

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

265 WEBER STREET EAST



Summary of Significance

- Design/Physical Value
- Historical Value
- Contextual Value

- Social Value
- Economic Value
- Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 265 Weber Street East

Legal Description: Plan 339 Lot 17 and 18 Part Lot 16 and 19

Year Built: 1948

Architectural Style: Structuralist

Original Owner: Michael Kraus

Original Use: Residential Apartments

Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

265 Weber Street East is a three-storey mid-20th century brick apartment building constructed in the Structuralist architectural style. The building is situated on a 0.36 acre parcel of land located on the south side of Weber Street East between Simeon Street and Borden Avenue North 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 apartment building.

Heritage Value

265 Weber Street East is recognized for its design/physical and historical/associative values.

Design/Physical Value

The design/physical value of 265 Weber Street East relates to the architecture of the apartment building. The building is a representative example of the Structuralist style of architecture, characterized by its cubic built form, rectilinear massing of modest proportions, clear expression of interior functions on the exterior of the building, and flat roof. The building is three-storeys in height and features: 'H'-plan, flat roof, red 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 "Eastview Apts"; cast-stone detail around windows above entrance; and concrete foundation.

Front/Main Façade (North Elevation Facing Weber Street East)

The front façade of the apartment building is symmetrical, with a wider central recessed portion and two narrower projecting bays.

The middle portion of this elevation 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 metal-framed glass door and two windows above. The door is framed by black vitrolite panels. The cast stone lintel above the door is engraved with the name of the building in capital serif letters ("Eastview Apts"). To either side of the door are white 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 white.

Side Façade (East Elevation Facing Garage)

This elevation is a large, flat brick wall. 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 white frames as the other elevations.

Rear Façade (South Elevation Facing St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery)

The rear façade is similar to the front elevation but plainer, with no cast-stone or vitrolite embellishments. The rear entrance is a half-light, paneled white-painted metal door.

The window arrangement at the basement also differs: the left projecting bay has a single rather than paired sash window and the central portion to the left of the entrance has two sash windows rather than a ribbon. One of these has been filled in. The second-storey apartment windows on the right side have green metal awnings.

Side Façade (West Elevation Facing Adjacent Residence)

The west elevation is similar to the east elevation, except there are five rather than six windows at the basement level. The fifth basement window opening has been filled in and covered with siding.

Garage

To the east of the apartment building, there is a one-storey garage building with a flat roof. The west elevation of the garage, facing the apartment building, is of textured brick and features nine numbered parking bays. Each bay is divided on the interior by a concrete-block wall and has a paneled garage door, which is either a colour matching the brick or black. A few of the doors have glass panels at eye level. Between each parking bay is a white triangular knee brace supporting the roof overhang, which has faceted white metal fascia trim. The north elevation of the garage facing Weber Street East is a plain white-washed wall with an off-centre white downspout, the return of the brick on the right side, and fascia trim continuing at the parapet.

Historical/Associative Value

The historical/associative value of 265 Weber Street East relates to the role of apartment buildings in Kitchener's postwar housing boom, the building's original owner, Michael Kraus, and the early history of co-operative housing in Kitchener.

Role of Apartments in Postwar Housing

The property municipally addressed as 265 Weber Street East illustrates the role of apartment buildings in addressing postwar housing needs in Kitchener. The apartment was 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 building at 265 Weber Street East is 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 and a smaller, rectangular module.

Co-operative Housing in Kitchener

The property municipally addressed as 265 Weber Street South is associated with the early history of housing co-operatives in the City of Kitchener. The co-operative housing movement in Canada dates to the 1930s, with housing for mining families in Nova Scotia and student housing at the University of Toronto as some of the first examples. After WWII, groups in major Canadian cities independently organized housing co-ops to meet their needs amidst postwar housing shortages (MacPhearson, 2008).

In the 1940s, co-operative housing was new and unfamiliar in Kitchener. In 1946, a plan by Harry Cook, president of Rockway Co-operative Limited, "for 32 homes to be built on a co-operative basis by a group of private citizens" was "something altogether different for this area in the line of housing projects" (Kitchener Daily Record, 1946a). Two years later, the "Eastview Apts." at 265 Weber Street East became the city's first co-operative multiple dwelling, with a headline in the paper announcing that it was "to make history" (Kitchener-Waterloo Record, 1948b). To buy in to the co-op, residents made a down payment as well as monthly payments for 20 to 25 years, thus becoming shareholders in a company rather than owners of individual units. The sale of the building by the builder and original owner, Michael Kraus, to the Eastview Co-operative was finalized in March 1949 for \$104,000 (Kitchener-Waterloo Record, 1949b).

The association of 265 Weber Street East with the history of co-operative housing in Kitchener is particularly strong because of its continuity. In 2025, the building is still owned by the co-operative housing corporation Eastview Co-operative Apts., with 15 shareholding members. Many residents live in the building for several decades, with a record residency of fifty-seven years.

Michael Kraus

The building has associative value related to its original owner and builder, Rev. Michael Kraus (1908–2003), a Kitchener entrepreneur, builder, and church leader.

Kraus was born Mihail Krauss in Meeburg (Romanian: Beia, Hungarian: Homoródbene or Szászbénye), a small village of German-speaking Lutheran Saxons in Transylvania, Romania. He immigrated to Canada in 1926 at the age of 18. In the 1930s, he worked at the Baetz Furniture Co. factory as a cabinetmaker and built apartments after hours (Vernon's, 1930). Kraus went into business importing and manufacturing fabrics in the 1940s, later founding Kraus Carpet Mills in 1959 and Strudex Fibres in 1971. When he died at age 95 in 2003, his companies employed over 900 people in Canada, the United States, and Australia. Kraus Carpets and Strudex Fibres operated in Waterloo until 2018 and in 2025, the company continues as the US-based Kraus Flooring (The Canadian Press, 2018).

Kraus became a member of the New Apostolic Church in 1932 and was ordained into the ministry the following year. He served in various capacities, becoming a district apostle and national leader of the church in Canada. Kraus's religious work and his work as a builder were intertwined. In 1945, he served as the contractor for a new church building in Kitchener, which still stands in 2025 at 182 Victoria Street North. He also helped build the current church in 1974, a prominent Collegiate Gothic stone building at 160 Margaret Avenue. As part of his missionary work, Kraus also organized the construction of thousands of church buildings in other countries. He was the founder and president of Stamm Investments, a company owned by the New Apostolic Church of Canada, which was involved in apartment construction and land development. The company's proceeds were partly dedicated to the church's missionary work in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Caribbean (The Record, 2003). Chief Apostle Richard Fehr compared Kraus's role in the worldwide growth of the New Apostolic Church "to the missionary work of Paul the Apostle of biblical times" (Bonk, 2025).

The New Apostolic Church is a Christian denomination that considers itself a re-establishment of the early church founded by the first apostles, and its leaders their successors. The connection that Kraus might have seen between church-building and physical building might be gleaned from a 1935 statement by Martin Keuchler, with whom Kraus was associated, that the apostles are "master builders of the church ... Upon this foundation the church is erected and being built" (Kitchener Daily Record 1935).

Contextual Value

The contextual value of 265 Weber Street East resides in the property's contribution to maintaining and supporting the character of the Weber Street East streetscape. The building is in its original location and maintains its original use as an apartment building. Prior to WWII, the area around this property represented the limits of Kitchener's urban development.

The property is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. This apartment building and the buildings surrounding it were constructed around the same time. There is also a link between this building and the neighbouring H-Plan apartment buildings at 105-117 Onward Avenue and 141-149 Borden Avenue North.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage value of 265 Weber Street East resides in the following heritage attributes:

- All elements related to the Structuralist architectural style of the apartment building including:
 - Cubic built form and rectilinear massing;
 - Flat roof;
 - 'H' plan;
 - Red rug brick;
 - Brick banding;
 - Symmetrical façade;
 - Cast-stone and vitrolite entrance surround with the inscription "Eastview Apts";
 - Cast-stone detail around windows above entrance; and
 - Concrete foundation.
- All elements related to the contextual value, including:
 - Location of the apartment building and the contribution that it makes to the continuity and character of the Weber Street East streetscape.

References

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Photographs



Front Elevation (North Façade)



Rear Elevation (South Façade)



Side Elevation (East Façade)



Side Elevation (West Façade)



Detailing of front entrance portal



Detailing of detached garage (not a heritage attribute)