TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register – 901 Lawrence Avenue West

Date: June 25, 2018
To: Toronto Preservation Board
North York Community Council
From: Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division
Wards: Ward 15 - Eglinton Lawrence

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council include the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. The property is located to the west of Dufferin Street on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West.

The property contains the Columbus Centre, which is the focal point of a landscaped setting at the heart of a campus of properties all with strong associations to the Italian community since 1972. The property also contains the former St. Mary's Training School and grounds operated by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd from 1941-1973.

Following research and evaluation, staff have determined that the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, which the City applies when considering properties for inclusion on its Heritage Register.

The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West has been the subject of a redevelopment application which would result in the demolition of the Columbus Centre.

The inclusion of 901 Lawrence Avenue West on the City's Heritage Register would identify the property's cultural heritage values and heritage attributes. Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained in accordance with the Official Plan Heritage Policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Urban Design, City Planning, recommends that:

1. City Council include the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West (the Columbus Centre) on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in accordance with the Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion), attached as Attachment 3 to the report (June 25, 2018) from the Director, Urban Design, City Planning.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of April 26, 27 and 28, 2017, City Council requested the Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services to research and evaluate the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West for potential inclusion on the City's Heritage Register and to report back to the Toronto Preservation Board and the North York Community Council with the conclusions of the evaluation.

http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.MM28.55

COMMENTS

A location map (Attachment 1) and photographs (Attachment 2) are attached. In late 2017, City Planning engaged an independent consultant, Ellen Kowalchuk of Common Bond Collective, to undertake preliminary research and evaluation of the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West. Staff undertook further research and evaluation to complete the attached Research and Evaluation Summary (Attachment 4) for the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act that the City also applies when considering properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register under the two categories of historic and contextual values. The northern wing of the Villa Colombo is also located on the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West but it has not been included in this heritage evaluation.

The property has historic value for its association with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and St. Mary's Training School originally constructed in 1941. It is also valued for its association with Italian Canadian Benevolent Association (now known as Villa Charities) who from 1969, through a lengthy campaign of personal initiative, dedication and extensive fund-raising, created a community campus containing facilities for the elderly, and for those in need of care and respite as well as day care, recreational and cultural facilities. In 1980, with the construction of the Columbus Centre and the renovation of St. Mary's, the expanded facilities provided were "dedicated to the spirit of multi-culturalism" in Toronto while maintaining a cultural heritage focus for the Italian-

Canadian community. Situated on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West, the Columbus Centre, has contextual value as it is visually, physically and historically linked to its surroundings. The Columbus Centre rotunda is a focal point within the landscaped setting of mature trees and an Italian sculpture garden, surrounded by the Villa Colombo, the two retirement residences, Casa Del Zotto and Caboto Terrace and the Dante Alighieri and Regina Mundi schools, and a landmark for the surrounding community.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) for 901 Lawrence Avenue West comprises the Reasons for Inclusion.

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SIGNATURE

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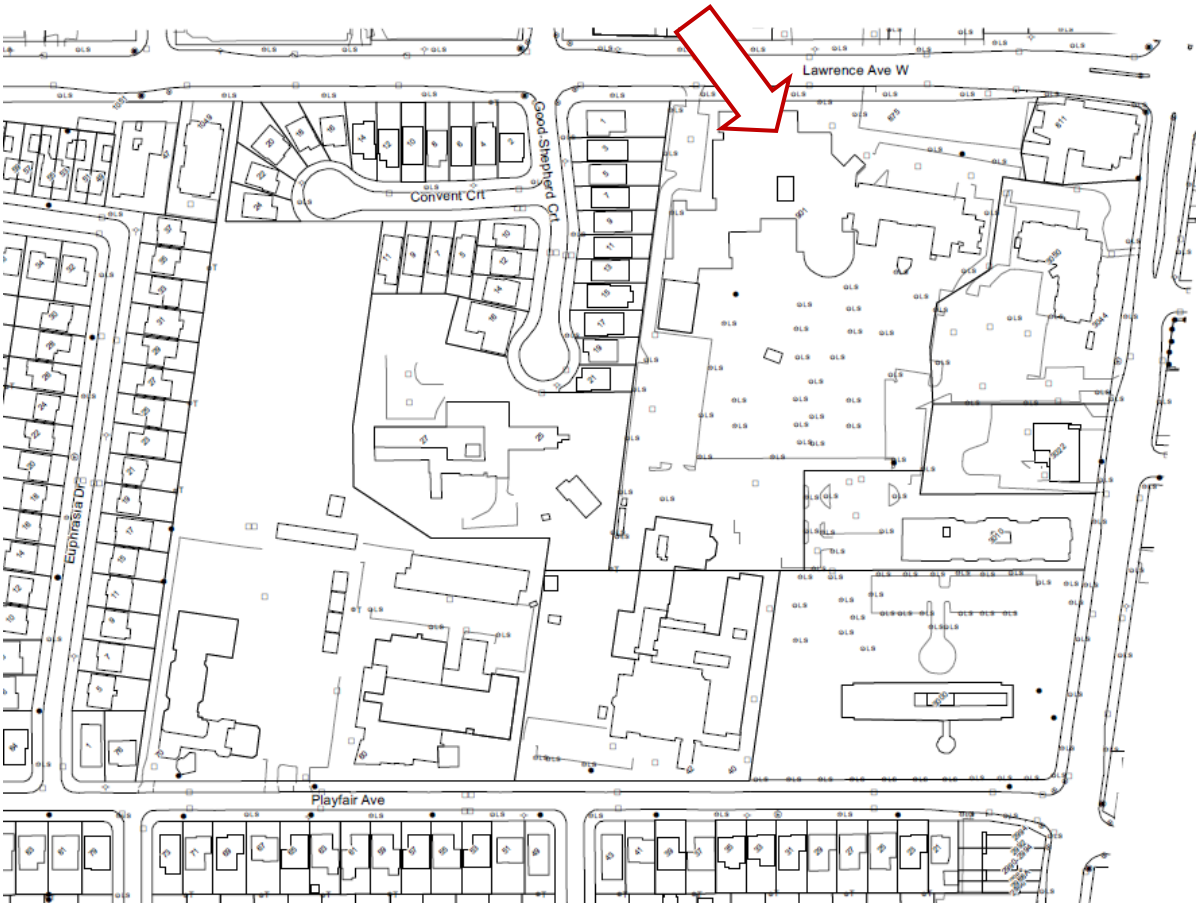
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Location Map
Attachment 2 – Photographs
Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion) - 901 Lawrence Avenue West
Attachment 4 – Heritage Property Research and Summary Report



This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The arrow marks the site.



Aerial View looking north at the former Sisters of the Good Shepherd property. The property encompasses land bound by Lawrence Avenue West, Dufferin Street and Playfair Avenue and the running track to the west. The former property includes the Columbus Centre with the former St. Mary's Training School (north facing Lawrence Avenue West), the Casa Caboto, Casa Del Zotto (east facing Dufferin Street), Villa Colombo, the Dante Alighieri Academy, Regina Mundi Elementary School (south facing Playfair Avenue), and at the centre east of the running track, the former Convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. (Google Chrome)



Columbus Centre, 901 Lawrence Avenue West - aerial view showing the complex set in its landscaped grounds with the Rotunda in the centre, the former St. Mary's Training School to the east and the sports complex to the west. (Google Chrome)


Columbus Centre, south elevations of the Rotunda and sports facilities to the west as viewed across the grounds with the sculpture garden (HPS, 2018)



Columbus Centre, south elevations of the Rotunda and St. Mary's Training School to the east as viewed across the landscaped sculpture garden (HPS, 2018)



Columbus Centre, north elevations facing Lawrence Avenue West with the 1978-80 renovations and, at the left, the altered St. Mary's Training School (HPS, 2018)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ATTACHMENT 3
901 LAWRENCE AVENUE WEST
REASONS FOR INCLUSION

The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West (Columbus Centre) is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, which the City applies when considering properties for inclusion on the Register, under the two categories of historical/associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West is located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West, to the west of Dufferin Street and contains the Columbus Centre, which includes the three-storey St. Mary's Training School (1941), a one-three storey sports and recreational centre including a swimming pool (1962, 1968 and 1980), a double-storey entry atrium (1980) with the Joseph Carrier Art Gallery and the three-storey Rotunda (1980) through an agreement between the Italian Canadian Benevolent Corporation (ICBC) and the Government of Ontario. The complex is clad primarily in red brick with curtain wall-glazing on the 1978-80 addition and faces a large landscaped setting with a sculpture garden and tennis courts.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West has historic value for its association with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, a religious order whose purpose was to provide refuge and education for young women who found themselves in perilous conditions or living as social outcasts. The Sisters purchased the property to build the St. Mary's Training School, which was occupied by the school from 1941 to 1973 and later adapted as part of the Columbus Centre complex. The property is also valued for its association with the ICBC (now known as Villa Charities) which through the dedicated, voluntary leadership of individual members undertook the fund-raising campaigns and building of retirement and community facilities for Italian Canadians from the late 1960s onward which culminated in 1980 with the completion of the Columbus Centre which has become a primary centre for Italian Canadian culture and heritage.

Located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West at the heart of the former Sisters of the Good Shepherd property, the Columbus Centre has contextual value as it defines and maintains the character of the property as a hub of Italian community facilities. The rotunda which is the most visible architectural expression of the Columbus Centre sits within a sculpture garden with mature trees, pathways and tennis courts, surrounded on its borders by social and cultural institutions of the Italian community which include schools, retirement homes, long-term care, as well as the social, athletic, business, research and cultural facilities of the centre itself. The Columbus Centre is visually, physically, functionally and historically linked to its surroundings. As the physical and cultural focal point of the landscape as well as the neighbouring community, the rotunda is a landmark.

The heritage attributes of the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the Columbus Centre rotunda sitting within the landscaped setting of the sculpture garden which includes mature trees, and provision for sculptures and a pathway which connects with the Villa Colombo
- The scale, circular form and massing of the three storey rotunda designed as a large gathering space
- The mosaic-tiled and brick door frame at the east corner of the south elevation of the St. Mary's Training School with the words "St. Mary's Training School" and decorative mosaic patterns



Photograph showing the Columbus Centre, south elevation, and the terrace with the balustrade and sculptures, with the athletic complex on the west side, the west wing of the former St. Mary's Training School on the east side and the playground of the children's day care centre. (HPS, 2018)

i. HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Key Date	Historical Event
1839	The 200-acre Lot 5 Con3 West Side of Yonge is granted to King's College
1851	Construction begins on the Northern Railway line which runs northwards across Lot 5 cutting the property in half
1909	After a series of owners, all of Lot 5 is owned by Henry Saunders
1922	Mary Saunders acquires Lot 5
1939	The Sisters of the Good Shepherd purchase a portion of the eastern side of the lot at the south-west corner of Dufferin and Lawrence Avenue West
1940	The contract to construct a training school for young women for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd on Dufferin Street is awarded to the firm of S. A. McGivney. A. W. Holmes is named as the architect and the firm of Harkness and Hertzberg as the structural engineers.
1941	The new St. Mary's Training School (previously known as St. Euphrasia's and located from 1898-1941 at Queen Street West and Lansdowne Avenue) is opened

1961	By this date the Convent for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd has been constructed to the south and west of the school site and has a Lawrence Avenue West address
1962	A new wing is added to the west side of the school including a dormitory and gymnasium
1969	Permit drawings are submitted to enclose an existing swimming pool with a building including change room facilities and a link to the dormitory wing
1969-1971	Representatives from the Italian community initiate the funding and construction of a retirement home and long term care facility and incorporate at the Italian Canadian Benevolent Corporation (ICBC)
1972	The ICBC purchases property from the Sisters of the Good Shepherd on the north side of Playfair Avenue, south of St. Mary's School, (now known as Elmcrest School)
1973	St. Mary's Training School closes
1974	Two new schools, Dante Alighieri Academy and Regina Mundi Catholic Elementary School are opened on the north side of Playfair Avenue to the west of the proposed retirement home on land previously owned by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
1974	Architectural drawings by the firm of Kelton, Lacka Ruddock and a model are prepared, fund-raising begins and the cornerstone for Villa Colombo retirement home is laid in October
1976	In January the first residents move into Villa Colombo
1977	North York approves a zoning change that would permit a children's day care facility
1977	ICBC and the Ontario Government sign an agreement which would allow the ICBC to lease the former St. Mary's school buildings and its 12 acres of land and develop the existing facilities as a community cultural and recreational centre, to be known as the Columbus Centre
1978	Drawings and a model are prepared by Kelton, Lacka Ruddock architects and the model is displayed during the fund-raising telethon
1980	Opening of the Columbus Centre
1983	Opening of Caboto Terrace, high-rise apartment building for seniors at 3050 Dufferin Street
1985	Creation of VITA Community Living Services
1987	Opening of the Joseph Carrier Art Gallery
1990	Opening of the Casa Del Zotto, high-rise apartment building for seniors at 3010 Dufferin Street
1995	ICBC changes its name to Villa Charities Inc.
2016	Proposal to demolish the Columbus Centre and replace it with a new high school and community centre
2017	Request from Toronto City Council to research and evaluate the property for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register
2018	The project for the redevelopment is placed on hold.

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West is located on Lot 5, Concession 3 WSY (west side of Yonge) which was surveyed as part of York Township begun in the 1791 with the establishment of the Town of York as the Capital of Upper Canada by the British. (Images 1-2) Lot 5 was a narrow 200-acre lot stretching east west between the concessions roads of Dufferin and Keele streets with a northern concession boundary now known as Lawrence Avenue West. By the late 1840s better access to the lot was provided with the construction of the Yorkville-Vaughan Plank Road, a diagonal route which started at Yonge Street, heading north-west along what is now Vaughan Road, taking a sharp turn north along Dufferin Street. (Image 3)

Transportation was soon augmented with the 1853 construction of the Northern Railway which ran across the middle of the Lot 5 with Weston Station located at the intersection with Lawrence Avenue West. (Image 4) This prompted a subdivision of the land on either side of the tracks which was called Balmoral. The sale of the subdivision lots did not materialize and ownership of Lot 5 as with the adjacent properties remained primarily as large land holdings suited for farming into the 20th century. In 1909 the whole 200 acres of Lot 5 are again under single ownership (Henry Saunders). (Image 5) Mary Saunders acquired the property in 1922. The rural character of a farming landscape would change substantially with the growth of suburban development after World War II. By 1940 a large portion of the eastern end of the property, at the south-west corner of Dufferin and Lawrence Avenue West had been purchased by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and was the site of St. Mary's Training School which had been relocated from Queen Street West and Lansdowne Avenue.

The order of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd was founded in France in1835 by Rose Virginie Pelletier, known as Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, originally a member of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. The focus of both orders was intended to be the care and rehabilitation of girls and young women whose life circumstances had put them in peril. The order of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd was invited to Canada by the Bishop of Montreal in 1844. In 1898, West Lodge, the remainder of Colonel Walter O'Hara's estate at the north-east corner Queen Street West and Lansdowne Avenue was given to the Sisters where they operated a refuge, which eventually became the St. Mary's Training School providing education and training as well as accommodation. Young women were referred to the refuge from the courts the police and other Catholic social agencies to be taught domestic and industrial crafts, chiefly dressmaking.[1]

Words describing the young women and girls who attended the training schools were often as follows: "fallen," "delinquent," or "failure in social adjustment" and therefore needing to be at "reform" or "correctional" institutions. However a 1946 report identified the following as reasons for removing the young woman from her home and sending her to live and study at St. Mary's[2]:
- desertion in home (1)
- either parent immoral (5)

1 Nicholson, p. 303
2 Common Bond Collective, p. 8.citing Ontario Dep. Of Reform Institutions *Annual report upon the Industrial School and Training Schools…*, 1946.

- either parent mental defective (1)
- either parent with court records (2)
- father dead (2)
- mother dead (2)
- parents dead (2)
- fair home but no control (13)
- poor home and no control (14)
- stepmother (2)
- parents separated (13)
- mentality of child (4)

Of the 61 young women removed from their homes and sent to St. Mary's, only 4 had a factor ("mentality of child") identified as a characteristic pertaining to themselves while the other factors were related to their parents and the family circumstances in which they were living.

By 1939, a provincial government report indicated that the buildings at both St. Mary's and St. John's schools "should as soon as possible be replaced on better sites and with modern fire-proof structures."[3] In August of the following year it was announced that the architect A. W. Holmes, structural engineers Harkness and Hertzberg and the contractor S. A. McGivney had been awarded the contract for a "girls training school on Dufferin Street for Good Shepherd Convent."[4]

The new school facility, accessed from Dufferin Street was complete in 1941. The location on a farm site added a new dimension to the life of the young women as the property included an orchard with apples and pears, and the farm still had horses, cows, pigs, chickens and rabbits. (Images 6-7)

By 1953 St. Charles Borromeo Church had been constructed at the south-west corner of Dufferin Street and Lawrence Avenue West. In 1956, the sisters relocated to a new convent building constructed to the west of the training school. A separate dormitory building was constructed in 1962 and included a gymnasium and auditorium. In 1966 the word delinquent was no longer used and "training" was removed from all schools of this type. St. Mary's name changed to St. Euphrasia's School recalling the founder of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd order. By 1969, a previously constructed swimming pool was enclosed with a new building that included change room facilities and had an enclosed link to the dormitory-gym building. The school, known from 1971 as the Elmcrest School, closed in 1973. (Images 8-9)

During this same period, a group of representatives of Toronto's Italian Canadian community including the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association and the Federation of Italian Canadian Clubs and Associations gathered together with the purpose of building a retirement home and long term care facility for members of their community. The group incorporated in 1971 as the Italian Canadian Benevolent

3 Common Bond Collective, p. 7.citing Ontario Dep. Of Reform Institutions *Annual report upon the Industrial School and Training Schools…*, 1939, p.5.
4 *Engineering and Contract Record*, p. 20.

Corporation (ICBC)[5] and began a vigorous campaign to fund-raise, construct and operate this facility.

At the time this project was initiated, the Italian Canadian experience of World War II was only 25 years behind the members of the ICBC. As Dr. Harney wrote in 1996, "the prominence of Italian Canadians and the popularity of Italian culture in North America obscures the arduous journey people of Italian heritage have made in [Toronto] over the last hundred years."[6] This included immigration restrictions in the 1920s and 1930s, the Canadian Government's confiscation of the Casa d'Italia, the social centre for the community in 1941, the internment of over 700 Italian Canadians and the requirement for others to register with the RCMP. In reaction there was a muffling of Italian cultural expression. The experience of the Italian Canadian community and the large number of people from Italy who settled in Toronto after 1947 when the Enemy Alien Act was finally repealed was to help each other and to stick together.[7]

Villa Colombo (VC) was "founded on the dream to care for *nonni* in an atmosphere that encouraged the elderly to continue to live their lives to the fullest."[8] In 1972, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd sold a parcel of their land to the south of the training school facing Playfair Avenue. In 1974 drawings and a model were prepared by Anthony (Tony) Ferracuti of Kelton Lacka Ruddock Architects for the Villa Colombo retirement and long term care residence. The cornerstone was laid in October 1974 and in January 1976 the first residents move in.

Built to provide long-term accommodation and care to the senior members of the Italian-Canadian community, one of the goals of Villa Colombo was that it would include all generations and be a part of the life of the community. To this extent they hosted dances, bridal showers, weddings in the Sala Caboto. Daycare programs were initiated for elderly non-residents but also for children of ages 2-5: "ensuring genuine community living meant the presence of children."[9] They also initiated respite programs for parents with developmentally challenged children and these were assisted by high school student volunteers from the adjacent Dante Alighieri Academy.

In 1976, the same year that VC opened, the ICBC was already focusing with renewed energy on the acquisition of the former St. Mary's Training School property for the expansion of broader community programs and to create a new community centre conceived as the *piazza* which has the multiple meanings of an open public square, as well as a covered gallery. When a crew began demolition of buildings on the school site, the ICBC held urgent meetings with provincial government officials. In 1977 an agreement with the Ontario Government was signed that would allow the ICBC to lease and eventually purchase the former school and its twelve acres of land and create a community and cultural centre. The Toronto Star quoted one of the ICBC leaders, Paul Ariemma who stated "the buildings will be used for an all-encompassing community recreation and social centre" indicating that the efforts of the ICBC and the facilities

5 In 1995 the ICBC changed its name to Villa Charities Inc.
6 Nicholas de Maria Harney, Foreword, p. xi, in Ariemma.
7 In 1990, the Prime Minister Brian Mulroney apologized for the interment of people of Italian origin as well as the requirement that Italians register with the RCMP.
8 As above.
9 Ariemma, p. 36.

purposed would extend beyond members of the Italian community. To this end the ICBC consulted with the community through a survey in English and Italian sent to 50,000 homes, on both their ranking for programs (sports and fitness were listed at the top with culture, recreation, social services and education following) as well as requesting votes on a choice of three names for the centre; Columbus Centre was the name chosen.

Anthony Ferracuti of Kelton Lacka Ruddock Architects was again engaged to design the new complex integrating a two-storey glazed entry atrium and three-storey rotunda between the 1941 school to the east and the 1960s gym, auditorium and swimming pool to the west, adding additional facilities.

In 1978 the drawings and a model for the new centre were presented for the fund-raising activities. As with the Villa Colombo, fund-raising relied as much on corporate donations as it did on grass roots associations, and $10 lottery tickets. There was widespread support in the local Toronto media as well as international media with Italian associations. Over the years support for funding would come from as far away as the Vatican Department of External Affairs as well as from global celebrities like Jerry Lewis, Gina Lollabrigida and Rosanno Brazzi and would assist with telethons and other events while members of all three levels of government would participate and assist with the efforts of the ICBC to contribute valuable community services and the buildings to house them. Construction of the Columbus Centre was complete in 1980. (Images 10 -11)

In the atrium just inside the entrance at the end of a long visual axis full of the flags of Italian provinces, stands a full-scale sculpture of Michelangelo's David and a smaller one of Pinocchio, two iconic emblems of Italian art and culture. The David is set against a back drop of marble on which gold metal letters have been fixed. They read "Columbus Centre; The Italian Canadian Community dedicates this centre to the spirit of multi-culturalism" emphasizing the commitment of the centres founders to be inclusive of all communities.

The Columbus Centre has offered a wide range of social programs. These are cultural including music, dance and art tuition and a lecture series. The fitness facilities include a diverse program aimed and many ages and abilities as well as programs for nutrition and general "wellness." Summer camps, special need camps and daycare are also provided. Facilities also include a conference centre, the Boccaccio restaurant and the Cinquecento café.

In 1987 the Joseph Carrier Art Gallery opened in the centre and continues to attract 20,000 visitors annually. Using parts of the atrium and the rotunda, the gallery has a permanent art collection and also holds several exhibitions a year including artists such as Ken Danby, Louisa Maralta, Ken Kirkby, and Alberto De Castro. It regularly holds exhibitions which Indigenous Peoples artists and have included Arthur Shilling and featured works from Manitoulin Island. Exhibitions related to the history of Italian culture, Byzantine mosaics, drawings by Leonard da Vinci and Piranesi etchings have been shown while others have included artists from Austria, China, Chile, Holland, Iran, Israel, Japan, Korea, and Uruguay. The atrium houses a permanent collection of Italian artefacts donated by Joseph Carrier and a library, as well as a collection of busts of

Italian cultural luminaries including Dante Alighieri, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Galileo Galilei, Verde, Puccini and Marconi.

Numerous community organizations are based at the Columbus Centre including VITA Community Living Services, opened in 1985 to support those living with intellectual and/or mental issues, the National Congress of Italian Canadians, the Multi-Cultural History Society of Ontario, Marina Research, the Cardiac Health Foundation of Canada, the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association of Toronto, Centro Scuola e Cultura Italiana and Villa Charities.

Architects

Arthur William Holmes (1863-1944) was born in England where he apprenticed with the influential Victorian architect George Edmund Street. In 1885, Holmes immigrated to Canada and subsequently worked with prominent architect Joseph Connolly from 1887-1891. During this period Holmes converted to Catholicism and devoted the rest of his career to designing churches and schools. When Connolly died in 1904, Holmes became the primary architect for the Catholic community in southern Ontario until 1940. His largest commission was the design for the St. Augustine Seminary Scarborough and later he designed Brennan and Teefy Halls for St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto. Described as "a prodigious and talented ecclesiastical architect,"[10] his work demonstrates his mastery of divergent architectural styles which ranged from the Baroque to a stripped down Collegiate Gothic.

Kelton Lacka Architects were founded in 1960 and by the late 1970s were known as Kelton Lacka Ruddock Architects. Anthony Ferracuti who graduated from the architectural technology program at the Ryerson Institute of Technology in 1959 became a partner of the firm and is credited with designing the Brutalist style Masters condominium (1980) in the west end of Toronto, as well as the Villa Colombo (1974-1976) and the Columbus Centre (1978-1980). Since 1992 the firm has been known as Global Architect Inc.

iii ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Columbus Centre

The Columbus Centre is comprised of numerous buildings constructed between 1940 and 1981. St. Mary's Training School sits at the eastern end of the complex. It's 1960s sports and dormitory facilities have been integrated into the new sporting complex which occupies the west side. At the centre is a north-facing entrance atrium and to the south of the atrium is the "piazza" whose rotunda form creates a strong focal point when viewed from the landscaped open grounds on the south side of the complex.

St. Mary's Training School, 1940-1941

The first building to be constructed on the property was the St. Mary's Training School which was designed as a three-storey volume on a U-shaped plan facing south with an additional two-storey bay to the east facing towards the entrance drive from Dufferin Street. The building is designed in a Neo-Baroque Classical style which is evident in

10 Hill.

the symmetrical composition of the main wing as a U with two projecting wings, and a projecting central bay, the carefully proportioned windows set equidistant from each other and in the decorative brick detailing. (Images 12-17, 20) This detailing stands in for elements that would have ordinarily been rendered in stone on a classical building. The bricks suggest full-height giant orders, square piers or columns at the corners with the patterning of the header blocks indicating their Baroque proportions. At the cornice an entablature is evoked in the course of dark bricks faming bands of yellow brick with small panels featuring blue and white mosaic. Mosaic is employed again in the framing of the entry doors with the words St Mary's Training School framed by small gold crosses and a patterning of blue and green mosaic surrounded at the edges by brick coursing. Copper is employed in narrowly coursed bands on the roof structure as well as in the sills and over the door cases.

The two-storey wing built to the east and facing the main Dufferin Street entrance with its circular drive provides a more modest and less institutional scale than that of the south elevation. This two storey wing currently provides access to the day-care centre.

There have been substantial alterations to the school which have compromised its original architectural design and integrity including the replacing and alteration of windows on the north elevation with mirror glass, the filling-in of most of the windows on the south elevation, as well as the inconsistent addition of the corrugated metal cornices which are intended to relate to the modern additions on the sports complex.

School Addition, 1962
Little trace remains of the 1962 addition as it has been incorporated in the 1978-1980 expansion of the recreational and sports facilities, however the original swimming pool which was enclosed in 1968 retains its original form at the farthest south and west extent of the complex. (Images 18-19) It reveals the original deep beams of its roof structure which are expressed on the exterior and include clerestory windows in between the beams.[11] Windows facing east towards the grounds of the Columbus Centre may have been added in the late 1970s.

Columbus Centre, 1978-1980
The extensions of the Columbus Centre to the north of the original school facilities included a transformation and integration of the various building elements to create a unified cohesive whole. (Images 21-24) The addition of an over-scaled curving corrugated cornice ties together the north elevations of the entire complex. It continue as flat corrugated bands on the east and south elevations of the training school. On the north elevation brick walls with long arched window openings with an Italianate quality were also used to tie the building complex together. Another feature of this late 1970s extension are the brick mural reliefs on the north elevation of a dancer, a boxer and a basketball player representing the range of physical activities available in the recreational facilities.

Interior Atrium

11 Permit drawings for the swimming pool enclosure, dated April 1969 were submitted by the contractors Perwin Construction Co. Ltd. It has been suggested that as the school is a provincial facility, the pool may have been designed by the provincial architect, Istvan Lendvay.

Between the original school building and the sports complex is the entry atrium which faces north towards the main entrance on Lawrence Avenue West and the rotunda, known as the Piazza facing south. (Images 25-26) The Atrium is a double-volume space, completely glazed on its north elevation and on the north-facing sloping roof. It provides access to all the facilities, and also houses the Joseph Carrier Art gallery. An upper level containing the permanent collection of Italian artefacts and the library looks over the entry space with the flags of Italian regions and the busts of Italian luminaries. The atrium features marble as a primary floor and wall finish.

The atrium connects east and west to the school, sports facilities, restaurants and cafes, but leads south to the three-storey rotunda known as the Piazza Toni Varone which is used for community events as well as the temporary art exhibitions organized by the Joseph Carrier Art Gallery.

Rotunda, 1978-1980
From the exterior, the rotunda achieves its prominence not only through its form but also through the façade articulation of a giant colonnade with curtain glass panels which contrast with the surrounding red brick facades of the adjacent school and sports facilities. (Images 27-29) Inside, the rotunda is designed as a large gathering space, circular in plan, with a domed skylight above and surrounded by two-floors of balconies with a broad winding staircase ascending within the main space. The rotunda represents a history of great Italian architectural spaces from the ancient Roman Pantheon to St Peter's basilica in Rome to the Baroque genius of Borromini and Bernini. The plain rectilinear grid of square piers and lintels clad in travertine recalls the stripped down "rationalist" classical work of the famous Italian modernist architect, Giuseppe Terragni (1904-1943). The reference to all of these classical architectural precedents is typical of Post-Modernism, but especially appropriate in the Columbus Centre which celebrates Italian heritage. The prominence given to the staircase was a particular Post-modern device favoured as a means of promoting social interaction and circulation.

Setting
The north side of the Columbus Centre facing Lawrence Avenue West has a narrow band of landscaping screening an entry forecourt with a porte-cochere leading to parking areas to the east where the landscaped strip separates parking from that of St. Charles Borromeo Church. A secondary route allow access to a narrow band of parking on the western edge of the property and then to a large lot behind the swimming pool on the south.

On the south side the centre faces a large open space which originally functioned as the sports fields and recreational grounds of the school. It has since evolved as a landscaped setting with mature trees and pathways, a sculpture garden with a fountain and tennis courts. (Images 30-34) The rotunda is the primary element with a terrace and balustrade connecting with a circular path with branches leading south to tennis courts, a formal walkway with columns and urns connecting to the Villa Colombo and other routes leading to the Casa Del Zotto, Caboto Terrace and the parking lots for each facility. From the terrace surrounding the rotunda routes lead back west to a sequence of small enclosed outdoor areas providing sheltered sunlit outdoor space for the Café Cinquecento patio. There is a grassy, shaded enclosed space adjacent to this patio for

the swimming pool. On the east side of the rotunda a children's playground occupies the lower levels, and an enclosed paved area situated in the U of the former school has a few picnic tables.

The pathways circulate under trees and pass by numerous classical statues, a rotunda of Corinthian columns, a stylized blue metal boat sculpture representing Giovanni Caboto's ship which reached Canadian shores in 1497, all of which evoke the tradition of formal Italian gardens, historic events relating to Italy and Canada or as in the case of a giant rocking chair, the origins of the Italian community on the property.

CONTEXT

Located at the south-west corner of Dufferin Street and Lawrence Avenue West, the Columbus Centre context is primarily characterized by typical post-war suburban residential development to the east and west of Dufferin Street and commercial/industrial uses to the north of Lawrence Avenue West. However within that broader neighbourhood, is the more particular context related to the large property originally owned by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in 1940, portions of which have been acquired by the ICBC (now Villa Charities) since 1972. Land owned by the Sisters is now occupied by the Dante Alighieri Academy (1974), Regina Mundi Elementary School (1974) and the Villa Colombo (1976) all of which are on the southern edge of the property bound by Playfair Avenue. St. Charles Borromeo Church (c. 1953) Caboto Terrace (1984), Casa Del Zotto (1991) and the Pauline Bookstore (Catholic bookstore) are all located on the eastern edge of the property. To the west is the Convent of the Good Shepherd (1956) and a small suburban development with the street names recalling the Sisters' early role in the development of the area; Good Shepherd Court, Convent Court and Euphrasia Drive. The style of the houses with their deep loggias, spiral stairs and formal plantings are evocative of Italy and the Italian community.

The Columbus Centre which is a part of the legacy, represents the social and cultural heart of the Italian community as well as the origins of the site intended as a place of refuge, and support initially for young women and later for elderly Italians. With each stage of its growth it has expanded to multiple age groups as well as cultural groups. The rotunda of the Columbus Centre is the focal point of the social and cultural history of the site.

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.

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

The evaluation has determined that St. Mary's Training School and the addition of the Columbus Centre do not have design or physical value. The original school building has been substantially altered reducing its integrity while the Columbus Centre has not been found to meet any of the three above criteria.

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

The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West has historic value for its association with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, a religious order whose purpose was to provide refuge and education for young women who found themselves in perilous conditions or living as social outcasts. The Sisters purchased the property to build the St. Mary's Training School, which was occupied by the school from 1941 to 1973 and later adapted as part of the Columbus Centre complex. The property is also valued for its association with the Italian Canadian Benevolent Corporation (now known as Villa Charities) which through the dedicated, voluntary leadership of individual members undertook the fund-raising campaigns and building of retirement and community facilities for Italian-Canadians from the late 1960s onward which culminated in 1980 with the completion of the Columbus Centre which has become a primary centre for Italian-Canadian culture and heritage. Although A. W. Holmes is a significant architect, the St. Mary's Training School has not been found to demonstrate or reflect the quality of his work.

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

Located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West at the heart of the former Sisters of the Good Shepherd property, the Columbus Centre has contextual value as it defines and maintains the character of the property as a hub of Italian community facilities. The rotunda which is the most visible architectural expression of the Columbus Centre sits within a sculpture garden with mature trees, pathways and tennis courts, surrounded on its borders by social and cultural institutions of the Italian community which include schools, retirement homes, long-term care, as well as the social, athletic, business,

research and cultural facilities of the centre itself. The Columbus Centre is visually, physically, functionally and historically linked to its surroundings. As the physical and cultural focal point of the landscape as well as the neighbouring community, the rotunda is a landmark.

SUMMARY

The property has been evaluated according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act that the City also applies when considering properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

Following research and evaluation it has been determined that the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West has associative and contextual values. The property has historic value for its association with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and St. Mary's Training School originally constructed in 1941. It is also valued for its association with Italian Canadian Benevolent Association (now known as Villa Charities) who from 1969, through a lengthy campaign of personal initiative, dedication and extensive fund-raising, created a community campus containing facilities for the elderly, and for those in need of care and respite as well as day care, recreational and cultural facilities. In 1980, with the construction of the Columbus Centre and the renovation of St. Mary's, the expanded facilities provided were "dedicated to the spirit of multi-culturalism" in Toronto while maintaining a cultural heritage focus for the Italian-Canadian community. Situated on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West, the Columbus Centre, has contextual value as it is visually, physically and historically linked to its surroundings. The Columbus Centre rotunda is a focal point within the landscaped setting of mature trees and an Italian sculpture garden, surrounded by the Villa Colombo, the two retirement residences, Casa Del Zotto and Caboto Terrace and the Dante Alighieri and Regina Mundi schools, and a landmark for the surrounding community.

SOURCES

Archival Sources

Aerial Photographs of the City of Toronto and York Township 1947-present (CTA)
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Miles & Co., *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York*. 1878. (Ng)
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http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html
Nicolson, Murray. "Irish Catholic Education in Victorian Toronto: An Ethnic Response to Urban Conformity," *Histoire Sociale - Social History,* Vol. XVII, No. 34, Nov.1984, pp. 287-306.
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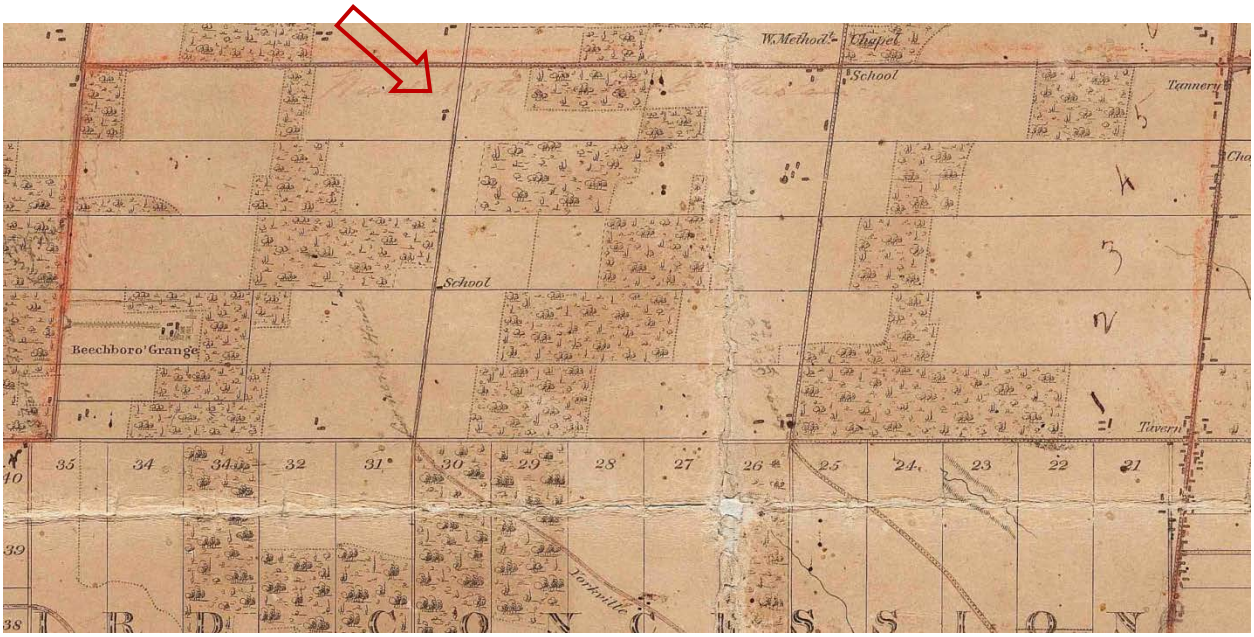
IMAGES: The arrows mark the location of the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West. Please note: all maps are oriented with north at the top, unless otherwise indicated.



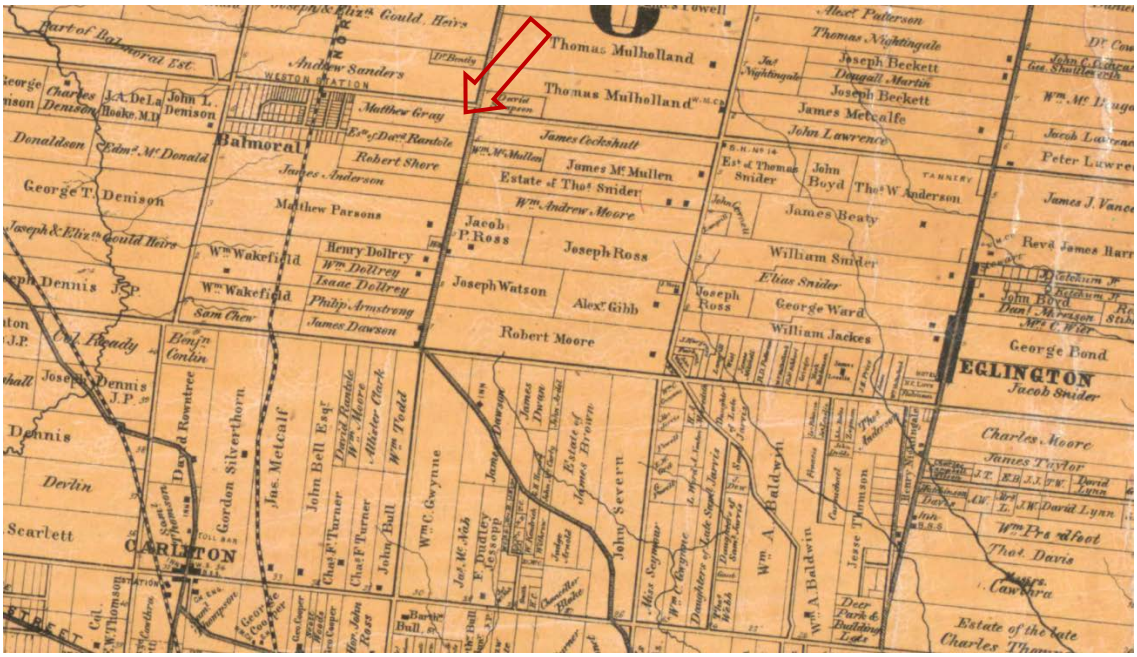
1. Aerial view looking north, at the former Good Shepherd Sisters' property as it currently contains the Columbus Centre including the former St. Mary's Training School, at 901 Lawrence Avenue West on the north edge of the property, the Casa Caboto, Casa Del Zotto (on Dufferin Street to the east), Villa Colombo, the Dante Alighieri Academy, and the Regina Mundi Elementary School (on Playfair Avenue along the south of the property), and the Convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (at 25-27 Good Shepherd Court to the west of the Columbus Centre). (Google Chrome)



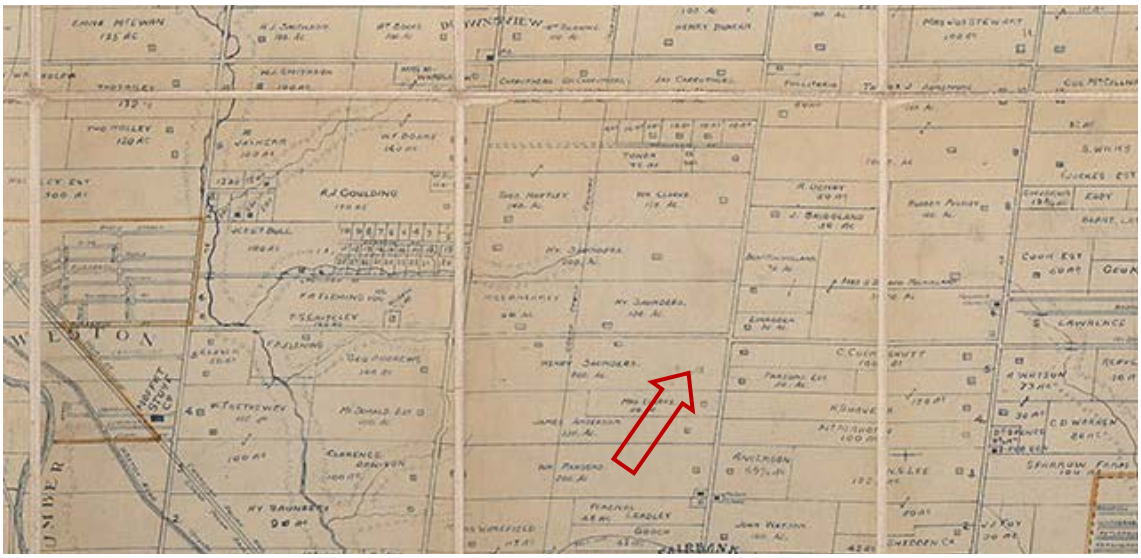
2. Aerial view, looking north, of the property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West, known as the Columbus Centre, showing the Rotunda at the centre of the complex, with the former St. Mary's Training School to the east and the recreational complex and swimming pool to the west. (Google Chrome)



3. 1851 J. O. Browne, *Map of the Township of York* (detail) showing Lot 5, 3rd Concession WSY (west side of Yonge). Note the lot numbers have been hand-written on the map from 1-5 at the right hand side. The concessions are marked by the roads Yonge, Bathurst, Dufferin and Keele streets. The stretch of land from Dufferin to Keele represents the third concession. The north and south borders are marked by today's Eglinton Avenue at the south and Lawrence Avenue West on the north. A pair of buildings is evident near Dufferin Street originally as the Yorkville-Vaughan Plank Road whose diagonal section, now known as Vaughan Road, can be seen in the lower section of the map labelled Third Concession. (Ng)



4. George C. Tremaine, *Map of the County of York, Canada West*. 1860 (detail) showing: North 50 acres owned by Mathew Gray south 50 - Estate of David Rantole The western half of Lot 5 around the Weston station stop on the Northern Railway line has been subdivided and named Balmoral (Ng)



5. The Ontario Free Directory and Map Co.*1909 Map of Township of York and City of Toronto* (detail) showing: the consolidation of Lot 5 into a single property again owned by Henry Saunders. Note the rural quality of the township at this time (TPL)



6. 1947 Aerial Photograph of the property showing the completed St. Mary's Training School with its principal access with a formal driveway from Dufferin Street. Note the primarily rural quality of the area with the beginning of more intense suburban development at the southern edge of the photograph (CTA)



7. 1953 Aerial view of the property showing the construction of St. Charles Church at the south-west corner of Dufferin and Lawrence Avenue West. Note the farmhouse and outbuildings to the south, the beginning of residential suburban development on the east side of Dufferin Street. (CTA, Map 96)



8. Sisters of the Good Shepherd Convent, 25 Good Shepherd Court, 1956 (HPS, 2018)



9. 1970 Aerial view showing the new construction of the school addition including new dormitories and a gymnasium to the right of the arrow and the enclosed swimming pool (along the dotted line) below the arrow. The convent is located to the west with access from both Lawrence Avenue West and Playfair Avenue. The apartment block, at the south west corner is an independent development located at 3010 Dufferin Street (CTA, Map 113)



10. 1981 aerial photograph showing the redevelopment of the original Sisters of the Good Shepherd property, including on the southern edge from the west corner, the Regina Mundi Elementary School (1974), the Dante Alighieri Academy (1974) and the Villa Colombo (1976). To the north along Lawrence Avenue West the Columbus Centre, with the rotunda and the expanded gymnasium complex is complete (CTA, Map 29)



11. View of the Columbus Centre looking north east with the Rotunda to the west and the former St. Mary's Training School to the east. (HPS, 2018)



12. South Elevation, former St. Mary's Training School, now part of the Columbus Centre, showing the central block with the two projecting wings and to the east the two-storey entry wing. (HPS, 2018)



13. East Elevation, former St. Mary's Training School showing the entrance wing (HPS, 2018)



14. South and east elevations of the former school with the main block and the two storey entry wing. The metal cornices were added with the extension of the Columbus Centre (HPS, 2018)





15. South elevation, of the main block of the former school looking toward the east corner showing the blocked in windows and the brick details of vertical headers on the corners suggesting giant piers, above left. (HPS, 2018)
16. Original school entrance, south elevation, with tiled surround, above right (HPS, 2018)



17. Upper level of the south elevation showing the brick detailing and the brick and tile frieze with the copper cladding of the service tower of the former school (HPS, 2018)





18. East elevation of the swimming pool, 1968, facing the rotunda and pool interior (upper left) (HPS, 2018)
19. Interior of the swimming pool (upper right) (HPS, 2018)



20. East and north elevations of the former school with added metal cornices and the new Columbus Centre entrance atrium facing Lawrence Avenue West (HPS, 2018)





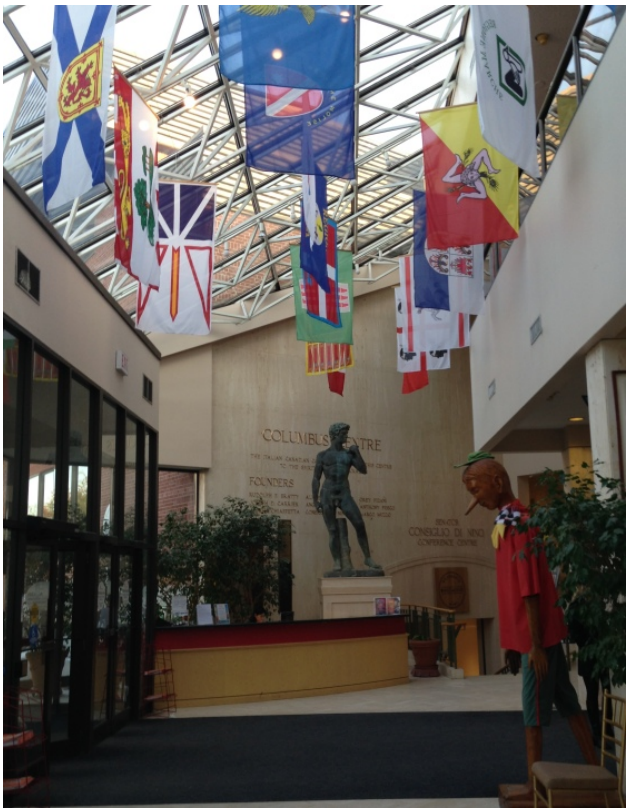
21. and 22. Looking east past the curving walls screening the athletic facility towards the atrium entry with the former school building beyond (HPS, 2018)



23. Looking west at the giant cornice-type element of the additional athletic facilities (HPS, 2018)



24. North elevation of the western-most section of the sports facility, facing Lawrence Avenue West, with brick reliefs of the ballet dancer, soccer players and boxer figures (HPS, 2018)



25. Columbus Centre, entry atrium with regional flags, a copy of the David by Michelangelo, and a sculpture of Pinocchio (HPS, 2018)


26. Entry Atrium with view from the upper level showing the library and some of the art collection (HPS, 2018)



27. Rotunda with skylight, rationalist colonnade and staircases (HPS, 2018)



28. Rotunda, ground floor with stair case and colonnade (HPS, 2018)



29. South elevation of the rotunda with the sports facilities, café and pool on the left and the various elements of the setting including the pathways, mature trees, and sculptures (HPS, 2018)



30. Looking past the rotunda on the left towards the landscaped grounds with mature trees and in the distance the Villa Del Zotto (HPS, 2018)





31. View from the pool through grove of mature trees towards the Café Cinquecento
32. Looking back towards pool at planting, sculptures and variety of trees (HPS, 2018)



33. Path leading from the Villa Colombo towards the grounds and the Columbus Centre (HPS, 2018)



34. Interactive sculpture of Giovanni Caboto's boat (HPS, 2018)