

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)
958 BROADVIEW AVENUE

ATTACHMENT NO. 3

The property at 958 Broadview Avenue 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 all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

Description

Located on the west side of Broadview Avenue, between Chester Hill Road and Pottery Road in the Broadview North neighbourhood, the property contains the former Chester Public School, now known as Estonian House. The original school building, complete in 1891, was a two-and-a-half storey, red-brick building with a bell tower on its south-east corner. The roof of the bell tower was removed prior to 1953. Following its purchase by Estonian House in 1960, a single storey addition including a new entrance and hall was constructed in 1962-3 to the rear, west elevation. A four-storey addition on the front, east elevation was completed in 1975 and an addition for accessibility was constructed on the north side elevation in 1995.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The former Chester School is a representative example of a late 19th century village school combining the American Richardsonian Romanesque and British Queen Anne styles. The elements of the Richardsonian Romanesque style are evident in the overall square massing with a complex silhouette created by a variety of roofs, projecting bays, a tower and two prominent chimneys, the use of red brick with rough-hewn red stone and with large arched openings. The Queen Anne style is present in the classicizing presence evident in the proportions of the pediments of the gable roofs, the regular symmetrical disposition of the windows, and in the rubbed and moulded brick elements seen in the tower. The school building displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit in its massing and composition as well as in its combination of details and the originality expressed in the hybrid of the two popular late 19th century architectural styles.

Chester School/Estonian House is the oldest surviving school of the former municipality of East York and is valued for its 135 year association with the historic villages of Chester and Todmorden, East York and the current Broadview-Danforth neighbourhood. It is associated with the earliest development of the late 18th century mills on the Don River, the development of Broadview Avenue from an Aboriginal trail and the growth of the surrounding community. The historic school is also valued for its association with the Helliwell family who gave Todmorden its name, farmed the land on which the school was built and whose descendent Grant Helliwell, one of the two architects of the school, was born in Todmorden. Since 1960, under the ownership of Estonian House (in Toronto) the property has been associated with the Estonian community, housing the

Estonian Consul, the Estonian Credit Union and providing for a variety of cultural, institutional and local community functions.

Chester Public School/Estonian house has contextual value as it is a community landmark on Broadview Avenue and is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings. It provides a transition between the divergent scales of the single family houses to its south and the towers in the park to the north. Situated on the top edge of the ravine on a narrow wedge of property determined by the course of the Don River, it is part of the unique historical relationship between the 220 year old community and the Don River and Valley.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the former Chester Public School, now known as Estonian House, completed in 1891 on the property at 958 Broadview Avenue are:

- The placement, set back and orientation of the building, as it is located on the west side of Broadview Avenue.
- The massing and composition of the building on a square plan with a central hipped roof, projecting bays on the north, west and south elevations, with gable roofs on the north and south bays, a tower at the south-east corner, and two prominent chimneys
- The original north, west, and south elevations
- The original east elevation with a projecting bay and gable roof now partially concealed within the 1975 extension
- The window openings on the south elevation with the flat-headed first floor and basement window openings, the flat-headed and semi-circular arched window openings on the second floor level, the trio of semi-circular arched openings in the pediment of the gable roofs on the south elevation and east elevations
- The window openings on the west elevation with the semi-circular arched window openings on the second floor level
- The window openings on the north elevation with the flat-headed first floor and basement window openings, and semi-circular arched window openings on the second floor level
- The semi-circular arched openings in the tower on the south and east faces (the east opening is partially concealed by the 1975 addition)
- The materials including the red brick, and sandstone
- The decorative brick details of the building comprising the brick string courses at the basement level, at the second story around the window heads, at the eaves and around the trio of windows in the pediment of the east gable roof as well as the upper tower openings. There is also decorative brick string coursing at the first floor level window adjacent to the tower on the south elevation. The brick details also comprise the rectangular panels in red brick beneath the second floor windows on the south elevation, and on the south face of the tower, the decorative moulded brick scrolls beneath the arched opening and the engaged moulded brick columns to either side of the arched tower openings. The brick details also

- comprise the decorative string course of checkerboard pattern bricks just below the tower roof eaves.
- The stone details comprise the rough hewn stone foundation, and string courses at the lintel level of the flat-headed windows at first and second floor levels windows and sill level of the second floor windows and also at the sill level of the arched opening in the tower.

The 1962-3, 1975 and 1995 additions are not included in the heritage attributes