

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1254 UNION STREET



Summary of Significance

- ☒ Design/Physical Value
- ☒ Historical Value
- ☒ Contextual Value

- ☐ Social Value
- ☐ Economic Value
- ☐ Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 1254 Union Street

Legal Description: GCT Lot 59 Part Lot 1 & 10; 58R-1977 Part Lot 1, 2 & 8

Year Built: 1904, with various additions

Architectural Styles: Industrial Vernacular with Spanish Eclectic Influences

Original Owner: Ontario Sugar Company

Original Use: Beet Sugar Factory (Warehouse)

Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

1254 Union Street is a two-storey early 20th century yellow and red brick former warehouse built in the Industrial Vernacular architectural style with Spanish Eclectic influences. The building is situated on a

5.63 acre parcel of land located on the north side of Union Street just before Union turns into Sereda Road in the Northward Planning Community in the City of Kitchener within the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the original former warehouse building and the former machine shop.

Heritage Value

1254 Union Street is recognized for its design, contextual, historic and associative values.

Design/Physical Value

The buildings have design/physical value because they are a unique and representative example of the Industrial Vernacular architectural style, with the original former warehouse building having Spanish Eclectic Influences.

The history of the subject property is quite complex, with many additions and removals throughout the years. The main warehouse building and the former machine shop are the only two remaining buildings from the original complex that was first built in the early 1900s.

The 1894, revised 1904 Fire Insurance Plan showed that the processing factory was one-third of a mile long when it was occupied by the Ontario Sugar Company, and included eleven (11) buildings in its entire complex. Out of these buildings, building No. 2 and building no. 5 are the buildings still standing today.

Original Former Warehouse Building

The subject property has design value because it is a representative and unique example of the Industrial Vernacular architectural style with Spanish Eclectic influences. It is two storeys in height, and still contains many of its original elements including but not limited to; main hip roof, yellow and red brick including decorative details; brick pilasters between bays; segmentally arched window openings with brick voussoirs, and exterior archways. The Spanish Eclectic influences can be seen in the small arched windows, prominent arched entranceways, and the hipped roof.

The main building was constructed in 1902, and has had many alterations done to it over the years. The protruding portico to the building is not original, and was most likely constructed between 2003 and 2006, along with the addition immediately behind it that was built with tan brick construction, with brick pilasters on each side and a parapet at the top. The addition covered most of the front façade of the original building, leaving only a bay of windows on each side of the original façade visible from the street. There is a single-storey addition on each side of the building that was constructed between 1904 and 1925. In 2005, the warehouse building was renovated by the owner at the time to serve as a private residence that was inspired by the “Road to Santiago de Compostela”, a century old-walk in Northern Spain, and later transformed into an award-winning event space.

Former Machine Shop

The original portion of the Former Machine Shop was built in 1902, with an addition that was constructed between 2017 and 2018. The building is one-storey in height, of tan brick construction with a hipped roof and arched windows.

Historical/Associative Value

The property has associative value because it has direct associations with the Ontario Sugar Company, the Breithaupt family in its operations, and Ebenezer Herrick Dyer (E.H. Dyer Co.) in the design of the original factory buildings.

In 1901, local businessmen were considering the idea of establishing a sugar-beet factory in Berlin (present-day Kitchener). To assess the cultivation of sugar-beets in Waterloo, several experiments were conducted in the same year, and many incentives were given to investors and farmers in the form of bonuses, tax exemptions, and grants to purchase farmland. On December 26th, 1901, Samuel Willaims, who was the president of the Berlin Board of Trade, announced that the Ontario Sugar Company had elected Berlin to build its new half million-dollar sugar beet factory. In 1902, the Ontario Sugar Company finalized its purchase to buy 69 acres of farmland in the Township of Waterloo, with 49 acres being from Daniel Fries and 20 acres being from the Breithaupt Family. Operations of the factory were strategically supported by its proximity to the Grand River, which was used to deliver 5 million gallons of water daily to the factory, and the Grand Trunk Railway which was accessible via the establishment of six branch lines on the property.

A portion of the factory's land was previously owned by the Breithaupt family, and they were also involved in establishing the company in Berlin. They were well known in the community, their contributions were highly significant to the development of Kitchener. J.C. Breithaupt and W.H. Breithaupt were the director and the president, respectively, of the Ontario Sugar Company at the time of the closure of the company.

The design and construction of the factory was contracted to E.H. Dyer Company of Cleveland. The company was founded by Ebenezer Herrick Dyer. He established the first successful sugar beet plant in the United States in the latter half of the 19th century. He was also responsible for the construction and design of over fifty (50) sugar refining factories globally thereafter. Dyer was known as the 'father of the sugar beet industry in America'. Even though the building has undergone many alterations over the years, this building is one of the last remaining from the original complex that was initially constructed, and some of the original architectural elements still remain intact and visible today.

The property also has associative value because it has potential to yield information regarding the rapid economic and industrial expansion of Berlin at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Berlin (now Kitchener) was experiencing major economic development during time, with the establishment of many industrial companies. The establishment of the Ontario Sugar Company also significantly contributed towards Berlin's industrial development. At the time of the opening of the factory, Berlin began to refer to itself as the "Sugar Beet Capital of Canada". The opening and processing within this factory represented the first sugar what was produced using Canadian beets. Furthermore, operating the plant created hundreds of permanent and seasonal jobs.

The property is associated with Ron Doyle, a local visionary, community builder, entrepreneur, and philanthropist who was behind the transformation of the former factory into an event space. The project was inspired by the 800 kilometre Camino de Santiago pilgrimage Doyle completed in Spain in 2001. Doyle was also behind Lot 42, a local event space for high profile gatherings, and A Better Tent City, a small community of vulnerable residents in individual cabins.

Most recently, the property was occupied by the Hacienda Sarria Market Garden, operated by the Working Centre. The Hacienda Sarria Market Garden was a volunteer-driven initiative to develop an

inclusive, hands-on learning environment to demonstrate, promote, and share knowledge about sustainable local food production and environmental stewardship.

Contextual Value

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. The buildings remain in their original location, and are still located in close proximity to the Grand River. This strategic location of the factory so close to the Grand River at the time of its establishment contributes to its contextual value even though the surrounding landscape has seen immense change in the years since. The factory was situated close to the Grand Trunk Railway. The railway was used to bring beets from farms to the refinery and the river was used to power the refinery and discharge effluent. The factory was built on a slight rise of land providing it prominence in the landscape.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of 1254 Union Street reside in the following attributes:

- All elements related to the construction and Industrial vernacular architectural style with Spanish eclectic influences of the main original 1902 former warehouse building, along with the wings on the warehouse building (1904-1923) portion; and Former machine shop (1902):
 - The location, massing and scale of the original 1902 former warehouse building with the wings (1904-1923) and the former machine shop (1902);
 - The style and appearance of the main hip roof;
 - Flat and shed rooflines on the wings of the original warehouse;
 - Yellow and red brick construction including decorative details on all facades;
 - Brick pilasters between bays;
 - Segmentally arched window openings with brick voussoirs;
 - Various arched window openings;
 - Two-storey front entrance portico with parapet;
 - Segmentally arched door openings with brick voussoirs;
 - Exterior archways; and
 - Flat headed door openings with timber lintels
- All elements related to the construction and architectural style of the original Former machine shop (1902) (excluding the later addition):
 - The location, massing and scale of the former machine shop;
 - Yellow and red brick construction;
 - The style and appearance of the hip roof;
 - Arched window openings with brick voussoirs;
 - Arched door openings with brick voussoirs;
- All elements related to its contextual value of the buildings:
 - The original location of the original former warehouse and former machine shop on the subject property, and its contribution to the Union Street streetscape.

Photos



1254 Union Street – Former Original Warehouse Building



1254 Union Street – Former Machine Shop, Source: MHBC HIA – 1254 Union Street

REFERENCES

McNaughton Hermson Britton Clarkson Planning Ltd., (August 2023), Heritage Impact Assessment Report – 1254 Union Street

Seto, S. (2021). *Waterloo Region business leader Ron Doyle, described as 'a visionary,' dies at 69*. KW Record: Kitchener, ON.