

Staff Report



Development Services Department

www.kitchener.ca

REPORT TO: Heritage Kitchener

DATE OF MEETING: August 1, 2023

SUBMITTED BY: Deeksha Choudhry, Heritage Planner, 519-741-2200 ext. 7291

PREPARED BY: Garett Stevenson, Interim Director of Planning, 519-741-2200 ext. 7070

WARD(S) INVOLVED: Ward 10

DATE OF REPORT: July 3, 2023

REPORT NO.: DSD-2023-317

SUBJECT: Notice of Intention to Designate 64 Water Street North under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

RECOMMENDATION:

That pursuant to Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the Clerk be directed to publish a Notice of Intention to Designate the property municipally addressed as 64 Water Street North as being of cultural heritage value or interest.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to request that Council publish a Notice of Intention to Designate 64 Water Street North under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- The key finding of this report is that 64 Water Street North meets 8 out of 9 criteria for designation under *Ontario Regulation 9/06* (amended by Regulation 569/22) and has been confirmed to be a significant cultural heritage resource.
- There are no financial implications.
- Community engagement included informing residents by posting this report with the agenda in advance of the Heritage Kitchener Committee meeting, consulting and collaborating with the owner regarding designation of this property, and consultation with Heritage Kitchener. In addition, should Council choose to give notice of its intention to designate, such notice will be served to the owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust, and published in the local newspaper.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

BACKGROUND:

The property municipally addressed as 64 Water Street North is located on the north side of Water Street North near the intersection of Water Street North and Francis Street North (Fig. 1). The property is currently occupied by a church, also known as the First Church of Christ, Scientist, that was built in 1899-1900. The building has been designed by blending certain architectural styles – the Arts and Crafts, Tudor revival, American Craftsman and the

*** This information is available in accessible formats upon request. ***
Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

Shingle style. The building is currently listed as a non-designated building of cultural heritage value or interest on the City's Municipal Heritage Register.



Figure 1: Location Map of 64 Water Street North.

REPORT:

Identifying and protecting cultural heritage resources within the City of Kitchener is an important part of planning for the future, and helping to guide change while conserving the buildings, structures, and landscapes that give the City of Kitchener its unique identity. The City plays a critical role in the conservation of cultural heritage resources. The designation of property under the *Ontario Heritage Act* is the main tool to provide long-term protection of cultural heritage resources for future generations. Designation recognizes the importance of a property to the local community; protects the property's cultural heritage value; encourages good stewardship and conservation; and promotes knowledge and understanding about the property. Designation not only publicly recognizes and promotes awareness, but it also provides a process for ensuring that changes to a property are appropriately managed and that these changes respect the property's cultural heritage value and interest.

The property municipally addressed as 64 Water Street North is recognized for its design, associative, and contextual values. The building is a two- and-a-half storey unique example of a church that has been designed with many different architectural styles blending together (Fig. 2 & 3).



Figure 2: Front façade of First Church of Christ, Scientist.



Figure 3: Rear Façade of First Church of Christ, Scientist.

The cultural heritage value of the church was assessed using *Ontario Regulation 9/06*, and it was concluded that the church met 8 out of 9 criteria:

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 historical or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
4. The property has historical or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
5. The property has historical 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.
6. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
7. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings.
8. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

A detailed explanation of this property's cultural heritage value can be found in the proposed Statement of Significance for the property (Attachment A).

Design/Physical Value

Exterior

The existing church has been designed by blending a variety of architectural styles together, which is rare and unique in the context of Kitchener. These architectural styles include the Arts and Crafts style, Tudor Revival style, Old English style, American Craftsman style, and the Shingle style. This church was not built in the Gothic style, which was the norm at the time in Kitchener (known then as Berlin), which makes this church even more unique. The church was built in 1899-1900, and still retains almost all of its original elements, and is in excellent condition. This church was the first Christian Science church that was built in what was then known as the British Empire.

The foundation is high and made of large pieces of rough rubblestone, laid with very fine joints. The style and height of rough rubblestone is very unique, as most buildings do not have a foundation design that is neither this high, nor made with such large stones. On the front façade, above the foundation, the exterior of the building is clad with 'half-timbered' stucco, drawing from the Tudor revival architectural style, with shingles at the main gable peak on the front façade.

The building is irregularly shaped, with a low but complex cedar roof. The main entrance portion of the building has a gable end with a large semi-circular original stained-glass sunburst window. The complex roofing system with the use of gable roofs with shingles and the prominent circular tower are representative of the Old English and Shingle styles. Two

sets of heavy double oak doors with large decorative black iron hardware and surmounted by semi-circular transom windows provide access to Water Street, with a similar single door leading to Francis Street on the rear facade. A wide variety of leaded and colored glass windows contain small diamond-shaped panes. The sanctuary inside is illuminated from the east by a large semi-circular sunburst window of leaded amber glass. The complex cedar shingle roof dominates the building as does the prominent round tower, positioned at the apex of the triangular lot at the corner of Francis and Water streets. The round tower also includes a granite corner date stone inscribed '1899' was quarried in Concord, New Hampshire, which was the home of Mary Eddy Baker, founder of the Christian Science Society, and laid on October 12, 1899. All the doors and windows of the church are original and operational.

The building has two corner towers, one located towards the front corner on the building which extends all the way to the rear façade, and one located on the rear façade, which partially extends to the front. The rear façade of the building is also rich in architectural details. It includes a flat-topped, five-sided turret to the circular tower on the right side of the building. Next to this is a small balcony supported by wooden columns on the upper storey, with a rectangular arch and the other corner tower and a chimney towards the other end of the building.

The design was adapted to fit on this tight triangular building site, with the principal facades facing onto two streets. Turn-of-the-20th-century examples in major cities like Toronto, New York and Chicago resulting in triangular-shaped structures are often known as "flat iron" buildings. Not only can this church be compared to the "flat iron" design found in other major cities, but it is also similar in its siting on a triangular lot to the Christian Science Mother Church in Boston, Massachusetts, built in 1894 (Fig. 5). Overall, the building is in excellent condition, with no major alterations to the exterior.



Figure 5. The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts. Source: Sarah Nicols

Interior

The interior of the church retains all of its original elements – including all the original woodwork inside the entrance hall of the church (Fig. 6 & 7). The design reflects closely the practice of Christian Science and the interior spaces function well. The sanctuary is wide and open with pews aligned in an arc around the dais. Adorned by black ash wainscoting, it can hold up to 400 people and contains a 1,000-plus-pipe Casavant Frères organ built in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, installed in 1911 and electrified in 1953. The Christian Science Reading Room was originally located on the ground floor of the circular tower with the board room above. The Reading Room found a new home next door in the 1950s (now known as 58 Water Street North). A Sunday School with a rusticated granite fireplace was established in the lower storey in 1936. The interior of the church also remains largely unaltered, with the exception of two wooden support beams towards the front of the sanctuary that were installed to help support the roof of the building.



Figure 6: Original Woodwork in the interior of the Church.



Figure 7: Sanctuary with the original Pipe Organ

Historical/Associative Value

This building has significant historical and associative value. This church was the first Christian Scientist church built outside of the United States of America, in what was then known as the British Empire. The faith was established by Mary Baker Eddy in the late 19th century, who was from New England. It follows a “set of beliefs and practices” that were formalized by Eddy, who, through her own personal experiences, believed in an alternative method of Christian healing. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, was built in Boston, Massachusetts. It was also built on a triangular plot of land. As mentioned above, the placement and siting of the church mimicked the Mother Church in Boston.

Meetings of the Christian Science Society were first held in Berlin in 1892. The faith was brought to Berlin by Sarah and Samuel Williams when she, along with her husband, moved to Berlin from Toronto. Sarah Williams started hosting regular Bible lessons, and in some time, was joined by other influential people in Berlin at the time – Mrs. Agenora Greene, Mrs. Christina M Hall, and Mrs. Mary E. West, and soon enough Christian Science started gaining momentum in the society. The meetings were first held at Sarah Williams’ home, but with new members joining, the first public meeting was held in a small office on Queen Street. With the congregation growing quickly, the office on Queen Street became too small, and the meetings started to be held in the Judge’s Chambers at the Court House. The need for a dedicated space became imperative, and a building fund was established in May 1896 and within a year, the congregation moved to a house at 11 Roy Street.

It took just six years for the fast-growing congregation to acquire the land and funds in order to begin construction on this site at a cost of \$6,000. Sarah Williams was instrumental in securing the land for the church, appearing before the Town Council on May 29, 1899, and on her request, Council agreed to donate the land at the corner of Francis Street North and Water Street North. Council’s willingness to donate the land at Mrs. William’s request showed the popularity and interest in Christian Science at the time. Dedication services were held August 2, 1900. It was the “first entirely new house of praise erected in the British Empire by the Christian Scientists.”. However, not only was this the first Christian Science church to be built in present-day Canada, but the influential people who brought the church to Berlin in the first place- Sarah and Samuel Williams- also contribute to the historical and associative cultural heritage value of the church.

Sarah and Samuel Williams

Sarah Williams was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1860, and Samuel Williams was born in Madison, Indiana in 1853. They moved to Toronto in 1880 upon their marriage and were part of the first Christian Science meeting that was held in Toronto (it was the first Christian Science meeting to be held outside of the United States). They brought Christian Science with them to Berlin when they moved upon the birth of their first child. Once in Berlin, they founded the church along with other prominent members of the society at the time that included Agenora Greene, William Greene Jr, Elinor Edwards, Christina M. Hall and Mary E. West. In the initial days of the church, Mrs. Williams also acted as First Reader.

It was in Berlin that Samuel Williams established many successful businesses and became a prominent member of society at that time. His businesses and contributions to Berlin included the William, Greene and Rome Co. manufacturing company, which was at one time on Queen Street South, and the Arrow Shirt Factory.

Sarah Williams hosted regular Bible lessons at her house, and essentially started the movement in Berlin along with her husband. As mentioned above, she also successfully acquired the land where the church was built. It was also Sarah Williams that retained architect, Joseph H. Taft, to design the church.

Joseph H. Taft

The task of designing the church was given to the one of the most successful architects and firms of that time – Joseph H. Taft who worked at McKim, Mead & White. Taft designed this building blending different styles of architecture together, but also bringing the “Shingle Style” to Kitchener, which was an American style made popular by the New England school of Architecture. Casper Braun, a local builder was the contractor, and Charles Knetchel prepared the working plans.

Andrew Taft is also known for designing many Manhattan brownstone terraced townhomes (many of which are now designated and protected), shingled seaside homes in New England, and even laboratories for Thomas Edison. Taft first appears in New York City in 1887 and continues to practice there until 1909. He was a member of the Architectural League of New York, and an Associate of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts & Sciences.

Contextual Value

The church also has significant contextual value because of its location. The church still exists in its original location, on a triangular plot of land located at the intersection of two streets at a sharp angle. This plot of land was purposely chosen to mimic the Mother Church in Boston. Furthermore, because of its prominent but unique form and architecture, this building has been recognized as a landmark in the community.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of this building are:

- All elements related to the construction, architecture, and style of the building including:
 - Exterior Elements:
 - Rugged Fieldstone raised foundation;
 - Half-timbered upper storey with roughcast stucco panels;
 - Prominent Round Towers and smaller half tower (on the rear façade);
 - Granite cornerstone inscribed ‘1899’;
 - Complex Cedar shingle roof;
 - Cedar shingle gable end on the front façade;
 - Window and window openings, including semi-circular transom windows, large semi-circular sunburst window of leaded amber glass, and leaded and coloured glass windows containing small diamond-shaped panes;

- Door and door openings, including single and double oak doors with decorative black iron hardware;
- Flat-topped five-sided turret;
- Tall yellow brick chimney; and
- Balcony supported by wooden columns.
- Interior Elements:
 - The 1911 Pipe Organ located in the central hallway;
 - Interior woodwork trim and wainscoting, specially in the entrance hall and the central hallway of the church;
 - Tudor-esque detailing surrounding the Pipe Organ.
- All elements related to its historical and associative values as the first purpose-built church for Christian Science in present-day Canada; and
- All elements related to its contextual value including:
 - Its original location;
 - The prominent triangular piece of land at the corner of Water and Francis Streets.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the Heritage Kitchener committee meeting.

CONSULT and COLLABORATE – Heritage Planning staff have consulted and collaborated with the applicant and owner regarding implementation of the recommendations of the HIA, including designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The owner has confirmed their support for designation subject to consideration by Heritage Kitchener and Council.

Section 29(2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* requires Council to consult with the Municipal Heritage Committee (Heritage Kitchener) before giving notice of its intention to designate a property. Heritage Kitchener will be consulted via circulation and consideration of this report (see INFORM above). Members of the community will be informed via circulation of this report to Heritage Kitchener and via formal consideration by Council. In addition, should Council choose to give notice of its intention to designate, such notice will be served on the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust, and published in the local newspaper (The Record). Once notice has been served, the owner has the right of appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. It should be noted that should Council decide not to proceed with a Notice of Intention to Designate, that the building will remain on the City’s Municipal Heritage Register until January 1, 2025, after which it will be removed according to the changes enacted by

Bill 23. Once removed, it cannot re-listed on the Register again for five (5) years, i.e. January 1, 2030.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- *Ontario Heritage Act, 2022*

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Proposed Statement of Significance for 64 Water Street North