STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

131 Victoria Street South



Summary of Significance

☑Design/Physical Value☑Historical/Associative Value☑Contextual Value☑Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 131 Victoria Street South **Legal Description**: Plan 378 Part Lot 552

Year Built: 1926

Architectural Style: Modest Vernacular example of the Ukrainian Baroque architectural style with

influences from the Byzantine architectural style

Original Owner: Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration

Original Use: Religious

Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

131 Victoria Street South is an early 20th century building displaying a modest vernacular example of the Ukrainian Baroque architectural style with influences from the Byzantine architectural style. The building is situated on a 0.22-acre parcel of land located on the east side of Victoria Street South between Theresa Street and Michael Street in the Victoria Park Planning Community of the City of Kitchener within the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the main church building. The property is located adjacent to the Victoria Park Area Heritage Conservation District, which contains the circa 1952 church rectory (49 Michael Street) and 1972 parish centre (15 Michael Street).

Heritage Value

131 Victoria Street South is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, contextual, and social values.

Design/Physical Value

The property municipally addressed as 131 Victoria Street South demonstrates design/physical value as a rare and unique example of an early 20th century religious building displaying a modest vernacular example of the Ukrainian Baroque architectural style with influences from the Byzantine architectural style. The building has many intact heritage attributes in good condition including: clerestory windows, bronze pear-shaped dome, rooftop cupola topped by a cross; front hipped gable roof; cross plan; red brick construction; brick dentils below the eaves; round window with stained glass; semi-circular window openings displaying paintings; semi-circular window openings with modest tracery, consisting of a plain circle with two rounded lancet lights under the main arch; brick voussoirs with drip molds; stone sills; semi-circular double front door entrance with stone surround; rose window; and, a 1926 stone datestone. Various additions have been added to the church building (1938, 1947, 2015) and adjacent to the building (1952, 1955, 1971-72).

Front (West) Façade

The front of the building faces Victoria Street South and is comprised of three bays including a centre projecting bay. The most prominent feature of the building is the bronze pear-shaped dome with rooftop cupola topped by a cross. The centre bay features brick dentils at the roofline, a large round stained-glass window with brick surround, a semi-circular stone door surround, and paneled double doors with a decorative semi-circular transom. The end bays each feature semi-circular window openings, brick voussoirs with drip molds, and stone sills. The windows in these openings have been removed and replaced with Byzantine paintings. The left bay (when looking at the front of the building) also features a 1926 stone datestone. The current exterior stairs were constructed in 1993 and provide access from the north and south. These stairs feature four brick piers of varying heights with stone caps. Between each brick pier is an angel stone wall capped with concrete. Two brick piers with concrete caps have been added to the front of the building along with an angel stone wall capped with concrete. The centre bay of the angel stone wall displays a cross. Four additional brick piers create a brick and iron fence that extends south along the property line (parallel to Victoria Street).

A portion of the cross-building plan on the south side also faces Victoria Street South. This section of the building was constructed in 1938 as the original church rectory. This elevation is setback approximately 11.5 metres (52.2 feet) from the front façade and is two storeys high. This elevation features a rose window, two 1/1 hung windows with flat lintels and stone sills on the first storey, two 1/1 hung windows with semi-circular lintels and stone sills on the second story (these windows appear to be altered with exterior trim or storm windows displaying flat lintels), a slightly inset semi-circular wood door with brick voussoirs, two lights flanking the door, the municipal address "131" above the door, and concrete stairs with a metal hand railing. A rusticated stone foundation is partially exposed above ground.

An alteration to the cross-building plan on the north side also faces Victoria Street South. This section has been altered twice. First, in 1947, when the original building was lengthened by 20 feet, and again, in 2015. As it exists today, this elevation is a new addition with a flat roof constructed in 2015. It appears that windows from the original building were salvaged and reused in the addition. The addition features a semi-circular window opening with decorative transom, brick voussoirs with drip molds, and stone

sills. Beneath the main window is a square window that matches other basement windows around the building. This square window has no brick voussoir but it does have a stone sill. This window opening is cut into a portion of the partially exposed parged concrete foundation as well as the red brick. The red brick is not original and not an exact match to the original.

Side (North) Façade

The north side façade features three bays; however, used to feature four bays. This section has been altered twice. First, in 1938, when the building was lengthened by 20 feet, and in 2015 with a building addition that increased the height and depth of the building. The fourth bay was covered by the 2015 building addition. Each bay features a large semi-circular window opening with modest tracery, consisting of a plain circle with two rounded lancet lights under the main arch with with brick voussoirs and drip molds along with a stone sill. Beneath two of the bays is a square window opening with what appears to be a non-original window with no voussoirs and a stone sill. These window openings cut into a portion of the partially exposed rusticated stone foundation as well as the red brick. Beneath one of the windows is a modern metal man door. The primary building material is brick. The eaves, soffits and fascia are plain apart from a discrete bracket at the southwest corner of the roofline.

The side gable of the north side façade was altered by the 2015 building addition which increased the height of the gable and extended the depth of the cross gable on the north along with a square addition with a flat roof. The side gable of the north façade features a single bay with a round rose decorative detail and a large semi-circular window opening with modest tracery, consisting of a plain circle with two rounded lancet lights under the main arch with brick voussoirs and drip molds along with a stone sill. Two modern lights flank the window. The foundation is parged concrete. The flat roof addition is red brick with no other significant architectural features.

Side (South) Façade

The south side façade features three bays. Each bay features a large semi-circular window with modest tracery, consisting of a plain circle with two rounded lancet lights under the main arch with brick voussoirs and drip molds along with a stone sill. Beneath two of the windows is a square window opening with what appears to be a non-original window with no voussoirs and a stone sill. These window openings cut into a portion of the partially exposed rusticated stone foundation as well as the red brick. The primary building material is red brick. The eaves, soffits and fascia are plain apart from a discrete bracket at the southwest corner of the roofline.

The side gable of the south side façade features two bays divided by a chimney that extends above the roofline. The two bays are not symmetrical. Each bay of the first storey displays two 1/1 hung windows with a flat lintel and a stone sill. The second storey displays three windows of different size but similar style. The style again is 1/1 hung windows with a flat lintel and a stone sill. The third storey is symmetrical with two 1/1 hung windows with a flat lintel and a stone sill. The rusticated stone foundation is partially exposed above ground.

Rear (East) Facade

The rear of the church is an addition that was built in 1947 to lengthen the church and hall by 20 feet. As it exists today, the end gable at the rear of the building is comprised of three unseparated bays. The third storey of the centre bay features a semi-circular window opening with brick voussoir, drip mold and stone sill. It appears that the original windows have been removed and replaced with Byzantine paintings. The second story features semi-circular window openings with brick voussoirs, drip molds and stone sills. These window openings also contain Byzantine paintings. Beneath each of the second

storey windows are square window openings with no voussoirs or sills. These window openings cut into a portion of the partially exposed foundation as well as the red brick.

The rear façade was altered again in 2015 with a building addition that increased the height of the gable and extended the depth of the cross gable. This addition features a new barrier-free building entrance. The entrance is covered by a small gable roof with supports that lead to modern doors made with metal and glass. The red brick is not original and not an exact match to the original.

Interior

The interior of the church was painted in 1949 by a St. Catherine's artist Mr. L. Scott Young who was unable to complete the project due to his unexpected death (Wynnyckyj, 1987). The project was finished by an unknown artist in 1951 (Wynnyckyj, 1987). Major renovations to the interior of the church were initiated in 1977, including: refurbishing the walls, pews, and woodwork; replacing the altars; installing a 15-foot-high wood iconostasis - a lattice screened between the nave and the sanctuary - covered by 18 painted icons in the Byzantine style (Wynnyckyj, 1987). Another project to paint the interior of the church in the Byzantine style began in 1983 and was completed in 1986 (Wynnyckyj, 1987).

Historical/Associative Value

The subject property has historical and associative value due to its history and association with Ukrainian immigrants, Kitchener's industrial history; the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration and Mykola Bibniak.

In the early 1900s immigrants from Ukraine started to arrive and sponsor Masses in the Eastern Rite at local Roman Catholic churches. They were drawn to the area by the industrial activity (Gesza, 2010), especially the rubber, machinery and tannery industries (Hamara, 1987). Many worked for prominent industries such as the Huck Glove Factory, the Lang Tannery, and the Kaufman Rubber Company. The parish beginning's date to the early 1920s when five Ukrainian families broke away from the local chapter of the Ukrainian Labor and Farm Temple Association (ULFTA) (Hamara, 1987). At the same time, other Ukrainians in the ULFTA became trade union activists in Kitchener's rubber, machinery and tannery industries (Hamara, 1987). By 1922, the non-communists in the community (Hamara, 1987) organized their own parish and in 1924 named it The Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Wynncyckyj, 1987). Land to construct the church was acquired in 1925 for a cost of \$1,160.00 (Wynncyckyj, 1987). Mr. Zomer who lived at the corner of Victoria Street and Oak Street acquired a mortgage (Gesza, 2020). These immigrants completed the construction of the church building in 1926 for a cost of \$11,400.00 (Wynncyckyj, 1987). The cornerstone was laid on December 5, 1926 and blessed by His Excellency, Bishop Nykyta Budka, the first bishop for the Ukrainian Catholics in Canada (Wynncyckyj, 1987).

In the beginning, Mass was performed by visiting priests from larger centres such as Toronto or Brantford. In 1938, the parish built an addition at the cost of \$3,635.00 to the church to serve as a rectory, which ultimately attracted the first resident priest – Father Charny (Wynncyckyj, 1987). The home adjacent to the church building was purchased in 1952 to house the members of the order of Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate (Wynncyckyj, 1987).

The church building was a focal point for Ukrainians. In the 1940s, at least 52 families lived within a 5-block radius of the church building (Gesza, 2010). The hall beneath the church hosted numerous activities such as dances, concerts, performances, English language instruction, etc. (Gesza, 2010).

By the end of 1977, significant interior heritage attributes – the iconostas- were added to the interior of the church building. The iconostas were 12-feet high and carved in wood by V. Barach. Within each of the iconostas, 18 icons were painted by Mykola Bidniak. Mykola lost his hands as a teenager and went on to learn how to paint with his mouth (K-W Record, 1979). He studied at the Ontario College of Art and in 1978 he was commissioned to "write" 18 Byzantine icons at a cost of \$20,000 (K-W Record, 1979). Bidniak's icons are fine examples of the inspiration and challenge of the iconographer's art (The Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration, date unknown). Additional wall paintings were added in 1949 by Mr. L. Scott Young (Wynnyckyj, 1987). Young was a church mural artist who painted more than three dozen churches in Canada (Unknown, 1994). Today, his artwork is only present in four churches, including the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration (Unknown, 1994). Additional icons were painted on the walls and ceilings in 1984 by Rev. Theodore Koufos, a Tortonto-based Greek orthodox priest.

Contextual Value

The contextual value of the property relates to its location and proximity to the church rectory, parish centre, on-site park and local industries.

The home adjacent to the church building was purchased in 1952 to house the members of the order of Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate (Wynncyckyj, 1987). In more recent years, this home has served as the church rectory. This home is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act as it is located within the Victoria Park Area Heritage Conservation District.

Lands for the parish centre, the Ukrainian Catholic Centre at 15 Michael Street, were purchased in 1963 for the sum of \$19,500.00 (Wynncyckyj, 1987) and the building was constructed in 1971-1972 to provide the congregation with a large, combined auditorium-gymnasium and some classroom space (K-W Record, 1972). The cornerstone was laid in November 1971 along with the burial of a time capsule (K-W Record, 1972). The opening ceremonies were held in May of 1972 and participants included Most Rev. Isidore Borecky (Ukrainian bishop of Eastern Canada), Rev. Russel Chyz (parish priest), and an official opening by Donna Sawicky (Miss Canada) (K-W Record, 1972a; K-W Record, 1972b).

In 2010, the parish planned the installation of a park on the south side of the church building to include an open wrought iron gate and walkways leading to a granite monument and landscaped with flowers, trees and benches (Gesza, 2010).

Social Value

The social value of the property relates to the parish, church building, rectory and parish centre.

The parish and church building were the original focal point of the Ukrainian community. The church building not only held worship services but also dances, concerts, dance and theatrical performances, choir practices and English language classes (Gesza, 2010).

In 1971, the parish held it's first annual East Egg Festival sponsored by the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League (Denney, 1986). This tradition continued for at least 21 years (Koza, 1992).

Heritage Attributes

All elements related to the construction and modest vernacular example of the Ukrainian Baroque architectural style with influences from the Byzantine architectural style, including:

- Cross-building plan;
- front hipped gable roofline with plain eaves, soffits and fascia as well as discrete brackets;
- red brick laid in a running bond, including brick dentils at the roofline on the front (west) elevation;
- rusticated stone foundation;
- the number, placement and details of bays on each elevation;
- clerestory windows below bronze pear-shaped dome with rooftop cupola topped by a cross;
- windows and window openings, including:
 - the large round stained-glass window with brick surround;
 - semi-circular windows with modest tracery, consisting of a plain circle with two rounded lancet lights under the main arch with brick voussoirs and drip molds along with a stone sill;
 - o semi-circular window openings featuring brick voussoirs with drip molds and stone sills;
 - o semi-circular window openings featuring decorative paintings;
 - o the rose window;
 - 1/1 hung windows with flat lintels and stone sills;
 - o 1/1 hung windows with semi-circular lintels and stone sills;
 - Square window openings with flat lintels and stone sills;
- doors and door openings, including:
 - a semi-circular stone door surround displaying double paneled wood doors with modest tracery, consisting of a plain circle with two rounded lancet lights;
 - o semi-circular wood door with brick voussoirs, two lights flanking the door, the municipal address "131" above the door, rusticated stone stairs with metal/iron hand railing;
- 1926 datestone; and,
- round rose decorative detail.

References

Denney, F. L., (1986). Easter Egg Festival Celebrates 15th year. K-W Record: Kitchener, Ontario.

Gesza, C. (2010). *Presentation for the Heritage Kitchener Committee*. Kitchener, Ontario.

K-W Record. (1971). Will lay cornerstone. Kitchener, Ontario.

K-W Record. (1972a). *Ukrainian Catholics to inaugurate unit*. Kitchener, Ontario.

K-W Record. (1972b). Centre Opening.

K-W Record. (1979). *Handless artist paints icons*. Kitchener, Ontario.

Koza, R. (1992). *Pysanky eggs*. K-W Record: Kitchener, Ontario.

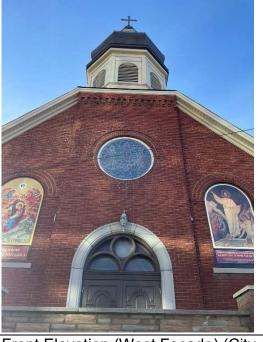
Unknown. (1994). *L. Scott Young, Artist*. Waterloo Historical Society: 82(1994): 26-30. Cober Printing: Kitchener, Ontario.

Wynnyckyj, I. L., (1987). *Milestones: A History of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration*. Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Transfiguration: Kitchener, Ontario.

Photographs



Front Elevation (West Façade) (City of Kitchener, 2009)



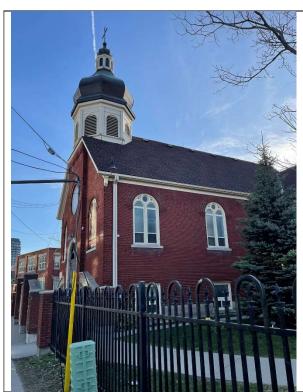
Front Elevation (West Façade) (City of Kitchener, 2024)



Rear Elevation (East Façade)



Rear Elevation (City of Kitchener, 2024)





Side Elevation (South Façade) (City of Kitchener, 2024)



Side Elevation (North Façade)



Side Elevation (North Façade) (City of Kitchener, 2024)



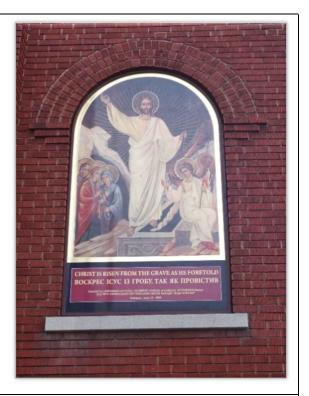
Photograph of monument located in the south garden (City of Kitchener, 2009)



Entrance to south garden from Victoria Street (City of Kitchener, 2024)



Photograph showing the details on the north 2015 building addition (City of Kitchener, 2009)



Photograph showing a window opening replaced with a painting (City of Kitchener, 2009)



Photograph showing the 1926 datestone (City of Kitchener, 2009)



View from Ukrainian Catholic Centre looking west on Michael Street towards the rectory and church (City of Kitchener, 2024)



Rectory and church (City of Kitchener, 2024)



View from south west corner of property looking north on Victoria Street North (City of Kitchener, 2024)



CULTURAL HERITAGE EVALUATION FORM

Address:	South	Recorder:	Michelle Drake	
Description:	5; Architectural Style – Ukrainian Baroque	— Date	February 9, 2023	
(date of construction, architectural s	tyle, etc)			
Photographs Attached:				
☑Front Facade ☑ Left	Façade ⊠ Right Façade ⊠ Rea	r Facade	☑ Details	☐ Settin
Designation Critoria	Heritage Kitchener Committee	Recorder-	Heritage Planning	Staff
1. This 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.	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown No	
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown □ No	
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No	



	* E.g constructed with a unique material combination or use, incorporates challenging geometric designs etc.				
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. * Additional archival work may be required.	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown □ No □
5.	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. * E.g - A commercial building may provide an understanding of how the	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown □ No □
	understanding of how the economic development of the City occurred. Additional archival work may be required.				
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	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No □	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No ⊠



	who is significant to a community. * Additional archival work may be required.				
7.	The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown □ No □
	* E.g It helps to define an entrance point to a neighbourhood or helps establish the (historic) rural character of an area.				
8.	The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings. * Additional archival work may be required.	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown □ No □
9.	The property has contextual value because it is a landmark. *within the region, city or neighborhood.	N/A □ Yes □	Unknown □ No □	N/A □ Yes ⊠	Unknown □ No □
Note.					



Additional Criteria	Recorder	Heritage Planning Staff			
Interior: Is the interior arrangement, finish, craftsmanship and/or detail noteworthy?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠			
Completeness: Does this structure have other original outbuildings, notable landscaping or external features that complete the site?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠			
Site Integrity: Does the structure occupy its original site? * If relocated, is it relocated on its original site, moved	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠			
from another site, etc.					
Alterations: Does this building retain most of its original materials and design features? Please refer to the list of heritage attributes within the Statement of Significance and indicate which elements are still existing and which ones have been removed.	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠			
Alterations: Are there additional elements or features that should be added to the heritage attribute list?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠			
Condition: Is the building in good condition?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠			
*E.g Could be a good candidate for adaptive re-use if possible and contribute towards equity-building and climate change action.					



Indigenous History: Could this site be of importance to Indigenous heritage and history?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □ □ Additional Research Required	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □ ☑ Additional Research Required
*E.g Site within 300m of water sources, near distinct topographical land, or near cemeteries might have archaeological potential and indigenous heritage potential. Could there be any urban Indigenous history associated with the property?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □ □ Additional Research Required	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □ ☑ Additional Research Required
* Additional archival work may be required.		
Function: What is the present function of the subject property? * Other may include vacant, social, institutional, etc. and important for the community from an equity building perspective.	Unknown □ Residential □ Commercial □ Office □ Other □ - ———	Unknown □ Residential □ Commercial □ Office □ Other ⊠ Religious
Diversity and Inclusion: Does the subject property contribute to the cultural heritage of a community of people?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □ □ Additional Research Required	N/A □ Unknown ☒ No ☒ Yes □ □ Additional Research Required
Does the subject property have intangible value to a specific community of people?	N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes □ □ Additional Research Required	N/A □ Unknown □ No ☒ Yes □ □ Additional Research Required
* E.g Waterloo Masjid (Muslim Society of Waterloo & Wellington Counties) was the first established Islamic Center and Masjid in the Region and contributes to the history of the Muslim community in the area.		



Notes about Additional Criteria Examined

Interior: See description in the Statement of Significance; Completeness: Park on south side with granite monument; Indigenous History: Located within 300 metres of water; Diversity and Inclusion: Ukrainian immigrants and their descendants

Recommendation

Does this property meet the definition of a significant built heritage resource, and should it be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act? (Does it meet two or more of the designation criteria?)
N/A □ Unknown □ No □ Yes ⊠
If not, please select the appropriate action for follow-up
☐ Keep on the Municipal Heritage Register
☐ Remove from the Municipal Heritage Register
☐ Additional Research Required
Other:
General / Additional Notes

TO BE FILLED BY HERITAGE PLANNING STAFF:

Date of Property Owner Notification: March 13, 2024