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Ontario Heritage Trust

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR

MBA/11662

IN THE MATTER OF *THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT*  
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND PREMISES KNOWN AS  
1200-1220 UNIVERSITY AVENUE WEST IN THE CITY OF WINDSOR  
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE**

**ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST  
10 ADELAIDE STREET EAST, TORONTO M5C1J3**

**TAKE NOTICE THAT** the Council of the Corporation of the City of Windsor intends to designate the property, including lands and buildings known as 1200-1220 University Avenue West as a property of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of *The Ontario Heritage Act*:

**Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest  
S. W. & A. Railway Car Barns  
1200-1220 University Avenue West  
Part of Lot 73, Concession 1 designated as Parts 5-19, inclusive, on Plan 12R28788, and  
Part 1 on Plan  
12R29398**

**Description of Property**

The S.W.&A. (Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg) Railway Car Barns are located at 1200-1220 University Avenue West on the north side, a half-block west of Elm Avenue and east of the bridge across the depressed Michigan Central Railway lands (Gateway Public Park). The property currently consists of several brick buildings: the west car barn (1220) was constructed in 1891 and designed by James G. McLean, while the east car barn (1200) was constructed c.1896 by an unknown architect. The barns are associated with the S.W.&A. Railway Co., which was active on the property from 1890 to the 1950s and the predecessor of Transit Windsor.

**Design or Physical Value:**

The S.W.&A. car barns were constructed as the central storage and repair location for the S.W.&A Railway Co., a franchised streetcar company. The architect of the west barn was James G. McLean, while the architect of the east barn is unknown. The two buildings were constructed of brick, mostly with tall single storeys.

The east barn building (1200) was constructed c1896 and is set back from the street. It features a two-step parapet and five small arched insets on the original south facade. The north (rear) facade has shadow lines of a stepped parapet, reflecting the presence of a previous structure that had been removed. The original red brick of the building is visible on the east alley-facing facade. The east (side) facade has triangular concrete buttresses regularly spaced between brick bays with arched windows.

The west barn building (1220) was constructed in 1891 and has two main sections. The original south section of the west barn has a stone foundation with a stone trim belt line, while the addition which extended the barn closer to the street has a brick foundation and lacks the stone trim belt line on the west side of the building. Its current street-facing (south) façade retains many original features, including a stepped parapet in front of a sloped roof. The outer frame of the original garage doors remain. The design of the east and west sides is fairly typical of 19th century industrial building design, with regularly spaced plain pilasters and rectangular windows with masonry sills. The main floor is at-grade at the south end; it has a single storey with high ceiling. As the grade under the west barn changes, sloping down towards the north and west, a lower level with openings becomes visible at about the north half of this section.

The north section of the west building has a barrel roof almost a storey below the south section roof. There are brick walls, the base of a large square brick chimney, and a stepped parapet on the north end. This section has two levels. On the west side facing the depressed railway park, there are arched windows and two sets of arched large wooden doors on the lower level; the upper level had small rectangular windows. The east side has a mix of doors and windows on the upper level. The foundation of the north barrel roof barn section is irregularly shaped stone with thick mortar, which differs from the neatly aligned cut stone foundation of the south section.

The designation does not include the new residential building to the north of 1220 University Avenue West.

**Historical or Associative Value:**

This property is the largest remaining facility of the streetcars which was the primary public transportation in the Windsor region for over fifty years. The property was previously used for agricultural purposes by Charles Maillou(x) in the 1850s, then the land was deeded to the S.W.&A Railway Co. in 1891. By 1896, the buildings were used as the "Car Barns" for the major local streetcar franchise. Trolley cars were stored and inspected in the east barn, and maintained and repaired in the west barn. The north barrel roof section of the west barn was the electricity-generating powerhouse.

The first local passenger vehicles on rails were horse-pulled and established in 1874 from Windsor through Sandwich, notably to the mineral springs tourist hub down-river. Instead of travelling the road along the river, a new route was made to facilitate passenger railway travel between the two towns which included a 100 feet wide private right-of-way called London Street, now known as University Avenue West. The S.W.&A. Railway Co. was formed in 1887 to continue the service, and electric lines were introduced in August 1891, making it the first all-electric railway system in Canada.

Another company had begun the first electric streetcar service in 1886, running a line between Walkerville and Windsor; this may have been the first electric street rail in Canada. By 1904, that company's assets were conveyed to the S.W.&A. Railway and later in 1920, rails were built to Amherstburg, Tecumseh, Essex, and Leamington by S.W.&A. and others, as well as a network within Windsor and Walkerville. All but one of the lines were owned by S.W.&A in 1930. Transportation modes changed further in the thirties. The first buses were purchased in 1938, and by February 1939 all rail lines had been replaced. The car barns continued to be used for buses until the 1950s.

### **Contextual Value**

The car barns' location on University Avenue, previously London Street, is historically linked to the development of the transit route between Windsor and Sandwich. London Street's primary purpose was to facilitate streetcar transit between the two towns. In the creation of London Street, a new neighbourhood had formed with schools, churches, residences, and shade trees lining the boulevard. The car barns are representative of the history and origin of University Avenue West as a transit route, and served as a major hub for the repair and storage of streetcars that serviced the people of Windsor and Essex County.

Further, the west barn building (1220) could also qualify as a long-standing landmark on University Avenue West. For over 120 years, the façade of this large building has been highly visible close to the street, next to the railroad lands depression and forward of the east barn building (1200).

### **Description of Heritage Attributes:**

#### **Exterior features that contribute to the design or physical value of the S.W.&A. (Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg) Railway Car Barns – East Barn Building (1200):**

- Constructed of red clay brick originally in common bond
- Two-step corniced parapet and five small arched windows on south façade
- Gable roof end and shadow lines of stepped parapet on the north brick wall, with a square chimney at northwest corner
- Brick east wall features
  - decorative brick dentil coursing
  - triangular concrete buttresses regularly spaced between common bond brick bays
  - arched window locations with triple course rowlock lintels and stone sills
  - concrete foundation wall
- Arched window openings with sills on the west wall displaying decorative brick dentil coursing near the roofline

#### **Exterior features that contribute to the design or physical value of the S.W.&A. (Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg) Railway Car Barns – West Barn Building (1220):**

##### **South Section**

- Constructed of variegated brick with gable roof
- One-storey grade change between the tall single storey south side and two storey towards the rear north and at the west elevation
- South facade features
  - peaked center, multi-stepped parapet, with coping
  - high window at center with arched top divided into three frames at bottom
  - frames for original large garage doors
- Brick side walls with regularly spaced pilasters
- A tall rectangular window between each bay (originally nine over nine sash), with soldier brick lintel and masonry sills
- North part of the south section has a square-cut stone foundation with rowlock brick and stone trim belt line
- Lower-level openings with stone lintels and sills on the east and west elevations

### **North Section**

- Barrel roof building with the large square brick chimney base remaining (recessed around mid-height)
- Triple stepped parapet with brick wall on the north elevation
- One-storey grade change between the two-storey west elevation and single-storey east elevation
- Lower/basement level (on west elevation) of rubble stone masonry while ground level walls are constructed of common bond brick
- Arched windows and arched large wooden doors on the lower level, with range of double course to quadruple rowlock brick lintels
- Original windows were multi-paned industrial types

### **Features that contribute to the historical or associative value of the S.W.&A. (Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg) Railway Car Barns:**

- The west barn building (1220) was designed by architect James Grey McLean, who had a successful practice in Windsor for over 10 years
- Historically the facility for the inspections, maintenance, and repairs of streetcars which was the primary public transportation in the region for over fifty years
- Owned by the S.W.&A. Railway Co., formed in 1887 and predecessor to current public transportation company, Transit Windsor.
- Associated with the predecessor company which began horse-drawn car service in 1874 from Windsor through Sandwich to the mineral springs down-river
- A competitor (later merged) began electric service in 1886 from Windsor to Walkerville and could have been the first electric street rail in Canada
- Electric lines were introduced in August 1891, supporting the first all-electric railway system in Canada
- Associated with the transportation network from Windsor to surrounding municipalities through the rails that were built to Amherstburg, Tecumseh, Essex, and Leamington by S.W.&A. and others, as well as a network within Windsor and Walkerville by 1920
- Served as the local bus yard after all rail lines had been replaced by buses in 1939, and remained location for repairs for buses until the 1950s

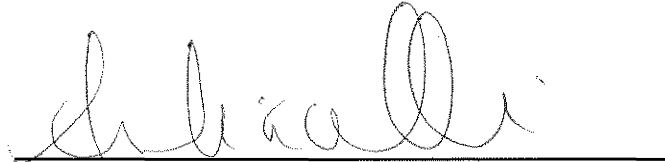
### **Features that contribute to the contextual value of the S.W.&A. (Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg) Railway Car Barns:**

- Connection to the development of University Avenue West (previously London Street), a street which was created for the purpose of passenger transit and initially the private 100-foot right-of-way for the streetcar line between Windsor and Sandwich
- Highly visible location of the Car Barn buildings near the street for 120 years
- Landmark in the area

Any person may, within thirty days of the publication of this notice, send by registered mail or deliver to the Clerk of the City of Windsor notice of his or her objection to the proposed designation together with a statement of the reasons for the objection and all relevant facts. If such a Notice of Objection is received, the Council of the Corporation of the City of Windsor shall consider the

objection and make a decision whether or not to withdraw the notice of intention to designate the property within 90 days after the end of the 30-day period of publication of this notice.

**DATED** at Windsor, Ontario this 21st day of August, 2023  
Anna Ciacelli, Deputy City Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Anna Ciacelli', written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Anna Ciacelli  
Deputy City Clerk

AC/lh