

Appendix D – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Legal Description

Lot 23, Plan 238(W), London

Description of Property

The property located at 172 Central Avenue is located on the north side of Central Avenue (formerly Lichfield Street, Litchfield Street) between Richmond Street and St. George Street. A two storey brick building with an elevated basement is located on the property.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property at 172 Central Avenue is of cultural heritage value or interest because of its physical or design values, historical or associative values, and its contextual values.

The property at 172 Central Avenue includes a house which is a representative example of the Italianate style in London. Popular in the 1870s-1880s, the Italianate style was at the height of its popularity when the house at 172 Central Avenue was constructed in about 1882.

The house has a symmetrical two-storey façade with three bays, where the central bay slightly projecting, which is typical of the Italianate style. However, the remaining design qualities of the house are unusual. It is narrow with its broadest façade facing Central Avenue to make the home appear larger and grander. The two storey house is very tall, emphasizing the verticality of the Italianate style in the elevated basement and formal approach up to the main entry door, nearly twelve foot ceilings on the main floor, and fourteen foot ceilings on the second storey. These design characteristics are often attributed to Dr. Oronhyatekha's robust stature.

The house demonstrates a high degree of integrity with respect to the Italianate style and its vertical emphasis in the design treatment of the façade, as it retains a number of original features, including: symmetrical façade, wooden two-over-two windows, paired and single brackets at the eaves, brick quoins, brick string course, brick voussoirs, brick frieze, shallow hipped roof, and slightly projecting central bay with gable and round louvered opening.

Dr. Oronhyatekha (1841-1907) is a person of National Historic Significance with direct historical associations to the property at 172 Central Avenue. He and his family lived in the house at 172 Central Avenue in its first occupancy in about 1882 until 1889. Dr. Oronhyatekha is often attributed as having a hand in the design of the house at 172 Central Avenue, as demonstrated in its tall ceilings, robust detailing, and prominent street-facing presentation to emphasize the prestige of the address. London is important in an understanding of Dr. Oronhyatekha's significance as he was living in London when he first joined the International Order of Foresters as well as when he became its Supreme Chief Ranger. Dr. Oronhyatekha cited London as the "cradle" of the International Order of Foresters. Dr. Oronhyatekha was remembered by Londoners well after his departure from London and death in 1907.

The house at 172 Central Avenue is associated with the International Order of Foresters as the home of its first Supreme Chief Ranger, Dr. Oronhyateka. The fashionable Italianate style of the house reflects the grandness and stature of a community leader, like Dr. Oronhyateka.

The property is also associated with Tony Urquhart (b.1934), who lived at 172 Central Avenue from 1968 until 1972. Tony Urquhart was the first Artist-in-Residence at the University of Western Ontario. He is the co-founder of the Canadian Artist Representation/Frontes des Artistes Canadiens, and is known for his distinctive "box" style of paintings and sculptures as one of Canada's pioneering abstractionists. He was inducted into the Order of Canada in 1995.

The property at 172 Central Avenue has the potential to yield information on an understanding of Mohawk ideals and Victorian values as reflected in the home of Dr. Oronhyatekha.

The property at 172 Central Avenue is important in defining the character of the North Talbot area. The North Talbot area is characterized by homes primarily in the 1870s and 1880s which reflect popular architectural styles of the time. The prominent design values of the house allow it to define this character.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes which support or contribute to the cultural heritage value or interest of the property at 172 Central Avenue include:

- Form, scale, and massing of the two storey brick building with elevated basement;
- Setback of the building from Central Avenue;
- Orientation of the building with its broadest façade towards Central Avenue;
- Brick exterior cladding (now painted) and brick detailing, including string course, frieze, quoins, voussoirs, and two chimneys;
- Symmetrical, three-bay façade with middle bay slightly projecting;
- Shallow pitched hipped roof with gable roof emphasizing the slightly projecting middle bay of the building;
- Louvered round window in the front gable;
- Paired and single wood brackets at the eaves;
- Segmented arch window openings with radiating brick voussoirs;
- Wooden two-over-two windows; and,
- Wood shutters on the front façade.