

Staff Report



Development Services Department

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REPORT TO: Heritage Kitchener

DATE OF MEETING: January 7, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Garett Stevenson, Director of Development and Housing Approvals,
519-783-8922

PREPARED BY: Jessica Vieira, Heritage Planner, 519-783-8924

WARD(S) INVOLVED: Ward 9

DATE OF REPORT: December 6, 2024

REPORT NO.: DSD-2025-014

SUBJECT: Notice of Intention to Designate 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street 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 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street as being of cultural heritage value or interest.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to request that Council direct the Clerk to publish a Notice of Intention to Designate the property municipally addressed as 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- An updated Statement of Significance on the property's cultural heritage value was taken to the Heritage Kitchener Committee on October 1st, 2024. On this meeting date, the Committee recommended that pursuant to Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the cultural heritage value or interest of 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street be recognized, and designation pursued.
- The key finding of this report is that the property municipally addressed as 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street meets the criteria for designation under Ontario Regulation 9/06 (amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22) and has been confirmed to be a significant cultural heritage resource. The property is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.
- There are no financial implications with this recommendation.
- Community engagement included informing residents by posting this report with the agenda in advance of the Heritage Kitchener committee meeting, providing written correspondence to the property owners dated May 23rd, 2023, and October 7th, 2024, and consulting 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.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

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

BACKGROUND:

80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street contains two mid-20th century apartment buildings. The buildings are situated on a 0.25 acre parcel of land located on the western corner of the intersection at York Street and Union Boulevard, within the K-W Hospital Planning Community of the City of Kitchener in the Region of Waterloo. The principal resources that contribute to the heritage value of the property are the two apartment buildings.

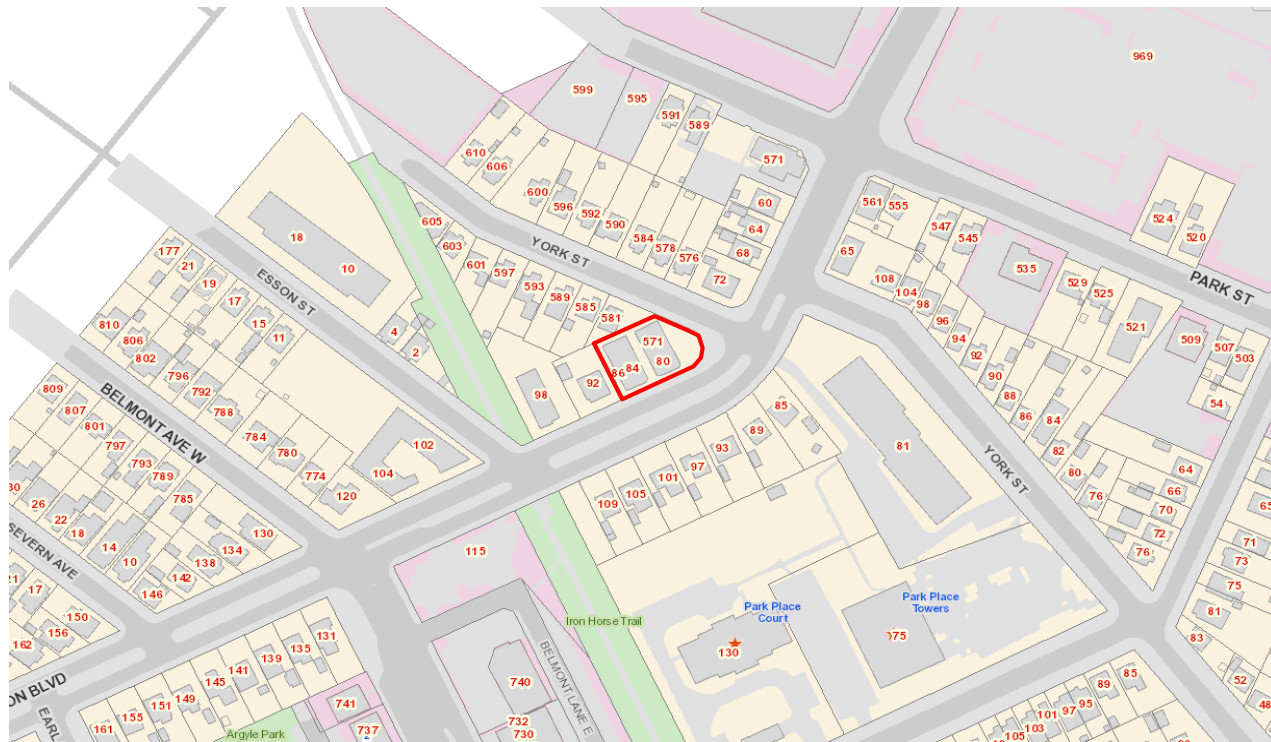


Figure 1: Location Map

A full assessment of 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street has been completed and included a field evaluation and detailed archival research. The findings concluded that the subject property meets the criteria for designation. An updated Statement of Significance on the property's cultural heritage value was taken to the Heritage Kitchener Committee on October 1st, 2024. On this meeting date, the Committee recommended that pursuant to Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the cultural heritage value or interest of 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street be recognized, and designation pursued. This work was undertaken as part of the City of Kitchener Municipal Heritage Register (MHR) Review, initiated in February of 2023. The MHR Review is the City's response to amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act introduced in January of 2023 through Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*. Bill 200, the *Homeowners Protection Act, 2024*, extended the time municipalities have to designate properties listed on their municipal heritage registers until January 1, 2027. The City contacted owners of listed properties through an initial letter dated May 23, 2023, to inform them of this undertaking. Owners of properties recommended for designation in October 2024 were contacted via a second letter dated October 7th, 2024, and invited to contact the City's Heritage Planner with any comments, questions, or concerns. No response was received to either letter.

Per standard procedure, should Council support the Notice of Intention to Designate, Owners will be contacted a third time through a Notice of Intention to Designate (NOID) Letter. An ad for the NOID will also be published in a newspaper. Once the letter is served and the ad posted, there will be a 30-day appeal period in which Owners may object to the designation.

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.

80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values. It satisfies five of the nine criteria for designation under Ontario Regulation 9/06 (amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22). A summary of the criteria that is met or not met is provided in the table below.

Criteria	Criteria Met (Yes/No)
1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, material, or construction method.	Yes
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	Yes
3. The property has design or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	No
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.	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.	Yes
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.	No
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	Yes
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings.	Yes
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	No



Photo 1: Front Facade

Design / Physical Value

The design value of the subject property relates to the architecture of the apartment building. The building is a unique example of the Art Moderne architectural style with Art Deco influences. The buildings are three and a half storeys in height, with a raised basement and the third floor being composed of dormer additions. They feature varied roofline, curved building corners, varied brick colour, concrete banding, projecting central front bay, main entrance framed by glass blocks with stone face surround; signage above the main entrance that reads “UNION APTS” with decorative leaf motifs; symbol with the letter’s ‘U’ and ‘A’; and, parged concrete foundation. The buildings also have a range of different windows and window openings including 1/1 windows with concrete headers and sills, 6/6 windows with concrete sills, and glass block windows with concrete sills.

The Art Moderne architectural style emerged during the 1930’s and developed out of the Art Deco architectural style. It is characterized by its use of simple geometric shape, long horizontal lines and banding, curved sides and corner windows, and glass block windows as seen in 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street. The Art Deco influences can be seen in the decorative detailing that adorn the building, such as the leaf motifs above the entrance of the carved UA symbol, or the more dramatic and ornate front entrance surround.

Front Façade

The front façades of the buildings are symmetrical in their design and massing. They can be divided vertically into three sections; while all sections are approximately the same width, the northern-most and southern-most sections are recessed back from the central section and contain angled corners with glass block windows and concrete sills and headers. The side sections also contain three single hung windows with concrete sills and headers. The projecting central section contains the single front-entrance, which is framed

by glass blocks and a stone-faced surround. A stone sign which reads “UNION APTS” with decorative leaf motifs is located within this surround, and above the sign there is a single lantern. Above the front entrance there are two single hung windows framed by concrete sills and headers and glass blocks to the side, as well as a decorative UA symbol just below the roofline. The roofline of the central section is square and stepped, and distinctive from the slope of the rest of the roof.

The building is also divided horizontally by concrete banding which delineates the raised basement, first, and second floor. The third floor is distinguished by the roofline and dormers which do not appear to be original and are clad with white horizontal siding.

Historical/Associative Value

The historic and associative value of the apartment buildings relate to their potential to contribute towards an understanding of development patterns in the late 1930's to the 1960's. This time period saw a marked change in housing, as Canada regained its economic and social footing following the second world war and opened its doors to new immigrants. As such a construction boom of apartments occurred, as they were an efficient and economical means to create a sufficient supply of housing. In 1928 14 apartments existed within Kitchener and Waterloo (Vernon's Directory, 1928). By 1945 there were 66 apartment buildings, and by 1955 there were 109 (Vernon's Directory, 1945 and 1955)

80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street was one of the first of several low-rise apartment buildings constructed in the Art Moderne style between the time period of 1944-1954 within the Waterloo Region. The Art Moderne style was an appropriate choice for such developments, as it was a response from designers which sought to meet the needs of ordinary citizens while proving that mass production / quantity and quality were not mutually exclusive. The resulting apartments were sensible and were still of a small enough scale as to allow a community-centric experience to residents.

Contextual Value

The contextual values relate to the contribution that the apartment building makes to the continuity and character of the Union Boulevard and York Street streetscapes and the surrounding area. The property is located within the Westmount East & West Neighbourhood Cultural Heritage Landscape, and borders the Union Street & Union Boulevard Cultural Heritage Landscape.

The Westmount CHL is a neighbourhood with a unique urban form inspired by the City Beautiful Movement. One of its more distinguishable features are the slightly curvilinear alignment of the roads and the 6-metre-wide medians planted with high branching trees and elegant light fixtures. The residential dwellings within the neighbourhood are a concentrated mixture of recognizable architectural styles from the 1920's-1940's, largely constructed from high quality material and displaying fine details. A number of these homes are historically associated with important city builders, businesspeople, and community leaders including A.R. Kaufman, E.O. Weber and E.F. Seagram. While slightly larger in height and massing than the typically 1.5 and 2-storey single detached dwellings predominate in the neighbourhood, the overall design, form, setbacks, and materials used in the construction of 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street are compatible and complimentary to adjacent and surrounding properties. The garden beds and mature trees

in and around the property further integrate it into the well-maintained Westmount neighbourhood.

The apartment buildings at 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street are also physically, visually, historically, and functionally linked to their surroundings as they remain in-situ and maintain their original multiple residential use.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage value of 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street resides in the following attributes:

- All elements related to the Art Moderne with Art Deco influences architectural style, including:
 - varied roofline;
 - angled building corners;
 - varied brick colour;
 - concrete banding;
 - window openings with concrete headers and sills;
 - glass blocks framing window openings and entrance openings;
 - glass block windows with concrete headers and sills;
 - projecting central front bay with main entrance;
 - stone faced surround;
 - sign that reads “UNION APTS” with leaf motifs;
 - light fixture above main entrance;
 - symbol with the letters ‘U’ and ‘A’; and,
 - parged concrete foundation.

- All elements related to the contextual value, including:
 - Location and orientation of the buildings and the contribution that they make to the continuity and character of the Union Boulevard and York Street streetscapes.

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– Heritage Planning staff have consulted with the Heritage Kitchener committee regarding designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Property owners were invited to consult via two separate letters dated May 23rd, 2023, and October 7th, 2024. As discussed in the Background section of this report, no response from the Owner was received.

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, 2027, after which it will be removed according to the changes enacted by Bill 23 and Bill 200. Once removed, it cannot re-listed on the Register again for five (5) years, i.e. January 1, 2032.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- *Ontario Heritage Act, 2022*
- Municipal Heritage Register Review – October 2024 Update (DSD-2024-413)

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services Department

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Statement of Significance for 80-86 Union Boulevard / 571 York Street.