

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

141-149 BORDEN AVENUE NORTH



Summary of Significance

- Design/Physical Value
- Historical Value
- Contextual Value

- Social Value
- Economic Value
- Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 141-149 Borden Avenue North
Legal Description: Plan 655 Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 33 Part Lot 32
Year Built: c. 1948
Architectural Style: Structuralist
Original Owner: Martin Kuechler
Original Use: Residential Apartments
Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

141-149 Borden Avenue North are three-storey mid-20th century brick apartment buildings constructed in the Structuralist architectural style. The buildings are situated on a 0.60 acre parcel of land located on the south side of Borden Avenue North between Weber Street East and East Avenue 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 are the apartment buildings.

Heritage Value

141-149 Borden Avenue North is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values.

Design/Physical Value

The design/physical value of 141-149 Borden Avenue North relates to the architecture of the apartment buildings. The buildings are a representative example of the Structuralist style of architecture, characterized by cubic built form, rectilinear massing of modest proportions, clear expression of interior functions on the exterior of the building, and flat roof. The buildings are three-storeys in height and features: 'H'-plan, flat roof, multi-coloured rug brick laid in common bond with six courses of stretchers between header courses; symmetrical façade; cast-stone and vitrolite entrance surround with the inscription "Parkview Apts" and "Borden Apts"; cast-stone detail around windows above entrance; and concrete foundation.

Front/Main Façade (North Elevations Facing Borden Avenue North)

The front façades of the two buildings are nearly identical. They are symmetrical, with a wider central recessed portion and two narrower projecting bays.

The middle portion of the front façade consists of a prominent triple-height central entrance portal in cast stone with ribbon windows on either side of it. The portal surrounds a single aluminum-framed glass door and two windows above. The door is framed by black vitrolite panels (which appear to have been replaced with newer glass side panels at 141 Borden). The panel above the door is engraved with the building number in a distinctive sans-serif typeface, set within a circle. The cast stone lintel above the door is engraved with the name of the building in capital serif letters ("Borden Apts" and "Parkview Apts"). To either side of the door are dark grey metal and glass hanging light fixtures. The upper portion of the portal is slightly narrower and divided from the lower portion by a cast-stone cornice. It contains two sash windows, which light the second- and third-storey landings of the interior stairwell. To either side of the tall portal are ribbon windows set within a flat brick surface at the basement and each of the upper three storeys. Each ribbon has three sash windows, a cast-stone sill, and a soldier course of bricks above.

The two projecting bays to either side of the central part of the front façade have paired sash windows at the basement and each of the upper three storeys. These have the same treatment as the wider ribbon windows on the central portion. All window frames are pale yellow.

Side Façade (West Elevations Facing Towards Weber Street East)

The west elevations of the two buildings are large, flat brick walls. A symmetrical pattern of six sash windows of slightly different sizes repeats in the central portion at the basement and three upper storeys. The windows have the same cast-stone sill, brick soldier course, and pale-yellow frames as the other elevations.

At 141 Borden ("Borden Apts"), the adjacent lawn rises up to the basement windowsills. At 149 Borden ("Parview Apts"), the grade is lower and the concrete foundation is visible below the basement windowsills; also, one of the basement windows is an awning rather than a sash.

Rear Façade (South Elevations Facing Weber Street/Adjacent Residence)

The rear façades are similar to the front elevations but plainer, with no cast-stone or Vitrolite embellishments. The rear entrances are half-light metal doors in a pale yellow colour that matched the window frames.

At the basement level of 141 Borden (“Borden Apts”), there is a small brick one-storey shed with a black roof where the central portion and the eastern projecting bay meet. Two windows in this area are square instead of ribbons.

Side Façade (East Elevations Facing Towards Adjacent Apartment Building)

The east elevations are similar to the west elevations, except 141 Borden (“Borden Apts”) has five rather than six windows at basement level. One of these has been filled in and covered with vertical siding, and one is a fixed window rather than a sash. None of them have sills. At both buildings, the grade rises up to the bottom of the windows (asphalt driveway at 141 Borden (“Borden Apts”) and grass lawn at 149 Borden (“Parkview Apts”).

Historical/Associative Value

The historical/associative value of 141-149 Borden Avenue North relates to the role of apartment buildings in Kitchener’s postwar housing boom as well as to the two buildings’ original owner, Martin Keuchler.

Role of Apartments in Postwar Housing

The property municipally addressed as 141-129 Borden Avenue North illustrates the role of apartment buildings in addressing postwar housing needs in Kitchener. The two buildings were built in the Structuralist architectural style, which offered a “utilitarian and economical solution” for government buildings, public schools, and apartment complexes for the growing postwar population of Canada. “This approach to mass housing was much influenced by Dutch housing schemes of the inter-war period which provided convenient dwelling units in a healthy environment at modest cost” (Ricketts, et. al., 2011).

The two buildings at 141-149 Borden Avenue North are part of a series of several apartments built by different owners on the same plan around 1948. The buildings are all three storeys and constructed of brick with raised basements and similar exterior detailing. Their plans consist of two different modules: an H-shaped module (as at 141-149 Borden Avenue North) and a smaller, rectangular module.

Martin Kuechler

Martin Kuechler was the original owner and builder of the apartment buildings at 141-149 Borden Avenue North. He was rector of the New Apostolic Church in Kitchener since 1933, when it was founded as a branch of the Waterloo church (Kitchener Daily Record, 1935; 1945). He is thus strongly associated with the early history of this denomination in the city. The church was originally located in a converted residence at 182 Victoria Street North, where Kuechler also lived with his wife Martha Keuchler (Kitchener Daily Record, 1935; Vernon, 1935; 1940). By 1943, the congregation numbered 102, and two years later, it built a new church on the same site to accommodate 300 (Kitchener Daily Record, 1943; 1945).

Keuchler held a variety of jobs in addition to his pastoral duties at the New Apostolic Church. He and his son, Harold, are listed in Vernon’s directory as contractors at the time the apartments at 141-149 Borden Avenue North were constructed (Vernon, 1949; 1950). Keuchler and his wife moved to Hamilton around 1949-1950, where he became an elder at the New Apostolic Church in that city (The Hamilton Spectator, 1948; Kitchener-Waterloo Record, 1951; The Brantford Expositor, 1955).

Heritage Attributes

The heritage value of 141-149 Borden Avenue North resides in the following heritage attributes:

- All elements related to the Structuralist architectural style of the apartment buildings including:
 - Cubic built form and rectilinear massing;
 - Flat roof;
 - 'H' plan;
 - Multi-coloured rug brick;
 - Brick banding;
 - Symmetrical façade;
 - Cast-stone and vitrolite entrance surrounds with the inscriptions "Parkview Apts" and "Borden Apts";
 - Cast-stone detail around windows above entrance; and
 - Concrete foundation.
- All elements related to the contextual value, including:
 - Location of the apartment buildings and the contribution that they make to the continuity and character of the Borden Avenue North streetscape.

References

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Photographs



Front Elevations (North Façade)



Rear Elevations (South Façade)



Side Elevations (West Façade)



Side Elevations (East Façade)



Detailing of front entrance portals