

Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report



Samit-Linke House

60 Cumberland Drive, Mississauga

Prepared By:

Heritage Planning & Indigenous Relations

Culture Division

Community Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The house on the subject property was constructed circa 1940 for Agnes and Kurt Linke and designed by Alfred A. Samit
- The house exhibits the early International Style and is a local landmark
- It is rare surviving International Style house in Mississauga and is recognized in two seminal publications on Ontario architecture for its design merits
- It merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act due to its physical, design and contextual value

INTRODUCTION

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 60 Cumberland Drive and applies evaluation criteria to determine if it merits designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The subject property is a two-storey house, including attached garage, on the south side of Cumberland Drive on the east end of the original village of Port Credit. It is located southeast of Hurontario and Lakeshore Road East. It is a single residential property that includes water lots at the rear. It backs onto Lake Ontario. A location map is below.



RESEARCH

Relevant Historical Timeline

Date	Event
1896	Kurt Max Linke born in Erfurt, Thuringia, Deutschland (Germany)
1897	Alice Louise Stellmacher born in Germany
1898/99	Alfred A. Samit born in Russia
1907	Agnes Anderson Campbell born in Stirlingshire/Glasgow, Scotland
1909	Port Credit becomes Police Village
1917	Russian Revolution, Samit flees to Germany
1919	Bauhaus Art School opens in Germany
1921	Wrights Limited creates "Hiawatha on the Lake" subdivision (Port Credit)
1926	Campbell arrives in Montreal
1930	Linke and Samit arrive in Halifax on different dates
1932	Alice Louise Stellmacher arrives in Toronto
1932	Samit marries Alice Louise Stellmacher, both were living in Toronto
1932	"The International Style: Architecture since 1922" Museum of Modern Art exhibit, New York
1933	Linke and Campbell marry, both were living in Toronto
1939	Linkes acquire property. House built at this time based on oral history. Record of Linke living in Port Credit in 1941.
1963	Samit dies
1974	Linkes still alive (voters list)
1982	Property added to Heritage Register (Kurt not mentioned in correspondence)
1999	House transfers ownership from Agnes Linke (deceased)

Linke Family

Despite an exhaustive search, no obituaries were found for the Linkes. Kurt is listed as a "silversmith" and in 1957 a "manufacturer" in voters lists. According to ocean crossing records and Toronto directories, he ran Silverware Products of Canada beginning by 1932; it operated until 1957. With Agnes, he also operated Link Brass and Copper for a few years at the same Toronto location. According to a weekly American "Steel" publication, in May 1942 plans were being prepared for a \$25,000 plant addition.

Based on oral history with Mrs. Linke, Summer 1981, the Linke family interviewed twenty-seven architects before hiring Alfred Samit to design their house. Agnes designed the interior.

Alfred A. Samit

Samit is variously listed as an engineer, contractor and builder. His obituary from the Globe and Mail is transcribed below:

Alfred A. Samit, House Builder Once Rebel, Racing Driver (Globe and Mail, September 10, 1963, page 39)

Alfred A. Samit, 65, of Lawrence Ave. E., a builder of many Toronto houses, dies Saturday at Toronto Western Hospital. Mr. Samit built houses in Forest Hill Village in the 1930s. Later, he built houses in the Bayview area.

He had a colorful career before coming to Canada from Europe. As a student of 19, he took an active part in the Russian revolution in Petrograd in 1917, but on the accession of power of the Bolshevik Government he fled to Germany. There he finished his education, graduating as a building engineer. In Germany he was a sports car driver and won many racing awards.

In Canada, Mr. Samit pioneered the construction of large bungalows without basements in the Bayview area. He was one of the first to construct split-level bungalows.

He leaves his wife, the former Alice M. (sic) Stellmacher.

Architectural Description

As per the 1982 heritage listing report:

The Samit-Linke House is two storeys high, flat-roofed, and constructed in buff brick. The north façade's central bay features a long, vertical stairway window in the projecting frontispiece, which is balanced by a door and second floor window found immediately to the left. The rest of the main façade's fenestration consists of tripartite industrial windows, which symmetrically flank the central bay on both levels.

A secondary entrance is tucked away into the corner L-shape formed by the house and its garage. The two-storey garage, located to the northwest of the residence, has its own main door to the east, and a ground floor window to the north. A second storey window is set in the northeast corner, allowing light into the servant's quarters.

The south façade's second storey is set back, and its projecting balcony is cantilevered beyond the face of the ground floor, thereby providing part of the shelter for the backyard patio. The south entrance consists of a single metal door with large glass, inset, flanked by similar sidelights, with simple rectangular transom windows set overtop. The rest of the fenestration achieves a symmetrical balance, except for two small vertical windows on the second storey, which have deliberately been placed to the right of centre.

The house exhibits the early (pre World War II) International Style. The International Style developed in the early twentieth century, a result of a movement towards Modernism, which began in the 19th century. Modernism, as its name suggests, is a break with the past, with tradition. In architecture, it was typified by simplification and an emphasis on material and form. The International Style stems from this trend but blossomed at the Bauhaus School in Germany, which opened in 1919. The style eschews ornamentation. It is a pared down look, a "machine for living" that gives no hint of its country of origin. It is characterized by clean lines and simplicity and matured after World War II. Pre World War II International architecture still has remnants of the Art Nouveau style, a mode that is slightly more decorative than International but is a move toward the sleek streamlined look of what was to epitomize Modernism. A travelling exhibit from New York's Museum of Modern Art helped spread the ideas in the United States in the 1930s.

The house at 60 Cumberland Drive is included as an example of the International Style in two seminal works on Ontario architecture:

Characteristic features of this formal-appearing Early International building include the flat roof, this vertical stair hall light, horizontal paned windows, monochromatic exterior finish and the lack of applied ornament. – John Blumenson, *Ontario Architecture, A Guide to Styles and Building Terms, 1784 to the present, 1990.*

The Samit-Linko House built in 1939 is indicative of the strictly unadorned but nicely balanced qualities of the International style. This building is very avant-garde for its time. The front is symmetrical with paired windows on either side of a simple frontispiece. The windows have simple sills, no surrounds, and no cornices or lintels. The garage is hidden from the front view, nicely tucked into the front wing. The chimney is simple and elegant with a small projection on the exterior. The building is made of gold brick with a flat roof and slight rustication on the base. – Shannon Kyles, www.ontarioarchitecture.com

The house is an aesthetically pleasing interplay of rectilinear shapes. Apart from the projecting central stairway, all blocks are slightly offset to create visual interest. The overall shape and form, with the western garage block closer to the road, is asymmetrical. The main house appears to be symmetrical at first glance, with its sets of triplicate windows on either side of the central projecting stairwell. However, the front door and a second storey window disrupt this symmetry. Similarly the rear openings are not symmetrically placed nor do they have matching sizes but the lake view is still pleasing to the eye.

With its lingering symmetry and corner window, there are still Conservative and/or Art Moderne features. However, when compared to another local building from the time, Harding Estate, the Modern Classical home that started construction in 1938, 60 Cumberland Drive is indeed “avant-garde.”

In her essay about *The Canadian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair*, architectural historian Elspeth Cowell suggests that North American architects took an “evolutionary approach to Modernism” at this time rather than a “radical philosophical break from tradition” à la European Modernists. Perhaps the European background of architect and client at Cumberland Drive contributed to a more forward-reaching style.

Apartment blocks in this style are more commonplace. An image of the Garden Court Apartments, Toronto, is included here as an example and happens to also have a projecting central staircase, a motif seen in some other buildings of the same era.

Other Early International Style buildings in Mississauga

There are other buildings of similar age in Mississauga and post World War II modern buildings but, there are no other surviving early International Style houses in the city.

Context

The property is on the south side of Cumberland Drive in a neighbourhood located to the east of downtown Port Credit on Lake Ontario. Located on the lake, the house is now surrounded by other homes of varying style. It is well setback from the street with a circular driveway in front accessed through an iron fence.

Property Changes

Photographic evidence suggests that the front yard fencing changed sometime between 2001 and 2007 (Google street view). A lamp post also appears to have been removed. Some windows may have been modified or the frames painted black since the 2001 photographs. Decorative features of the driveway island appear to have been removed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the years 2000 and 2011, the City's Heritage Advisory Committee expressed interest in designating the property under the Ontario Heritage Act. Residents provided research assistance through Heritage Mississauga. The Town of Port Credit Association supports the heritage designation of the property as of 2021.

EVALUATION: Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed by the Province of Ontario for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Design or Physical Value	
i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	X
ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	X
iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property has design value because it is a rare surviving example of an International Style house in Mississauga. It also displays artistic merit. The Province defines "artistic merit" as "showing imaginative skill in arrangement or execution."

Historical or Associative Value	
i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

Built and designed by European immigrants, in an avant-garde style, with further information, the property may yield information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

Contextual Value	
i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	N/A
ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	N/A
iii. is a landmark	X

The property has contextual value because it is a local landmark due to its distinct style.

Heritage Attributes

- Flat roof
- Monochromatic colour

- Overall shape and form based on rectilinear volumes, combination of symmetry and asymmetry, i.e. central bay and garage section to side, including chimney
- Balance of symmetrical and asymmetrical arrangement of fenestration
- Elongated vertical window in front bay
- Simplicity, i.e. simple sills, no window or door surrounds, no cornices or lintels
- Multipaned steel frame windows, panes with horizontal emphasis
- Small windows compared to building mass
- Corner window above the garage
- Its visibility from Cumberland Drive
- Cantilevered second floor in rear
- Offset bricks that form horizontal lines
- The circular driveway which provides access to the garage and front entrance – this was likely part of the original design

CONCLUSION

What is most remarkable about the house at 60 Cumberland Drive is its unique very modern early International Style. It is distinctive from anything else in the city, including its immediate context. It is a local landmark. It may also tell a story about new Canadians sharing the architecture of their recent country of origin.

REFERENCES

“Alfred A. Samit” Obituary, *Globe and Mail*, September 10, 1963, page 39.

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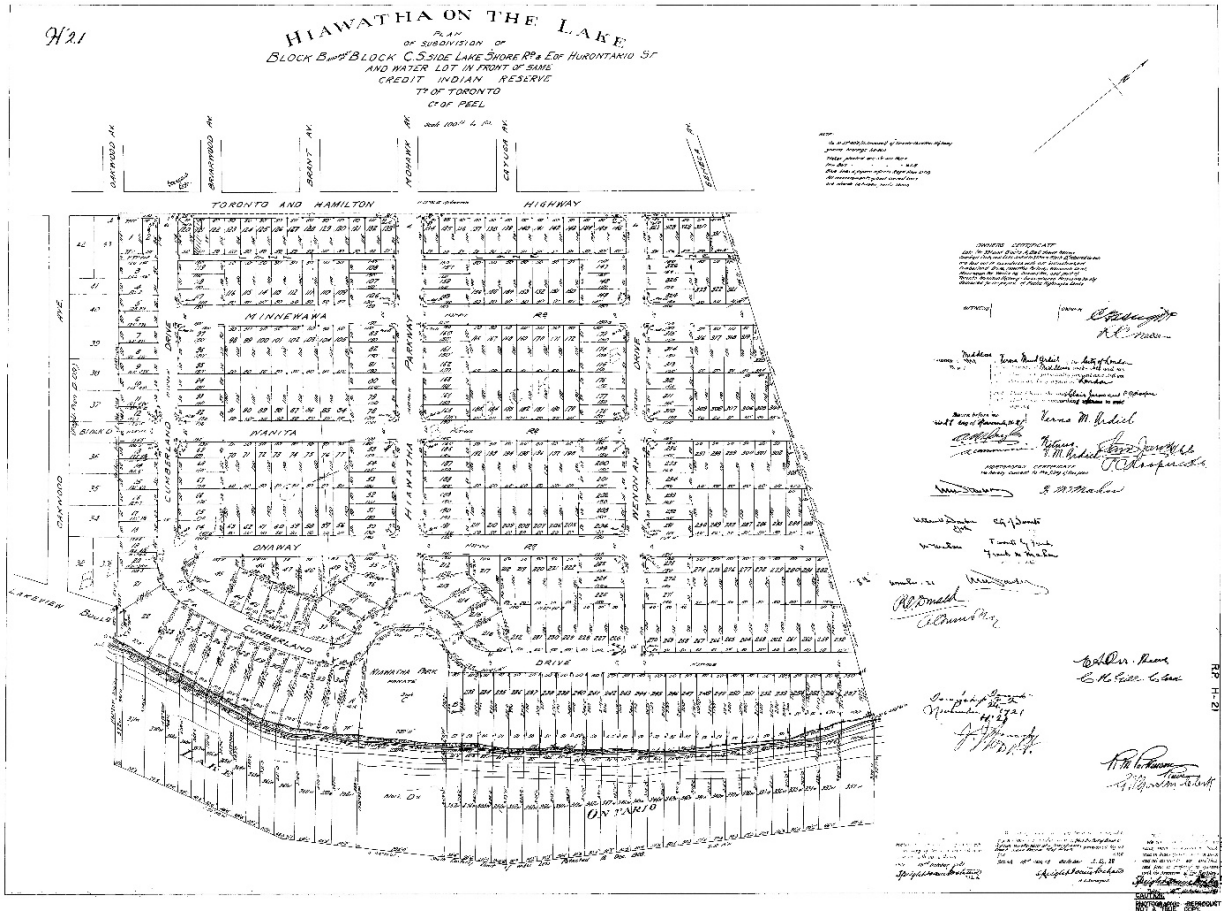
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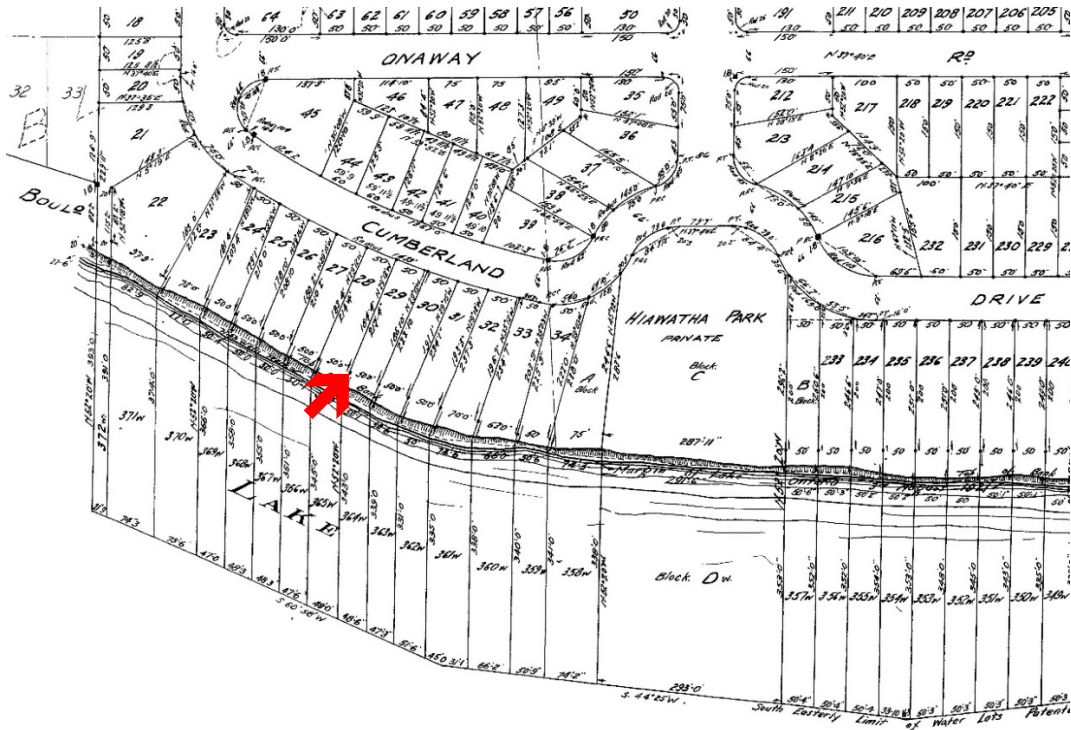
Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport, *Standards & Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties: Heritage Identification & Evaluation Process*, September 1, 2014.

Service Ontario, Parcel Register for LT 28 PL H21 PORT CREDIT; LT 29 PL H21 PORT CREDIT; LT 365W PL H21 PORT CREDIT; LT 364W PL H21 PORT CREDIT.

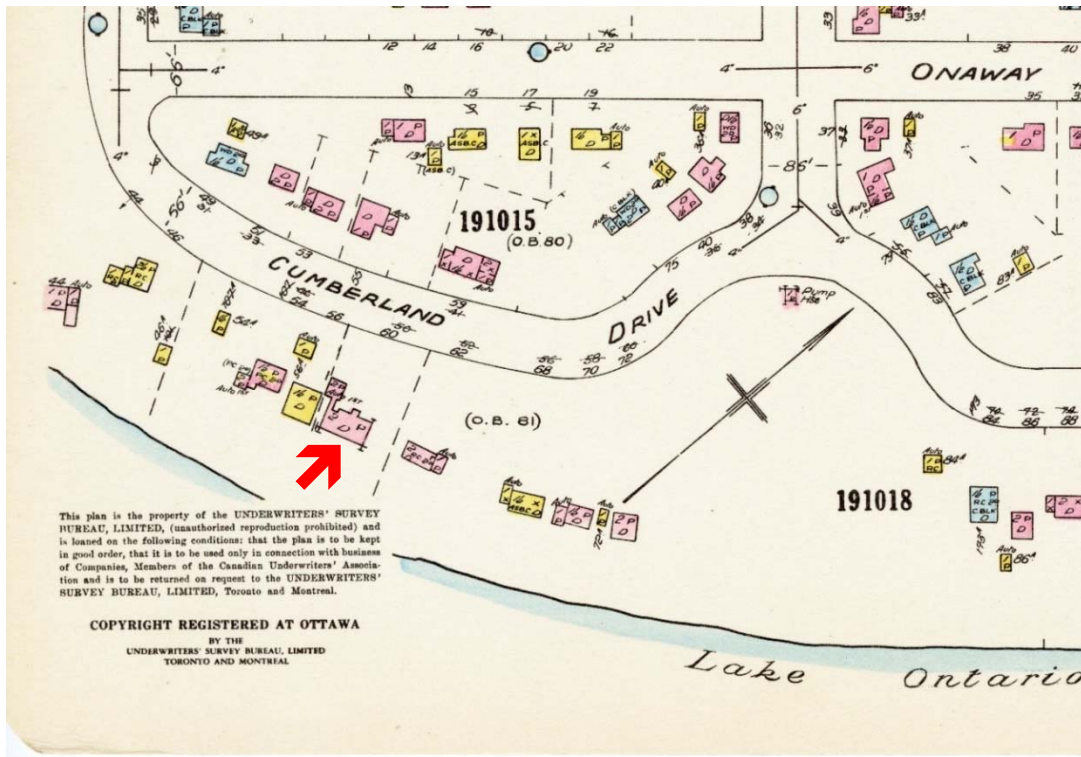
Steel, volume 110, no. 20, May 18, 1942, page 156. http://delibra.bg.polsl.pl/Content/18434/P-779_1942_Vol110_No20.pdf, accessed 23 March 2021.



Registered Plan H21, 1921



Detail of H21 Plan



Fire Insurance Map, 1952

2001 Images of 60 Cumberland Drive:



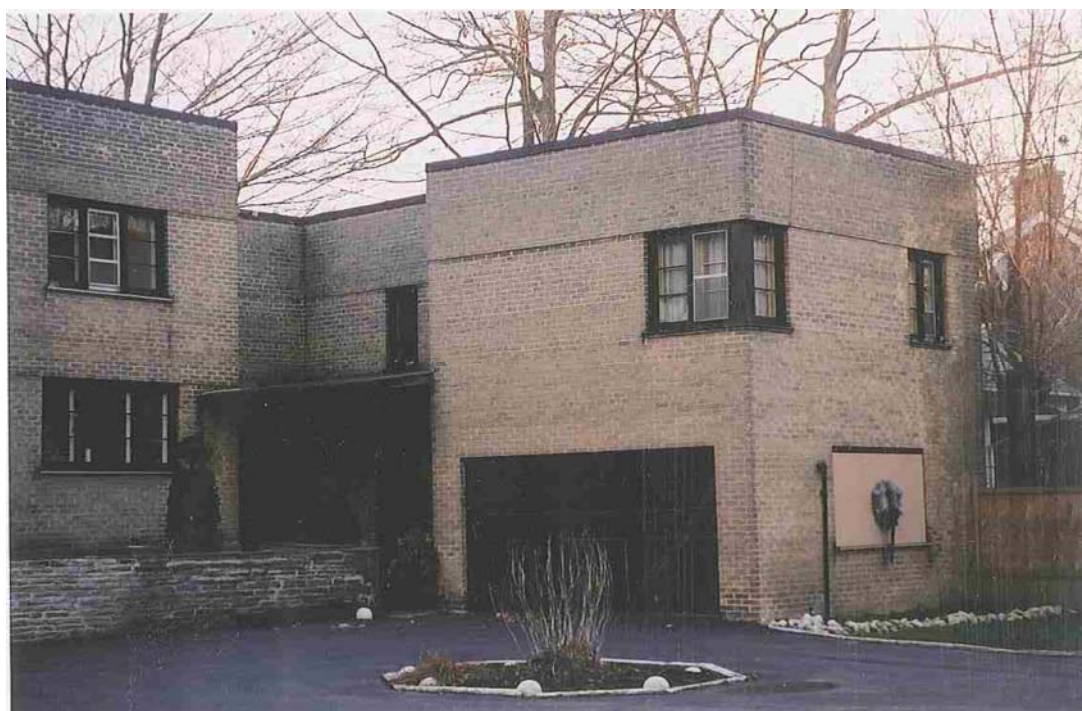
Front (north) face



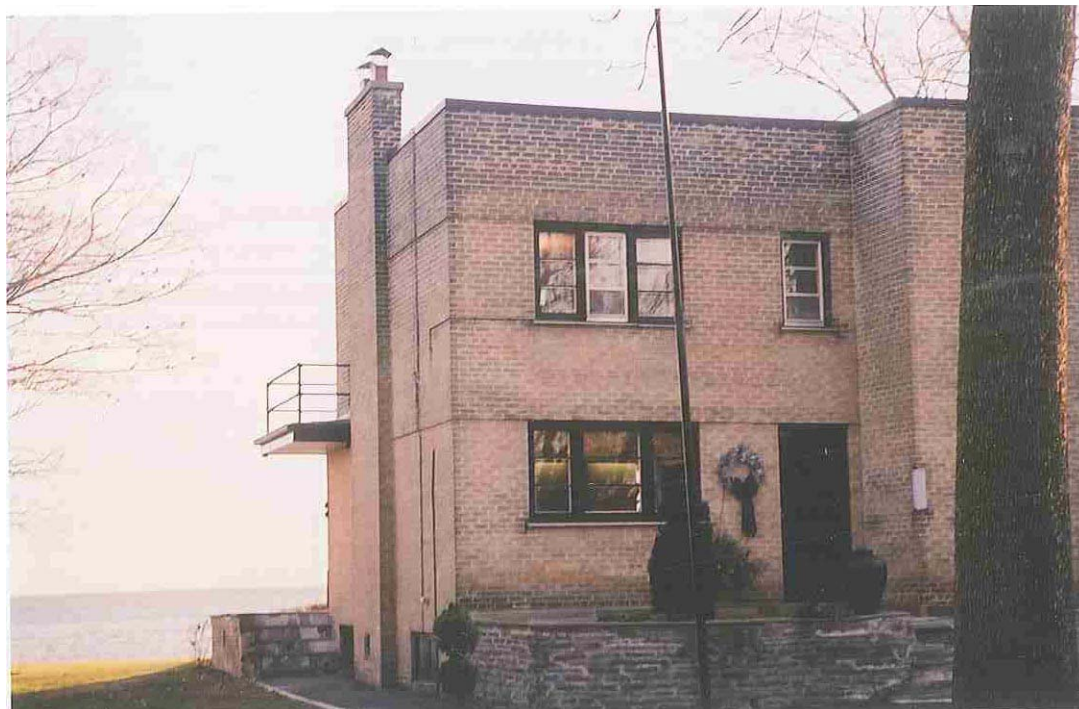
View facing southwest



Image showing 60 Cumberland with house to the east



Detail of garage portion of house



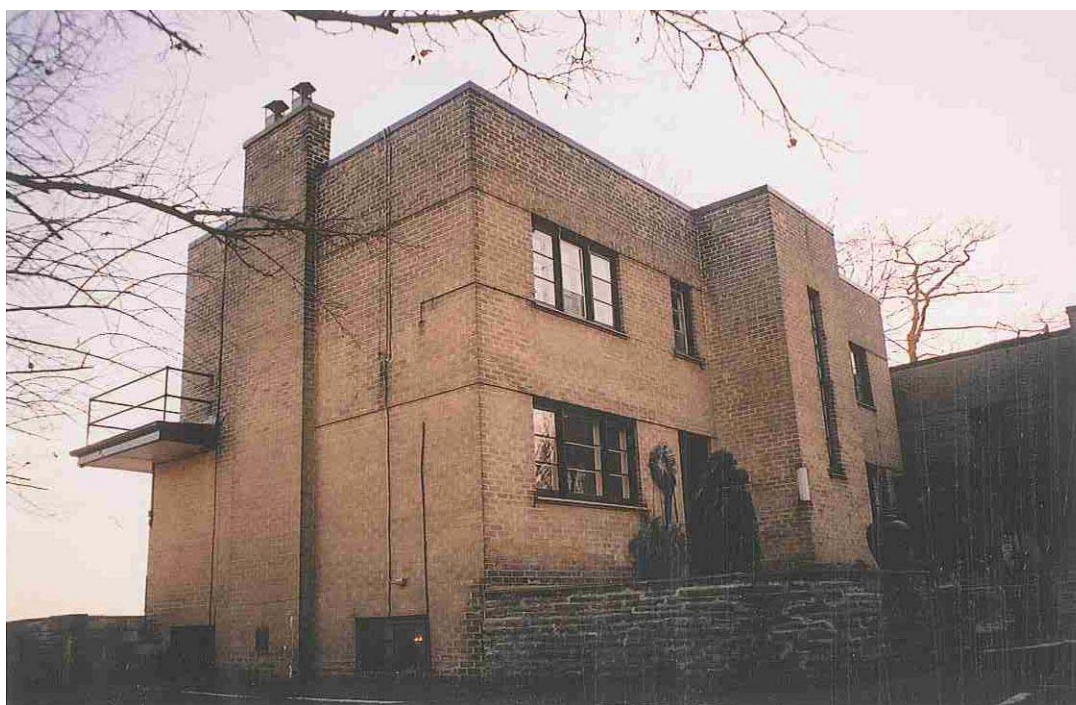
Front/side detail



Front detail



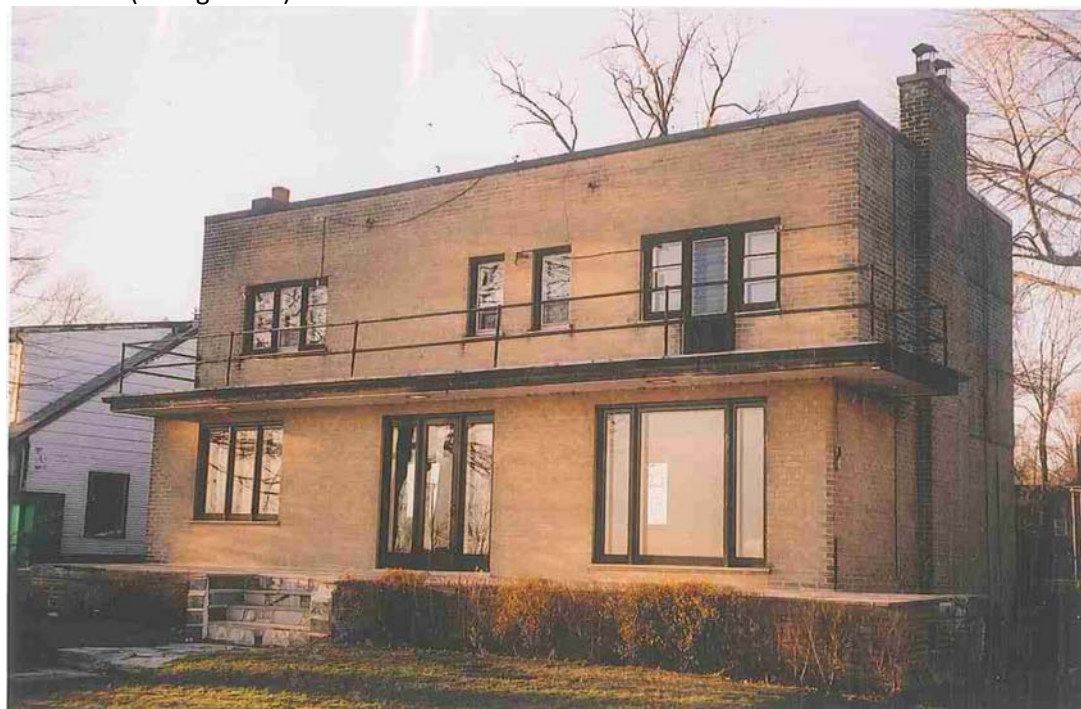
Another view facing southwest



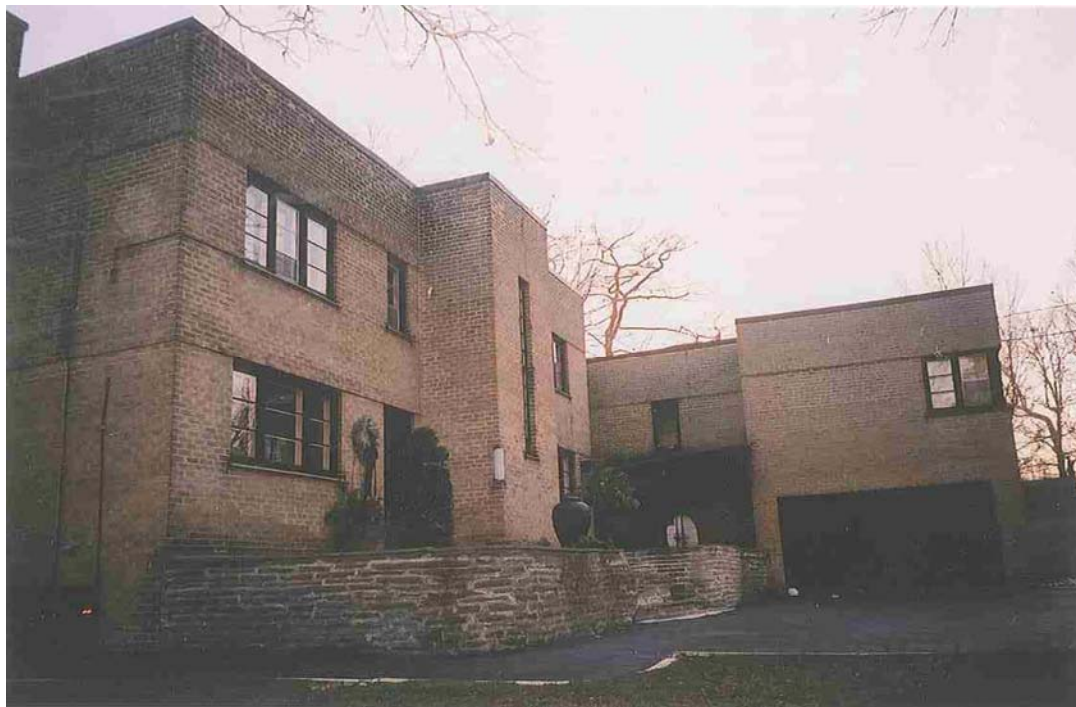
Detail of main house showing front and side



Rear view (facing north)



Close up rear view



Close up facing west



Garden Court Apartments, 1939-42, Toronto by Page and Steele. Image Source: <http://vikpahwa.com/tag/garden-court-apartments/>.



North face, 2008



North face, 2021



2021



2021

DRAFT DESIGNATION STATEMENT

Description of Property – 60 Cumberland Drive

60 Cumberland Drive is a two-storey house on the south side of Cumberland Drive on the east end of the original village of Port Credit. It is located southeast of Hurontario and Lakeshore Road East. It backs onto Lake Ontario.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value of Interest

The property has design value because it is a rare surviving example of an International Style house in Mississauga. The house was built circa 1940 in a simple rectilinear style that generally eschews historic ornamentation but with remnants of the Art Nouveau style. It also displays artistic merit. The Ministry of Heritage, Sport Tourism and Cultural Industries defines “artistic merit” as “showing imaginative skill in arrangement or execution.” The house offers a pleasing interplay of rectilinear forms with subtle asymmetry to create visual interest.

The property has contextual value because it is a local landmark due to its distinct style.

Description of Heritage Attributes

(Save for its visibility from Cumberland Drive, all of the attributes below contribute to the property’s physical, design and contextual value. The visibility of these attributes collectively makes it a landmark.)

- Flat roof
- Monochromatic colour
- Overall shape and form based on rectilinear volumes, combination of symmetry and asymmetry, i.e. central bay and garage section to side, including chimney
- Balance of symmetrical and asymmetrical arrangement of fenestration
- Elongated vertical window in front bay
- Simplicity, i.e. simple sills, no window or door surrounds, no cornices or lintels
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