

Heritage Committee

PRESENTATION ON 35 DINNICK - INTENTION TO DESIGNATE, AGENDA ITEM PB 35.6, June 20, 2018

Opposition to Intent to Designate

Author: Angus Skene Architect - for Owner of 35 Dinnick Dr. Victor Spear - *As read to Heritage Committee,*

1. Introduction

My name is Angus Skene. I am an architect with a lot of heritage experience. I list some in the endnotes for reference.

I represent Dr. Victor Spear the owner of 35 Dinnick crescent

Dr. Spear opposes the intention to designate his home

Dr. Spear has proposed a complete redesign of his proposal to Paul Maka at Heritage Preservation Services. Mr. Maka feels he will likely be able to support the revised proposal.

None the less Heritage Preservation Services is proceeding with their Intent to Designate.

Please note that this property has never been listed on the City's inventory and has not been cited in any of the City or community heritage research or publications for this area.

Dr. Spear feels he has been singled out for this action despite his expressed willingness to compromise.

We feel this is a Divide and Conquer strategy by Heritage Toronto with the hopes of attaining further justification for their well-publicized Heritage Conservation District aspirations.

To understand our opposition, it will help to understand a bit more about the building.

2. The Story of 35 Dinnick

The story of 35 Dinnick starts in the summer of 1923 when John E. Hoare Senior. - a newly retired player-piano manufacturer built a house on spec. He had bought lot 64 in the failed Lawrence Park Estates subdivision. His 23-year-old son - John E. Hoare Junior - was living at home and drew up the plans. Junior called himself an architect but back then anyone could. A few years before Junior had been a clerk. The poor drafting and lettering skills on the permit drawings for 35 Dinnick show him as young man of limited training.

Albert E. Knox lawyer and his wife Olga bought the completed house in the summer of 1924. Albert did not commission Architect Hoare to design the house. Albert lived there for about 15 years, had a few kids and then died. Olga and the kids were then tossed almost immediately. Albert had borrowed against the house and the lender foreclosed.

Olga would have something to say about this so-called "Albert E. Knox House".

3. The Three Tests - the Three Arguments:

Heritage Preservation Services recommends designation based on three tests:

- *Design Value*
- *Associative Value*
- *Contextual Value.*

I will deal with them in that order.

The first is Design.

4. Argument One - Against Designation based on Design Value

Heritage Preservation Services proposes Design Value in two different ways - one based on Style the other on Craftsmanship.

Regarding Style: The style of 35 Dinnick is too common to warrant designation. It is a speculative builders version of some very fine, expensive houses built around 1900 in England. Around here they call it Arts and Crafts or Tudor Revival but at its best it's always degraded from the English originals. The builder's variant like we have at 35 Dinnick is even worse and basically just cherry picks some superficial forms and details- that's how a few 1x6 pine boards nailed to the wall become the "half timbering" proposed as significant in the staff report. Heritage Preservation Services seems easy to impress: They also note the symmetrical plan of 35 Dinnick as 'distinguishing' as if it is some kind of an achievement. The plan was simply a choice and like the style, does not reflect any significant design value.

Regarding Craft: There is little or no craft value at 35 Dinnick Crescent. This building was created by an industrialized construction industry- just like today. From the wood framing to the brick, the boilers, windows, doors, mantles, trim, plumbing and radiators were all factory made and transported to the site. A look into any construction magazine from 1880 on will make this clear. It's all ads for factory made products. Products intended for use by workers no more or less skilled than people working construction today

Those are my arguments regarding Design Value.

I will now address number Two - Associative Value.

5. Argument Two - Against Designation based on Associative Value

Heritage Preservation Services asserts two ways in which 35 Dinnick has Associative value: The first is through association with the original development and the second through association with the self-styled architect John E. Hoare.

Regarding Lawrence Park Estates: Built after the failure of the Lawrence Park Estates speculation the people who built and bought 35 Dinnick can have only a tangential relationship to the original real estate salesmen. Regardless Heritage Preservation Services proposes that as an artifact of material culture 35 Dinnick can help provide a greater understanding of the development of the area. But the same can be

said for any other physical artifact in the area - a house, a bench or sewer grate. This argument leads to nonsense and does not hold up as a basis for determining heritage value. Furthermore, the most appropriate associative value building has been listed since 1979 and been designated since 2004. It is 77-79 St. Edmunds Drive - the home of the original developments founder. It is reasonable to ask how many associative artifacts in this area need designation. Over the last forty years people have agreed on one. We say one is enough.

Heritage Preservation Services then argues that 35 Dinnick has value through association with architect John E. Hoare Junior.

Regarding John E. Hoare Junior Architect: John E. Hoare was a practicing architect. Like thousands of others. He lived and worked. His body of work has no outstanding merit. Any qualities it may possess are typical for their time and easily sourced by him from larger, more important work. To our knowledge he never received any significant honours or awards from any professional or public body.

In their 2007 book, A Historical Walking of Lawrence Park, authors and longtime heritage activists Barbara Myrvold and Lynda Moon list the Major Architects of Lawrence Park. John E. Hoare Junior is not one of them.

His importance is being built up in the staff report to inordinate proportions. His work does not merit designation.

6. Argument Three - Against Designation based on Contextual Value

The final argument put forth by Heritage Preservation Services is one of contextual value - essentially that this building is so critical to the maintenance of the 'character' and 'harmony' of the area that it must be designated.

The area is already home to a diverse set of building types and yet retains its longstanding leafy, peasant and highly desirable atmosphere. The context can withstand diversity and frankly in midsummer you can barely see the buildings on many lots for the trees.

Any value 35 Dinnick may contribute to its surroundings could be duplicated by another building of similar scale and similar landscape open space. The current zoning bylaw and planning process ensures such scale and landscape open space would be maintained so designation based on context is not required.

It should further be noted that much of the areas character comes from the road pattern and the mature City owned trees and the extensive plantings taken on by owners in the City owned. The City fully regulates the continued existence of these features through its bylaws governing trees and landscaping and construction in boulevards.

That ends my arguments regarding the Three Tests for designation.

7. Errors in Assessment of so-called Heritage Features

I would like to point out errors in Heritage Preservation Services' assessment of the building:

Windows: Heritage Preservation Services cites the "multi-paned windows" as a 'heritage feature". Most of the windows are new and were installed by Dr. Spear within the last few years.

Front Porch: Heritage Preservation Services cites the "front porch and roof with two square posts" as a 'heritage feature". The columns and porch were added within the last twenty years. Both are modern constructions.

This lack of Heritage Preservation Services staff to be able to discern OLD from NEW is deeply disturbing.

Please refer to the attached photographs.

8. Closing and Questions

Thanks for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

In the interests of brevity, I have kept the presentation as short as I could, but I know a great deal more about this all of this than I have written here.

9. Sources

- Census of Canada 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921
- City of Toronto Directories 1895 - 1988, Toronto Public Library
- Myrvold Barbara and Lynda Moon, Historical walking Tour of Lawrence Park rev ed 2007
- Title Search Lot 64, Plan 1485

10. About the Author

- As an architect have been renovating and adding to older Toronto buildings since 1987.
- Created Heritage Building Inventory for the City of Cambridge.
- Created detailed study on evolution of the Breithaupt Tannery Complex for the City of Kitchener
- Created the popular television series Structures - focusing on Toronto's history and architecture.
- Writer of twenty popular articles for the Toronto Star focusing on Toronto's history and architecture.
- Taught at U of T Continuing Education Department on Toronto's history and architecture
- Developed and lead many tours on Toronto's history and architecture and into Buffalo New York.
- Recipient of numerous Heritage Toronto awards for these various activities.



Figure 1 : Modern Wood Framing of Porch Column incorrectly cited as a Heritage Attribute

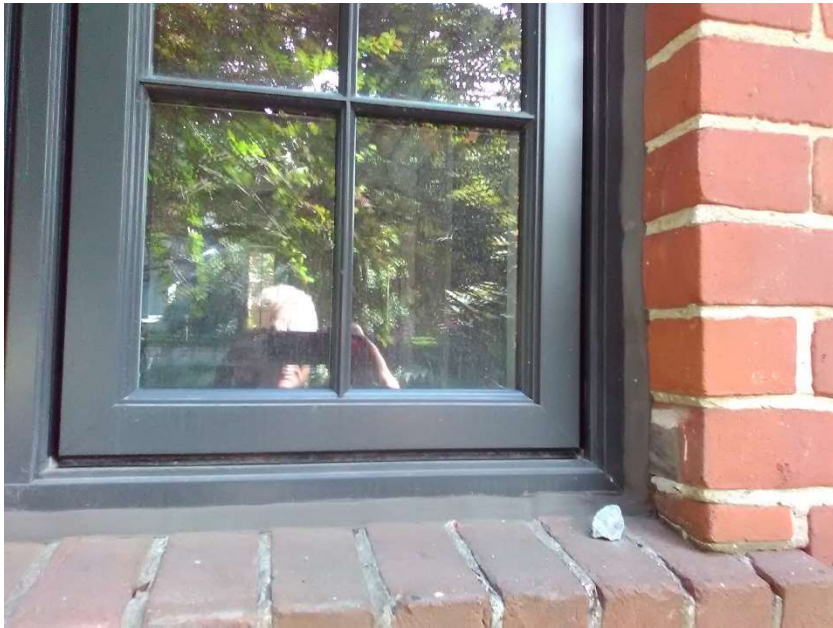


Figure 2 Modern Window incorrectly cited as a Heritage Attribute



Figure 3: Modern Aluminum Soffits throughout



Figure 4: View of the West Elevation from the Street