



Research Report

**827 Gordon Street
City Of Oshawa**

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 Purpose of Report.....	2
1.2 Legislative Context.....	2
2. Description of Property	3
2.1 Location	3
2.2 Legal Description.....	3
2.3 Site Description	3
3. Historical Context	4
3.1 Summary.....	4
3.2 Early Lot History.....	4
3.3 Cedar Dale School History	6
4. Structural Design and Architecture	7
4.1 Form and Design.....	7
4.2 Wall Treatment.....	7
4.3 Roof	7
4.4 Entrances	8
4.5 Window Openings	8
4.6 Additions	8
5. Applicability of Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act	9
6. Resources	10
7. Historical Photographs of the Property	11
8. Current Photographs of the Property	13

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Report

This report evaluates the cultural heritage significance of 827 Gordon Street in the City of Oshawa in accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value, or Interest.

The purpose of this undertaking is to determine the heritage and landscape value of the property more fully in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act (the Act).

1.2 Legislative Context

Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the *Ontario Heritage Act* sets out the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, which is required to designate a property under the provisions of Part IV of the Act.

A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it:
 - i. is a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
 - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or
 - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,
 - i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community,
 - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
 - iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.

3. The property has contextual value because it,
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area,
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings, or
 - iii. is a landmark.

After analyzing the history of and heritage attributed to the subject property, it is concluded that the subject property merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act considering criteria 1 (i), 2 (i) and 3 (i), (iii).

2. Location

The building at 827 Gordon Street is in the City of Oshawa. The building faces west onto Simcoe Street South, between Gordon Street and Wolfe Street.

2.1 Legal Description

BLK A PL 198 East Whitby, LT C27 SHEET 28 PL 335 EAST WHITBY; OSHAWA.

2.2 Site Description

Located in a residential neighborhood, the building located at 827 Gordon Street stands prominently on a large three acres lot bounded by Simcoe Street South to the west, Gordon Street and Conant Street to the northwest and Wolfe Street to the south.



Figure 1- Location of 827 Gordon Street, Oshawa, ON. GIS Map City of Oshawa, July 2021

3. Historical Context

3.1 Summary

The structure at 827 Gordon Street, originally used for educational purposes, called Cedar Dale Public School, was in use from 1920 until 2002. The history of the Cedar Dale Public School spans almost a century. When Oshawa became a city in 1924 there were eight elementary schools and Cedar Dale Public School was one of them.

3.2 Lot History

The community of Cedar Dale was located just south of what today is known as Bloor Street and was bounded by Park Road and Wilson Road with frontage to Lake Ontario. It was not a part of Oshawa until the early 1920s. Prior to this date, Cedar Dale was designated a “Police Village”, separate also from East Whitby Township. The creation of Cedar Dale has been credited to one man, A.S. Whiting. This credit is given to A.S. Whiting because he chose to build his new manufacturing business south of the other industries found in the Oshawa area. Mr. Whiting even brought in people to work at his new factory from his home state of Connecticut. The *Ontario Reformer* for Friday, May 7, 1873 credited Mr. Whiting for the existence of Cedar Dale. According to the article, it was “through the establishment and enterprise of the Cedar Dale Works” that Cedar Dale now exists. The plant not only brought work and thus income to the area, but it brought people to work at the plant and make their homes near by. Whiting Avenue was home to many of the employees who came to the area to work for Mr. Whiting.

On June 9, 1911, the plan known as Gordon D. Conant’s Plan was registered in East Whitby Township.

In 1919, G.D. Conant provided three acres of this plan, located on the east side of Simcoe Street below the Grand Trunk Railway Tracks, today the Canadian National Railway Track. Prior to property being used to build a school, the property had a tenant, Mr. E. J. Phillip who farmed the land for over four years which included an apple orchard.

The street where Cedar Dale is located, Gordon Street, is named after Gordon Daniel Conant. Gordon Conant was a member of a prominent Oshawa family who lived in Cedar Dale. In 1913 he married Verna Conant (née Smith), daughter of E. D. Smith. Together they had three children. In 1916-197, G.D. Conant was the Mayor of Oshawa. He practiced law in Oshawa and was premier of Ontario. Outside politics, Conant served as president of Oshawa General Hospital, Oshawa Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club.

3.3 Cedar Dale School

In the early 1800s, the first common school was School Section No. 2, a log structure, that was constructed between the settlement of Oshawa and the Lakeshore. It was located on the west side of the 'main highway' known today as Simcoe Street South.

In 1867, plans for a new school were completed by architect H. R. Barber. The building was made of greyish brick that would replace the log structure. This building originally contained one room, with a cloak room and dual entry, one for boys and one for girls. A belfry was constructed at the front on the east façade that faced the road.

As the community grew a further addition was needed to accommodate the growing class size. The one room schoolhouse became a two-room structure. Today this building is the Cedar Dale United Church¹.

The population of Cedar Dale rose during the first World War, the annexation of Cedar Dale to Oshawa, and the enforcement of Adolescent School Attendance Act contributed to this increase. In 1919, The trustees of School Section No. 2 proposed to build a six-roomed school across the street on the east side of Simcoe Street South. The original school was constructed to accommodate 300 pupils. In January 1923 when Cedar Dale was annexed with Oshawa, there were 1449 student names on the assessment roll.

In 1927 a two-room addition was added, followed by additional renovations in 1928. In 1960, another two rooms were added to replace a portable that had been in use since 1958. Beginning in the 1970s, the school of Cedar Dale struggled, according to local newspapers, the Board of Education proposed closures due low enrolment and upkeep costs. An article from the Oshawa Times, January 22, 1983, the Board wanted to close the school due to repair costs for a roof. In the winter school classrooms were being propped up by wooden columns to support sagging ceilings caused by heavy snow accumulation. Community pressure continued to keep the school open.

In 1995 Cedar Dale School celebrated its 75th anniversary and held a reunion on June 23 and 24. Events included a tree planting ceremony, choir performances, a dance, and the placing of a time capsule². It is unknown where this time capsule is currently located.

In 2002 Cedar Dale School closed. In the fall of 2002, Cedar Dale Public School and Conant Public School were renamed Bobby Orr Public School. Cedar Dale housed students from kindergarten to grade 4. Conant housed students from grades 5 to 8.

¹ This building has served the community for more than 160 years, first as a school and then as a church. George McLaughlin bought the school from the city in the 1920s and donated it to the United Church.

² According to former student and teacher Sharon Zawaky, "The time capsule was lost in transition from Cedardale to Bobby Orr P. S. It sat in a locked wooden box on top of the display case in the front hall of the school for many years. A box filled with the pringles containers collected from the individual classrooms for their time capsules. It is presumed the box was left behind at Cedardale after the move from Cedardale to Bobby Orr P. S. It is possible it was either sent to garbage or handed over to DDSB board warehouse".

A new school replaced both structures in 2003, Bobby Orr Public School, located at the corner of Ritson Road South and Simcoe Street South.

Current Use

The building is currently home to the business, *The Rehearsal Factory* and is for sale by the current owner.

4. Structural Design and Architecture

By the twentieth century, the learning environment and needs of students and teachers had been analyzed and presented in standardized formulas for design and construction. Published plan books such as *Modern Schoolhouses*, offered floor plans, architectural designs, and technical specifications for new construction. Numerous schools built in the 1920s feature the central hallway plan with classrooms located on either side featuring large windows that would provide lots of natural light.

4.1 Form and Design

In 1919, the proposed design of Cedar Dale School Public School was described as follows:

“The school is to be a six-room structure so modelled that further rooms may be added at any time. This seat of learning as at present planned will seat about 300 pupils and is supposed to be modern in every respect. It is constructed of red brick with ornamental stone trimmings and will have a frontage on Simcoe Street of approximately ninety-three feet by corresponding width and will cost in the neighbourhood of \$30,000.³”

The actual cost was \$42,000. The architect was Mr. Paul, the contractors were W.J. Trick and Company who completed the construction of the school and its partly paved four-acre playground⁴. Two unique features of the school were the teacher’s consultation room on the second floor and heated girls’ and boys’ playrooms in the basement.

This is a medium square, two-storey structure with a centre projecting frontispiece, central entrance, and a flat roof. It faces west and occupies a large block of land. The west (main) façade achieves symmetry through central placement of the main entrance, the balanced window groupings. The north and south facades contain multiple slight arched recessing in the brick that contain small square window openings on each story.

4.2 Wall Treatment

Constructed of red brick, with smooth concrete detailing. The openings and corners of the main façade and recesses are defined with stone quoins (blocks).

4.3 Roof

The roof is flat and contains a decorative cement parapet at the roof line.

³ Ross, J Douglas, *Education in Oshawa*. pg. 132

⁴ *Ibid.* 133

4.4 Entrance

The main entranceway is classical in design contained in a prominent two storey bay projection on the west façade. The doorway features a simple 4 pane transom above double leaf doors. Above the entranceway is a flat roof portico that would have provided protection from the elements as students entered the building. Between the transom and portico reads 'Boys'. This was most likely the original boys entrance and the girls entrance was originally located on north façade, indicated by the brick work that has been modified where there are currently two covered window openings.

4.5 Window Openings

The front façade features large window openings arranged in a symmetrical pattern with concrete sills and lintels, in groupings of five. The hung sashes are four over two. Located beside each grouping of five on the front façade, is a smaller window featuring a single sash containing four panes over two. Each window opening is framed by decorative light concrete details with quoins on each façade. The north and south façade feature small square window openings surrounded by light concrete decorative details. These small window openings are contained within an arched recessed area of the red brick, creating a unique decorative element. Located in the centre of the north façade between the smaller recessed window openings is a larger window on each story.

Currently all the windows on the building are boarded up except for the windows on the west façade and a few large windows on the east façade.

4.6 Additions

The additions extend from the east façade. In 1927 a two-room addition was added, followed by additional renovations in 1928. In 1960, another two rooms were added to replace a portable that had been in use since 1958.

5. Applicability of Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

In light of the findings of this report, it is concluded that the property located at 827 Gordon Street, in the City of Oshawa meets the criteria outlined in Regulation 9/06. The property meets the criteria for designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of 1. Design or physical value, 2. Historical/associative value and 3. Contextual value.

1. (i) 827 Gordon Street has design and physical value because the building is representative of a 1920s school representative of Classic Revival architectural style.
2. (ii) 827 Gordon Street has direct association with Gordon Daniel Conant, an early settler in the area, who provided the land where Cedar Dale School stands. The surrounding streets are named after members of the Conant family including Verna, Conant, Gordon.
3. (i) 827 Gordon Street is historically linked to the City of Oshawa as it is representative of the community of Cedar Dale that now lies within the City of Oshawa. That is where the name of the school originates.
3. (iii) 827 Gordon Street is a landmark and served as an educational institution for over 75 years serving the population in the southern end of the City of Oshawa.

6. Resources

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Thomas Bouckley Collection. The Robert McLaughlin Gallery

Vernon's City of Oshawa Directory, 1921 -1995

1837 Walton's Directory Whitby Township

www.ontarioarchitecture.com

7. Historical Images of the Property



Figure 2 – Cedar Dale School, circa 1876. Today Cedar Dale United Church. Oshawa Archives



Figure 3 – Cedar Dale School, circa 1910. Today Cedar Dale United Church. Oshawa Archives



Figure 4- Cedar Dale United Church, 2000. Oshawa Archives



Figure 5 - Cedar Dale School, 1996. Oshawa Archives



Figure 6 - Cedar Dale School, East Façade, 1996. Oshawa Archives



Figure 7 – 827 Gordon Street, Oshawa, ON. Google Map 2009

8. Current Photographs of the Property



Figure 8 – 827 Gordon Street, Oshawa, ON, west façade, August 2021



Figure 9 – 827 Gordon Street, Oshawa, ON, south façade, August 2021



Figure 10 – 827 Gordon Street, Oshawa, ON. north façade, August 2021



Figure 11 – 827 Gordon Street Oshawa, ON., east façade, August 2021