

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

57-61 Stirling Avenue North



Summary of Significance

Design/Physical Value

Historical Value

Contextual Value

Social Value

Economic Value

Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 57-61 Stirling Avenue North

Legal Description: Plan 77 Part Lots 59-62 58R-7728 Part 1

Year Built: 1925, additions in 1952 and 1991.

Architectural Styles: Neo-Gothic

Original Owner: Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church

Original Use: Church

Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

57-61 Stirling Avenue North, also known as the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church is a church built in the Neo-Gothic architectural style. The church is situated on a 0.41-acre parcel of land located on the east side of Stirling Avenue North between King Street East and Weber Street East in the King East Planning Community of the City of Kitchener within the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the church.

Heritage Value

The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church is recognized for its design/physical, historic/associative, and contextual values.

Design/Physical Value

The design value relates to the architecture of the church. The church is a notable example of the Neo-Gothic architectural style. The church is in good condition. The church is one-and-a-half storeys in height and features: asymmetrical design; front and side gables with shaped parapets; multi color brick; pointed-arch windows with stone drip-molds; pointed-arch front door with drip-mold; and stone details such as door surrounds, window surrounds, lintels and date stones.

The original design of the church was a one-storey building built. There have been two major additions and renovations to the church ever since, one in 1952 and one in 1991. The front façade of the church has been altered from its original design in 1952. However, both these additions do not detract from the cultural heritage value of the church, instead contribute to the overall cultural heritage value. These additions were complimentary and sympathetic to the original design of the church.

The 1952 addition included altering the front façade of the church, adding wings on both sides of the façade, as well as an addition towards the rear of the church. The 1991 addition included constructing a two-storey building adjoining the front façade on the northern portion of the property towards the front.

Front Façade (West Elevation)

The front façade of the church includes the altered original portion of the church and the 1992 addition. The central portion of the church includes a 3 over 3 gothic arched windows with stone surrounds and tracery. Above the window is a tripartite arched window with stone surrounds with a gable parapet. These windows are surrounded by double square windows with square surrounds on either side. The projecting wing on the right side (as seen from the street) includes a door opening with stone surrounds and a small, fixed window with stone surrounds with a gable parapet facing the southern direction. There is also a "1924, 1952" datestone next to the door. The projecting wing on the left side also includes a door opening (that has since been filled in) with stone surround and a small, fixed window with soldier coursing and sills. Next to this wing is the 1992 brick addition with an arched door opening with stone surround, with a tripartite arched gothic window with stone surrounds above it and a gable parapet.

Side Elevation (South Elevation)

This elevation can be divided into five bays with four brick buttresses and is likely the original portion of the church. Each bay contains arched gothic windows with sills. Towards the rear, there is a gable-roofed addition which contains square windows with sills.

Side Elevation (North Elevation)

The north elevation of the church has a gable parapet, with a round-arched tripartite window on the upper section. This elevation also includes brick buttresses dividing a portion of the elevation into three bays. Each bay has square windows with sills on the upper and lower section of the elevation. There are also three-square basement windows.

Historical/Associative Value

The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church has historical value because it has direct associations with the establishment, growth and evolution of the Anabaptist faith and Mennonite community in former Berlin and present-day Kitchener. The First Mennonite Church, located at 800 King Street East, was one of Kitchener's (then Berlin's) first churches, with the First Mennonite Church cemetery being the principal ground for the burial of the first two generations of settlers of this area. The original church was a log structure built in 1813 on a half-acre of land given in 1810 by Joseph Eby. Today, the property cemetery is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The First Mennonite Church grew steadily after its establishment, however, there was a dispute in 1924 which resulted in the departure of approximately half their members and their pastor, Urias Knipe Weber, who had been a preacher at the First Mennonite Church since 1907. The rift in the church had been caused because Weber had attempted to help the church adapt to the urban ways, but his bishops disapproved. These bishops, who served rural churches, were against giving communion to girls who went to work without their bonnets, but Weber did not follow their suggestion.

The departed members, along with U.K. Weber decided to establish an independent Mennonite church on a lot located near Stirling and Weber, elevated on a hill where they could still see the First Mennonite Church and the cemetery. The constitution committee of seven men and women met on September 30, 1924, to develop the constitution. By then, the lot had been purchased, and the Committee declared that the new church would be named "Sterling Avenue Mennonite Church" (The name of the street was changed from Sterling to Stirling in 1942). Ground was broken for the new church on November 1, 1924, and excavation began using horse-drawn equipment. Clean fill was taken from Kitchener's New City Hall, which has been built in the same year. Allan Shantz managed the building project, which also included many charter member volunteers.

The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church was established as an independent church and continued to operate as such for nearly 20 years. They did not have any affiliation with any organizations. U.K. Weber served as pastor of the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church from 1924-42, and then as pastor emeritus from 1942 until his death in 1971. When Weber retired, the church needed another minister, and Rev. Andrew Shelley, who was from Pennsylvania, was called. He belonged to the General Conference Mennonite Church in the United States, which was the American Counterpart of the United Mennonites in Ontario. He did take them to his conference, but they might as well have been considered independent because all the rest of the Pennsylvania and 500 miles away.

The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church also has historical value because it has the potential to yield an understanding of the evolution of the Mennonite community in the City. Even though they were independent, during the second World War, the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church started associated more closely with other Mennonite churches around Kitchener. They worked together on peace efforts, conscientious objection and relief programs, and even sent emissaries internationally to India and South Africa. After the war, the cooperation continued to grow, with Stirling members actively supporting Conrad Grebel College, which was an inter-Mennonite college. The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church and First Mennonite Church also began to have a better relationship, with them offering joint camping trips, missions' programs, and joint church council meetings.

In 1970, the rift that began almost forty-six years ago was healed, with the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church being accepted back into the Mennonite Conference on Ontario. At the same time, the church was also welcomed into the United Mennonite Churches in Ontario. So, the church had no ties with any Canadian conference became the first and only church to have been associated with two conferences at once. The building has always been used as a church and continues to be used as a church.

William Herbert Eugene Schmalz

The historic and associative value of the building also lays with its architect, William Herbert Eugene Schmalz, who designed the 1952 addition and renovation of the church. A native of Berlin (now Kitchener) and the son of former Mayor W.H. Schmalz, W.H.E. Schmalz had an active career within the area which spanned from 1914 until after 1960. Notable works he completed include the 1922 Kitchener City Hall (in conjunction with B.A. Jones through their firm Schmalz & Jones, dissolved in 1926), the fourth office of the Economical Mutual Fire Insurance Company at 16-20 Queen Street North (in conjunction with Charles Knechtel), the War Memorial Cenotaph, alterations to the Waterloo County Gaol, and several churches which remain at the time of this report in 2024. Through his work Schmalz contributed to the existing appearance of Kitchener's built landscape. In addition to his prolific architectural career, W.H.E. Schmalz was an engaged citizen who served with distinction on the board of many local community groups and held much interest in the City's history and development. He was President of the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation from 1956-57 and aided in the planning, development, and operation of Doon Pioneer Village. He also acted as president of the Waterloo Historical Society, and further was a frequent contributor to its annual volumes.

Contextual Value

The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church is important in maintaining and supporting the character of the area. The church is located within the Central Frederick Neighborhood Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL). The Central Frederick Neighborhood is important for its associative value to the explosive growth and development of Kitchener in the late 19th and early 20th century. The CHL contains a range of well maintained, finely detailed homes from the second and third decade of the 20th century. The church was built in the early 20th century and contributes to the streetscape and cultural heritage value of the CHL through its own craftsmanship, architectural style and detailing.

The contextual value of the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church relates to the physical, historical, functional and visual links to the building's surroundings. After the rift that resulted in the many members of the church leaving the First Mennonite Church, the lot on which the church was built was strategically chosen to remain close to the First Mennonite Church. Furthermore, the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church was built on an elevated hill, that provided visual access to the First Mennonite

Church and cemetery. The proximity to the church also reflected a desire to be close to their homes and farms as that time that area was considered to be edge of the town. As such, its location has significant contextual value in relation to the First Church Mennonite Church and cemetery.

Other Values

Social Value

The Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church is recognized for its social value because in 1978, the church accepted its first female minister in a Canadian Mennonite Church – Mary Smith. As a commissioned minister, she could perform all the duties of an ordained minister while she was at the church. When Smith was accepted as minister, the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church had already become a member of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and the United Mennonite Conference, setting a precedent for both these organizations.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of 57-61 Stirling Avenue North resides in the following heritage attributes:

- All elements related to the construction and Neo-Gothic architectural style of the building, including:
 - The location, massing and scale of the building.
 - all elevations of the building.
 - asymmetrical design.
 - front and side gables with shaped parapets.
 - The existing roofline.
 - multi color brick.
 - windows and window openings, including:
 - pointed-arch windows with stone drip-molds.
 - square window openings.
 - doors and door openings, including:
 - pointed-arch front door with drip-mold; and,
 - stone details such as door surrounds, window surrounds.
 - The “1924, 1952” and “1991” datestones on the front elevation of the church.
- All elements related to the contextual value of the building.
 - The original location of the building on Stirling Avenue North and its contextual relationship to the First Mennonite Church and Cemetery.

Photos



Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church – Front Facade



Stirling Avenue – Front and Side (north) facade



Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church – Front and side (south) façade)

References

- Bauman, S. (1963). *First Mennonite Church 1813-1963*. Waterloo Historical Society, Volume 51 – 1963: Kitchener, Ontario.
- Millar, A. & D. Millar. (1993). *Of such is the kingdom: a pictorial history of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church*. Kitchener, Ontario.
- Harder, L. (2003). *Risk and Endurance: a history of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church*. Kitchener, Ontario.
- KW Record. (1952, October 20). *Present Keys for Addition to Church*. The Record: Kitchener, Ontario.
- KW Record. (1974, September 28). *Present will vary for Stirling's 50th*. The Record: Kitchener, Ontario.
- KW Record. (1992, June 13). *Kitchener congregation pulls together.* KW Record: Kitchener, Ontario.
- KR Record (1978, February 28) *Mennonites quietly accept first female minister in Canada*, Roswitha Goggie for KW Record, Kitchener, Ontario
- Mennonite Archives of Ontario. (1999-2012). *Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church*. Retrieved from <https://uwaterloo.ca/mennonite-archives-ontario/congregations/stirling-avenue-mennonite-church> on January 24, 2014.
- Shantz, E. (1967). *Mennonite Groups in Waterloo County and Adjacent Area*. Waterloo Historical Society, Volume 55 – 1967: Kitchener, Ontario.
- Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. (1992). *Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church Dedication Service*. Kitchener, Ontario.
- Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. (1997). *Stirling Quarterly*, January 1997. Kitchener, Ontario.
- Vernon, H. & Son. (1925, 1928-1928). *Vernon's Berlin, Waterloo and Bridgeport: Street, Alphabetical, Business and Miscellaneous Directory: For the Years 1910-1911* (8th Ed.). Hamilton, ON: Griffen & Richmond.
- Waterloo Historical Society. (1967). *Mennonite Groups in Waterloo County and Adjacent Area*. Waterloo Historical Society, Volume 55: Kitchener, Ontario.

CULTURAL HERITAGE EVALUATION FORM

Address: 57-61 Stirling Avenue North – Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church Recorder: Deeksha Choudhry

Description: Church Date: August 1, 2024

Photographs Attached:

Front Façade Left Façade Right Façade Rear Façade Details Setting

| Designation Criteria | Recorder – Heritage Kitchener Committee | 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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit. | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <p>achievement.</p> <p><i>* E.g. - constructed with a unique material combination or use, incorporates challenging geometric designs etc.</i></p> | | |
| <p>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.</p> <p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p> | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p><i>* E.g - A commercial building may provide an understanding of how the economic development of the City occurred. Additional archival work may be required.</i></p> | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p><i>* Additional archival work</i></p> | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

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| <i>may be required.</i> | | |
| <p>7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.</p> <p><i>* E.g. - It helps to define an entrance point to a neighbourhood or helps establish the (historic) rural character of an area.</i></p> | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.</p> <p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p> | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> |
| <p>9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.</p> <p><i>*within the region, city or neighborhood.</i></p> | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

Notes

| Additional Criteria | Recorder | Heritage Kitchener Committee |
|---|--|--|
| Interior: Is the interior arrangement, finish, craftsmanship and/or detail | <p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

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| noteworthy? | | |
| Completeness: Does this structure have other original outbuildings, notable landscaping or external features that complete the site? | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Site Integrity: Does the structure occupy its original site? <i>* If relocated, is it relocated on its original site, moved from another site, etc.</i> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Alterations: Are there additional elements or features that should be added to the heritage attribute list? | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Condition: Is the building in good condition? <i>*E.g. - Could be a good candidate for adaptive re-use if possible and contribute towards equity-building and climate change action.</i> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Indigenous History: Could this site be of importance to Indigenous heritage and history? <i>*E.g. - Site within 300m of water sources, near distinct topographical land, or near cemeteries might have archaeological potential and indigenous heritage potential.</i> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required |
| Could there be any urban Indigenous history associated with the property? | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required |

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| <p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p> | <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> | |
| <p>Function: What is the present function of the subject property?</p> <p><i>* Other may include vacant, social, institutional, etc. and important for the community from an equity building perspective.</i></p> | <p>Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Office <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Church</p> | <p>Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Office <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - _____</p> |
| <p>Diversity and Inclusion: Does the subject property contribute to the cultural heritage of a community of people?</p> <p>Does the subject property have intangible value to a specific community of people?</p> <p><i>* 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.</i></p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> | <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> |

Notes about Additional Criteria Examined

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: _____

REFERENCES

- Beohmer Family Records, accessed via Kitchener Public Library
- Waterloo Region Generations,
<https://generations.regionofwaterloo.ca/getperson.php?personID=I36383&tree=generations>
- Waterloo Region Generations,
<https://generations.regionofwaterloo.ca/getperson.php?personID=I176604&tree=generations>
- Vernon's street, alphabetical, business and miscellaneous Directory – 1907, 1920, 1940, 1958, 1970.