



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

This document was retrieved from the Ontario Heritage Act Register, which is accessible through the website of the Ontario Heritage Trust at **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

Ce document est tiré du registre aux fins de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, accessible à partir du site Web de la Fiducie du patrimoine ontarien sur **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

Wendell Graves
Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk



P.O. Box 520, City Hall
St. Thomas, ON N5P 3V7
Telephone: (519) 631-1680
Ext. 4120
Fax: (519) 633-9019
wgraves@stthomas.ca

December 17, 2013

Ontario Heritage Trust
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 1J3

ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

DEC 20 2013

RECEIVED

Dear Sir/Madame,

**SUBJECT: ALMA STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
40 ALMA STREET - ST. THOMAS
INTENT TO DESIGNATE - ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT**

The purpose of this letter is to advise you that, as a result of information provided by the City's Municipal Heritage Committee, City Council has initiated the "Intent to Designate" process for 40 Alma Street, Alma Street Presbyterian Church, as found within the Ontario Heritage Act. Please find enclosed a document outlining the reasons for the proposed designation.

A notice of Intent to Designate will be published in the local newspaper on Saturday, December 21, 2013. After a 30 day period, should no objection be received about this matter, Council will consider a by-law to designate the property.

As required under the Ontario Heritage Act, this letter is being forwarded to you.

I would ask that should you have any comments regarding this proposed designation and or any objections please advise the municipality accordingly within the 30 day period.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact this office.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W. Graves", written over the printed name and title of the signatory.

Wendell Graves,
CAO/Clerk

c/c St. Thomas Municipal Heritage Committee

DATE:

**THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ST. THOMAS
INTENT TO DESIGNATE A PROPERTY AS A HERITAGE PROPERTY**

PROPERTY: ALMA STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
MUNICIPAL ADDRESS: 40 ALMA ST.

Analysis for reasons for designation as provided by the Municipal Heritage Committee:

Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under The *Ontario Heritage Act* as it relates to the Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value of Interest. Under this regulation, a property may be designated under Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* if it meets one or more of three criteria.

In applying these criteria to the facts relating to the property it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

- 1) The property has design value or physical value because it,
 - i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
 - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
 - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement

ALMA STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH can be described as Gothic Revival architecture with echoes of Queen Anne in the twin towers. Originally built of red brick, the building was resurfaced in PermaStone in 1951 giving it a faux cut stone façade. In the resurfacing, all of the original architectural features were retained including buttresses, pointed arch openings on windows and doorways, and trefoil details on its centre and towers (characteristic of the Gothic Revival style). The stone finish adds a Romanesque flavor to the design.

All interior church fittings have been removed, including a 900 pipe Casavant organ. The interior space retains its original ceiling and mezzanine levels.

The property has historical value or associative value because it,

- i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
- ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
- iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

Originally known as St. Thomas East Presbyterian Church and after c.1895 as Alma Street Presbyterian Church, the building was built and occupied in 1891. Land at the corner of Alma Street and Kains Street was donated by Mr. Norman McDonald, a barrister. The building was provided to the congregation, debt free, by Mr. A.M. Hutchinson. Architect and builder on the project was J.Z. Long, also the architect of Balaclava Street Public School among other prominent local projects.

As noted in the 50th Anniversary history of the church, "permission was sought and granted for the establishment of a Presbyterian Mission in the eastern section of the City of St. Thomas, the object being to better serve the people, particularly the railwaymen, in that rapidly-growing part of the city". Thus, there is an inextricable link between the establishment of the church and the boom in railway development which took place in the early history of the city.

Records show the church was expanded just two years after completion because it had already outgrown its original capacity of 300. By 1922 the church was expanded again with the addition of the upper galleries.

The congregation was dissolved on May 23rd, 2000. For the past 10 years the property has been privately owned and operated as Dance Expressions, a dance studio.

2. The property has contextual value because it,
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
 - iii. is a landmark.

Despite the 1951 resurfacing, the building retains all of its key architectural attributes. The church retains its unique built form, the only example of its type in St. Thomas. It remains important because of its noted architect and as a symbol of the early development of the east side of St. Thomas during the railway boom. It also demonstrates the ability to successfully repurpose heritage buildings with willing owners.