

# Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

130 Sandwich Street South  
Amherstburg, Ontario  
PLAN 7 LOT 1 PT LOTS 2 AND 3, RP 12R24659 PARTS 1 AND 2

## Description of Property

The property located at 130 Sandwich Street South is the former General Amherst High School. It is a two-storey institutional building located on the west side of Sandwich Street South, directly facing the Bill Wigle Park to the south and Laird Avenue to the West. Constructed between 1921 and 1922, the school served as the primary secondary education facility for Amherstburg and the surrounding townships for a century. Additions were made to the structure in 1929 (later demolished), 1951, 1960, 1964 and 1967.

## Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

### Design and Physical Value:

The former General Amherst High School has design value as a well-preserved example of period institutional architecture. The 1922 design does not fit exclusively within any distinctive architectural style but exhibits elements of "Interwar Stripped Classicism" and simplified "Collegiate Gothic Revival" style. The 1922, and 1951 addition, have a principal façade facing south and are primarily constructed with red brick cladding. The facades have classical proportions with a symmetrical design, large windows, stone details, stepped pilasters, and intricate brick and coursing patterns.

On the west elevation of the gymnasiums there are nine murals. The murals are a rare construction method made using an application process called "granolux." The murals have a unique styling, utilizing bold colours and simplistic geometry all on a uniquely large scale.

### Historical and Associative Value:

The property has historical value as the first dedicated high school building constructed in Amherstburg, replacing earlier "continuation classes." The school is a physical representation of the evolution and maturing of the Town of Amherstburg. It reflects the development of Amherstburg during the early part of the 1900's as the town grew and the needs of the community became more sophisticated as the town modernized. The school has been a Town focal point as a main centre of educational activity since 1922. As the Town's High School, it has been a key centre of learning, sports and extra-curricular activities and a wide variety of community events such as concerts and ceremonies.

The school reflects the work of prominent local architects Harold McEvers (1922 Design) of Windsor and J.C Pennington of Windsor (1951 addition). Architect Harold McEvers identified the school as "an ideal working example of a Vocation Academic high school."

## Contextual Value:

The former General Amherst High School possesses contextual value as it is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. The south façade is linked to the Public Park and community space to the south. The connection to the park and its surroundings was integral in the original design of the school as the southern entrance to the school was centrally aligned with the park. This visually linked the south façade to the community space. Functionally, the park was used as a sports field by the institution. The relationship between the school and the park has been there since the construction of the school.

Further, the property and structure are a landmark in the Town of Amherstburg. As the primary high school for the region for a century, it is a visually and socially prominent landmark in the community. The property has been a landmark since 1922, since which time it has been one of the most substantial buildings in the Town. The building's central location has been recognized by residents and visitors as a long standing historical institutional landmark with the Town of Amherstburg.

## **Description of Heritage Attributes.**

The following heritage attributes are essential to the cultural heritage value of the property:

### **I. 1922 and 1951 Principal (South) Facades**

Massing and Form: The building's primary significance is anchored by its two-storey rectangular massing, which presents a disciplined and formal aesthetic consistent with early 20th-century institutional architecture.

Site Orientation: A defining attribute is the intentional placement and orientation of the south facades, which are set to face directly into Bill Wigle Park, establishing a civic relationship between the educational institution and the public green space.

Masonry and Cladding: The exterior is characterized by red brick cladding featuring a heavy combed finish. This is enhanced by intricate brick accent coursing and traditional masonry detail elements throughout the elevations.

Architectural Articulation: The facades are defined by vertical and horizontal demarcation elements, including:

- Pilasters that provide vertical rhythm.
- A prominent parapet that defines the roofline.
- A continuous brick base with recessed banding, providing a visual foundation for the structure.
- Strategic facade steps and standardized bay spacing that emphasize the building's symmetrical balance.
- A distinct brick arch over the center bay of the parapet, which serves as a focal point for the principal entrance.
- Recessed brick panels at the parapet.

Ornamental Stone Detailing: The use of stone detailing provides contrast to the masonry, including:

- Structural and decorative sills and coping.
- Formal pilaster caps and bases.
- A commemorative name stone and date stone (1922) integrated into the primary elevation.

Decorative Paneling: The presence of recessed parged panels adorned with terra cotta tile medallions, adding a layer of fine-grained decorative texture to the exterior bays.

Fenestration Standards: The building maintains a strict fenestration pattern characterized by:

- Regularized spacing and consistent opening sizes.

## **II. West Elevation: Artistic and Commemorative Elements**

Granulox Murals: The west elevation features nine significant Granulox murals. These artistic installations represent a unique integration of cultural narrative into the building's fabric, serving as permanent heritage markers of the local community's history and values.