

HERITAGE DESIGNATION REPORT: REASONS FOR HERITAGE DESIGNATION



Peterborough Normal School / Teachers College

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

January, 2004

Heritage Designation Status Sheet

Street Address:	100 Benson Avenue
Roll Number:	050080185000000
PIN Number:	281160081
Short Legal Description: Pl. 71,	Blk D, Pl 101, Lt. 14, Lts. 16-18, Pt. 1, ECR, Pt 1, RR, 45R1146
Name of Owner(s): Public	Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
Owner's Mailing Address: Drive,	Education Centre, 1994 Fisher Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 7A1.
Owner's Concurrence:	yes / no
Designation Application Note:	Heritage designation included as condition of rezoning by Planning Division.
PACAC Application Review Date:	October 2002
On-Site Evaluation Date:	January 2003.
Evaluation Category:	A
Evaluators: Michelle	Jim Leonard, Basia Baklinski, Townsend.
Heritage Type:	Built Heritage – buildings Built Heritage - interiors
Designation Type:	Ontario Heritage Act - Part IV
Designation Brief Completion Date:	February 2003.
PACAC Application Approval Date:	March 2003.

Comments:

-The modern addition attached to the south east of the heritage structure, is not to included in the scope and content of the heritage designation with the exception that vertical additions to the addition are subject to heritage review for their impact on the original building.

"The short statement of the reason for the designation, including a description of the heritage attributes (below) along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Report constitute the "Reasons for the Designation" required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Heritage Designation Report is available for viewing in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours."

SHORT STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DESIGNATION

The Peterborough Normal School and surrounding grounds are both architecturally and historically significant. The property is worthy of heritage designation for cultural heritage value or interest pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Built in 1908 at the height of Peterborough's prosperity, it reflects a time when the city was highly regarded nationally as a major urban centre.

Architecturally the building is significant for its overall design, landmark status and its association with an architect of provincial renown, F.R. Heakes.

The former Peterborough Normal School (later renamed Peterborough Teachers' College) is the largest surviving example of turn-of-the-century Beaux Arts or City-Beautiful architecture in the City of Peterborough. Other local examples include: King George Public School, the old Carnegie Library, the former De Laval administrative building on Park Street South, Hunter Street Bridge and King Edward Public School.

It is also one of only three remaining provincial Normal Schools. The North Bay facility has been converted into a correctional facility and the Stratford building is now a museum. Another normal school built in Hamilton was demolished.

General Heritage Attributes Included in Designation:

excellent example of Edwardian Classicism and City Beautiful architectural detailing;

prominent landmark standing three storeys high, with a raised basement storey;

'Category A' classification under PACAC heritage evaluation criteria;

prominent entablature on central pavilion including a wide, coffered cornice ornamented with modillions, dentils and metal architrave;

all column and pilaster capitals, along with other neo-classical details;

all window openings, as now sized, including decorative cast stone heads with keystones over windows and door openings, flat lintels on basement windows and cast stone window sills;

red brick walls including parapets;

all decorative brick detailing including quoins, pilasters, round brick columns, continuous plain parapet, etc.;

all wood sash and metal frame windows;

all decorative metalwork including the parapet caps, decorative architrave mouldings, cornice mouldings and entry overhangs, etc.;

all columns and pilasters including capitals and architrave ornamentation above entries;

all ornamental cast stonework over vestibule entries;

cast stone string-course below second floor windows;

large transoms above existing and blinded entries;

property is distinguished by several mature shade trees (maple) and cedar hedges, cement pedestal erected for a sundial (now missing) on the front lawn (near the south-west corner of lot).

West Facade (facing Benson Avenue):

hemispherical, ribbed metal dome (silver painted) supported by a round brick tower and highlighted by two painted metal frieze bands; the upper one decorated with gilded lions heads;

a pavilion rising through the two upper stories with two round brick columns and Doric capitals (cast with egg and dart motif);

square half columns behind them; columns support a very prominent segmental pediment (with returns);

pediment is decorated on its underside with narrow rectangular panels.

a large, arched window with two vertical panes (topped with dentil moulding) and a semi-circular top pane with wooden muntin bars forming a fan shape;

cast stone, decorated with a giant keystone, two cast-stone roundels imbedded into the brick wall, decorative wrought-iron railing extending between the columns at base of the window;

string course of cast stone running below the second storey windows;

two round stone columns topped with Corinthian capitals, supporting a flat hooded canopy, (marks opening into brick vestibule); canopy is supported by two large, ornately decorated brackets (decorated with papyrus motif);

brick vestibule with a prominent, semicircular cast-stone arch above stairs, supported by brick pilasters with Doric cast-stone capitals; tongue-in-groove stained wood ceiling;

original concrete floor;

massive double-leaved oak door accented with a series of square panels, side lights and transom leading into the building from the porch (doorway is decorated with a straight head with keystone and alternating voussoirs);

South Facade (facing O'Carroll Street):

brick vestibule used or the side entrance, also with cornice decorated with dentils;

concrete staircase;

heavy oak door with a series of square panels, side lights and transom leading into the building (doorway is decorated with a straight head with keystone and alternating voussoirs);

Interior Elements:

all pressed metal ceiling elements throughout the building including third floor auditorium, but excluding the ceilings in the basement level.

wooden staircases and related detailing on south and west sections of building;

all columns and capitals in third floor auditorium;

interior finishes and related detailing including wooden door and window surrounds, chair-rails and baseboards throughout building should be retained

and if required to be removed, should be reused, as much as possible, in interior renovations.

PREVIOUS OWNERS AND OCCUPANTS: Kawartha Pine Ridge Public School Board

ARCHITECT: Francis R. Heakes

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1907-1908 (actual)

CONTEXT - SITE AND SETTING:

With its elevated site above Dixon Park, the former Peterborough Normal School (later renamed Peterborough Teachers' College) is an impressive institutional structure. The building is a tremendously important landmark. The silver coloured dome is visible throughout most of the City. It is also the most important architectural feature of a generally well-preserved Edwardian neighborhood in the north end of the City.

The grounds contain several distinguishing landscaping elements including: mature shade trees (maple) that surround the building, cedar hedges and a cement pedestal erected for a sundial (now missing) on the front lawn (near the south-west corner of lot).

HERITAGE EVALUATION CRITERIA NOTE:

The Peterborough Normal School/Teachers College ranks as a "Category A" structure under PACAC's heritage designation criteria. Category A buildings are: *"individually outstanding and have the broadest heritage significance in the City by virtue of architectural, historical, and environmental criteria along with overall integrity of design and construction. "Category A" properties generally hold provincial and/or national significance"*.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Peterborough Normal School is a rectangular building constructed of unpainted red brick. It stands three stories high above a raised basement storey, resting on a course of rock-faced limestone serving as a continuous sill for the basement windows.

The corners of the first floor have brick quoins. The corners of the upper two storeys have brick pilasters with plain, cast stone Doric capitals above them.

A string course of cast stone runs below the second storey windows, serving as a continuous sill.

Above the third storey windows and the capitals of the pilasters, there is a continuous painted metal crown molding. Above that again is a prominent architrave surmounted

by a wide bracketed cornice (with modillion brackets) and frieze of painted metal and a plain brick parapet capped with a painted metal molding.

The windows on the upper three stories have alternating voussoirs of cast stone over them.

On the first and third stories are cast-stone lugged sills.

Original wooden, one-over-one hung sash windows remain only in the basement level and on the third storey.

Replacement windows, (with a sash configuration), are found throughout the main building. These windows were installed during the occupancy of the Kawartha Pine Ridge Public School Board. Archival images confirm that these replacement sash windows (particularly those on the third storey) are similar in composition and appearance to the original wooden sash windows installed during the 1907-1908 construction.

The basement window heads consist of heavy rock-faced limestone lintels.

The **main west facade (facing Benson Avenue)** is five bays wide. The wide projecting center bay extends farther out on the first floor, where every sixth brick course is recessed, echoing the quoining at the corners of the building.

The first floor projection forms the base for a pavilion rising through the two upper stories. Two round brick columns, with square half columns behind them, support a very prominent segmental pediment (with returns). This pediment is decorated on its underside with narrow rectangular panels. The capitals topping the round brick columns are decorated with a cast egg-and-dart motif.

In the center of the bay is a large, original arched window with two vertical panes (topped with dentil moulding) and a semicircular top pane with wooden muntin bars, forming a fan design. The semicircular window head is cast stone and decorated with a giant keystone. On either side of the head are cast-stone roundels. A decorative wrought-iron railing extends between the columns.

Above the main Benson Avenue facade is a hemispherical metal dome supported by a round brick tower with two, narrow metal frieze bands. The upper frieze is decorated with gilded lions' heads.

To the right of the center bay on the first floor is a brick vestibule porch under a semicircular cast-stone arch supported by brick pilasters with Doric cast-stone capitals. The arch is decorated with three large keystones. Two round painted stone columns with Corinthian capitals support a projecting flat hooded canopy on two large brackets decorated with papyrus leaves. The canopy is paneled on its underside. The canopy marks the position of the main entrance to the building via the brick vestibule. The

ceiling inside the vestibule is clad in tongue-and-groove stained wood. The vestibule floor still retains an original cement base.

A massive double-leaved oak door accented with a series of square panels, side lights and transom leads into the building from the vestibule. The doorway is surmounted by a straight head with alternating voussoirs. To the left of the center bay on the first floor are two windows, and there are two on each side on the second and third stories.

The **north facade (facing Dixon Park)** is divided into three equal sections, each consisting of four bays on each storey. The center section is recessed. At the rear of the front section there is a one-storey ell decorated with a dentillated cornice.

A concrete staircase has survived and leads to a blocked-up vestibule, now with a small window, still topped with its original decorative voussoir. The stairs once led to the north entrance doorway.

Originally the north facade parapet (at the roofline) was an open balustrade with turned, wooden balusters. Presumably a similar wooden balustrade would have been found at the south facade. Although building owners are absolutely not obligated to restore lost architectural elements, the restoration of the lost balustrades is strongly encouraged. King George Public School in Ashburnham has an intact roofline balustrade that is virtually identical to what once existed on the Normal School.

The **south facade (facing O'Carroll Street)** resembles the north, with two projecting sections of four bays each. However, the west section is set back from the front one full bay, allowing for an opening from the porch on that side. The center recessed section is narrower, with paired windows on the second and third stories.

A one-storey brick vestibule for the side entrance, (also with a cornice and dentils), projects out from the center section.

A heavy oak door with a series of square panels, side lights and transom leads into the building.

The modern addition at the **east facade**, while executed in a modern style, does not impinge on the historic design of the main block. The architect was careful to subordinate the addition's design to the original structure.

Interior Spaces:

Although the interior of the Normal School have been modified to accommodate the most recent administrative uses of the building, the majority of the vintage interior finishes have survived and are well preserved. They include: the substantial wooden staircase on the west facade, the wooden staircase on the south facade, pressed metal ceilings throughout the building, wainscoting, wooden door and window surrounds, other wooden finishes and the ornate columns and capitals (decorated with papyrus motifs) inside the third storey auditorium.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION:

Early in 1906, the Ontario government announced plans to construct at least three provincial normal schools (teachers colleges) to provide standardized training of teachers for the public school system. However, locations for the new schools had not been decided upon at the time of the announcement.

Almost immediately, the Peterborough Board of Education, members of City Council and the local Board of Trade embarked on a lobbying effort to ensure that Peterborough would not be overlooked as a prospective location.

Only a year earlier Peterborough was incorporated as a city. Industry was booming, the population was expanding rapidly and large impressive homes were being erected in new subdivisions just west of Park Street. Newspaper headlines, tourism brochures and virtually every piece of commercial literature were bursting with civic pride. No public official wasted an opportunity to expound on Peterborough's many virtues.

In February 1906 a delegation consisting of every member of the local school board and representatives from Council and the other groups, made a trip to Queen's Park to discuss Peterborough's case with the Minister of Education. After the meeting the Minister stated that the delegation made a strong case but he remained non-committal.

The delegations' efforts had not been in vain however. In the summer of 1906, Peterborough was chosen as one of four communities for a new normal school. Hamilton, Stratford and North Bay were the others. The City offered a construction site free of charge in Dixon's Park, located in the North Ward. Other areas considered included: the old Dickson Lumber mill site on the banks of the Otonabee River between London and Murray Streets; the north half of Central School, a site adjacent to the YMCA on Murray Street and the Hilliard Farm. The Provincial Government would make the final site selection.

After much debate the Board of Education recommended the Dixon Park site which was sufficiently large and an ideal place for a school, away from all noises as one Board member observed in the Examiner. The Board also promised to expand the North Ward School (Queen Alexandra School) to 10 rooms to accommodate the training needs of teachers.

Francis R. Heakes, the Provincial Government Architect, was commissioned to design the new normal schools. The Government requested only one design to be used for all four normal schools. F.R. Heakes is perhaps best known for his 1916 design of the Chateau styled Government House - monumental Toronto landmark (demolished).

Heakes initial designs for normal schools included a large cupola above the main entrance and other ornamental towers. The architect was certainly inspired by

fashionable Edwardian classicism and the "City Beautiful Movement" which encouraged architects to develop monumental, impressive designs that would promote "civic grandeur". The movement was based on the desire to revitalize city life through the creation of monumental buildings and urban parks that fostered civic pride. The Teachers College building represents a time when Peterborough saw itself as participating in a design movement along with great cities like New York, Chicago and Montreal.

In October 1906 construction tenders were received based on Heakes initial design. Construction costs were not to exceed \$50,000 for each project.

Unfortunately every tender that was submitted estimated construction costs to be at least \$75,000 per building. Queen's Park declared that "the towers will have to go" according an Examiner headline. Heakes was forced to scale back the ornamental elements somewhat and he also reduced the overall square footage of each building.

In January 1907 the successful construction bid was announced. Fred Whitman, a Brantford building contractor, had submitted the lowest bid of \$53,000 per building. Whitman had just completed some major projects for the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph and a railway station in Brantford.

Each Normal School would be identical. They would each be stone and brick clad, with a 78 foot frontage, 4 floors and a single tower with a metal clad dome. The buildings would be equipped with a large gymnasium in the basement, chemistry labs, prep rooms, 5 large classrooms, and a second floor assembly hall that could comfortably accommodate 500 people.

The first project underway was in Hamilton. By the middle of 1908 construction of the Peterborough Normal School was nearing completion in the North Ward. On September 15, 1908, the School was officially opened with an attendance of 159 student-teachers. It's first Principal was Duncan Walker.

In May 1918 the Governor General, Duke of Devonshire and his wife, made a formal visit to the Peterborough Normal School. His Excellency addressed the student body in the large Assembly Hall and a small reception followed.

The Peterborough Normal School operated continuously until the late 1960s, training several hundred new public teachers. After the Normal School closed, the building was used as the main offices for the Peterborough County Board of Education. In 1998, the Board relocated to a new facility after the amalgamation of the Peterborough and Northumberland School Boards.

The Normal School in Stratford, Ontario (designated under the Heritage Act in 2002) was recently restored as the new home of the Stratford-Perth Museum. The school in North Bay (protected by a cultural heritage protocol agreement through the provincial government) was altered significantly when it was converted into a correctional facility.

The structure retains virtually all of its vintage architectural detailing with the exception of most one-over-one wooden sash windows (replaced some years ago), roofline balustrades and some entrances.

SOURCES

- Peterborough Examiner, 1906, 1907 in City Archives/PCMA.
- Peterborough Normal School yearbooks in City Archives/PCMA.
- F. H. Dobbin Index, City Archives/PCMA.
- Ontario Association of Architects.
- Stratford-Perth Museum.
- Balsillie Collection of Roy Studio Images, City Archives/PCMA.
- Fire insurance Plans, City Archives/PCMA.

CREDITS

This document prepared by Jim Leonard, (City Archivist) staff liaison to PACAC, using an architectural and historical report written in 1999 by Dr. Christopher Greene, Erik Hanson and Jim Leonard.