

# Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report

## **St. John's the Baptist Anglican Church**

719 Dundas Street East, Mississauga

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

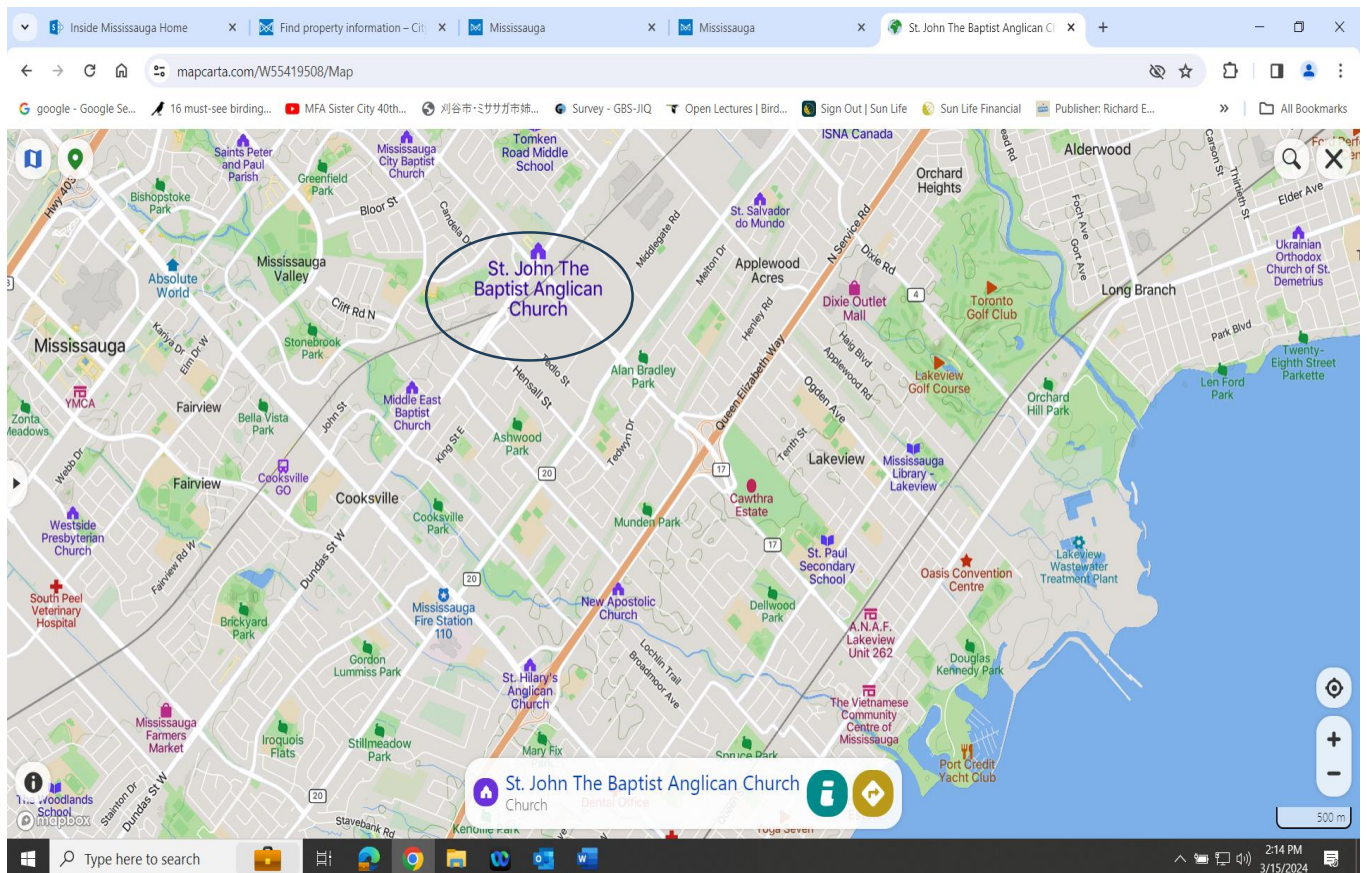
- The Church on the property was built in 1926 with a Christian education wing and community hall added in 1955
- The church exhibits a Neo-gothic style and has an active cemetery
- It merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act due to its physical, design, and contextual value

## INTRODUCTION

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture, and context of the property at 719 Dundas Street East 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 brick, gothic-style structure on the north-east corner of Dundas Street East and Cawthra Road in the historic village of Dixie. A location map is below.



Ref: <https://mapcarta.com/W55419508/Map>

## RESEARCH

### Relevant Historical Timeline

Date	Event
1809	Land donated for a church and cemetery by Cody family
1811	The construction of a log cabin church was started but it was delayed due to war
1816	First protestant church built by the Union Church completed
1837	Cabin was replaced by a stone chapel (designated). Oldest Unio Chapel in Ontario
1870	Anglicans built their own church- St. John's the Baptist (Dixie)
1910	Started purchasing additional land for the cemetery
1922	A basement dug for additional space in the church
1924	St. John's was struck by lightning and burned down
1926	New St. John's church opens
1951	St John's received its own rector (had been sharing with St. Peter's since 1870)
1954	St. John's Cemetery expanded by 8 acres
1955	A Parish Hall was added to accommodate a Sunday School. Opened March 4th
1961	Final purchase of land for the cemetery
1979	Dedication of final stained-glass windows
1988	A new office and crematorium were added to the cemetery
2002	An addition added to make the church accessible - renovations included meeting rooms and office spaces as well as new washrooms
2008	Addition and alterations including a cosmetic update of hall as well as new HVAC

The early history of St. John's the Baptist (Dixie) Anglican Church starts with the construction of the Dixie Union Chapel in 1816. Built on land donated by tavern owner Philip Cody, the chapel was a shared building between Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Methodists. Each had their time slot for worship. It was a union chapel not united as each congregation remained separate. Over time other congregations joined including the Baptists, Congregationalists, and Lutherans. The log chapel was replaced in 1837 (officially opening in 1838) with a stone chapel. It still exists today and is the oldest Union Chapel in Ontario.

The Anglicans stopped using Dixie Union Chapel when they built their own church beside it in 1870. St. John the Baptist (Dixie) Anglican Church was struck by lightning in 1924 and the church burned down. The congregation banded together and rebuilt the church in the same neo-gothic style. Its dedication service was held on December 20, 1925, with full services starting in 1926. Stained glass windows have been added to replace the original windows over the years.

The 1950s was a time of change and growth at St. John's. It had been sharing a minister with St. Peter's Anglican Church in Erindale since its founding. It had grown large enough to have its own minister in 1951 and a hall was added in 1955. According to the Church's website, over 300 hundred children attended the Sunday school at that time.

In 2002 an addition was added to make the church accessible. The addition also included improved washroom facilities and additional office and meeting space. It was dedicated on September 15, 2002, at a service by Rt. Rev. Ann Tottenham, Bishop of the Credit Valley. Further alterations were made in 2008

with new HVAC units and cosmetic updates.

St. John's the Baptist (Dixie) has an active cemetery. It added property to the cemetery between 1910 and 1961 with approximately 12 acres of space. It offers full casket and cremation burials, and it has a separate cemetery building. The building has 3 cremation retorts, a small chapel, and a larger chapel designed to serve people of all faiths. The funds from the cemetery help offset costs for the church.

### **T.L. Kennedy**

Colonel Tom Kennedy died on February 13, 1959. He had a long history with St. John's the Baptist (Dixie) Church and the Dixie Union Chapel. His funeral was held at the church and many prominent dignitaries attended including Ontario Premier Leslie Frost. He was buried at Dixie Union Chapel Cemetery.

T.L. Kennedy (1878-1959) was a local farmer, soldier, and politician. His political career started in 1907 when he became a councillor for Toronto Township (now Mississauga) followed by a term as Deputy Reeve and then Reeve in 1910-1911. After serving in WWI, Kennedy continued his political career becoming the Minister of Agriculture in 1930-1934 and again in 1943-1952. He served as the interim Premier of Ontario from 1948-1949 which gained him the name of "Old Man of Ontario". He retired in 1953 but continued helping farmers until his passing.

Interestingly, Kennedy chaired the centenary celebration of the Dixie Union Chapel in July 1937. "The spirit of union exemplified by this building may be recaptured someday with the great benefit to all," he remarked during his speech.

### **Architectural Description**

As per the heritage listing report:

The roof of the original section is steeply gabled while that of the addition is flat. The foundation is of roughly coursed stone, the walls are of brick. A string course of stone appears where the brick begins. Buttresses divide the north and south sides into bays, between which is the fenestration. The main windows along both facades have groups of three cusped openings in which there is a multiplicity of stained-glass panes, the whole surrounded by stone trim in a faintly pointed gothic manner. Near the base of the tower, these windows appear singly. The front door beneath the tower is treated the same way as the windows but the stone lintel above is eared. The wooden door has nine panels. The base of the square-sided tower juts out of the front facade. It is topped by an octagonal spire and four smaller ones at each corner. Inside, the altar, pews, and other woodwork are original and intact, but the rest of the church has been remodeled and decorated in a modern fashion.

The church exhibits some elements of neo-Gothic (Gothic Revival/Victorian Gothic) architecture which was a widespread style starting in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was an architectural movement starting in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that was intertwined with philosophical movements associated with "a re-awaking of the high church or Anglo-Catholic belief concerned by the growth of

religious nonconformism.” The architecture varies from strict adherence of medieval principles to touches of neo-Gothic decorations. St. John’s includes a few of the key elements of Gothic style including large stained-glass windows, pointed arches, and ornate decoration.

### **Other Neo-Gothic Churches in Mississauga**

Another example of a Neo-Gothic Church in Mississauga is St. Andrew’s Memorial Presbyterian Church which was opened in 1928. Similarly, a hall was added in 1956 to accommodate the growing congregation and Sunday school needs.

### **Context**

The property is a brick, gothic-style structure on the northeast corner of Dundas Street East and Cawthra Road in the historic village of Dixie. It is beside the historic Dixie Union Chapel, the oldest union chapel in Ontario. It has its own 12-acre cemetery providing green space.

### **CONCLUSION**

The church has a long history within the community and is still active today. It has ties with many local well-known families including the Kennedy’s who were important in the development of the Village of Dixie.

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Dixie Union Chapel and St. John the Baptist Church (Dixie) from H.H. Shaver private postcard ca1910  
Mississauga Historic Image Gallery (N565)



St. John the Baptist (Dixie) c. 1907 before fire from a post card  
Mississauga Historic Image Gallery (N563)



St. John the Baptist Anglican Church (Dixie) 1975

Mississauga Historic Image Gallery (A325)



St. John the Baptist (Dixie) ca.2000

Heritage Property Inventory- City of Mississauga





