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# ***Planning, Design & Development***

RECEIVED

AUG 14 2009

**Date:** 13, August 2009.  
**To:** Sean Fraser, Manager, Conservation Services, Ontario Heritage Trust  
**From:** Jim Leonard, Heritage Coordinator, Planning, Design and Development  
**Subject:** Notice of Intention to Designate of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery, 11873 The Gore Road, in the City of Brampton

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Please find enclosed the Notice of Intention to Designate the subject property indicated above as being of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Thank you,

**Jim Leonard**, B.A. (hons), C.M.S., C.A.H.P.  
Heritage Coordinator  
City of Brampton,  
Urban Design and Special Projects Section  
2 Wellington Street West, 3rd Floor,  
Brampton, Ontario, Canada, L6Y 4R2.

phone: 905-874-3825  
cell: 416-897-5157

enclosed.

## Public Notice

### NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

**IN THE MATTER OF THE *ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT*, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER 0.18, AS AMENDED, AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND PREMISES KNOWN AS ST. PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY LOCATED AT 11873 THE GORE ROAD IN THE CITY OF BRAMPTON, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.**

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of The Corporation of the City of Brampton under Council resolution HB113-2006 intends to designate the lands and premises at 11873 The Gore Road under Part IV of The *Ontario Heritage Act*.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

The property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal heritage designation prescribed by *Ontario Heritage Act* Regulation 9/06.

The property was listed in the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Resources in the early 1990s. It was rated a Category A resource.

The property is situated in the former cross-roads hamlet of Wildfield in Toronto-Gore Township. The government of Upper Canada deeded a grant of 200 acres at Part Lot 17, Concession 10 in 1834 for a Catholic church and cemetery to serve Irish settlers in the area, whose closest place of worship, until that time, had been St. Paul's Church in Toronto.

The existing 35-acre parcel is roughly rectangular in shape, situated prominently at the south-east corner of The Gore Road and Mayfield Road.

The plan of the principle masonry structure is rectangular in shape.

The principle elevation (main façade) is emphasized by the prominent square bell tower which stands as the tallest physical features for several kilometres around. The front façade faces The Gore Road. The cemetery is adjacent to the Church at the north-east corner of the property.

The landscape is define by gently rolling hills, with expansive open space, trees and woodlot clusters and partially naturalized valley land and tributary creek surrounding the church.

### SHORT STATEMENT OF THE REASON FOR THE DESIGNATION

The cultural heritage value of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church is related to its design or physical value as a good example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century church architecture. The church was constructed in 1894 and is a representative example of Romanesque Revival design reflecting a high degree of craftsmanship with a prominent, square bell tower with a steep, pyramidal, metal clad roof, unpainted red brick walls; masonry buttresses and other brick detailing, along with pointed arched window openings with leaded stained glass windows and a dated cornerstone on the north-east wall. The red brick for the church was fired on a brick works near Castlemore and the foundation stones came from Salt Creek near Tullamore. The metal bell in the tower was forged in France. Churches of this scale are less typical in a rural hamlet. They are more likely to be found in a more urban area.

The church was built in 1894 replacing a smaller frame structure constructed in the 1830s. The church is the design of the noted Toronto architectural firm of Arthur W. Holmes (1863-1944) and Albert Asa Post (1850-1926). The firm of Post and Holmes designed a great many buildings for Roman Catholic dioceses across southern Ontario, including St. Michael's College in Toronto (1891), St. Michael's Hospital (1894) and St Gregory's Catholic Church in Oshawa (1893).

The interior of St. Patrick's is noteworthy for its arched ceiling with heavy, decorative wooden trusses, also the substantial wood choir loft (the base of which served as the scaffolding platform for the construction of the bell tower). Also of note is the wood paneled ceiling in the entrance vestibule.

The property also holds compelling historical or associative value. St. Patrick's is the second oldest parish in the Archdiocese of Toronto and the first church in the diocese to bear the name of St. Patrick. The property was the location of Wildfield's first school and the first Catholic school in Peel County (built 1907). It was also the site of St. John's Agricultural College (1862-1875), which was a school for local children and orphans from Toronto. The site is connected with the site of the former Loretto Convent (established in 1946), which was situated directly across the road in the former Grady General Store.

The site also honours the historical legacy and many contributions made by the Roman Catholic Church. St. Patrick's was originally referred to as the "Gore Mission". It served the many farmstead and hamlets in the surrounding areas. Wildfield was chosen as the site for a Catholic church because it was deemed to be a central geographic point between the surrounding townships. The local clergy acquired a 200-acre land grant in 1834 and a frame church was built. The present St. Patrick's church was built on the site of this original frame structure. The priests of St. Patrick's served mission churches over a large area for several decades and today St. Patrick's is still known as the "Mother Church" for all Catholic parishes in Peel Region. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Fr. O'Reilly is known to have married nearly 400 couples and baptized close to 2000 people, including 71 adult converts to Catholicism. Fr. O'Reilly was also instrumental in ensuring that concession and sideroads roads were cleared. He also coordinated the establishment of the separate school, rectory and St. John's Agricultural College.

Another religious leader who left a tremendous impact on Wildfield was Father Francis McSpiritt (1830-1895). He was the parish priest from 1887 to 1895. McSpiritt was well known as a miracle worker. According to local legend, he was able to cure the sick. There are several accounts of him curing people of epilepsy, blindness, tremors, nervous disorders and other afflictions. Large groups of pilgrims traveled to Wildfield from all over Ontario, parts of the United States and even Europe seeking his cures.

Due to the popularity of Fr. McSpiritt and the growth of the Wildfield community, the current church was built. McSpiritt oversaw the construction. People contributed generously to the project and the new church was completed without incurring debt. For years after his death in August 1895, visitors to Fr. McSpiritt's grave in St. Patrick's cemetery would scoop up handfuls of soil in the belief that it held curative powers. The bell in the St. Patrick's bell tower rang the first time at Father McSpiritt's funeral.

The property is associated with the history of the crossroads hamlet of Wildfield and the Gore Road area, which grew up around St Patrick's. Irish Catholic immigrants were instrumental in the settling of the area beginning in the early 1830s. St Patrick's Church was the focal point of Roman Catholic settlers from the local community and the outlying communities too.

The Euro-Canadian cemetery reflect the legacy of the Irish settlers to Canada as most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century burials are for people of Irish descent. The property, and the many burials its contains, also holds significant spiritual importance as the

'final resting place' of several settlers from Wildfield and Toronto-Gore township. The many early tombstones and grave markers (most inset in a concrete cairn) reflect a high degree of craftsmanship as exhibited by ornately carved motifs and symbols. The first burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery was for Thomas Russel, who was working on the area land survey team in the 1830s.

The landscaping characteristics of the Cemetery and grounds in general are also significant. Trees are planted intermittently with single trees and small groupings of shrubs and other plantings. The main exception to this pattern is the row of mature conifers planted formally as a backdrop to the cairn. Other characteristics of the grounds include expansive open lawns and gently contoured and mostly naturalized valley lands flanking the rear portion of the property along a north-south axis, all of which contribute to a rural, pastoral character.

The cultural heritage value of the property is also deeply connected to its contextual value as the long established focal point of the former crossroads hamlet of Wildfield. The overall site is a very significant cultural heritage landscape. The church spire dominates the landscape. It is easily the tallest and most prominent built feature in the general area and is visible for several kilometers in every direction. The church property is situated on the crest of a rolling hill where The Gore Road and Mayfield Road meet. The subject property is the most recognizable and single most prominent feature remaining of the original hamlet of Wildfield. The village itself grew up around this significant landmark. The cemetery, valley containing a tributary of the West Humber watershed and the considerable amount of open green space, along with some dense woodlots that surrounds the church, maintain the pastoral, rural character of the area.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES**

Unless otherwise indicated, the reason for designation apply generally to all exterior elevations, facades, foundation, roof and roof trim, all doors, windows, other structural openings and associated trim, all architectural detailing, construction materials of wood, stone, brick, plaster parging, metal and glazing and related building techniques and the pastoral characteristics of the grounds.

To ensure that the cultural heritage value of this property is conserved, certain heritage attributes that contribute to its value have been identified specifically and they include:

##### Design / Physical Value:

- St. Patrick's Church (built in 1894) is a good example of vernacular Romanesque Revival architecture;
- The Church reflects a high degree of craftsmanship with prominent square belltower with steep pyramidal roof profile and metal cladding; unpainted red masonry walls; prominent masonry buttresses and other brick detailing; slender pointed arched window openings; leaded stained glass windows; heavy metal bell in tower; wooden double leaf doors.
- Cornerstone (1894);
- Metal cross at pinnacle of belltower;
- Steeply pitched roof.
- Tall masonry chimney stack on south elevation;
- Certain interior architectural heritage fabric of the Church comprising: arched ceiling with heavy wood trusses; substantial wood choir loft; wood paneled ceiling in entrance vestibule and label detailing over statuary built-ins that flank the main altar;
- Cemetery elements include: beautifully carved gravestones inset in a long concrete cairn; other grave markers in the cemetery; marker for Fr. Francis McSpirt; monument to Fr. Eugene O'Reilly; historical plaques.

##### Historical / Associative Value:

- St. Patrick's Church is a good example of work of noted Toronto architectural firm, Post and Holmes;

- St. Patrick's Cemetery reflects the legacy of the many Irish settlers who arrived in the Toronto-Gore area starting in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- First church in Toronto Archdiocese to bear the name of St. Patrick.
- Second oldest parish in the Toronto Archdiocese;
- First separate school in Peel was located on the subject property (1907);
- Wildfield's first school was located on the subject property;
- St. John's Agricultural School in operation from 1862 to 1875 was located on the subject property;
- Associated with the Loretto Convent (est. 1946) once located across the road;
- The site has been the historical focal point of the cross-roads hamlet of Wildfield since the 1830s;
- Subject property honours the legacy of the Roman Catholic Church in Ontario;
- Associated with prominent local clergyman, Father Eugene O'Reilly (1796-1861) who is buried in the cemetery;
- Associated with prominent clergyman and reputed faith healer, Father Francis McSpiritt (1830-1895) who is buried in the cemetery;
- Cemetery is 'final resting place' of many early settlers to Toronto-Gore.

Contextual Value:

- Site is a significant cultural heritage landscape;
- Church is a prominent landmark particularly in rural setting such as Wildfield;
- St. Patrick's spire is the tallest and most prominent built feature in the general area and is visible for several kilometers in every direction;
- Subject property is single most tangible element associated with the historic hamlet of Wildfield; Hamlet of Wildfield developed around the subject property;
- Cemetery, valley, contoured landscape, trees, shrubs, expansive open green space and lawns, help to maintain the pastoral, rural character of the area;
- Some dense woodlots and other vegetation mostly in and flanking the valley lands;
- Valley containing a tributary as part of the West Humber watershed.

The short statement of reason for the designation, including a description of the heritage attributes along with all other components of the detailed Heritage Report: Statement of Reason for Heritage Designation, constitute the "reason for heritage designation" required under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Please contact Jim Leonard, Heritage Coordinator in Urban Design Section at (905) 874-3825 for further information respecting the proposed designation, including the detailed heritage report.

Notice of objection to the designation, setting out the reason for the objection and all relevant facts, may be served on the Clerk, City Hall, 2 Wellington Street West, Brampton, Ontario, L6Y 4R2, no later than 4:30 p.m. on September 14, 2009.

Dated at the City of Brampton on this 12th day of August, 2009.

P. Fay, City Clerk  
 2 Wellington St W, Brampton, ON L6Y 4R2  
 905 874-2113 (voice), 905 874-2119 (fax), 905 874-2130 (TTY)  
 cityclerksoffice@brampton.ca