbed neighbouring Carlton and Davenport. The City of West Toronto was incorporated in 1908, one year before it was annexed by the City of Toronto.

Dundas Street West became the community's "Main Street" for business, while Annette Street to the south was the preferred location of many institutions, including schools, the West Toronto Public Library (now the Annette Library, which was completed with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation in 1908), and the West Toronto Masonic Temple

<sup>3</sup> The Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railway (to Owen Sound), followed by the Credit Valley Railway (to St. Thomas) shared a corridor northwest from Union Station before separating at the junction northeast of Dundas and Keele: <http://www.trainweb.org/oldtimetrains/CPR/east.htm>

(1909). By the early 1890s, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches were situated along Annette Street, west of Keele Street, including the predecessor of High-Park Alhambra United Church.<sup>4</sup>

### 260 High Park Avenue

The location of the property at 260 High Park Avenue is depicted on historical maps and atlases, including those included in Section 6 of this report. In 1884 when “Annette Street was then just a quiet country road,” the West Toronto Junction Methodist Mission was established under the auspices of the Davenport Methodist Church.<sup>5</sup> The next year, the trustees acquired a partially built wood church on the corner of Annette Street and Quebec Avenue (Image 7).<sup>6</sup> The rapid growth of the congregation led to its independence as the self-supporting Annette Street Methodist Church, which commissioned a custom-built brick church on the south side of Annette, west of High Park Avenue in 1887 (Image 8). Three years later, a transept was added to the building, more than doubling its capacity to 850 seats (Image 8). “By [1907] West Toronto had grown and developed to such an extent that more accommodation was acquired,” and the large tract on the southwest corner of Annette Street and High Park Avenue was purchased by the trustees.<sup>7</sup> The land and church were partly financed by the estate of Hart Massey, the famed Toronto industrialist and an important Methodist philanthropist.

Designed to face east toward the side street, the new edifice was opened as High Park Avenue Methodist Church (Images 9-12 and 15).<sup>8</sup> The 1887 church was retained, adjoining the west end of the new building as the Sunday School wing (Image 11). The church utilized the interior plan favoured for Methodist churches, with one large open space where “the pulpit platform is well advanced into the auditorium, bringing the preacher into close touch with the congregation,” and the choir and organ “virtually in the main room.”<sup>9</sup> This proximity was further accentuated by the raked floor where the seats were arranged in a “bowled form” with “a perfect view obtained from each,” and the balcony was wrapped around three sides “with the hope of bringing the occupants of the gallery into more intimate touch with those on the main floor.”<sup>10</sup> Above, the roof was described as “supported on four columns, the only ones rising through the gallery, and from these spring arches in all directions forming a central crossing and a span of 42 feet and meeting in an octagonal dome which is of richly panelled tracery.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> While the Anglicans opened the first church in West Toronto Junction in 1883, it was not located on Annette Street. A Roman Catholic congregation was established in the area prior to its acquisition of an existing church on Annette Street in 1895 (the present St. Cecilia’s Church was built in 1909)

<sup>5</sup> Located at present-day 1900 Davenport Road, the property is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

<sup>6</sup> The building was started by a Congregational group and initially intended as a Union church shared by various Protestant denominations

<sup>7</sup> The remainder of the large site was used for both tennis courts and a skating rink, with part subdivided for the manse (which was later severed and sold)

<sup>8</sup> High-Park Alhambra United Church, 260 High Park Avenue, booklet, 1970, unpagged

<sup>9</sup> Toronto Daily Star, October 24, 1908, 5

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

In 1925, the Methodist Church of Canada merged with Congregational churches and most Presbyterian congregations as the United Church of Canada. The High Park Avenue Methodist Church became High Park Avenue United Church. At the neighbouring Victoria Presbyterian Church (1892) at Annette and Medland, the dissenting members who favoured the union were reorganized as the Victoria United Church (Image 16). The latter congregation worshipped in the Sunday School wing at 260 High Park Avenue before merging with High Park Avenue United Church in 1926 as “one of the largest (congregations) in the United Church of Canada.”<sup>12</sup>

The formation of the United Church of Canada coincided with the completion of High Park Avenue United Church’s new Sunday School Building, which replaced the 1887 church at the west end of the complex (Image 13). While the congregation’s inaugural Sunday School class in 1885 welcomed only 16 scholars, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century more than 400 students and nearly 30 teachers required accommodation. “By 1907 the Sunday School was about to take over the whole of the old brick church [1887] and eight years later it had overflowed into the basement of the new church as well.”<sup>13</sup> Pressure to enlarge the complex followed the amalgamation of High Park Avenue United Church with Victoria United Church, increasing the numbers to over 1300 scholars and 142 Sunday School teachers.<sup>14</sup> The Sunday School building was designed to complement the church “in a simplified form suitable for the rectangular-shaped plan necessitated by its practical use.”<sup>15</sup> With the unveiling of the new enlarged large wing, which contained a gymnasium along with classrooms, the complex accommodated what “was said to be the largest United Church Sunday School in Canada in that period.”<sup>16</sup> Up to World War II, the Sunday School was organized into 10 departments with an enrolment of 1550.

Congregational histories note that “High Park has always tried to maintain its spiritual and social influence in the community,” under the leadership of church organizations that included the Ladies’ Aid group (afterward the Women’s Association).<sup>17</sup> Echoing its founding as a Methodist Mission, the congregation both financially supported and provided accommodation for subsequent missions prior to its absorption into the United Church of Canada. In 1903, during the debate in West Toronto Junction over the prohibition of liquor, “Reverend T. E. Shore of Annette Street Methodist Church denounced the town’s hotels as ‘cesspools of harlotry, vice and inequity’ in a sermon...”<sup>18</sup> While organizing and supporting local service groups, the congregation was active during World War I and II assisting parishioners at home and abroad. Veterans of both conflicts were honoured in the church building, with commemorative plaques and

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<sup>12</sup> “High-Park Alhambra United Church,” undated typescript, United Church of Canada Archives, Fonds 289

<sup>13</sup> “High-Park Alhambra United Church, 1885-1985: Our Centennial Anniversary,” typescript, 1985, 14

<sup>14</sup> Church histories indicate that these numbers excluded adult classes, which used the main body of the church

<sup>15</sup> Undated newspaper clipping, United Church Archives, Fonds 289

<sup>16</sup> High-Park Alhambra United Church, 1885-1985: Our Centennial Anniversary,” typescript, 1985, 14

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Myrvold, 22. The next year, the town approved a local option by-law, with portions of West Toronto Junction remaining dry until the 1990s

the dedication of the Casavants organ. A plaque relocated to the new Sunday School building honoured Ruskin H. P. Bell (1903-1920), “who saved two younger comrades from drowning in the Humber River in August 1919.”<sup>19</sup>

In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century in the face of declining membership, High Park Avenue United Church merged with Alhambra Avenue United Church and remained in the High Park Avenue location as High-Park Alhambra United Church (Image 17). Founded by members of Royce Avenue Presbyterian Church in 1909, Alhambra Presbyterian Church occupied a custom-built church at Bloor Street West and Alhambra Avenue in 1923, which was renamed after the majority of the members voted to join the United Church of Canada two years later. A memorial window dating to 1941 and commemorating Alhambra’s first minister was relocated to the High Park premises.<sup>20</sup>

The trusteeship of the property at 260 High Park Avenue was transferred to the bilingual Korean- and English-speaking Hanuhl congregation in 1991. Five years later, High-Park Alhambra United Church disbanded, and the current owners acquired the property in 2015

The property at 260 High Park Avenue was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 1990.

### Architects

High-Park Alhambra United Church was designed by the notable Toronto architects Burke and Horwood and completed by the successor firm of Burke, Horwood and White. Edmund Burke (1850-1919) began his career in 1865 as an apprentice for his uncle, Henry Langley when he was in partnership with Thomas Gundry during the 1860s and as a solo practitioner from 1869 to 1872. During the latter period, Langley received the commission for Metropolitan Methodist Church (1870-82) in McGill Square, which was celebrated as the “Cathedral of Methodism” in Toronto and contributed to Langley’s reputation as the designer of more than 70 ecclesiastical projects. In 1873, Edmund Burke formally joined Henry Langley and another uncle in a decade-long partnership as Langley, Langley and Burke. Following Edward Langley’s retirement, the renamed firm of Langley and Burke continued until the early 1890s. During Burke’s association with Henry Langley, the pair designed local landmarks that included Jarvis Street Baptist Church (1874-75), which reputedly introduced the first auditorium-styled interior in a Toronto church. Previously associated with American designs, the interior featured semi-circular seating on the ground floor with a horseshoe-shaped gallery above that placed the congregants closer to the officiant. This configuration became an important feature in

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<sup>19</sup> High Park Avenue United Church: the Autobiography of Our Congregation, Honouring the Celebration of its 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1960, 33

<sup>20</sup> The five-part window depicting Christ and the writers of the Gospel commemorated Dr. J. Ewing Reid, the first minister of Alhambra Presbyterian Church, and his wife, Eliza Jane Scott Reid

subsequent commissions, where the plan was particularly welcomed by Baptist and Methodist congregations focused on preaching.<sup>21</sup>

Beginning in 1895, Burke formed a partnership with J. C. B. Horwood (1864-1939), who had worked as a draftsman for Langley, Langley and Burke and its successor before relocating to New York City for additional training. With this experience, Horwood was familiar with the Arts and Crafts movement that was influencing church design at the close of the Victorian era. Between 1908 and Burke's retirement in 1919, the firm was known as Burke, Horwood and White when Murray White (1870-1935), another former Langley student who afterward worked in Chicago, joined the partnership.

The commission for the subject property was accepted by Burke and Horwood, with the architectural drawings labeled Annette Street Methodist Church and produced in 1907 (including those attached as Images 9-10). Completed a year later and renamed High Park Avenue Methodist Church, Burke, Horwood and White were credited as the architects according to the program accompanying the official opening of the building. The architects' design approach that "favoured Arts and Craft mode for smaller chapels, while Neo-Gothic assumed importance for larger churches" was reflected in the subject property.<sup>22</sup>

Completed in 1925, the Sunday School building was designed while the church was known as High Park Avenue Methodist Church. Toronto architect F. E. (Franklin Ernest) Belfry accepted the commission in association with Ewart G. Wilson. Belfry (1882-1951) worked for a succession of notable Toronto architectural firms before entering into a brief partnership with James Thomson in 1911. Between 1912 and 1918, Belfry served as architectural superintendent of the buildings department for the Toronto Board of Education where, working directly for the chief architect, he "likely prepared the plans for many school buildings in Toronto," including Keele Street Public School (1913) in the West Toronto Junction neighbourhood.<sup>23</sup> After a stint in Ottawa where his roles included Chief Architect for the City, Belfry returned to Toronto to work with Wilson on the Sunday School for the church at 260 High Park Avenue.

### iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Current photographs of the property at 260 High Park Avenue are found on the cover and in Section 6 of this report. High-Park Alhambra United Church is designed with features of Neo-Gothic design favoured for ecclesiastical buildings in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the Neo-Gothic style, "the taste for varied visual effects found in the High Victorian Gothic churches gives way to a desire for monumentalism and grandeur."<sup>24</sup> Inspired by

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<sup>21</sup> Langley and Burke employed a similar plan in their 1887 design of Trinity Methodist Church (present-day Trinity-St. Paul's United Church) on Bloor Street West, which is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. At the same time, Burke developed a prototype for smaller churches that was published in the Canadian Baptist magazine in 1896

<sup>22</sup> Carr, 37

<sup>23</sup> "F. E. Belfry," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, unpagged

<sup>24</sup> Brousseau, 178



English Perpendicular Gothic churches from the late Middle Ages, the Neo-Gothic style (also known as Modern Gothic) originated in Britain in the 1880s and was introduced to North America in designs for university buildings.<sup>25</sup> The key components of the Neo-Gothic – crenellated towers, monochromatic colour schemes, flat wall surfaces and large windows, including those with Tudor (four-centered) arches – are displayed on High-Park Alhambra United Church.<sup>26</sup>

Anchoring the southwest corner of High Park Avenue and Annette Street, the High-Park Alhambra United Church consists of the church (east) and the attached Sunday School building (west). The church rises one extended storey with a near-square plan above a raised base with window openings. Clad with red brick, the building features brick, stone, wood and glass detailing, with floral-and-leaf patterned glass in many of the openings.<sup>27</sup> The structure is covered by a steeply-pitched gable roof with tall brick chimneys at the rear (west) end where it intersects with the Sunday School wing. Towers of different heights mark the northeast and southeast corners of the principal (east) elevation on High Park Avenue. The church is entered through the towers, with raised entrances on the east faces, as well as one on the north side of the taller tower facing Annette Street. The entrances are recessed in oversized compound Tudor-arched openings (the original doors and transoms have been removed on the east wall and altered on the north elevation). The towers are decorated with brick buttresses with stone coping, pointed-arched and lancet windows with stone trim and, at the top, crenelles. Between the towers, the east elevation is marked by a gabled frontispiece with stone coping and, near the apex of the gable, a diminutive pointed-arch opening. The frontispiece encompasses a monumental Tudor-arched opening with brick and stone mullions, a stone hood mould and continuous stone sill. The stained glass windows in this opening include those relocated from Alhambra Avenue United Church on Bloor Street West.

The long north elevation facing Annette Street and the near-identical south elevation continue the detailing from the principal (east) façade. On each wall, a shallow transept contains a single monumental Tudor-arched window opening and is flanked by single arched openings.

On the interior of the church, the auditorium with the three-sided gallery beneath the vaulted ceiling support on columns is identified as a heritage attribute.

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<sup>25</sup> The most famous example of the style in Toronto is Hart House on the University of Toronto's St. George Campus, which was funded by the Massey Foundation headed by Hart Massey's grandson, Vincent Massey. Hart House is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

<sup>26</sup> The Tudor, or four-centred arch is described as having the point "not very much raised above the springing, and a typical Tudor arch has a very flattened appearance," unlike the more severe pointed arch associated with High Victorian Gothic (Curl, 179)

<sup>27</sup> Following its opening, the windows were described as "leaded cathedral glass carefully designed and having a moderate introduction of colour in quiet tones" (High Park Avenue United Church, Toronto, Ontario: Sixtieth Anniversary, 1885-1945, Booklet, 1945)

The Sunday School building is attached to the west end of the church and complements it in scale, materials and decorative detailing. Above a raised base with window openings, the two-storey Sunday School wing features a rectangular plan that extends south past the south elevation of the church. The flat roofline displays brick detailing, with a stone motif on the north elevation. At the northeast corner of the Sunday School Building, the transition between the church and the wing is marked by a gable-roofed wing with an entrance (north) at the base of the gabled frontispiece with buttresses. The pair of wood doors with transoms is protected by a gable-roofed porch. To the west of this entrance, the north elevation incorporates a frontispiece with an arcade of arched window openings with transoms in the upper storey. The flat-headed window openings on the north, west and south elevations distinguish the Sunday School building from the church, and those on the west wall are organized by buttresses and piers. Another gable-roofed entrance is found on the east wall of the wing as it extends south of the church. This entry, containing double wood doors and transoms, is placed at the base of a frontispiece with an arched window opening in the upper wall.

#### iv. CONTEXT

As shown in Image 1 below, the property at 260 High Park Avenue is located on the southwest corner of Annette Street where High-Park Alhambra United Church is set in a landscaped setting that enables the church and Sunday School wing to be viewed from both streets. It is adjoined by and faces house form and low-rise apartment buildings in the historical residential neighbourhood of West Toronto Junction.

With its position on Annette Street adjoining the intersection of High Park Avenue, High-Park Alhambra United Church is part of an important institutional enclave. The church and Sunday School wing are placed kitty-corner to the former Annette Baptist Church (1888 with additions) at 200 Annette Street, which is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. To the east, St. Cecilia's Roman Catholic Church (1911) and the former Victoria-Royce United Church (1892) are other church buildings that, with their distinctive steeples, contribute to Annette Street. This institutional enclave is completed with the placement of the West Toronto Masonic Lodge (1909) and the Annette Street Branch of the Toronto Public Library (1908) on the south side of the street, west of Medland Street.

### 3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. While the criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto uses it when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The evaluation table is marked "N/A" if the criterion is "not applicable" to the property or X if it is applicable, with explanatory text below.

<b>Design or Physical Value</b>	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	<b>X</b>
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	<b>X</b>
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	<b>N/A</b>

**Well-crafted example of a style and type** - High Park-Alhambra United Church has design value as a well-crafted early 20<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical building with the hallmarks of the Neo-Gothic (also known as Modern Gothic) style, which was developed in Britain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and inspired by English Perpendicular Gothic churches from the late middle ages. The crenellated towers, monochromatic colour scheme, flat wall surfaces and Tudor-arched windows that distinguish the Neo-Gothic from the Victorian Gothic style are displayed on High Park-Alhambra United Church. The attached Sunday School building complements the church in its scale, materials and detailing.

<b>Historical or Associative Value</b>	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	<b>X</b>
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	<b>X</b>
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	<b>X</b>

**Community** - The property at 260 High Park Avenue is historically associated with the evolution of West Toronto Junction, which developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century adjoining the intersection of three railway lines. Incorporated as a village, town and city between 1884 and 1908, West Toronto Junction was noted for the beauty of Annette Street as the setting of the community's churches, library and other institutional buildings, where High Park-Alhambra United Church (then known as High Park Avenue Methodist Church) was completed the year before the municipality was annexed by the City of Toronto.

**Institution** - The cultural value of the High Park-Alhambra United Church is also through its identification as an institution of importance in West Toronto Junction for over a century. From its origins as a Methodist Mission in the 1880s, the congregation occupied two earlier churches on Annette Street before commissioning the current building after the turn of the twentieth century. Renamed in 1925 as High Park Avenue United Church, it became one of the largest congregations in the newly created United Church of Canada following its amalgamation with Victoria United Church. The size and success of its Sunday School classes resulted in the commissioning of a custom-built wing (1925). With its late 20<sup>th</sup> century amalgamation with Alhambra Avenue United Church as High Park-Alhambra United Church, the congregation continued to serve the spiritual and social needs of the community in this location.

**Architect** - High Park-Alhambra United Church is also valued as an important project of the Toronto architectural firm of Burke, Horwood and White, which completed the church after Murray White joined the existing partnership of Burke and Horwood in 1908. The commission for High Park-Alhambra United Church as a Methodist church reflected the evolution of the work of architect Edmund Burke who, after apprenticing and practicing with his uncle, the acclaimed church designer, Henry Langley, continued his execution of notable ecclesiastical designs. High Park-Alhambra United Church was indicative of Burke, Horwood and White’s preference for Neo-Gothic styling for their large-scale church projects.

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	<b>X</b>
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	<b>X</b>
iii. landmark	<b>X</b>

**Character** – Contextually, the property at 260 High Park Avenue defines, maintains and supports the character of West Toronto Junction as it developed as an independent municipality prior to its annexation by the City of Toronto in 1909. In the community that was established southwest of the railway junction where Dundas Street West served as the “Main Street”, Annette Street became the east-west corridor through the residential sector of West Toronto Junction and the setting of important institutional and ecclesiastical buildings, including High Park-Alhambra United Church.

**Surroundings** – The property at 260 High Park Avenue is also historically, visually, physically and functionally connected to its setting on the southwest corner of Annette Street where it contributes to the important collection of churches that characterizes the street between Medland Street (east) and High Park Avenue (west). The former Annette Street Baptist Church (1888) at 200 Annette and Victoria-Royce Presbyterian Church (1892) at 152 Annette are included on the City of Toronto’s Heritage Register along with High Park-Alhambra United Church.

**Landmark** - With its appearance and location on an expansive site adjoining the prominent intersection of High Park Avenue and Annette Street, High Park-Alhambra United Church is a local landmark in West Toronto Junction.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 260 High Park Avenue has cultural heritage value for its design, associative and contextual values. High Park-Alhambra United Church (1908) is a well-crafted example of the Neo-Gothic style applied to an early 20<sup>th</sup> century church by the important Toronto architectural firm of Burke, Horwood and White, which is complemented by the attached Sunday School building (1925). The property is historically associated with the development and transition of West Toronto Junction from an independent municipality to an important neighbourhood in Toronto. It contributes to the character of West Toronto Junction where it is part of the institutional

enclave of churches and public buildings on Annette Street. Anchoring an expansive site that adjoins the prominent intersection of High Park Avenue and Annette Street, High Park-Alhambra United Church is a local landmark in West Toronto Junction.

## 5. SOURCES

### Archival Sources

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan 553, Block 15, Lots 16-18, and Plan 795, Lots 1-4  
Archival Photographs, City of Toronto Archives, Toronto Historical Board and Toronto Public Library (individual citations below)

Assessment Rolls, West Toronto, 1906-1908, and City of Toronto, Ward 7, 1909 ff.

Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York

City of Toronto Directories (including suburban directories), 1885 ff.

Goad's Atlases, 1884-1924

"High-Park Alhambra United Church," Local History Files and Fonds 289, United Church

of Canada Archives

- "Description of Our Church," program, October 25, 1908
- "High Park-Alhambra disbands amid shrinking membership," The Villager, June 1996
- High-Park Alhambra United Church, booklet, 1970
- "High-Park Alhambra United Church," undated typescript
- "High-Park Alhambra United Church, 1885-1985: Our Centennial Anniversary," typescript, 1985
- "High Park Avenue United Church: the Autobiography of Our Congregation, Honouring the Celebration of its 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," typescript, 1960
- High Park Avenue United Church, Toronto, Ontario: Sixtieth Anniversary, 1885-1945, booklet, 1945
- "Historical Sketch: Memorial Service for Members of the Various Brotherhoods of Railway Men who have Died During the Year," High Park Avenue Methodist Church, program, 1908
- "It's a Loss, Not a Failure," The West Toronto Times, June 11, 1996

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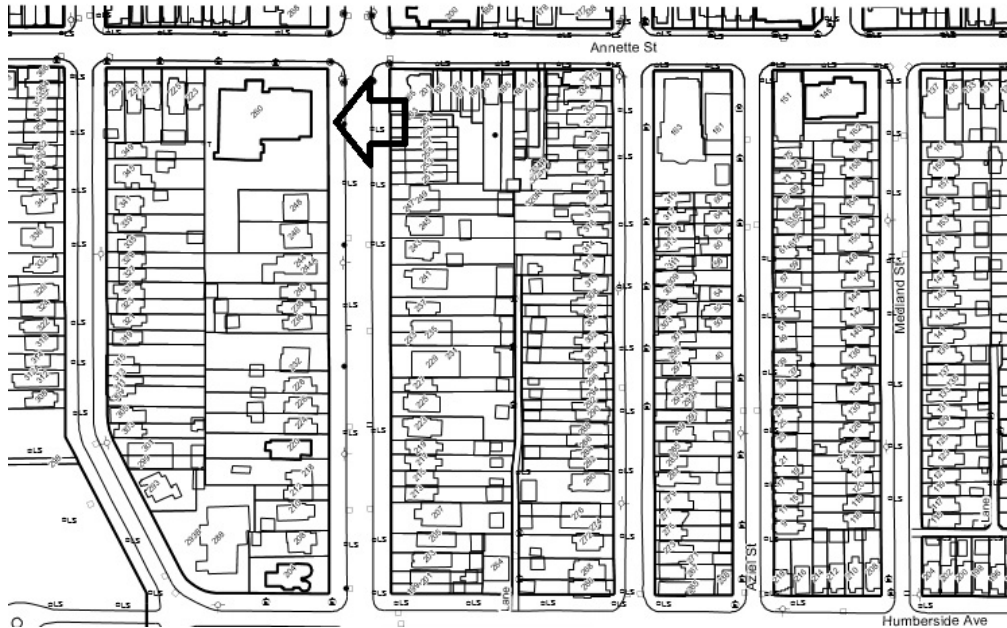
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- “Victoria Presbyterian may occupy High Park Sunday School,” Toronto Daily Star, January 27, 1925, 2

6. IMAGES – maps and historical atlases are followed by other archival images. The **arrows** mark the location of the property. All images are oriented with north on the top unless indicated.



1. Location Maps, 260 High Park Avenue: showing the location of the subject property on the southwest corner of High Park Avenue and Annette Street (above), and as part of a streetscape of institutional buildings (below) (City of Toronto Property Data Map, above, and [www.bing.com/maps](http://www.bing.com/maps), below).



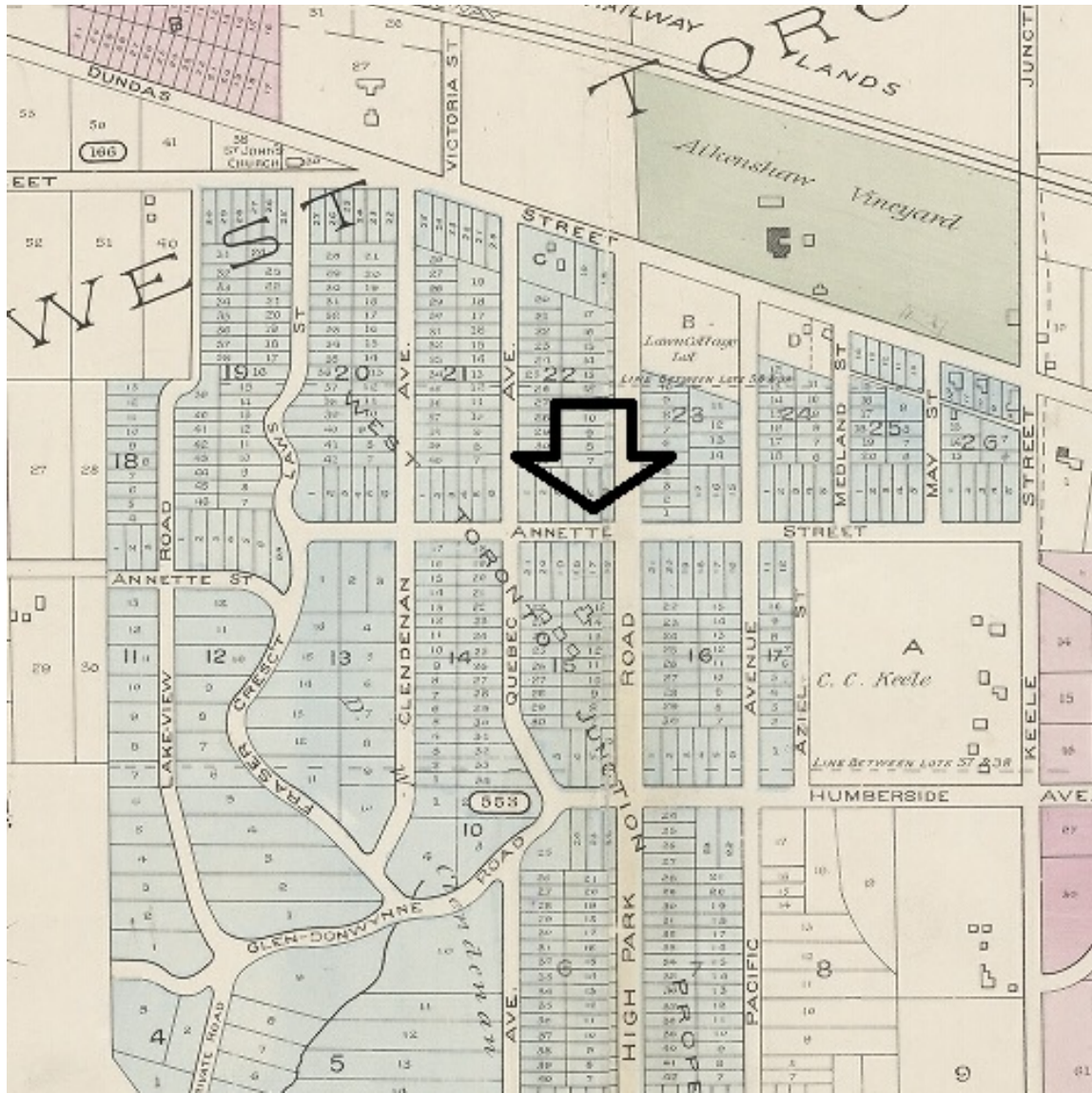
1860



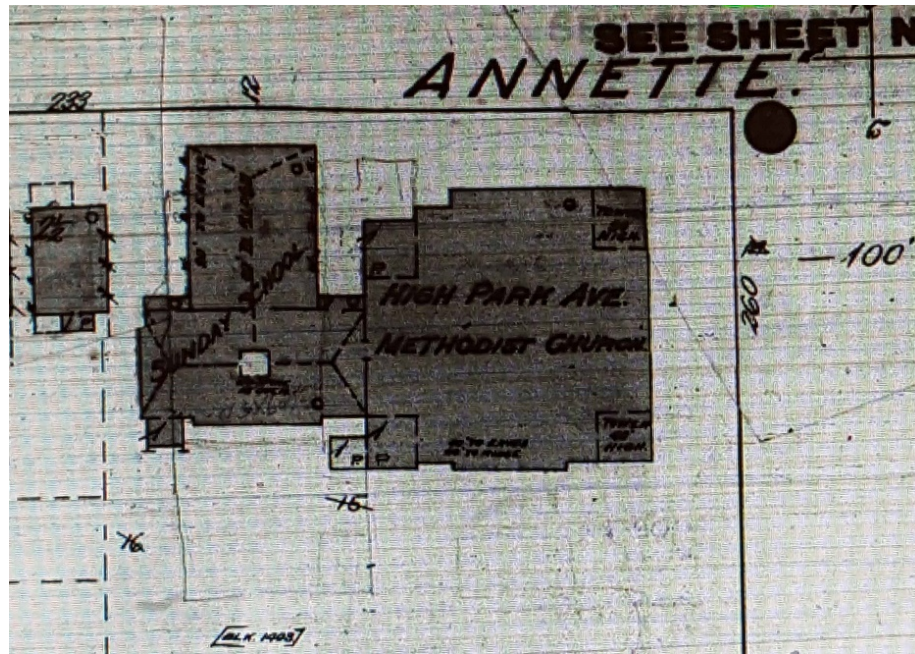
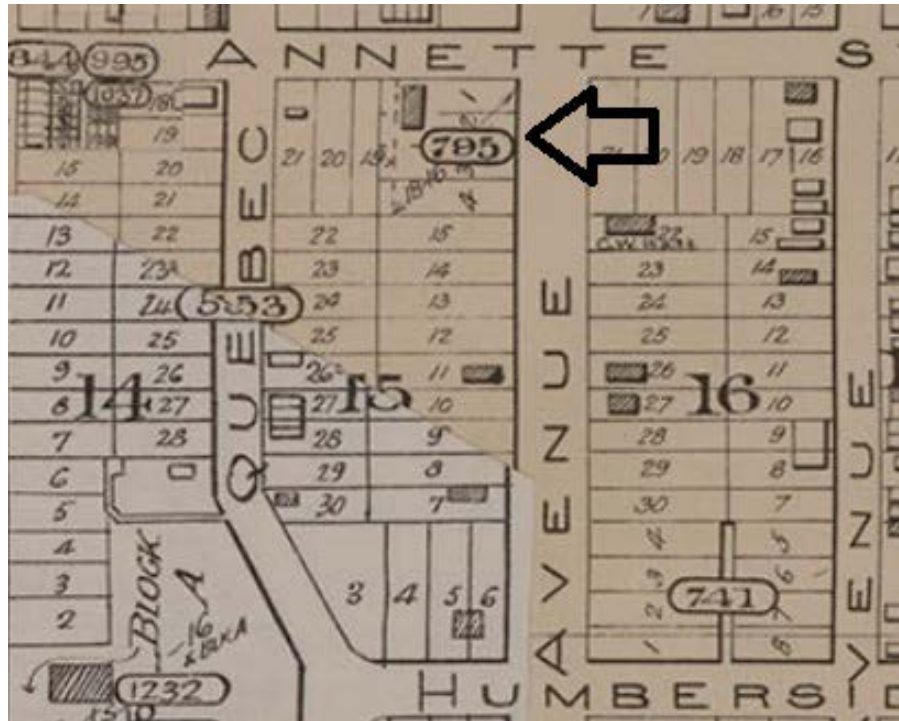
1878

2. Historical Atlases, 1860 and 1878: showing the future site of the subject property in the neighbourhood that developed adjoining the junction of the railway lines in West Toronto (Tremaine's Map of the County of York and the City of Toronto, 1860, and Miles and Company's Atlas of the County of York, 1878).

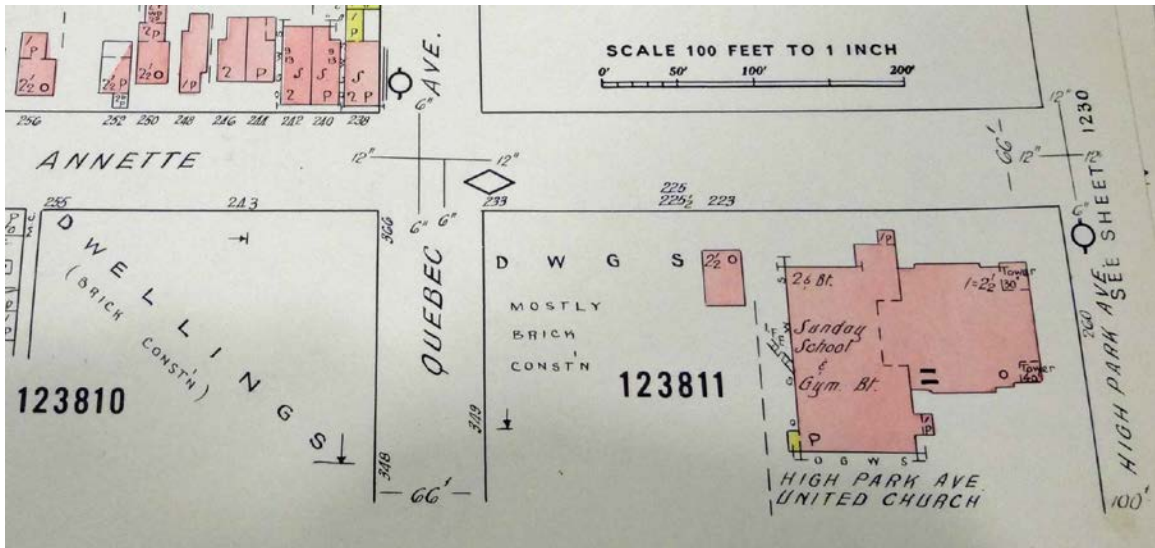




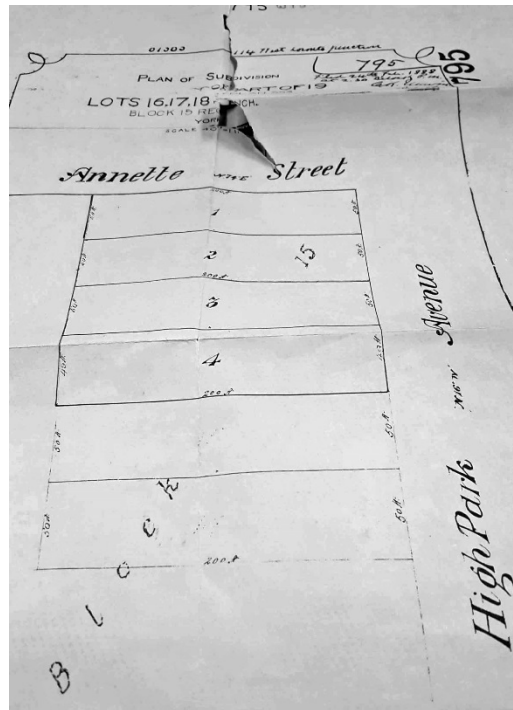
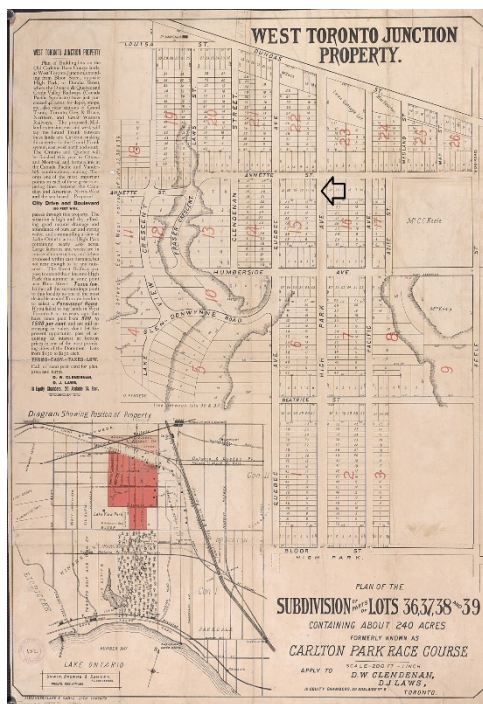
3. Goad's Atlas, 1884: the first atlas illustrating the area shows West Toronto Junction at the time it was incorporated as a village with the residential subdivisions adjoining Dundas Street (the main commercial street) and Annette Street (where institutional buildings were located).



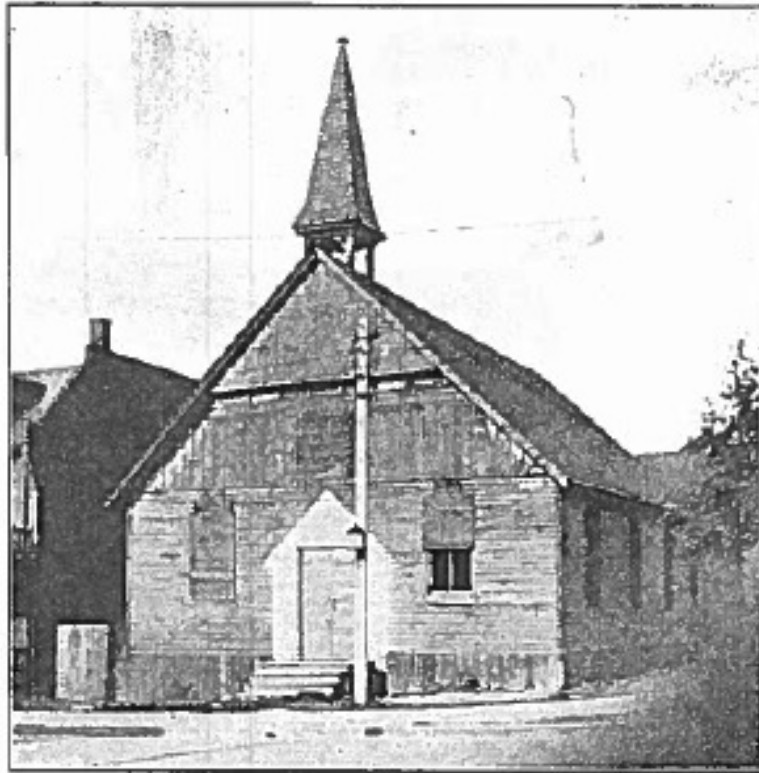
4. Goad's Atlases, revised to 1903 (above) and 1912 (below): showing the subject property with the first Annette Street Methodist Church dating to 1887 (above), and its conversion to a Sunday School building after the addition of the 1908 structure first known as High Park Avenue Methodist Church on the east end of the site (below).



5. Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1965: showing the High Park Avenue United Church with the attached Sunday School wing dating to 1925.

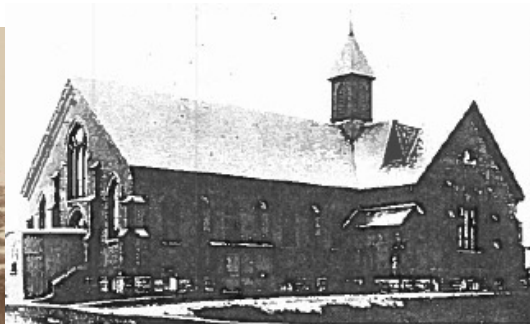


6. Plan 553, 1883 (left) and part of Plan 795, 1888 (left): showing the subdivision of the former Carlton Park Race Course for residential lots (left), and the further subdivision of part of the area under Plan 795 where the subject property is located on Lots 1-4 (Toronto Public Library, Item 39, and Toronto Land Registry Office).



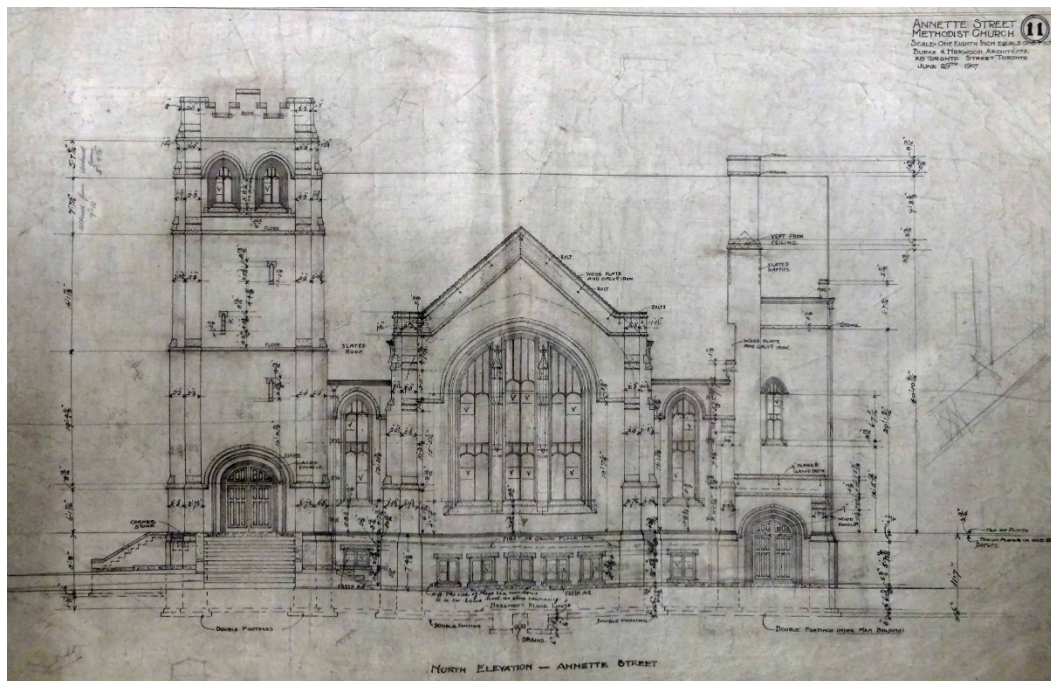
**THE FIRST CHURCH**

7. Archival Photograph, West Toronto Junction Methodist Mission, undated: showing the first church dating to 1885 (High Park Avenue United Church: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, booklet, 1945, 5).

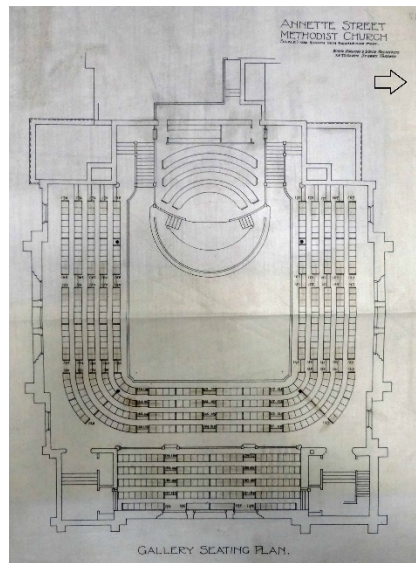
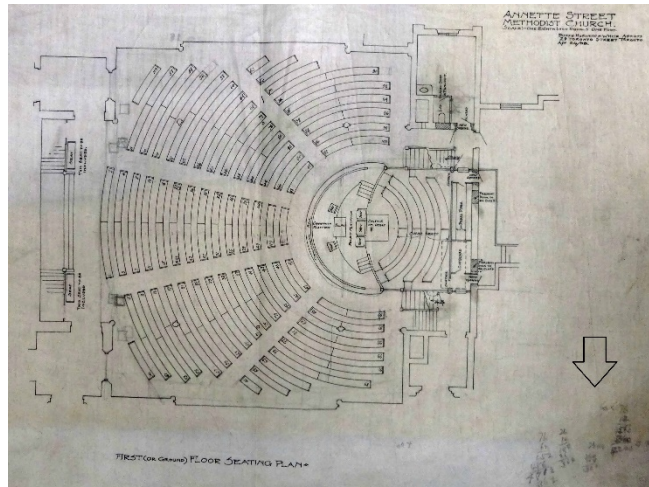
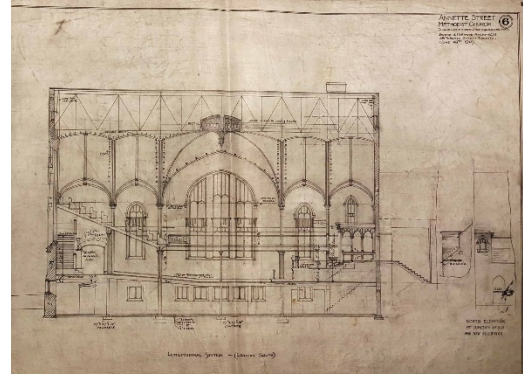
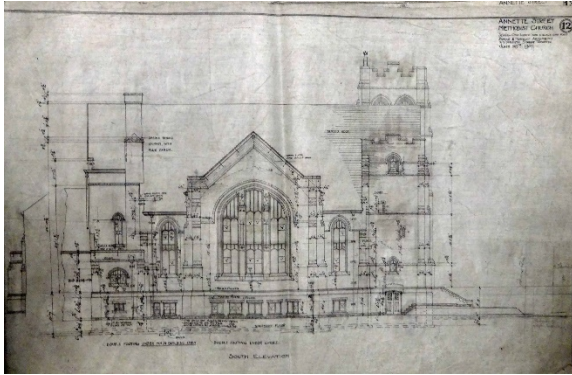


**THE ANNETTE STREET CHURCH**

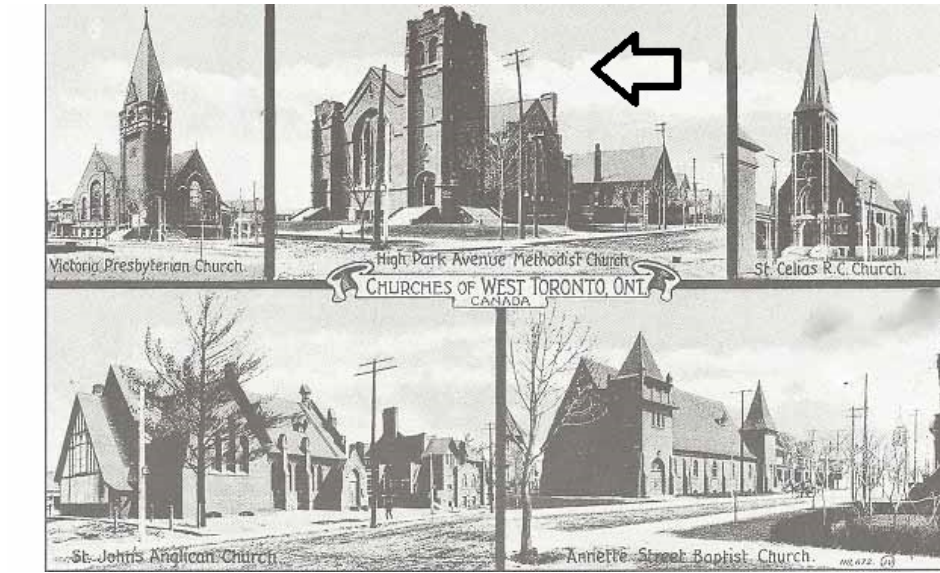
8. Archival Photographs, Annette Street Methodist Church, undated: showing the first brick church (1888) on Annette Street, west of High Park Avenue (left), which was extended with a transept in 1890 (right) and became the Sunday School wing of the 1908 church (Toronto Public Library, Item 4628, and High Park Avenue United Church: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, booklet, 1945, 9).



9. Architectural Drawings, Annette Street Methodist Church, 1907: showing the east elevation on High Park Avenue (above) and the north elevation on Annette Street (below) (Archives of Ontario, Horwood Collection, C11-187).



10. Architectural Drawings, Annette Street Methodist Church, 1907: showing the south elevation (top left), the section looking south and showing the vaulted ceiling (top right), the floor plan (centre) and the gallery seating plan (bottom) (Archives of Ontario, Horwood Collection, C11-187).



11. Archival Photograph, Churches of West Toronto, undated: photographed prior to the formation of the United Church of Canada and completion of the current Sunday School building in 1925, the subject property is the largest church complex depicted (reproduced in Leader and Recorder, 1996, 8).



12. Archival Photograph, High Park Avenue United Church, 1945: showing the church complex with the purpose-built Sunday School building at the west end (right) (High Park Avenue United Church: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1945, cover).



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILDING

13. Archival Image, Sunday School Building, High Park Avenue United Church, 1945: showing a sketch of the 1925 Sunday School wing (High Park Avenue United Church: 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1945, 13).

THE UNITED CHURCH OBSERVER  
BURN MORTGAGE ON SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

Taking part in the ceremony of mortgage burning at High Park Church, Toronto, Ont., were, left to right: Mrs. A. L. Tonkin, Mr. J. R. Jackson, Rev. F. E. Howley James, Mr. J. R. Seaman, Mrs. F. J. Johnston, and, in the background, Mr. Malcolm Strachan.

**High Park Church, Toronto, Marks End of Indebtedness**

High Park Avenue United Church, Toronto, Ont., celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in November and as part of the celebration burned the mortgage which had been arranged when the large Sunday school building was built twenty years ago. In addition to paying off its indebtedness, the congregation decided

to make needed improvements including a new lighting system and redecoration of the auditorium and to do this took up an Anniversary Offering of more than \$14,000, of which over \$9,000 was in cash, the balance to be paid in 1946. The work will be done as materials and labour are available. Two new ministers were called to this large congregation last summer and are giving vigorous leadership in all departments of congregational life. Rev. F. E. Howley James who came from Wesley Church, Fort William, and Rev. Frank G. Patterson from Larder Lake.

14. Archival Photograph, United Church Observer, 1945: celebrating the burning of the mortgage secured to finance the Sunday School wing 20 years earlier (United Church Archives, Local History Files).





15. Archival Photograph, High Park Avenue United Church, c. 1950: showing the interior of the church with the vaulted ceiling supported on columns above the raked floor, the gallery extending along three sides of the auditorium, and the platform with the pulpit favoured by Methodist churches to reduce the distance between the officiant and the congregation (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Item 301).



16. Archival Photograph, Victoria Presbyterian Church, 1956: showing the neighbouring church at Annette and Medland where, following the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925, part of the congregation left to form Victoria United Church before joining High Park Avenue United Church (Toronto Public Library, Item 3791).



17. Archival Photograph, Alhambra Avenue United Church, undated: showing the building completed in 1923 as Alhambra Avenue Presbyterian Church, whose congregation joined the United Church of Canada in 1925 and amalgamated with High Park Avenue United Church in 1970 as High-Park Alhambra Avenue United Church (High-Park Alhambra United Church, 1885-1985: Our Centennial Anniversary, 1985).



18. Archival Photograph, 260 High Park Avenue, 1990: the church and Sunday School wing are shown at the time the property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) (Toronto Historical Board).



19. Archival Photographs, 260 High Park Avenue, 1993: showing the church and Sunday School wing (above), and the Sunday School Building (below) with the north (left) and west (right) elevations (Toronto Historical Board).



20. Current Photographs: showing the east elevations of the church and Sunday School wing on High Park Avenue (above) and the north elevations of both buildings on Annette Street (below) (Heritage Preservation Services, 2016).



21. Current Photographs, Sunday School Building, 2016: showing the east and west elevations (above) and the south and east elevations (below) with the east entrance (Heritage Preservation Services).



22. Current Photographs, 260 High Park Avenue, 2016: showing the detailing of the stained glass windows on the church (above left), the north entrance to the church (above right), and its context on Annette Street as part of a significant group of ecclesiastical buildings (below) (Heritage Preservation Services).