

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE
BY-LAW 1993-53

A by-law to designate 2489 Lakeshore Road West
as a property of historic, architectural
and contextual value and interest

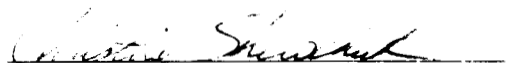
THE COUNCIL ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The property municipally known as 2489 Lakeshore Road West is hereby designated as a property of historic, architectural and contextual value and interest pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act for reasons set out in Schedule "A" to this By-law.
2. The property designated by this By-law is the property described in Schedule "B" attached to this By-law.

PASSED by the Council this 26th day of May, 1993.



MAYOR



CLERK

SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW 1993-53

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Walton Memorial United Church at 2489 Lakeshore Road West was built in 1914 as the home of the United Church community in Bronte and the surrounding district.

The history of the United Church in Bronte dates back to 1830. In that year, a tract of land about an acre in size was set aside for a burial ground, school house and a church. This tract of land is the present site of the Bronte Cemetery, located at the foot of West Street overlooking Lake Ontario. A church was never built on this site, so it is believed, according to local historians, that worship services were held in the school house. The earliest records of a religious meeting dates back to May, 1845. It was a Sunday School boasting 55 members. They recited a total of 5,470 Scripture verses in 1847.

Walton Memorial United Church began life as the Bronte Methodist Episcopal Church, a white clapboard building built on its present site in 1850 on land set aside for the Credit Indians, but an 1857 map showed the tract marked "Methodist".

The church became well known as the social hub of the community. "A divider was placed down the centre of the room and on arrival at the church, men would sit on one side, the women on the other, however, couples planning to marry were allowed to sit side by side in the center of the room, separated only by a rail", wrote local historian Irene Bumby. "After marriage, they were denied that privilege, and the rail seats were used by other courting couples."

The church was like a community centre during its halcyon days. It hosted socials, tea parties on the west lawn, hayrides, tennis, softball, baseball, musical groups, quilting bees and local theater.

The original church was found to be inadequate to continue serving the needs of a growing Bronte congregation. There was some discussion about building a new church, however, no funds were available for this project. Nevertheless, the Walton family of Bronte decided to have the new church built, acting on a suggestion from Mrs. Emanuel Walton, primary teacher in the Sunday School, whose husband had recently retired as its superintendent. Over Christmas Dinner, it was decided that the Walton family would build the church in memory of Wallis Walton, a faithful church member and officer. The Waltons included Emanuel, a successful local farmer and his two brothers, Watson of Hamilton and George of Toronto, plus a number of relatives and in-laws.

Soon after, the steeple was removed, and the original white church was moved across Triller Street (Lakeshore Road West) on sleepers to make way for the new construction. The following summer, the present building was erected at a cost known only to the donors, the Waltons. Members of the congregation volunteered their labour in construction and the hauling of brick made from the red clay taken from the area now occupied by Sheridan College. According to local historian Irene Bumby, it seems there was an unofficial competition between the farmers of Bronte, Palermo and Merton to see who could haul the most bricks. The new building was designed by architect George Burgess who had married Annie Walton.

On New Year's Eve, 1914, Mrs. Emanuel Walton handed over the golden key to the door of the new church to Reverend Thomas Boyd, and the new Walton Memorial Church was opened and dedicated, debt-free, a gift from the Waltons. The service began in the old church and parishioners walked across the street into the new structure for the final dedication. Apparently, the varnish was still drying on the seats.

In 1923, the church became part of the United Church of Canada, hence, it became Walton Memorial United Church, although the title stone continues to read "Methodist". In the mid-1980s, a renovation and restoration project was undertaken which involved the provision of up-to-date facilities on the interior, a new roof and repairing the foundation.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The building known as Walton Memorial United Church is a good example of church architecture from the turn of the century. The building is of the Gothic style, but represents the trend towards simplification of detail after the heavily ornamental styles of the Victorian era. The building was designed by local architect George Burgess. It is of red brick construction, with white stone foundation and trim. The form of the original building is rectangular with a steeply pitched gable and a square bell tower at the southeast corner.

The south facing facade has a large Gothic window in the central gable, a large title stone with Walton Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church carved on it, and two date stones with 1850 and 1913 carved on them, representing the foundation dates of the original church and the present church respectively.

There are also four square windows with stone lintels and sill, a Gothic arched entrance to the basement and a Gothic arched main entrance in the bell tower. The bell tower has square windows and vents with stone lintels and sills, stone bands and castellations at the top of the tower.

The east facing facade presents the steeply pitched roof, which is now clad in modern shingles but was originally wood, and four Gothic windows with stained glass, and buttress supports in between.

The original west facing facade is similar to the east, with its Gothic windows and buttresses. There are additions to this facade, however, these are low in height and do not overwhelm the original architecture.

CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Walton Memorial United Church is a large and highly visible feature along Lakeshore Road West. The building is a reminder of the significant role the United Church played in Bronte, and is an important link with Bronte's past.

SCHEDULE "B" TO BY-LAW 1993-53

Parcel 65-1, Section M-10 being Lot 65, Plan M-10 Save and except Part 1, Plan 20R-10566.