

Statement of Significance

10201 Yonge Street – Richmond Hill Methodist Church

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street is recommended for designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, as described in the following Statement of Significance. The subject property has been found to meet Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Description of Property

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street is a brick church built in the Gothic Revival style consisting of an original church building built in 1880 and a North Wing addition built in 1957. Only the 1880 church is considered to possess cultural heritage value or interest. The property is located at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre streets, within Richmond Hill's historic village core.

Design and Physical Value

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has design and physical value as a representative example of the Gothic Revival architectural style applied to an ecclesiastical building typology. Architectural features that contribute to the church's Gothic Revival style applied to an ecclesiastical typology include, but are not limited to, its cruciform footprint, polygonal apse, square towers with octagonal spires and belfry, lancet-arched window and door openings, stained glass windows with foliated tracery, hood moulds, and iron cresting.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 1: The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has design and physical value for the high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit displayed in its stained-glass windows. The church's stained-glass windows were installed gradually over the years, were made by different artists, and many were made to commemorate significant Methodist and United Church members. Windows include "I come to do thy will o'God", "For they know his voice," and "St. Mark".

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 2: The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

Historical and Associative Value

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has historical and associative value because of its association with the Methodist Church. The church was constructed in 1880 to house Richmond Hill's Methodist congregation, who remained in the subject building until the Methodists became the United Church of Canada in 1925.

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As a long-standing congregation and the most populous church in Richmond Hill in the 19th century, the Methodist Church touched many parts of 19th- and early-20th-century village life. In addition to providing religious service, the church organized musical groups and performances, hosted classes and lectures for children and adults, organized religious camp meetings, and performed charitable and missionary work. The Methodist Church was also notably involved in the village's popular and successful Temperance Movement, recruiting supporters, hosting lectures, and establishing a Methodist Temperance Society in 1859.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 4: The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has historical and associative value because of its association with the United Church of Canada. Like other United Churches across the country, Richmond Hill's United Church was formed because of a historic union between Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and General Council of Local Union Churches in 1925 to bring together the churches' ministry and missionary work in Canada and abroad. As a result of the union, church congregations combined and grew, and the church's doctrines evolved. The subject building has housed the United Church congregation since 1925, first called the St. John's United Church before being renamed to the Richmond Hill United Church in 1926. The church has housed the United Church congregation since 1925 and continues to serve as a religious and community gathering space to this day.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 4: The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has historical and associative value because it demonstrates the work of Toronto-based architect Charles A. Walton. While Walton is best remembered for designing the Yonge Street Arcade in Toronto (1883-1884), Walton's work was versatile and diverse, spanning different typologies including shops, residences, schools, and factories. The Richmond Hill United Church is one of four known Walton-designed churches, three of which were Methodist churches. The subject building also bears a strong resemblance to another of Walton's works, the St. George's Anglican Church, which was built in the same year. The Richmond Hill Methodist Church is Walton's only known building in Richmond Hill.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 6: The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

Contextual Value

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has contextual value because it is important in defining and maintaining the predominantly fine-grained late-19th and early-20th-century main street character of Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's village core. Surrounding the subject property, Yonge Street is typified by low-rise commercial and mixed-use buildings with storefronts at-grade, interspersed with landmark historical public/institutional buildings, including churches, schools, and a post office. The subject property also contributes to the historic character of Richmond Hill's village core more broadly, which includes commercial and institutional built form along Yonge Street and residential buildings located on side streets east and west of Yonge Street.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 7: The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has contextual value because it has historical links to nearby structures within the village core. The subject property is historically and functionally linked to the Methodist Church Manse (1864), located one block east at 33 Centre Street East, because it historically housed the church's ministers. The subject property is also historically and functionally linked to the Temperance Hall (1876), located one block west at 11 Centre Street West. The Temperance Hall was built to support the Temperance Movement, which historically had close ties to the Methodist Church community. Located near the intersection of Yonge and Centre streets, these three buildings formed an important nucleus for Richmond Hill's Methodist community in the late-19th century and continue to contribute to an understanding of how the Methodist church and community would have functioned during this time.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 8: The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings.

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has contextual value as a local landmark within Richmond Hill's historical village core. The church is sited in a prominent and highly visible location at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre streets, where it has served as a nucleus and marker for the local community since its construction in 1880. The church is regarded as a local landmark due to its prominent scale and highly visible spires, distinct historical character and high level of design, and longstanding role as a religious and community gathering place.

Therefore, the subject property meets O. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 9: The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

Heritage attributes of the 1880 church that contribute to the value of the property as a representative example of the Gothic Revival style applied to an ecclesiastical typology are:

1880 Church Exterior Attributes

- The scale, form and massing of the church with a cruciform plan;
- The steeply-pitched complex roof profile with corbel-stepped gables;
- The yellow brick construction with decorative stone and brick detailing, including:
 - Brick scalloping;
 - Brick and stone string courses;
 - Carved label stops;
 - Brick buttresses with stone copings;
 - Corbel-stepped gables;
 - Date stone inscribed with “A.D. 1880” on the west elevation;
- The stone foundation;
- The two square towers with copper octagonal spires and iron cresting on the front (west) elevation;
- The projecting bays with corbel-stepped gables on the south and north elevations;
- The polygonal apse on the rear (east) elevation;
- The windows, including:
 - The lancet-arched openings;
 - The brick and stone hood moulds and stone sills;
 - The leaded stained glass units, some with foliated tracery;
 - The clear leaded glass units;
 - The louvered window units;
 - The gable-roofed dormers;
- The doors, including:
 - The lancet-arched door openings on the front (west) and side (south) elevations, featuring period wood door units;
 - The leaded glass transoms with foliated tracery;
 - The brick porch with a corbel-stepped gable and lancet-arched doorway on the main (west) elevation.

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1880 Church Interior Attributes

- The nave, including:
 - The vaulted ceiling;
 - The plasterwork, including the ribs, cornices, and foliated bosses;
 - The lancet-arched niche on the east wall outlined with plaster cornices and colonettes; and
 - The horseshoe-shaped balcony with intricate metal balustrades supported by Corinthian columns.

Heritage attributes of the 1880 church that contribute to the value of the property for its high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit are:

- The stained glass window units.

Historical and Associative Value

Heritage attributes of the 1880 church that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with the Methodist and United Churches are:

- The building's scale, siting and orientation at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre streets; and
- The building's Gothic Revival architectural style applied to an ecclesiastical typology, and material palette.

Heritage attributes of the 1880 church that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with architect Charles A. Walton are:

- The building's Gothic Revival architectural style applied to an ecclesiastical typology, and material palette.

Contextual Value

Heritage attributes of the 1880 church that contribute to the contextual value of the property for defining and maintaining the predominantly late-19th and early-20th-century main street character of Yonge Street, for historical and functional links to its surroundings, and for being a landmark are:

- The building's scale, siting and orientation at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre streets; and
- The building's Gothic Revival architectural style applied to an ecclesiastical typology, and material palette.

Note: the building's 1957 North Wing and rear (east) addition are not considered to possess heritage attributes.