

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Tuesday, November 21, 2023
Subject	49 Metcalfe Street: Notice of Intention to Designate

Recommendation

1. That the City Clerk be authorized to publish and serve notice of intention to designate 49 Metcalfe Street pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
 2. That the designation bylaw be brought before Council for approval if no objections are received within the thirty (30) day objection period.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to recommend that Council publish its intention to designate the Dario Pagani House at 49 Metcalfe Street pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The cultural heritage significance and heritage attributes of the property are described in this report.

Key Findings

49 Metcalfe Street is listed as a built heritage resource on the City of Guelph's Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties under Part IV, Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if it meets at two or more of the criteria used to determine cultural heritage value or interest as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06 (as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22; see Attachment-4).

Heritage planning staff, in consultation with Heritage Guelph, have completed a [Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report and Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest](#). Staff have determined that the property meets five of the criteria used to determine cultural heritage value according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 (as amended by O. Reg 569/22 under the Ontario Heritage Act. Therefore, the property merits individual heritage designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The key findings and recommendations of this report align with the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Building our Future priority area. By conserving significant built heritage resources, the City moves in a direction that continues to build strong

vibrant, safe and healthy communities that foster resilience to the people who live here. The conservation of cultural heritage resources is aligned with building and maintaining vibrant and resilient communities. This designation will align with 2024-2027 Strategic Plan priority 6.1.4 to conserve our cultural heritage resources.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Report

Location

The subject property is located on the northeast corner of Metcalfe Street and Parkholm Avenue. The legal description is PLAN 357 LOT 26 PT LOT 24.

Building Description

The structure located at 49 Metcalfe Street (formerly 79 Metcalfe Street) is a two-story, flat-roofed, cast-in-place concrete residential dwelling clad in white stucco. The residence features an L-shaped floorplan and asymmetrical façade that responds to its corner-lot siting, with a curved two-story wall encasing an interior curved staircase. A stepped staircase window follows the curve of the wall between the first and second stories. The windows appear to be the original wood frame windows with interior and exterior operable sashes, horizontal muntins, and original hardware. The front entrance contains a door with a porthole window. Above the entrance is a second-floor balcony supported by a metal pillar and wrapped with metal balustrade. A drive-in garage protrudes from the northwest façade of the structure.

Known as the "Dario Pagani House," the residence was constructed in 1936-37 by Guelph-based contractor Dario Pagani and is considered the first and only residence in the City of Guelph to be designed in the Art Moderne style. Inspired by aerodynamic design, the Art Moderne style emphasized streamlined, curving forms, and long horizontal lines. The Pagani house includes features typical of the Art Moderne, with smooth, rounded stucco walls, a flat roof with a small ledge at roofline, an asymmetrical façade, corner sash window groupings, and metal balustrades. Art Modern architecture was most frequently utilized for institutional and commercial constructions, making the Dario Pagani house a rare example of Art Moderne residential architecture.

Historic Background

The house was constructed by Dario Pagani, an Italian immigrant who became one of Guelph's leading building contractors from the 1930's to the 1960's. The house is also associated with Dario and Mary Pagani's son, Richard, who was raised at 49 Metcalfe and would go on to study architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and become one of Guelph's most notable mid-century architects. The residence Richard designed for his family at 13 Evergreen Drive was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act in 2002.

According to the 1931 Canadian Census, Dario's father, Peter, immigrated to Canada in 1913 ahead of the rest of his family. Dario's immigration papers record that he entered Canada from Italy on December 13, 1920, at age seventeen. The immigration records note that he intended to join his father in Guelph at 144

Ferguson Street. Both Dario and his father are listed as carpenters working in building construction, which suggests that Dario learned his trade from his father. The census records 17 Morris as the Pagani family home in 1931. In the early-1930s, Dario partnered with Angelo Battaglia and established the construction firm Battaglia and Pagani, with an office at 120 Ferguson Street. By 1937 Dario had established his own firm, with an office operated out of his newly built house at 79 Metcalfe Street.

The Paganis lived in the house from 1937 to 1943. An ad in the 1938 City of Guelph Directory for Pagani's Contracting business lists 79 Metcalfe as his "Office and Residence." It is likely that Dario wanted the house to showcase his firm's ability to build modern housing, as cast-in-place concrete was a rarity in 1930s Ontario residential construction.

By the 1930s, Italian immigrants had established a distinct community in St Patrick's Ward. The Dario Pagani house represents the social and economic mobility achieved by working-class Italian immigrants in mid-twentieth century Guelph. The property stands out amongst the predominantly brown, yellow, and red brick revival style residences that ring St. George's Park on Metcalfe, Grange, and Palmer streets. The stark white stucco walls, situation on a corner lot across from St George's Park, and unique Art Modern architectural style make the residence a landmark in the neighborhood.

Statement of Significance

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets five of the prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by 569/22. The heritage attributes of 49 Metcalfe Street display: design or physical, historical or associative, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

The subject property meets Criterion 1 because it exhibits design or physical value as a rare example of the Art Moderne style architecture in the City of Guelph. The Dario Pagani house is the first Art Moderne residence constructed in the city and remains Guelph's only example of Art Moderne residential architecture.

The subject property meets Criterion 2 because it displays a high degree of artistic merit. Inspired by aerodynamic design, the Art Moderne style emphasized streamlined, curving forms, and long horizontal lines. The Pagani house includes features typical of the Art Moderne, with smooth, rounded stucco walls, a flat roof with a small ledge at roofline, an asymmetrical façade, corner sash window groupings, and metal balustrades.

Historical/Associative Value

The subject property meets Criterion 4 because it has direct associations with Dario Pagani, an Italian immigrant that became one of Guelph's most significant mid-century building contractors, and Dario's son, Richard Pagani, who was raised at 49 Metcalfe and would become a provincially significant architect.

The subject property meets Criterion 5 because it yields information that contributes to an understanding of the Italian immigrant experience in the first half of the twentieth century. When the Dario Pagani House was constructed, St. George's neighborhood was occupied primarily by Canadians of Anglo-Celtic

descent. The Dario Pagani house represents the social and economic mobility of working-class Italian immigrants in mid-twentieth century Guelph, especially those involved in construction trades.

Contextual Value

The subject property meets Criterion 9 because it is a landmark. The property stands out amongst the predominantly brown, yellow, and redbrick revival style residences that ring St. George's Park on Metcalfe, Grange, and Palmer streets. The stark white stucco walls, situation on a corner lot, prominent visual location across from St George's Park, and unique Art Modern architectural style make the residence a landmark in the neighborhood.

Heritage Attributes

The following elements of the property at 49 Metcalfe Street should be considered as heritage attributes in a designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act:

- The building form, including o Flat roof o Curved exterior wall
- Window and door openings including:
 - Stepped 3-unit window on the curved wall
 - Wrap-around corner windows
- Front door with porthole window
- Extant original exterior doors
- Poured concrete walls
- Metal balustrade and balcony support
- Stucco cladding
- Protruding attached garage
- Original internal roof drainage system (main roof and garage roof)

It is intended that non-original features may be returned to the documented earlier designs or to their documented original without requiring City Council permission for an alteration to the design.

Financial Implications

None.

Consultations

Heritage staff consulted the property owners, Debra Catherine Enright & James Michael Peluch, on October 3, 2023. The property owners indicated they support designation and advised staff on the list of heritage attributes.

Heritage staff have been in contact with the Pagani family, including Dario's daughter-in-law, Yvonne Pagani, and his granddaughter, Cathy Pagani, who enthusiastically support the designation of 49 Metcalfe Street and provided staff with additional research material.

At the July 10, 2023 [meeting of Heritage Guelph](#), the committee [passed the following motion](#):

THAT the comments provided by Heritage Guelph members on the '49 Metcalfe Street: Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report' be provided to staff and Council for their consideration.

At the October 10, 2023 [meeting of Heritage Guelph](#), the committee [passed the following motion](#):

THAT Heritage Guelph supports the heritage attributes identified for 49 Metcalfe Street as outlined in the staff report dated October 10, 2023; and

THAT Heritage Guelph recommends that City Council give notice of its intention to designate 49 Metcalfe Street pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Historic Documents

Attachment-2 Current Photographs

Attachment-3 Location

Attachment-4 Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Departmental Approval

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