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IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
R.S.O. 1980, CHAPTER 337 AND
186 COWAN AVENUE
CITY OF TORONTO, PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW

To: The Trustees of St. John's
Polish National Catholic Church
186 Cowan Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M6K 2N6

✓ Ontario Heritage Foundation

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto has passed By-law No. 521-91 to designate the above-mentioned property to be of architectural value or interest.

Dated at Toronto this 22nd day of October, 1991.


Barbara G. Caplan
City Clerk

✓

No. 521-91. A BY-LAW

To designate the property at 186 Cowan Avenue
(St. John's Polish National Church) of architectural value or interest.

(Passed September 16, 1991.)

Whereas by Clause 9 of Neighbourhoods Committee Report No. 11, adopted by Council at its meeting held on September 16, 1991, authority was granted to designate the property at 186 Cowan Avenue of architectural value or interest; and

Whereas the Ontario Heritage Act authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historic or architectural value or interest; and

Whereas the Council of The Corporation of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the lands and premises known as 186 Cowan Avenue and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks; and

Whereas the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "B" hereto; and

Whereas no notice of objection to the said proposed designation has been served upon the clerk of the municipality;

Therefore the Council of The Corporation of the City of Toronto enacts as follows:

1. There is designated as being of architectural value or interest the real property more particularly described and shown on Schedules "A" and "C" hereto, known as 186 Cowan Avenue.
2. The City Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper land registry office.
3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto.

ARTHUR C. EGGLETON,
Mayor.

BARBARA G. CAPLAN
City Clerk.

Council Chamber,
Toronto, September 16, 1991.
(L.S.)

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OCT 23 1991
ARCHITECTURE AND
PLANNING
HERITAGE BRANCH

SCHEDULE "A"

In the City of Toronto, in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of Lots 75 and 78 on the west side of Cowan Avenue, according to Plan 382 registered in the Land Registry Office for the Registry Division of Toronto (No. 63).

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Plan SYE2490, dated August 8, 1991, as set out in Schedule "C".

SCHEDULE "B"

Reasons for the designation of the property at 186 Cowan Avenue (St. John's Polish National).

PROPERTY RESEARCH SUMMARY

Basic Building Data:

Address:	186 Cowan Avenue (at Melbourne Avenue)
Ward:	2
Current Name:	St. John's Polish National Church
Historical Name:	Cowan Avenue Methodist Church
Construction Date:	1886
Architect:	Smith and Gemmell
Contractor/ Builder:	Unknown
Additions/ Alterations:	1954, Interior, L.S. Macie; 1956, Addition of gym and rectory to the rear, Samuel Devore; 1965, interior.
Original Owner:	Trustees of the Methodist Church
Original Use:	Institutional (Religious)
Current Use:	Institutional (Religious)
Heritage Category:	C
Recording Date:	April 17, 1991
Recorder:	HPD:jc

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Parkdale:

Prior to its annexation to the City of Toronto in 1889, the Village of Parkdale was an "elite" suburb distinguished by large lots and prestigious homes. People commuted to the city by rail, but with the introduction of the Queen Street streetcar in 1890, the village of Parkdale became much more accessible. It became a playground for Toronto with the introduction of boardwalks, bathing pavilions, dance halls and, in 1920, the Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion and Amusement Park.

At the end of World War II, growing numbers of immigrants settled in Parkdale, attracted by affordable rents. Today, Parkdale shows the rich diversity that characterizes all of Toronto.

Methodism in Toronto:

The Methodist movement was begun in 1729 in Oxford, England, by Charles Wesley, who questioned the liturgy of the Church of England. Methodism, a title bestowed upon the followers of Wesley by outsiders, experienced rapid growth in the late 18th Century. Methodism in Canada can be traced to the early 1760's in Quebec.

The Methodist Church was well represented in Toronto. In the time of John Graves Simcoe, York was frequently visited by the influential American Methodist evangelist Reverend Elijah Woolsey (1771-1850). With the official separation of the Methodist Church from the Church of England in October of 1825, the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. The Reverend William Case (1780- 1855), long considered to be the Father of Canadian missions, was elected to the general superintendency, and was the presiding Elder in Canada from 1818 to 1828.

Cowan Avenue Methodist Church:

In the latter part of the 19th Century, Parkdale experienced a marked growth in the number of Methodist adherents. In the summer of 1875, the first Methodist classes in Parkdale were held in the home of Mr. Thomas Abbs on Queen Street near Brockton Road. The classes became so popular that regular Sunday worship was established and a committee was empowered to secure land on which to erect a church. A lot on Queen Street between West Lodge Avenue and Landsdowne Avenue was purchased at a cost of one thousand dollars. A small wood and frame church was erected by the committee in 1877.

Increased attendance and prosperity in the following years prompted expansion. By 1881 the congregation had purchased the property now known as 186 Cowan Avenue. A building committee was appointed and tenders were called in February and March of 1885. Building operations commenced without delay by the Toronto architectural firm, Smith and Gemmell, and, by 1886, the brick and stone building was completed. The dedicatory sermon was delivered in 1886 by Reverend Dr. John A. Williams (1817-1889), then the President of the United General Conference.

By 1889 the church at Cowan Avenue had become too small for the congregation. A lot was purchased on Dunn Avenue in that year for the erection of a larger church. The Cowan Avenue Methodist Church was vacant from 1890 until 1896, when the property was purchased by the Presbyterian Church. Over the years, a number of different faiths have worshipped in the church. Since 1954, the building has been owned by the Trustees of St. John's Polish National Church.

The interiors were substantially altered in 1954 and 1965. A rectory and gymnasium were added to the west and the south of the main body of the building in 1956.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The church at 186 Cowan Avenue is built of brick with stone detailing and a slate roof. It features elements of the Gothic Revival style. The cruciform plan comprises a projecting east end, a nave, transept arms, and a squared west end.

The main (east) facade features three pointed doorways with decorative brickwork in the spandrels. The north and south walls of the east end contain small, paired lancet windows. Above the doorways are three lancet windows, separated from the ground level by a stone string course. The roof is steeply pitched and billet mouldings mark the cornice. The nave is three bays in length, featuring paired segmentally arched basement windows surmounted by paired lancet windows. Single stepped buttresses mark the bay division. Above these windows are corbelled cornices and deep eaves. The transept arms feature paired segmentally arched basement windows surmounted by paired lancet windows on the north and south faces. These windows are separated by a single stepped buttress. A door was added in 1956 to the south transept arm facade. The squared chancel features single lancet windows in the north and south faces.

CONTEXT

The church at 186 Cowan Avenue is located on the west side of Cowan Avenue, south of Queen Street West. It shares the prevailing materials and setbacks of the surrounding residential neighbourhood and is a local landmark.

SUMMARY

The property at 186 Cowan Avenue is identified for architectural reasons. The cornerstone was laid in 1885 and the church was completed in 1886.

The church at 186 Cowan Avenue is a brick construction with stone detailing and features Gothic Revival elements. Its simple design reflects the Methodist values of the builders, but has been successfully adopted to the needs of a number of faiths over the last 100 years.

SCHEDULE "C"

MAP AREA 480-23

