

CITY OF ST. THOMAS

BY-LAW NO. 31-2002

A by-law to designate 502 Talbot Street
in the City of St. Thomas, as a building
of historic and architectural value.

WHEREAS pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 18, the Council of a municipality may by by-law designate a property including buildings and structures thereon to be of historic or architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS notice of intention to designate the property at 502 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, Ontario, has been duly published and served, and no notice of objection has been received to such designation;

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ST. THOMAS, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. There is hereby designated as being of historic and architectural value or interest the property known as 502 Talbot Street in the City of St. Thomas, all of which is described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, for the reasons set out in Schedule "B" attached hereto.
2. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of the by-law to be registered upon the title to the property described in the aforementioned Schedule "A" 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 the St. Thomas Times-Journal.
4. This by-law comes into force on the day it is finally passed.

READ a First and Second time this 11th day of March, 2002.

READ a Third time and finally passed this 11th day of March, 2002.

Peter J. Leack, City Clerk

Peter Ostojic, Mayor

SCHEDULE "B"

History

This beautiful stone church, is the third church to sit on this property on the south side of Talbot Street at the west side of White Street. The property here has been in use by the Catholic Church since it was first deeded by Archibald McNeal in 1831 for the "sole and singular purpose of the Catholic church and cemetery." The first mass was said on Christmas Day 1831. The original cemetery on this site was removed to Sunset Drive in 1874. This was the second church built in St. Thomas after the Anglican Church (1824) on Walnut Street. It is the first Catholic church built in this region of Southwestern Ontario. This church is responsible for the eventual establishment of churches in London, Dunwich Township, West Lorne, Aylmer and Fingal during the 1830's and 1840's.

The original frame church, which faced Talbot Street, stood in centre of the property and the cemetery was adjacent to and east of the church. In 1871, when the Canada Southern Railway was purchasing property for the right of way through St. Thomas, a portion of the church property was sold to the rail company. By the end of November, 1872, a new brick church was built in place of the framed one. The original church was moved and used as a separate school until it was destroyed by fire. In 1878 and 1879 a Convent and School were built to the south and east of the church, with the Sisters of St. Joseph in charge of education. The elementary school and the Convent were an integral part of the community for many years. A secondary school also was built on this property. In 1994 the school buildings and the convent were demolished.

The current stone church was built in 1911 and cost about \$72,000. This church is one of seven stone churches in the Catholic Diocese and is one of two stone churches in St. Thomas. The second church was demolished on February 26, 1910 and the present church was dedicated one year later on February 25, 1911. The large stained glass window in the front facade is reported to have won first place at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 and was purchased for this building. The church bell that is mounted in the parking lot recalls the historical links to the original church, the school and other churches, as this bell was also used by the Catholic Church in Port Stanley.

The parish residence sits directly west of the church. This is the second residence to stand on this portion of the property. The first frame was demolished in 1905 and the present residence was built in 1906 on virtually the same site as the first. It is the last remaining residence on the south side of Talbot Street, west of Stanley Street. It is perhaps the best example of early Edwardian style residences in this city. Both the Church and the residence offer a continuous link to the Talbot Street community and to St. Thomas' religious heritage.

Architectural Details - the Church

This Romanesque building is constructed of quarried limestone, which gives it a strong and very grand, stately appearance. It is constructed with buttressed walls, heavily arched doorways and windows, a raised foundation and twin towers. All the stained glass windows and doors in this church are framed with semi-circular arches. The roof is constructed of slate and rises to a steep peak above the main entrance.

The raised foundation allows for placement of a grand staircase entrance in the north or front facade which faces Talbot Street. The entrance is comprised of three large paneled wooden doors. Each of the doors swings inward to the church interior. Over each of the doorways is a heavy stonework frontispiece which rests upon a series of simple stone columns that gives the appearance of a vaulted roof over the entrance. A three panel stonework window is formed over each of the doors and under the heavy stonework arch. Centred above the front entrance is a large stained glass window, set into another stone arch, which is supported by twin stone columns. There are two recesses along this part of the facade which may have been intended for statuary. Large square stone towers frame either side of the front facade. A large octagonal louvered belfry sits on each tower and a copper sheathed spire rises from each belfry. A simple Latin cross adorns each spire, with a matching cross at the centre peak of the north and south facades. Another alcove sits in the peak of the north facade, over the large stained glass window.

Each of the two towers, on the front face, contain two sets of windows. In the lower level there are two smaller windows, formed by three columns supporting the stone arch. A smaller window is set in the arch. On the upper level of the towers, a single window mirrors the construction of the front entrances, including the use of the arch and frontispiece. The towers have three stone drip ledges installed at various heights.

The east and west facades are virtual mirror images of each other. The most prominent architectural details in the walls are the six buttresses and seven elongated, arched windows placed symmetrically along both of the facades. Each of the wall sections between the buttresses rise and extend above the edge of the steeply peaked roof. These extensions also mirror the frontispiece of the front entrance. The semi-circular arched windows sit upon a solid stone ledge and a stone drip ledge extends from buttress to buttress. Each of the buttresses has two stone caps which form drip ledges. A ground level entrance is housed in each of the towers, in both the east and west facades. These two entrances mimic the front entrance in detail, with the exception that both are recessed and provide shelter from inclement weather. Also a smaller round window is inset above the arch over the doorways.

The semi-circular Chancel wall projects from the rear facade of this church. There are four symmetrically placed smaller windows about the upper level of the Chancel wall. A small entrance sits above the grade at the far southern end of the east facade. On the west facade this is a covered entrance allowing access from the parish residence to the vestry.

The Church, Interior Features:

The church interior has numerous features which should be considered for preservation. Among the items are the Baldachin over the altar, the marble altar, the Stations of the Cross and one set of pews complete with kneelers. It is understood that these items may be placed elsewhere in the church depending on the changes to the Liturgy. The interior of the church reflects the exterior design in its stately and handsome design.

The Residence:

This stately home is constructed in the Edwardian style of the early 20th Century. For the purpose of this designation the front facade, which faces Talbot Street is most important. Constructed of pressed red brick, this building's most significant feature would be the large wrap-around covered verandah that crosses the entire front facade and continues along the east side of the house. The verandah retains much of its original design including the pine tongue and groove flooring and plain support columns capped with ionic capitals. Each of the columns rest upon a stonework base. There are a series of three more columns on either side of the raised front entrance stairs. The porch railing is simply designed with classical balusters and plain handrails.

The double hung windows used in this building are all placed carefully into the design plan. Each window rests on a stone ledge and a stone lentil is used above each window adding strength and weight to the building. Two identical windows sit between single windows in the upper level of the front facade. The front entrance is placed symmetrically under these windows in the lower level. A large entrance door is complemented by small sidelights of stained glass on each side. The two lower windows sit balances on either side of the front entrance. A pedimented dormer, with two small windows, sits in the roof at attic level and is reflected in the pediment set into the verandah roof, over the front stairs. Identical dormers are found in the east and west facades. The eaves are extended and are punctuated by a series of three Italianate-like brackets at the corners and underneath each side of the dormers. The roof was originally covered with slate.

Interior Features:

While much of the home remains structurally as it was, some of the rooms have been converted to accommodate its use as offices and meeting places. A large beveled glass wall and doorway separates the front entrance from the main lobby. The extensive use of woodwork throughout the house reflects the high level of craftsmanship found in the early 20th century homes. It is suggested that the parish residence gets its sense of importance not only from its stately exterior design, but also the intense care that has been taken to preserve the interior design of the home.