

## **817 Mount Pleasant Road - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act**

**Date:** March 4, 2026

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

**From:** Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

**Wards:** 15 - Don Valley West

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance which includes a description of heritage attributes found in Attachment 1.

The subject property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road is located on the southeast corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Roehampton Avenue one block north of Eglinton Avenue East in the Mount Pleasant East neighbourhood. It contains a Mid-Century Modernist style church, bell tower, and columbarium. A location map and current photograph of the heritage property is found in Attachment 2.

The distinctive A-Frame Mid-Century Modernist style church with bell tower is an architectural landmark on Mount Pleasant Road. Commissioned by Estonian immigrants and designed by Estonian-Canadian architect and church member Michael Bach (1916-1972), St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church was constructed in 1955 and dedicated as a memorial to the thousands of Estonians who died in both World Wars, the Estonian War of Independence, and as refugees. Since its construction it has continuously served as an active place of worship and commemoration site for Toronto's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran community and as a cultural hub for the broader Estonian-Canadian community for over 70 years.

Staff have determined that the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road has cultural heritage value and meets 5 of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets two or more of the nine criteria.

In accordance with 3.1.6.50 of the Official Plan and the City's Protocol for the Identification and Review of Heritage Places of Worship, Heritage Planning staff

consulted members of the Council of St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church to determine if any of the heritage attributes identified in the Statement of Significance and in a future designating by-law were liturgical elements, and therefore not subject to regulation while the property remained in use by the congregation. St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church confirmed that none of the identified attributes were liturgical elements.

The property was listed on the City's Heritage Register on June 14-15, 2023. While staff were consulting with the Church, the property was deemed removed from the Register on June 14, 2025, two years after its listing date in accordance with the Act, however this does not restrict Council's ability to designate the property at this time.

Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 817 Mount Pleasant Road St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1, to the report, March 4, 2026, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On July 23, 2018, Council adopted the Midtown in Focus: Final Report, including the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan. The Midtown in Focus Study included a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment which identified 817 Mount Pleasant Avenue as having potential cultural heritage value. The property is included on Map 21-10 of the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan, titled "Properties with Potential Cultural Heritage Value."

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.PG31.7>

City Council included the subject property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on June 14-15, 2023. It was deemed removed from the Register in accordance with Section 27(14) of the Ontario Heritage Act on June 14, 2025. [Item - 2023.NY5.30](#)

On January 22, 2026, the Planning and Housing Committee received PH27.14: Properties Removed from the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in Accordance with Section 27(15) of the Ontario Heritage Act - 2025 including the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road. Provincial amendments to the Act made through Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, deem properties as removed from the Register after a period of two years unless they are designated under Section 29 of the Act. [Item - 2026.PH27.14](#)

## **POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS**

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### **Provincial Plans and Policies**

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

Further, the policies and definitions of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented.

[Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

### **Official Plan**

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision making within the City. It contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. The Official Plan can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

## **Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act and Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act**

Through Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 ("Bill 23") and again through Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 ("Bill 200"), the Province of Ontario made amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. These amendments have had implications for non-designated ("Listed Properties") included on the City's Heritage Register. Listed Properties may now only remain on the Register for two years. Properties that were listed prior to January 1, 2023, must be either designated or removed from the Register by January 1, 2027. Once removed, Council may not relist a property for five years. Further, Council is prohibited from designating a property that is subject to specified Planning Act applications once the Clerk has provided notice that the City has received a complete application.

### **COMMENTS**

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On July 23, 2018, Council adopted the Midtown in Focus: Final Report, including the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan, which identified the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Avenue as having potential cultural heritage value.

In September 2020, Heritage Planning received a nomination from members of the St. Peter's Estonian Lutheran Church community to have the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The property was listed on the City's Heritage Register on June 14-15, 2023.

Staff commenced consultation with the Church to advance the Notice of Intention to Designate in March of 2025.

### **Evaluation Analysis**

The following evaluation analysis is based on the comprehensive research conducted on the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road (see Attachment 3) and provides the rationale for the recommendation(s) found in this report.

The property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road meets the following 5 out of 9 criteria:

**The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method**

The property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road has design value as a representative example of a Mid-Century Modernist style A-Frame church. Its clean lines, functionality, simplicity of form, honest expression of both natural and manufactured materials, and large, steep, gable-ended roofline and freestanding bell tower are hallmarks of the Mid-Century Modernism. The property is unique for its fan-shaped plan with sloping roof ridge, complex four-point glulam beam trusses, copper clad roof with ridges referencing the glulam trusses, prow-shaped principal elevation with projecting front gable, and

richly textured brick cladding laid in the Common bond pattern featuring alternating recessed and protruding courses.

**The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit**

The property also has design value for its artistic merit which masterfully combines scale, form, and massing, with structural elements and materials. This is reflected in the copper standing seam roof, building's fan shaped floor plan and rear sloping roof ridge that, on the interior, draws the eye to the altar in the sanctuary at the liturgical (east) end, a floating balcony surmounted by a full height window at the west end, a wood clad cathedral ceiling supported by a system of four-point wood laminated glulam trusses, and pyramidal hanging light fixtures.

**The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community**

The property has value for its direct association with Toronto's Estonian-Canadian community. St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1948 by Estonian immigrants fleeing Soviet occupation after the end of the Second World War. Following a brief period of worship at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 274 Concord Avenue, in 1954 the church commissioned Estonian-Canadian architect and church member, Michael Bach, to design their own place of worship. Constructed and consecrated in 1955, the property has continuously served as a place of worship for the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran community and a cultural hub for the broader Estonian Canadian community.

**The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community**

The property has value for its association with the noted Estonian-Canadian architect, Michael Bach, who is identified as a person of significance by Toronto's Estonian-Canadian community. An instructor at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto, Bach was the first of a group of Estonian-Canadian architects to arrive in Toronto after the Second World War who would play an important role in advancing Modernism in Toronto and teaching the future generation of Canadian architects. The subject property reflects the ideas of Michael Bach, which were heavily influenced by Scandinavian Modernist architecture. This is evidenced through its Mid-Century Modernist design, clean lines, and an emphasis on natural materials

The property has further value for its association with acclaimed Austro-Canadian glass artist and painter Ernestine Tahedl, who created the property's stained-glass windows between 1987 and 1990. With a career spanning over 60 years, her works include the coloured-glass windows for the Sanctuary building at the Canadian pavilion for Expo '67 (1965-1967) and the Salvation Army Sanctuary in Toronto (2023). Other notable works by Tahedl include the concrete and glass sculpture lantern at McGill University (1968),

and the glass mosaics for the former Edmonton Post Office (1965), which were reinstalled at the Royal Alberta Museum in 2016.

### **The property has contextual value because it is a landmark**

St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church has contextual value as a landmark property on Mount Pleasant Road at the corner of Roehampton Avenue and in close proximity to Eglinton Avenue. Constructed in 1955 and enlarged in 1970 and 1975, its distinctive free-standing bell tower and Mid-Century Modernist design stand out among the surrounding mix of early-20th century house-form buildings, modern mixed-use mid and high-rise structures, and the Collegiate-Gothic style of Northern Secondary School directly to the north. St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church also has value as a cultural landmark for the greater Toronto area as an active place of worship serving the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran community and its members throughout the city for the past 70 years.

See Attachments 1, 2 and 3 of this report for the Statement of Significance; Location Map and Photograph; and Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources pertaining to the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road, as all of these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this staff report.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Staff have determined that the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road meets 5 out of 9 criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. As such, the property merits designation and staff recommend that Council support the designation of this property to conserve its cultural heritage value.

This report was prepared in accordance in accordance with 3.1.6.50 of the Official Plan and the City's Protocol for the Identification and Review of Heritage Places of Worship and reflects St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church determination of which heritage attributes are to be identified as liturgical elements.

The Statement of Significance: 817 Mount Pleasant Road (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1 to this report comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jason Thorne  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)  
Attachment 2 – Location Map and Current Photograph  
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

**ST. PETER'S ESTONIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH****STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under the categories of design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

**Description**

Located on the southeast corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Roehampton Avenue, St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (817 Mount Pleasant Road) was commissioned by Estonian immigrants and designed by Estonian-Canadian architect and church member, Michael Bach. Erected in 1955 as a memorial to the thousands of Estonians who died in both World Wars, the Estonian War of Independence, and as refugees, it continues to serve as an active place of worship and commemoration for Toronto's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran community and as a cultural hub for the broader Estonian-Canadian community. The property contains a Mid-Century Modernist style A-Frame Church with attached two-storey ancillary wing, a 1970 Modernist style freestanding, pre-cast concrete belltower, and columbarium. Based on Bach's plan, fellow Estonian-Canadian architect and church member Ants Elken oversaw the addition of the Ladies Guild Room to the north wing, bell tower, and courtyard with garden wall, which were completed by 1970.

**Statement of Cultural Heritage Value****Historical and Associative Value**

The property has value for its direct association with Toronto's Estonian-Canadian community. St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1948 by Estonian immigrants fleeing Soviet occupation after the end of the Second World War. Following a brief period of worship at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 274 Concord Avenue, in 1954 the church commissioned Estonian-Canadian architect and church member, Michael Bach, to design their own place of worship. Constructed and consecrated in 1955, the property has continuously served as a place of worship for the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran community and a cultural hub for the broader Estonian Canadian community.

The church also has value for its association with the noted Estonian-Canadian architect, Michael Bach (1916-1972), who is identified as a person of significance by Toronto's Estonian-Canadian community. An instructor at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto, Bach was the first of a group of Estonian-Canadian architects to arrive in Toronto after the Second World War who would play an important role in advancing Modernism in Toronto. The subject property reflects the ideas of Michael Bach, which were heavily influenced by Scandinavian Modernist architecture. This is

evidenced through its Mid-Century Modernist design, clean lines, and an emphasis on natural materials.

The property has further value for its association with acclaimed Austro-Canadian glass artist and painter Ernestine Tahedl, who created the property's stained-glass windows between 1987 and 1990. With a career spanning over 60 years, her works include the coloured-glass windows for the Sanctuary building at the Canadian pavilion for Expo '67 (1965-1967) and the Salvation Army Sanctuary in Toronto (2023). Other notable works by Tahedl include the concrete and glass sculpture lantern at McGill University (1968), and the glass mosaics for the former Edmonton Post Office (1965), which were reinstalled at the Royal Alberta Museum in 2016.

### **Design Value**

The property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road has design value as a representative example of a Mid-Century Modernist style A-Frame church. Its clean lines, functionality, simplicity of form, honest expression of both natural and manufactured materials, and large, steep, gable-ended roofline and freestanding bell tower are hallmarks of the Mid-Century Modernist style. The property is a unique for its fan-shaped plan with sloping roof ridge, complex four-point glulam beam trusses, copper clad roof with ridges referencing the glulam trusses, prow-shaped principal elevation with projecting front gable, and richly textured brick cladding laid in the Common bond pattern featuring alternating recessed and protruding courses.

The property also has design value for its artistic merit which masterfully combines scale, form, and massing, with structural elements and materials. This is reflected in the building's fan shaped floor plan and rear sloping roof ridge that, on the interior, draws the eye to the altar in the sanctuary at the liturgical (east) end, a floating balcony surmounted by a full height window at the west end, a wood clad cathedral ceiling supported by a system of four-point wood laminated glulam trusses, and pyramidal hanging light fixtures.

### **Contextual Value**

St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church has contextual value as a landmark property on Mount Pleasant Road. Constructed in 1955 and enlarged in 1970 and 1975, its distinctive free-standing bell tower and Mid-Century Modernist design stand out among the surrounding mix of early-20th century house-form buildings, modern mixed-use mid and high-rise structures, and the Collegiate-Gothic style of Northern Secondary School directly to the north. St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church also has value as a cultural landmark for the greater Toronto area as an active place of worship serving Toronto's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran community and its members throughout the city for the past 70 years.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### **Design or Physical Value**

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of the property:

#### **Exterior**

- The scale, form, and massing of the church, featuring a fan shaped plan with prow-shaped principal (west) elevation and steep A-Frame roof with sloping roof-ridge
- The copper roof cladding featuring raised diagonally set ridges following the interior laminated wood glulam roof trusses
- The brown brick cladding laid in a textured Common bond pattern featuring alternating courses of recessed and protruding brick at the principal (west) and rear (east) elevations
- The principal (west) elevation's centred double entrance featuring heavy wooden doors with vertical battening and copper clad awning set beneath a full-height window featuring triangular lights with metal muntins divided into four quadrants by mullions in the form of a Latin cross
- The freestanding precast concrete bell tower

#### **Interior**

- The exposed laminated wood glulam roof trusses set in a crossing pattern that terminate as pillars at grade
- The wood-clad cathedral ceiling in the nave and sanctuary featuring a narrow, full-height skylight at the rear (east) wall above the altar
- The full height volume of the sanctuary featuring wooden pews and floating balcony at the west end featuring a pipe organ and accessed by north and south balcony staircases
- The low-slung north and south walls featuring coloured-glass windows set between the laminated wood glulam pillars
- The rear (east) wall featuring flush pointed Common bond-laid brown brick
- The front (west) wall featuring flush pointed Common bond-laid brown brick set between vertical steel supports, and centred double entrance with batten doors beneath a full height coloured-glass window

### **Historical or Associative Value**

The following heritage attributes contribute to the historical and associative value of the property:

- The organ, located on the floating balcony with plaque commemorating Estonian Sailors
- The Finnish Boys Memorial on the south wall facing the altar
- The coloured-glass windows on the north, south, and west walls of the church
- The date stone on the north corner of the principal (west) elevation

### **Contextual Value**

The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of the property:

- The set-back, placement and orientation of the main church building and bell tower on the east side of Mount Pleasant Road at Roehampton Avenue

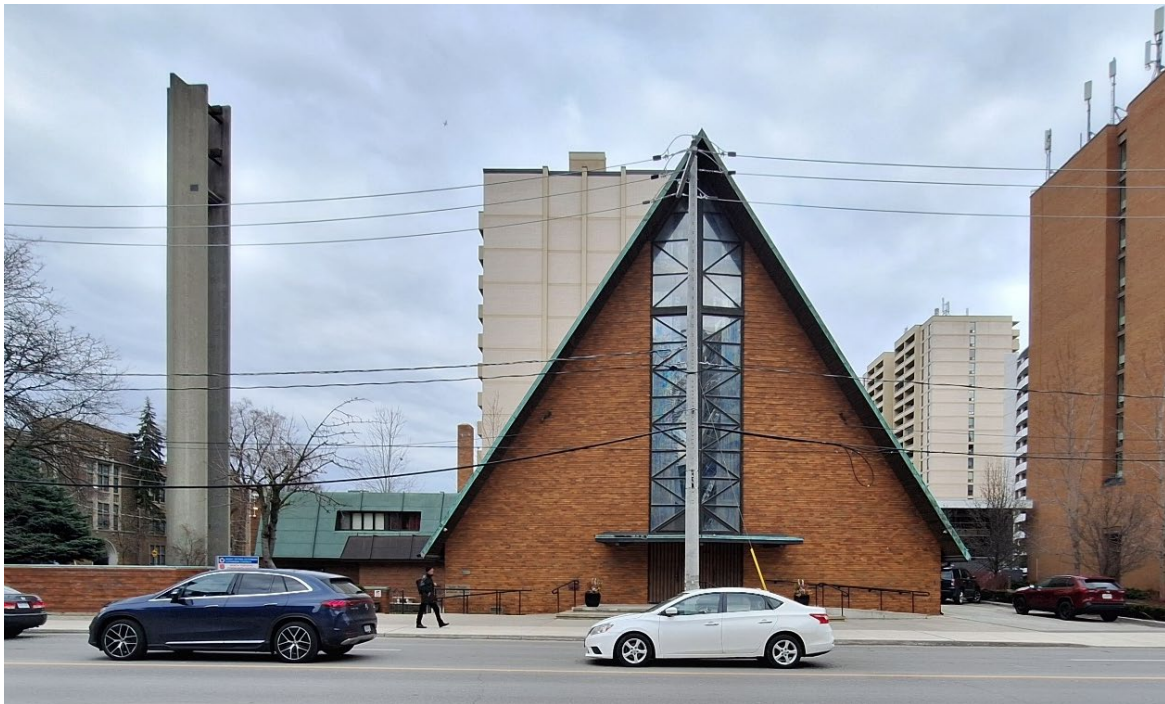
NOTE: The columbarium and 1955-1970 ancillary wing do not contain heritage attributes.

**LOCATION MAP AND CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH**  
**817 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD**

**ATTACHMENT 2**



This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red outline marks the location of 817 Mount Pleasant Road (City of Toronto iView Mapping, annotated by Heritage Planning, 2025).

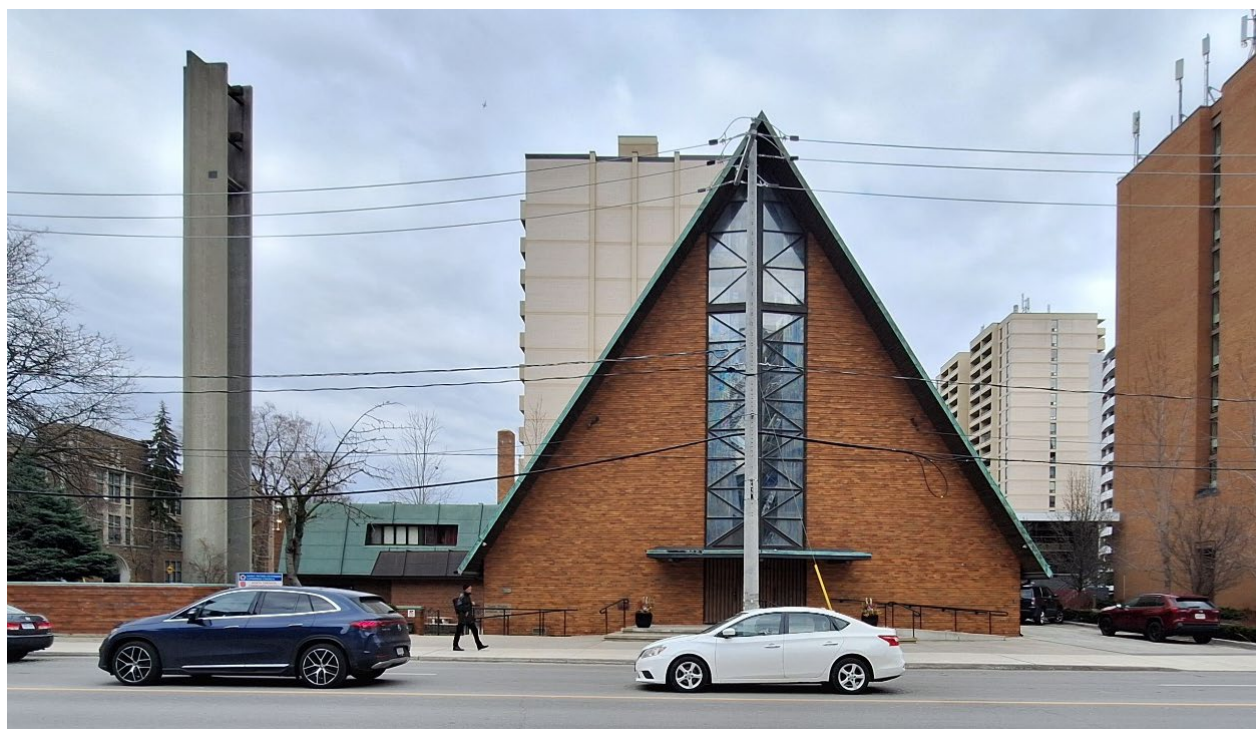


817 Mount Pleasant Road (Heritage Planning, 2025).

**RESEARCH, EVALUATION &  
VISUAL RESOURCES  
817 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

In undertaking this research and evaluation, we recognize that the area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



**1. DESCRIPTION**

817 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church	
ADDRESS	817 Mount Pleasant Road
WARD	15 - Don Valley West
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Mount Pleasant East
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1955
ORIGINAL USE	Church
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law	Church
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Michael Bach
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 3
LISTING DATE	June 14, 2023

## 2. ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06 CHECKLIST:

### CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The following checklist identifies the prescribed criteria met by the subject property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if the property meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

The evaluation table is marked "N/A" if the criterion is "not applicable" to the property or "✓" if it is applicable to the property.

#### 817 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD

1.	The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2.	The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	✓
3.	The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N/A
4.	The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	✓
5.	The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	N/A
6.	The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	✓
7.	The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	N/A
8.	The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	N/A
9.	The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	✓

## 3. RESEARCH

This section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property. Visual resources related to the research are located in Section 4. Archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Section 5 (List of Sources).

## INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

For time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Ojibway oral histories speak of Ice People, who lived at a time when ice covered the land.<sup>1</sup> Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge and Humber rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. Beads made from seashells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated most of their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors<sup>2</sup>, contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their village in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York. As evidenced by the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan Treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, the Haudenosaunee continued to have an interest in the resources of the area.

Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved into the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Anishinaabe people continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe

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1 With thanks to Philip Cote for the reference to Benton-Banai, Edward, *The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway* (Indian Country Press, 1985), p. 26.

2 <https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east>; Gary Warrick, "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds., *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), p. 72.

people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.<sup>3</sup>

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island).

The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold. Following the Toronto Purchase, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

The City of Toronto remains the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

## **i. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

In the late summer and autumn of 1944, during the Second World War, between 70,000 and 80,000 Estonians fled their homeland to escape the advancing Soviet Army which would occupy Estonia until 1991.<sup>4</sup> Housed in displaced persons camps in Germany and Sweden, the vast majority would immigrate, with large Estonian communities developing in Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada.<sup>5</sup> While small numbers of Estonians had immigrated to Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, 17,000 Estonian refugees settled in Canada.<sup>6</sup>

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3 Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." n.d.

4 Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024.

5 Aruvald, Priit. N.d.

6 Aruvald, Priit. N.d.

The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Toronto was established on August 3, 1948, in the hall of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 274 Concord Avenue, with the first service occurring on August 29, 1948. For the next 7 years, the growing congregation held services at St. John's Church. In September 1951, the decision was made to build a dedicated church. In 1953, the congregation purchased parts of Lots 18 and 19 of Plan 639 at the southeast corner of Roehampton Avenue and Mount Pleasant Road.<sup>7</sup> In 1954, the congregation was renamed St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and Estonian-Canadian architect and church member Michael Bach was commissioned to design a new church for the congregation. Featuring a Mid-Century Modernist design, Bach's plan for the property included a dramatic A-Frame church structure, ancillary wing, and bell tower.

In 1955, the church and a one-storey ancillary wing were constructed and consecrated. At the cornerstone laying ceremony a proclamation written in English and Estonian was placed inside which read:

Our St. Peter's Church has been built to the glory of God and is a memorial of our escape to a free country. This church is being erected in memory of the thousands of Estonians who have died in World Wars, the Wars of Liberation, and the dangerous escape. This temple of the Lord shall be our spiritual home where the Gospel of Jesus Christ shall resound. It shall be a place where we pray for heavenly blessing for those who are heavy-laden and those who are in bondage. It is a place where we shall pray for true peace and the deliverance of all oppressed.

Among those Estonians who arrived in the late 1940s and early 1950s were members of Infantry Regiment 200. Known as the Finnish Boys, the unit was mostly comprised of Estonian volunteers who fought in the Finnish Army against the Soviet Union during the Second World War. In Canada, they formed the Finnish Boys Club to provide support to one another. When they decided to create a memorial to their fallen members, St. Peter's provided a space at the south side of the altar. Artist and fellow brother-in-arms, Alfred Karu created the memorial, which was unveiled and blessed at a church service in October of 1958. Made of polished Swedish granite it features a simple symbol of a flame of hope and the inscription "For the honour of Estonia, as a pledge for the future" which comes from the flag of Infantry Regiment 200. In 1969, a granite altar also designed by Karu was added which included which included a small oak box containing soil from Estonia.

By 1958, the congregation had grown to approximately 4000 members and at the time was the largest Estonian church congregation outside of Estonia.<sup>8</sup> Over the next 20 years, as resources allowed much of Michael Bach's original plan, which included a bell tower and guildhall, was carried out. In the summer of 1961, the basement hall and foundation for the bell tower were completed. Based on Bach's plan, fellow Estonian-Canadian architect and church member Ants Elkin oversaw the addition of the Ladies Guild Room to the north wing, bell tower, and courtyard with garden wall, which were completed by 1970. Ants Elkin also designed the 1975 extension of the sanctuary 7 feet

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<sup>7</sup> Land Registry Office 80; St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Toronto (no date).

<sup>8</sup> Ambos, L., May 7, 2025.

eastward which saw the replacement of the unfinished stained-glass window at the east end with brick wall, a new altar, and the relocation of the organ from behind the altar to the rear balcony as had been originally intended. At this time a second wall containing a columbarium was added to the courtyard. This was followed by the columbarium at the corner of Mount Pleasant Road and Roehampton Avenue in 1982. Between 1987 and 1990 a series of coloured-glass windows designed by Ernestine Tahedl were installed in the window openings on the north, south, and west elevations. In 2012, a one-storey entrance vestibule was added to the ancillary wing.

### **Michael Bach (1916-1972)**

Mihkel (Michael) Bach was born in Estonia and studied architecture in Berlin prior to the Second World War. In 1949, while living in Sweden, he was encouraged by a visiting professor from the University of Toronto's School of Architecture to come to Canada and join the nascent faculty of modern architecture.<sup>9</sup> Heavily influenced by Scandinavian Modernist architecture, Bach was the first of a group of Estonian-Canadian architects to arrive in Toronto after the Second World War who would play an important role in advancing Modernism in Toronto.<sup>10</sup> For his contribution to architecture, Michael Bach is identified as a person of significance by Toronto's Estonian-Canadian community.

### **Ernestine Tahedl**

Ernestine Tahedl was born and educated in Austria, where she received a master's degree in graphic art from the Vienna Academy of Applied Arts in 1961. Following graduation, she collaborated with her father, Professor Heinrich Tahedl, in the design and creation of coloured-glass commissions before immigrating to Canada in 1963.<sup>11</sup> With a highly acclaimed career spanning over 60 years, she has been the recipient of numerous awards internationally and in Canada including the Allied Arts Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1966), the Canada Council Arts Award (1967), and the Arts and Letters Award from the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto (2000). Elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1977 and the Ontario Society of Artists 1984, she is the recipient of the Governor General's Canada 125th Anniversary Medal (1993), the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal (2002), the President's Medal of the Ontario Society of Artists (2006), and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012). In Canada, her works include the coloured-glass windows for the Sanctuary building at the Canadian pavilion for Expo '67 (1965-1967) and the Salvation Army Sanctuary in Toronto (2023) as well as the concrete and glass sculpture lantern at McGill University (1968) and the glass mosaics for the former Edmonton Post Office (1965), which were reinstalled at the Royal Alberta Museum in 2016.

## **ii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining design or physical value of Criteria 1, 2 or 3 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

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<sup>9</sup> Very, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Toronto (no date).

<sup>11</sup> Ernestine Tahedl (no date).



## **Church Building**

The church building is a representative example of a Mid-Century Modernist A-Frame Church. The Mid-Century Modernist style was the predominant architectural style of the post-war period (1945-1970). Combining new building materials and technologies with bold and expressive designs it represented a move away from the more rigid and institutional International Style. Unlike the International Style, Mid-century Modern is notable for being successfully applied to almost every building typology and for its regional differentiations in articulation. The style is characterized by sleek and geometric massing that creates a strong sense of volume; the differentiation between solid structural walls and glazed curtain walls; and a tendency toward decorative and design gestures emphasizing simple and high-quality materials.<sup>12</sup> This was particularly notable in Churches, which often took on expressionistic forms that featured dramatic geometric building forms and sweeping rooflines.<sup>13</sup>

## **Church Building Exterior**

The exterior of the church building features a symmetrical reverse-fan-shaped plan with a five-storey tall, prow-shaped, gable ended principal (west) elevation, low slung side walls, and a narrower, four-storey tall, prow-shaped rear (east) elevation. Supported by a complex system of four-point glulam beam trusses, the steeply sloped roof features a dramatic rear sloping ridgeline and copper cladding with prominent ridges that reference the roof trusses which are visible on the interior. The eastern end of the roof is comprised of a narrow skylight. All four elevations feature brick cladding laid in an English garden-bond pattern of alternating recessed and protruding courses.

The principal (west) elevation facing Mount Pleasant Road features a double entrance with heavy wooden doors featuring vertical battening set beneath a flat roofed metal awning. Extending from the top of the entrance to the roofline is a large window opening featuring triangular lights with metal muntins divided into four quadrants by mullions in the form of a Latin cross. A cornerstone dated 1955 is located at the northeast corner of the principal elevation near the foundation. The rear (east) elevation features a blank wall. Both the north and south side elevations are divided into 8 bays by paired glulam beam trusses, with the two easternmost on both elevations entirely clad in brick. The third easternmost bay on the north elevation opens onto to the adjacent vestibule of the ancillary wing while the westernmost bay on the south elevation features an emergency exit and window opening. The remaining bays feature large rectangular window openings between the building trusses that rise from a low knee wall to the top plate.

## **Church Interior**

The interior of the church building is comprised of a large double height sanctuary featuring a wood clad cathedral ceiling supported by a dramatic system of paired glulam truss beams. These beams rise from the foundation, forming the side walls of the church, before curving to support the roof where they splay away at a 17.5-degree angle and intersect at the peak, visually creating a four-point vault, while supporting the

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<sup>12</sup> Taylor Hazell Architects Ltd., 2017.

<sup>13</sup> City of Los Angeles, 2021.

roof without a ridge plate. Hanging from the ceiling are four pairs of prism shaped metal light fixtures.

The west end features a floating balcony accessed by a double staircase which flanks the principal entrance and west window. At the rear of the balcony, a large pipe organ frames the west window and screens the double staircase stairwell. The east end features a raised altar with a large crucifix centred in front of the solid brick clad east elevation. An approximately 2-foot-wide skylight extends along the entire run of both slopes of the roof. The central section of the sanctuary contains wooden pews while the window openings on the north and south elevations, along with the west window, feature coloured glass panels by noted coloured glass artist Ernestine Tahedl.

### **Ancillary Wing**

Extending northward from the easternmost 2 bays of Church Building is a two-storey ancillary wing featuring a flat roof and rectangular massing. The west and north elevations feature brick cladding while the west elevation features a brick clad first storey and steeply sloped copper clad roof with recessed window openings. The ancillary wing is accessed by a one-storey vestibule extending across the southern half of the west elevation and the third easternmost bay of the Church building's north elevation.

The ancillary wing does not contain any heritage attributes.

### **iii. CONTEXT**

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining contextual value of Criteria 7, 8 or 9 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The City of Toronto Property Data Map attached (Attachment 2) shows the site of the property at 817 Mount Pleasant Road.

The section of Mount Pleasant Road to the north features mid-rise residential buildings on the west side and a mix of two-storey semi-detached residences and main street commercial buildings on the east side. South of the property, Mount Pleasant Road is comprised of a mix of mid- and high-rise mixed-use buildings at Eglinton that transitions to mid-rise mixed-use buildings and one storey commercial plazas further south. East and west along Roehampton Road features mid- and high-rise mixed-use buildings, while the northeast corner of Roehampton Road and Mount Pleasant Road is anchored by the Collegiate Gothic Style Northern Secondary School constructed in 1930. The area west of the property is comprised of high-rise mixed-use buildings located along the Yonge Street corridor while the area to the east is characterised by low-rise residential buildings.

#### 4. VISUAL RESOURCES



Figure 1 Image of St. Peter's Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church from Mount Pleasant Road showing (right to left) the Church Building, Auxiliary Wing, and Bell Tower, and columbarium wall (Heritage Planning, 2025).



Figure 2 1981 image of the subject property from Mount Pleasant Road prior to the construction of the outer columbarium wall and removal of the cross from the bell tower (Toronto Archives).

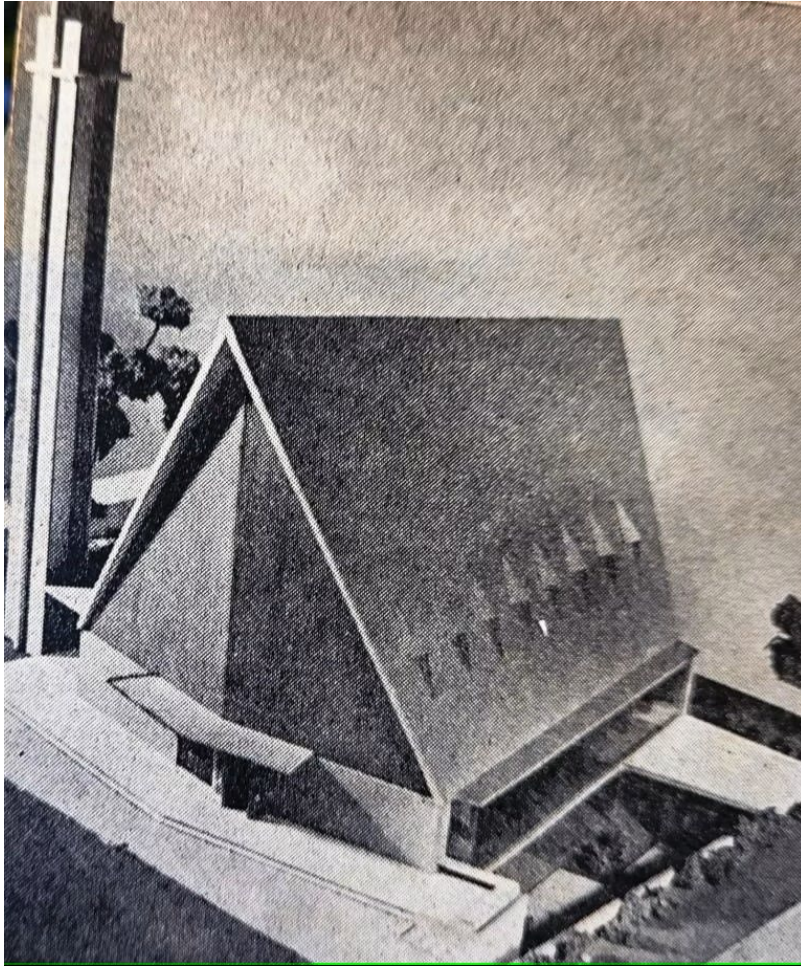


Figure 3 1954 image of building model by Michael Bach (St. Peter's EELC).



Figure 4 1955 image the Church Building under construction (St. Peter's EELC).



Figure 5 1955 image showing the blessing of St. Peter's (St. Peter's EELC).



Figure 6 Image looking southeast from Mount Pleasant Rd and Roehampton Ave (Heritage Planning, 2025).



Figure 7 View looking south from Roehampton Avenue showing (left to right) the ancillary wing, Church Building, Bell Tower and Columbarium (Heritage Planning, 2025).



Figure 8 View of the south elevation of the Church Building. Note the copper clad roof with angled ridges (Heritage Planning, 2025).



Figure 9 1960s image showing the original altar and east elevation with partially finished coloured glass windows and Pipe Organ (St. Peter's EELC).



Figure 10 View of Sanctuary looking east towards the altar (Heritage Planning, 2025).



Figure 11 View of Sanctuary looking west toward the rear balcony showing the glulam truss beams, coloured glass windows, pyramidal light fixtures, and pipe organ (Heritage Planning, 2025).



Figure 12 Interior view of south elevation showing coloured glass windows, glulam truss beams and pews (St. Peter's EELC, 2026).



Figure 13 Image of Finnish Boys Memorial (St. Peter's EELC, 2026)

## 5. LIST OF SOURCES

### ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- City of Toronto Archives.
- City of Toronto Building Records, Building Permits for 817 Mount Pleasant Road.
- Land Registry Office 80, Book 414 (Plan 333), Book 68E (Plan 639).

### SECONDARY SOURCES

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