

The Corporation of the City of Hamilton

BY-LAW NO. 00-037

To Designate:

LAND LOCATED AT MUNICIPAL NO. 88 FENNEL AVENUE WEST

As Property of:

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUE AND INTEREST

WHEREAS the Council of The Corporation of the City of Hamilton did give notice of its intention to designate the property mentioned in section 1 of this by-law in accordance with subsection 29(3) of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18;

AND WHEREAS no notice of objection was served on the Municipal Clerk as required by subsection 29(5) of the said Act;

AND WHEREAS it is desired to designate the property mentioned in section 1 of this by-law in accordance with clause 29(6)(a) of the said Act.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Corporation of the City of Hamilton enacts as follows:

1. The property located at Municipal No. 88 Fennell Avenue West, Hamilton, Ontario and more particularly described in Schedule "A" hereto annexed and forming part of this by-law, is hereby designated as property of historic and architectural value and interest.
2. The Corporate Counsel is hereby authorized and directed to cause a copy of this by-law, together with reasons for the designation set out in Schedule "B" hereto annexed and forming part of this by-law, to be registered against the property affected in the proper registry office.
3. The Municipal Clerk is hereby authorized and directed,
 - (i) to cause a copy of this by-law, together with reasons for the designation, to be served on The Ontario Heritage Foundation by personal service or by registered mail;
 - (ii) to publish a notice of this by-law once in a newspaper having general circulation in the Municipality of the City of Hamilton.

PASSED this 14th day of March A.D. 2000

MUNICIPAL CLERK

MAYOR

Schedule "A"

To

By-law No. 00-

88 Fennell Avenue West, Hamilton, Ontario

PIN 17074-0009 (LT)

Part of Lot 15, Concession 4

formerly in the Geographic Township of Barton

now in the City of Hamilton

Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth

as in NS112274

Saving and Excepting as in Instrument #HL152296

Being the whole of the said PIN

Schedule "B"
to By-law No. 00-

Auchmar
88 Fennell Avenue West, Hamilton

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

In 1852, Scotsman Isaac Buchanan, purchased property on the west mountain for an estate worthy of a successful wholesale merchant, civic leader, and aspiring political figure in the United Provinces of Canada. In 1855, he began building his country manor on lands totalling eighty-six acres. The entire property he named Claremont Park; the walled and landscaped portion he called Auchmar after his family's vast estate on Loch Lomond. This walled estate, consisting of approximately 9.6 acres, is located at the north-east corner of Fennell Avenue West and West Fifth Street.

1850s Country Estate in Hamilton

In Upper Canada during the pre-Confederation era, it was the fashion for wealthy gentlemen to leave their mark on the new country by building magnificent country estates. For over a century Hamilton was distinguished for its legacy of elegant country villas dating from this period, most of which have been lost with the city's expansion. Auchmar is one of only two such estates on the mountain to survive intact; the other being Chedoke on the escarpment brow.

In some ways, The Honourable Isaac Buchanan's country estate of Auchmar may be considered a sequel to Sir Allan MacNab's estate of Dundurn. Built twenty years later, on the mountain instead of the bay and in a later architectural style, Auchmar shares many of the same planning and design features found at Dundurn.

Essentially, both properties are modelled after the gentleman's country estate of Britain. Like Dundurn, the entrance to Auchmar was heralded by a gate-lodge, located on its northern-most boundary at the escarpment brow (still existing at 71 Claremont Drive). For the requisite scenic approach to the grounds, Auchmar's driveway was designed as a .5 kilometre treed allee (following today's streets of Arcade and Glenwood Crescents) passing through an arched entranceway (now closed) into Buchanan's secluded private grounds. The treed allee continued southwards towards the main focal point, Buchanan's manor house, a home with presence and dignity, enhanced by landscaped gardens. The drive proceeded to circle around to the south entrance facade of the house, designed as a perfect mirror image of the north garden face.

Buchanan's complex includes additional structures typical of a gentleman's estate: a carriage house, two arched passageways, high garden walls, and a square, two-storey dovecote, all constructed in stone. The first stone wall swings north-east from the archway at the carriage house around to the dovecote, creating a sizeable, south-facing walled garden. A second high stone wall extends along the east border of the property and partially across its north boundary, designed to provide privacy and a shelter for Buchanan's original orchard. Most of this orchard wall still exists as do a number of apple trees believed to be remnants from his original planting. A third low stone wall runs along the south border of the property at Fennell Avenue.

Today, this historic enclave, although little known to the outside community, represents a rare and significant cultural heritage landscape, dating from one of Hamilton's most illustrious building periods. In 1970, Buchanan's Auchmar and its gatehouse Claremont Lodge were recognized and plaqued as a property of Provincial significance.

Picturesque Cultural Landscape

Like Dundurn, Auchmar survives today as a rare and outstanding example of a mid-nineteenth century Picturesque country estate, complete with manor house, outbuildings and landscape features. With its built and natural features integrated into a comprehensive design, Auchmar fully upholds the principles of the Picturesque: its setting is secluded and wooded; its structures and landscaping display an interest in movement and variety; and the choice of design capitalises on the play of light and shadow. The verandahs and terraces (now gone) once served to extend interior space outdoors into the garden, another key component of the Picturesque.

The architect of Auchmar is to date unknown; the landscape design is attributed to George Laing, a British landscape architect responsible for gardens at Dundurn Castle and Rock Castle in Hamilton, and Woodend in Ancaster (presently the HRCA headquarters).

Gothic Revival Style

The manor house of Auchmar is considered to be an excellent, full-blown example of the Gothic Revival style in Upper Canada, characterised by the use of such features as multiple gables, bargeboard decoration, pointed arched windows, bay windows and clustered chimney stacks. The lively and intricate detailing of the Gothic style enhances the Picturesque effect of the whole.

By comparison to the more formal Gothic mansions in Hamilton, like Inglewood and Rock Castle, Auchmar takes the more informal, playful aspects of the Gothic Revival and expands them to the grand scale of a country mansion. Unusual, too, is its interior layout based on a Roman cross plan with the central hallway running the width of the house flanked by staircases at each end. Designing identical front and garden facades, likewise, provided an inventive solution to creating equally important facades: the approach (north) side and the formal entry (south) side.

The Gothic Revival style was also successfully integrated throughout the estate. The interior of the manor house shows gothic detailing in the rib vaulting of the hallway, pointed arched doors, decorative wooden shutters, plaster ceiling, fireplaces, etc. Gothic detailing also appears on all the outbuildings--in the matching diminutive gatehouse, in the carriage house's bargeboard and pinnacles; in the dovecote's bargeboard, cupola and traceried pigeon holes; and in the latticed garden pagoda (now gone).

The Honourable Isaac Buchanan

The Honourable Isaac Buchanan (1810-1883) was a man of many achievements--in business, politics and church affairs. He became one of the country's leading wholesale merchants and together with several other businesses established Hamilton as an important wholesale distribution centre. Buchanan was one of Hamilton's major civic leaders from the 1850s to the 1870s, as a promoter of the railway and as a prominent figure in local politics and the Scottish Presbyterian community. He was also an influential figure in the politics of the United Provinces of Canada.

As Entrepreneur

Isaac Buchanan began his mercantile career in Glasgow as an apprentice with the trading firm, William Guild & Co. and moved to Montreal in 1830. By 1834, Isaac and his older brother Peter were able to establish their own firm, Peter Buchanan and Company, based in Glasgow. In 1840, the wholesale dry goods and groceries firm of Buchanan, Harris and Company was established in Hamilton, with a branch office in Montreal. With Isaac's fearless opportunism and his partners' managerial skills, the Buchanan enterprise expanded rapidly, becoming one of the largest and most profitable wholesale businesses in Upper and Lower Canada. Isaac Buchanan played an instrumental role in the formation of boards of trade, becoming first president of the Toronto Board and later the Hamilton Board (formed in 1864).

As Politician

Throughout his life Isaac Buchanan was passionately engaged in politics. In the early 1840s, he served as representative for Toronto in the first Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. He later served several terms as Hamilton representative (between 1857 and 1867) and was also appointed president of the Executive Council in the 1864 Tache Macdonald administration. He also deserves much of the credit, along with Sir Allan MacNab, for bringing the Great Western Railway to Hamilton.

As Religious Leader

As a man of religion, Buchanan gave liberally in time and wealth to Presbyterian causes and churches across the country. He was strongly committed to promoting the Knox "free" church, donating to the building fund for the first Knox Church in Hamilton (1845) and later bearing the major cost of erecting the MacNab Street Church (1856).

History of Site

The mountain estate of Isaac and Agnes Buchanan, with its spacious villa and landscaped grounds, provided a fitting setting to raise their large family, entertain dignitaries, and hold church and political functions. Unfortunately, their enjoyment of Auchmar was relatively short-lived. Isaac's increasingly speculative and unprofitable business ventures forced him to begin selling off portions of his landholdings as early as 1862. In 1873, a large parcel to the west was sold for the construction of the Hamilton Asylum for the Insane and the remainder of his property, including Auchmar, was sold the following year to pay his creditors.

After 1874, Auchmar and the remainder of Buchanan's property changed ownership a number of times and continued to be subdivided. Around the turn-of-the-century, Auchmar was owned and occupied by Captain Alfred Trigge and his family. The estate was then acquired by Elsie Buchanan, the youngest daughter of Isaac and Agnes, who in turn sold it to Alan Vernon Young in 1926. During World War II, Auchmar served as a convalescent hospital for the R.C.A.F. The 33-acre property was further subdivided before the remaining portion was sold in 1945 to the Sisters of Social Service, a Roman Catholic order originating in Budapest, Hungary. The Sisters acquired the original building complex and surrounding landscaped grounds (9.6 acres in size) with the intent of opening a novitiate for women studying to become members of the order. The original villa was enlarged in 1963 by the addition of a large rear wing (with a chapel and conference centre) to serve as a retreat house. In recent years, the Sisters have lived in the smaller modernized carriage house.

Significant Features

Many remnants still exist from the layout of Buchanan's original estate but only those features on the present-day Auchmar property are included in the designation.

The features important to the preservation of Auchmar include but are not limited to the following: built and natural landscape features: the manor house, carriage house, dovecote, garden walls (four), treed allee, orchard, walled garden and park-like setting with its open space and mature trees.

Significant features of the manor house include but are not limited to the following: all four original exterior facades--walls, gables, dormers, clustered chimney stacks, all original windows including the castellated bay windows, doors, mouldings, decorative bargeboard, pinnacles/pendants and brackets. Included also on the interior are the first and second storey hallways and vaulting, the staircases, and the original walls, doors, windows, shutters, fireplaces, wood and plaster mouldings, and wood panelling.

Significant features include the exterior facades of the carriage house--original stone walls, gables and dormers, and pinnacles; of the dovecote--the original stone walls, gables, bargeboard, traceried pigeon holes; the original stone garden walls with coping stones, openings and gates; and foundation remnants near the wooded area.

Excluded from designation are the attached garage and Holy Spirit Retreat Centre and any late 20th century additions to the building complex.