

RESEARCH REPORT



Harmony Public School
149 Harmony Road South
Oshawa, Ontario

Prepared for Heritage Oshawa

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1.0	Introduction	
1.1	Purpose of Report	4
1.2	Legislative Context	4
2.0	Description of the Property	
2.1	Location	5
2.2	Legal Description	5
2.3	Site Description	5
3.0	Historical Attributes of Harmony Public School	
3.1	Summary	6
3.2	Early Lot History	6
3.3	Harmony Public School	7
3.4	Additions	7
4.0	Condition of Harmony Public School	7
5.0	Architecture	
5.1	Date of Construction	8
5.2	Form	8
5.3	Masonry	8
5.4	Foundation	8
5.5	Roof	8
5.6	Entrances	9
5.7	Window Openings	9
6.0	Conformity to Applicable Designation Criteria	9
7.0	Proposed Designation Statement and Description	
7.1	Purpose	10
7.2	Location and Description of Property	10
7.3	Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest	10
7.4	Description of Heritage Attributes	10
8.0	Recommendation	11

FIGURES AND APPENDICES

Figure 1 – Site Plan, Harmony Public School, 06/06/06

Appendix A - Photographs of Harmony Public School Exterior

Appendix B – Photographs of Harmony Public School Interior

Appendix C – Maps, Village of Harmony, 1877

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

This report evaluates the heritage significance of Harmony Public School located in the City of Oshawa and examines the suitability for designation under Section IV of the *Ontario Heritage 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 in order to designate a property under the provisions of Section IV.

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 and heritage attributed of the subject property, it is concluded that the subject property merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act in light of criteria 1 (i), 2 (i), 3 (ii), and (iii).

2.0 Description of Property

2.1 Location

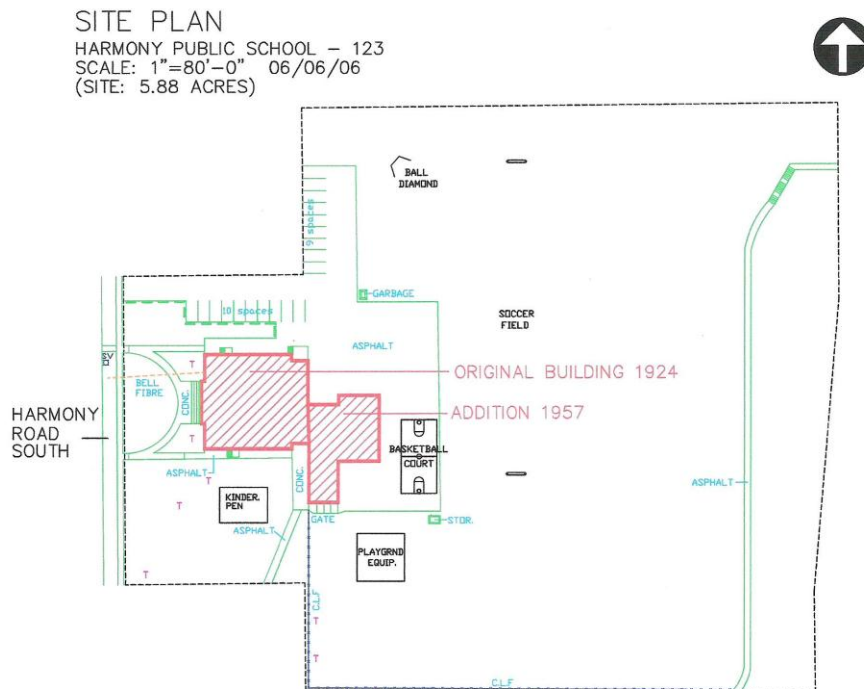
Harmony Public School is located in the City of Oshawa at 149 Harmony Road South. The school is located on the east side of Harmony Road South between Olive Avenue and King Street East.

2.2 Legal Description

Harmony Public School is located on part of Lot 4 on Concession 1, at 149 Harmony Road South. LR PIN: 16339 MUNICIPAL PLAN 357 East Whitby PART of Lot 16, 18, 19 PLAN 40R22193

2.3 Site Description

Harmony Public School is located on a 5.88 acre lot at 149 Harmony Road South in the City of Oshawa. The school contains a large soccer field, a playground and basketball court. See Site Plan Figure 1.



Harmony Public School Site Plan, 2012

3.0 Historical Attributes

3.1 Summary

Education in East Whitby Township

In 1812 a school was erected in the Harmony district on Kingston Road near Wilson Road (Concession 2, Lot 7) “near the Rogers homestead” and Pickell’s farm. The first teacher was John Ritson, whose name is perpetuated in Ritson Road and Ritson Road Public School; Abram Farewell, one of his students, became the second teacher.

By the 1840s there was a movement to establish a new education system which would be accessible to all. Reverend Egerton Ryerson was charged with undertaking this work. In 1846 he released his report which called for common, universal schools.

One of Ryerson’s major efforts was securing improvements to school design. Ryerson developed a recommended plan for new schools with greater emphasis on natural light, spaciousness and ventilation. Many of the original wood or log schools did not meet Ryerson’s recommended specifications and between the 1850s and 1860s wooden schools were replaced with better schools designed mainly of brick.

Harmony Public School (S.S. No. 1 East Whitby) – a brick school was built in 1871 on land donated by Akeus Farewell. This replaced the log cabin school that was built in 1829 – this was a one room rural schoolhouse.

Articles in the “Vindicator” of those days mention several schools outside the village. It shows how rapidly the area was being settled. It was said the old Harmony school had to be propped up at one end to keep it from falling down. They were thinking then that it was time to be building another.

3.2 Early Lot History

The crown patent for the two hundred acres of Lot 4, Concession I, East Whitby, was issued on March 14 1798 to absentee land owner James L Givens. In 1804 Moody Farewell was granted 200 acres of Lot 4, concession 1. After Moody Farewell passed away the 200 acres was transferred to his son Akeus Farewell.

In 1851, Mr. Akeus Farewell designated part of his land on the south east portion of Concession 1, Lot 4 for the site of a new school house with a picket fence. Records show that Mr. William Scott was hired as a teacher at the brick school in 1872 at a salary of \$400 per annum. The earliest register also reveals that 58 pupils were enrolled at the school, with 13 of them being Farewells.

In 1890 trees were planted around the school property and those same trees lasted until 1967 when they were removed due to excessive decay. As a centennial project, the pupils and staff purchased and planted ornamental shrubs.

3.3 Harmony Public School

Over the years the school building on this lot has changed and been rebuilt various times. In 1890 a one-room school house was erected on the property that was also known as S.S. East Whitby #1. In 1915 a new brick school was erected due to an increase in students.

When the enrolment reached one hundred students in 1923, the School Trustees held a meeting and discussed the need for a new building. This new school was two-storeys, made of red brick, contained four classrooms and was estimated to cost \$25000. The school, complete with basement, was ready for use by teachers and students in 1924. For the first ten years only three of the four classrooms were being used. The first headmistress for this school was Miss Laleen J. Moore who retired only one year later. Another addition was built in 1956 and contained four classrooms and a kindergarten.

During the 1960's, The Home and School Association donated a showcase that was to be used to display the schools trophies and memorabilia. The first items to be placed in the case were the old guest book and log book and Abraham Farewell's Bible.

3.4 Additions

In 1956 an addition was added to east side of Harmony Public School. It consisted of four classrooms and a Kindergarten classroom.

4.0 Condition and Current Use

Overall the school is in fair condition. According to a report the main expenditures at this time include but are not limited to making the building accessible, there are numerous major building components that are in need of replacement but not high priority at the time this report was written November 2011. The school grounds such as the pavement, parking lots, playground asphalt, concrete steps and walkways all need to be repaired.

5.0 Architecture

When Oshawa was designing several new schools in the 1920s, Classic Revival and Neo Gothic were popular architectural styles. Harmony Public School contains elements that are an example of the Classic Revival style. This is reflected on the front entranceway that features a Greek Doric portico that is supported by Doric columns. The architrave between the abacus and the pediment has a strong double horizontal accent yet is simple on both the front and sides. Within the Greek Doric portico is the front entrance that contains a rounded fanlight transom. This temple front is very pronounced and makes a statement on a relatively plain vernacular building made from red brick with a white classical inspired cornice and dental detailing around the roofline. There are paired french inspired doors that lead to a central entranceway that are painted blue. The wood frame side windows are simple in design, and not quite as large as the entranceway, feature 6 over 6 double hung sash windows. The roof is flat with a small parapet in the centre over the main entranceway located on the west façade.

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.

5.1 Date of Construction

Harmony Public School was built in 1924. This is indicated on the west façade of the school. In 1956 an addition was added to east side of Harmony Public School. It consisted of four classrooms and a Kindergarten classroom.

5.2 Form

This is a large rectangular, two storey structure with a temple front design featuring Doric columns and a flat roof. It faces west and occupies a block of land (2.38 hectares with orientation to the southeast corner. The west (main) façade achieves symmetry through a central placement of the main entrance and balanced window groupings.

5.3 Masonry

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

5.4 Foundation

The foundation is concrete.

5.5 Roof

The roof is flat with a parapet above the entranceway on the west façade.

5.6 Entrances

The entranceway is classical in design featuring a pediment portico supported by 2 large Doric columns. A second entranceway is located on the north façade. It features a simple 16 pane transom above double leaf doors.

5.7 Window Openings

Single, double and triple groupings of window openings are arranged in a symmetrical pattern. The hung sashes vary between one over one, four over four and eight over eight. All openings have lugsills. The window frames are wood that has been painted white.

6.0 Conformity to Applicable Designation Criteria

In light of the findings of this report, it is concluded that the school known as Harmony Public School meets several of the criteria outlined in Regulation 9/06, as follows:

- 1(i) Harmony School is an example of a school that was built in the 1920s representative of the Classic Revival architectural style.
- 2(i) it has direct association with the Farewell Family. The land on which the school sits was donated by Akeus Farewell. The Farewells were one of the first families to settle in the Village of Harmony. They came to the area in circa 1804.
- 3(ii) it is historically linked to the City of Oshawa as it is representative of the Village of Harmony that now lies within the City of Oshawa. That is where the name of school originates.
- 3(iii) Harmony Public School is a landmark in the City of Oshawa, approximately ½ km to the north lays Farewell Cemetery another landmark in a community that was once known as the Village of Harmony.

7.0 Proposed Designation Statement and Description

7.1 Purpose

Should the Heritage Oshawa Committee and Council agree that designation of Harmony Public School is appropriate, it is recommended that the following designation statement and description be incorporated into the designation by-law.

7.2 Location and Description of Property

Harmony Public School, located at 149 Harmony Road South in the City of Oshawa, was in use from 1924 until 2011. The land it stands on was used since 1851 for education purposed structures. The history of the Harmony Public School spans almost a century. When Oshawa became a city in 1924 there were eight elementary schools and Harmony Public School was one of them.

7.3 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The structures cultural heritage value results from their historical significance and their importance as a cultural heritage value is expressed in its historical associations with early public education in the City of Oshawa that was once known as the Village of Harmony.

The property has historical value as it has been used for educational purposes since 1851. The land was originally owned by one of the first settlers in the Village of Harmony, Moody Farewell. The school remains a landmark in a community that was once known as the Village of Harmony.

The cultural heritage value Harmony Public School is related to its architectural value, as it is comprised of the Classic Revival style.

7.4 Description of Heritage Attributes

- Original multi-paned wooden sash windows in multiple assemblies on the west, north and south facades.
- Classic Revival inspired Greek Doric Portico entranceway supported by Doric columns
- Harmony School dates from an early period in the development of the City of Oshawa during the 1920s
- It is named after the Village of Harmony where one of Oshawa's first schools was located in 1812 on property donated by Moody Farewell.

- Designed in the Classic Revival style, the school contains many of the elements thought to be important to scholastic architecture during the 1920s.
- It remains a landmark in a community that was once known as the Village of Harmony now part of the City of Oshawa.
- The buildings institutional form, scale and massing as expressed by its one-story height, full height basement, front gabled pedimented entranceway featuring Doric columns on the west elevation.

8.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the property Harmony Public School, location at 149 Harmony Road South, in the City of Oshawa be considered for designated in accordance with the provisions of Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value.

Sources

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French, Olive Manuscript: *The Story of Oshawa Schools: 1800 – 1967*. Oshawa Community Archives

Oshawa Community Archives, Harmony Public School File

Oshawa Historical Society: *The Village of Harmony: Searching for the Lost Settlers*. 2010

Ross, J. Douglas. *Education in Oshawa from settlement to city*. 1969

Thomas Bouckley Collection. The Robert McLaughlin Gallery

Bell, Robert T. *Photographs. Interior*. 2012

Appendix A – Exterior Photos



Harmony Road School

The undated image above is of a house located on Harmony Road. The photograph was donated by a gentleman who grew up in Harmony and some of his family members attended this school. It is most likely of a late 19th century, early 20th century construction, due to the number of students and the fact that the building was made of brick. The photo below is of SS Number 1 – this became Harmony Public School.





West Façade, September 2012



North Façade, September 2012



South Façade, September 2012



East Façade, September 2012

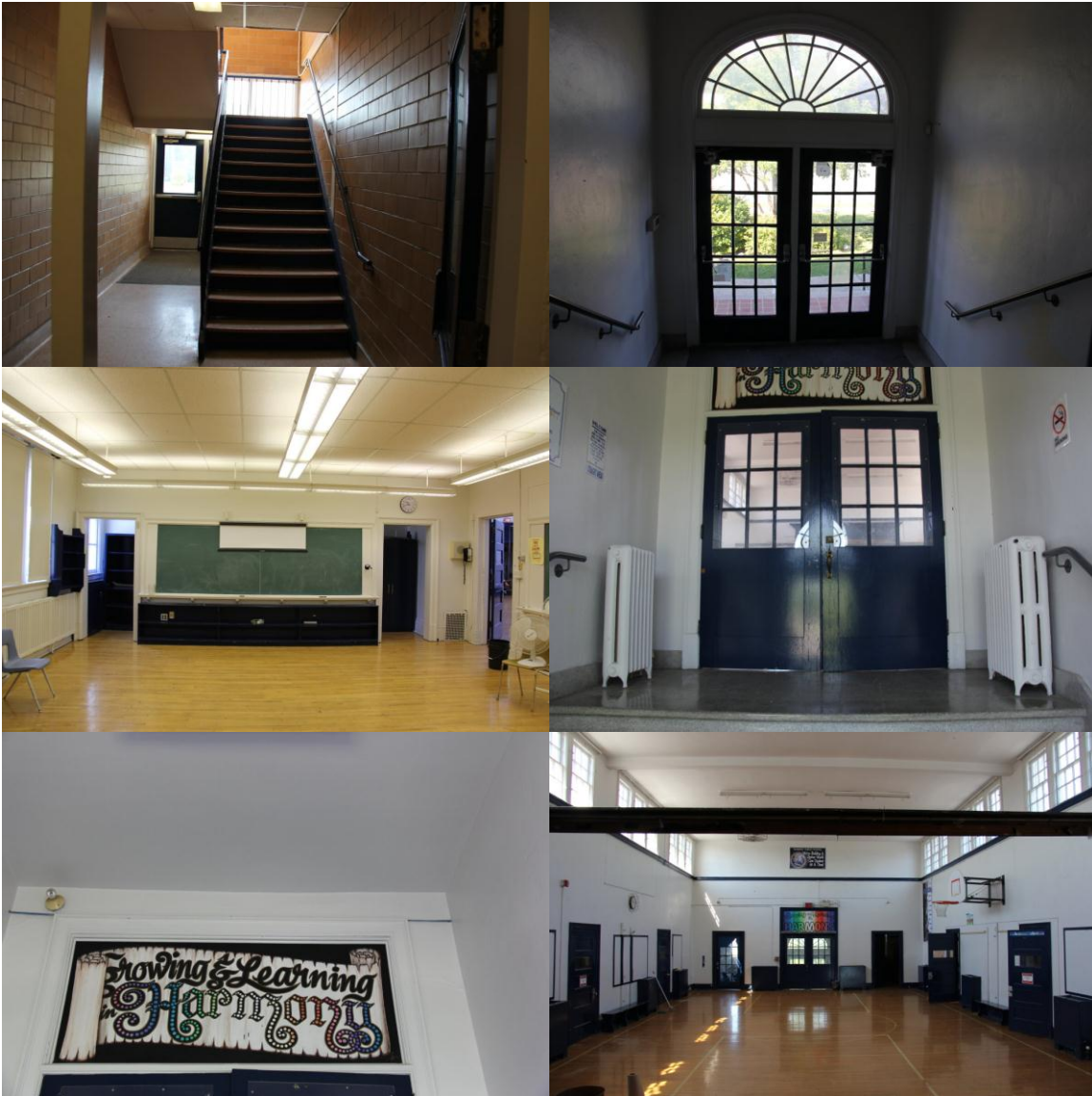




West Façade, Entranceway, September 2012

Appendix B - Interior Photos

Interior photos were taken by Robert T. Bell, June 2012





Appendix C – Map, Village of Harmony 1877

