Appendix C:

Description of architectural styles
APPENDIX C

Downtown Oakville Heritage Conservation District Study: Description of Architectural Styles

The Downtown property inventory contained in Appendices A and B of the heritage assessment report included a classification of the variety architectural style types found in the study area. These are described further in this appendix and are listed alphabetically below.

Arts and Crafts (1900-1945)
Arts and Crafts refers to buildings inspired by the English Arts and Crafts Movement and related North American architectural styles such as American Craftsman, American Bungalow or American Prairie Style. This is primarily a domestic style with a pre-Industrial or hand-crafted character. It was a popular style for bungalows in the 1920s and 1930s. Arts and Crafts architecture is derived from the honest expression of traditional building materials and methods and expresses ideas about shelter and comfort. It represents a rejection of all superfluous ornamentation and traditional stylistic vocabularies. Interiors and furnishings are often part of the design. Typical features include, small windows, often with multi-paned sashes or casements, low overhanging roofs often sheltering deep porches, large dormers and prominent chimneys.

181 Church Street (1922)

213 Randall Street (c. 1920s)

Beaux-Arts Classicism (1900-1945)
Beaux-Arts Classicism is an early 20th century re-interpretation of Classicism. It is based on principles developed at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris that emphasized a rational approach to planning and design using an eclectic Classical vocabulary. Designs emphasize symmetry and monumentally, often employing giant orders and over-sized classical elements. The rational and functional layout of the
interior is clearly articulated on the exterior. Entrances are highly visible and major components of the interior are clearly expressed. Beaux-Arts Classicism was employed for a wide range of building types including banks, insurance buildings, private clubs, assembly halls and theatres. It was often used for public buildings such as libraries and post offices.

159 Lakeshore Road East (1910)

216 Lakeshore Road East (1939)

125 Thomas Street (1923)

Brutalism (1960-1970)

Brutalism is a modern architectural style that was popular in the 1960s. It is defined by heavy masonry, often utilizing monolithic concrete construction to convey an overpowering sense of solidity and mass. Surfaces are often highly textured. Proportions are large and imposing. Some compositions emphasize the grid of the underlying concrete frame, others incorporate curved shapes to emphasize the fluidity of poured concrete. Traditional treatments of corners and openings, based on various structural components, are abandoned in favour of continuous frames that convey a sense of forms derived from poured concrete. Openings can be grouped or randomly placed and are generally related to internal requirements and not deliberately organized to create a sense of symmetry on the exterior. Compositions consist of clearly defined geometric shapes that reflect internal divisions. Designs often combine stark contrasts between the repetition of massively scaled window openings
and large expanses of unarticulated wall. In Ontario, Brutalism was popular for schools, offices and government buildings.

![130 Navy Street (1967)](image)

**Classic Revival (1830-1860)**

Classic Revival refers to early Ontario buildings with Classical features derived from Ancient Greek and Roman sources and influenced by British Neoclassical (or Georgian) architecture. It is similar to Federal Style architecture built in the United States between c. 1780 and 1830. This style was used for a wide range of building types and was easily adapted for simple dwellings, commercial buildings, large houses, important civic buildings, schools and churches. The most popular motif employed was the temple front which consisted of Classical columns supporting an entablature and triangular pediment. Often a Giant Order was superimposed over several storeys to give a monumental effect. In small domestic buildings, a simple end gable roof was interpreted as a classical pediment by adding a bold cornice with returns. Pediments often had an elliptical, round or half-round window in the center.

![75 Navy Street – former Hotel](image)
Contemporary (1970-Present)

Contemporary refers to buildings built after 1970. Stylistically this group is very diverse and includes various trends towards Formalism and High Tech that developed out of Modernism and the International Style. It also includes examples that can be considered Post-Modern or anti-Modernist in their return to historical styles. These buildings utilize modern materials and construction methods, including steel and concrete which allow for curtain walls, large plate glass windows and open plans. Modernist influenced examples tend to emphasize space and form and are generally devoid of ornamentation and are primarily commercial buildings. In contrast, examples based on historically derived styles are highly ornamented with eclectic, over-scaled ornamentation drawing from traditional styles, mainly Classical. These buildings are mainly multi-unit residential condominiums with rich articulated stucco facades with French and Italian Renaissance motifs.
Edwardian Classicism (1900-1930)

Edwardian Classicism refers to a British architectural style that represented a rejection of High Victorian styles and a return to a more restrained classicism. In this period, the rich ornamentation and structural complexities of High Victorian buildings, gives way to simpler forms and a selective use of strong Classical elements. This is a transitional style from nineteenth-century eclecticism to twentieth-century Beaux-Arts Classicism. Stylized and exaggerated classical elements are a typical feature of this style. In North America the “Four-Square” house evolved in response to this new taste for simplicity. These houses are typically built of brick and are two-and-a-half-storeys high with a hipped roof and central dormer. A large verandah across the front has classical details. Variant of the “Four-Square” features a front gable or a wrap-around porch and side entrance, both features associated with the earlier Queen Anne period.

Gothic Revival (1850-1900)

The Gothic Revival style was a very popular style in Ontario for residential architecture, reaching its height of popularity in the 1850s and 1860s. Early examples are derived from English Gothic, Tudor and Elizabethan architecture. Later examples have a more picturesque and freer approach drawing on a wider range of sources, including French and Italian Gothic architecture, often combining different coloured building materials. Distinctive features of Gothic Revival buildings include pointed arch openings, steep gable and cross gable roofs often with multiple dormer and gables, decorative verge-boards, pinnacles and finials and hood moulds with carved label stops. Features associated with later examples include dichromatic brick patterns, varying window shapes and sizes and decorative front and side verandahs. Typical plans included an L-shaped plan or a rectangular plan with a centre peak commonly called the ‘Ontario Cottage’. Gothic Revival was the most common style used for
churches in Ontario and it was often used for educational and charitable institutions. It was rarely used for commercial buildings.

250 Lakeshore Road East (1887)

131-137 Dunn Street (1877)

156 Randall Street (c. 1850)

159 Church Street (c. 1860)
International Style (1930-1965)
International style refers to buildings that show an influence from European Modernism, particularly the cubic and industrially inspired designs associated with the Bauhaus. International Style architecture represents a rejection of all past styles and ornamentation and adheres to a strictly rational and functional aesthetic based on modern construction and materials. Steel frame and curtain-wall construction is typical, with large windows often grouped horizontally in long strips or around corners, to emphasize the non-load-bearing character of the wall. In Ontario, this style was not widely employed until after World War II when it was utilized for modern factories, office buildings and transportation buildings. The construction of a number of large postal facilities in the 1950s, brought International Style architecture to large and small communities across Ontario.

![Image of International Style building]

193 Church Street – Postal Office

Italianate (1860-1900)
The Italianate style was popular in Ontario for both residential and commercial buildings. These buildings have classically derived ornamentation and picturesque compositions. They are often quite sculptural and dramatic combining several materials, often in contrasting colours. Elaborate cornices with paired brackets, tall vertical proportions and round or segmental arched openings for doors and windows are typical features. Domestic buildings often have low-pitched hipped roofs, large bay windows and occasionally a rooftop belvedere or cupola. Commercial buildings usually have a decorative parapet that hides the roof. This parapet often contains a name or date plaque and may be decorated with urns or other classically inspired motifs. Some examples employ highly sculptural treatments of doors and windows with pediments based on Renaissance architecture, while others employ castellated motifs along the roofline and at corners, such as battlements and towers, inspired by late Medieval Italian buildings.

![Image of Italianate building]
Mid-Century Modern (1945-1970)
Mid-Century Modern refers to buildings built in the 1950s and 1960s influenced by European Modernism. In contrast to the smooth, white surfaces of International Style architecture, Mid-Century Modern tends to be more colourful, plastic and expressive. Similar to International Style architecture it
represents a complete rejection of all past historical styles and forms and explores the potential of modern materials and construction. Walls are freed from loads. Interior walls are removed to allow open-plan interiors. Exterior walls can be opened to allow for large glazed openings. This style was popular for suburban houses, large apartment towers, commercial buildings and roadside architecture. In contrast to the limited vocabulary associated with International Style buildings, Mid-Century Modern buildings convey a strong sense of individuality and draw upon a wide range of forms and motifs.

197 Lakeshore Road East - Bank

155 Navy Street – Apartment Tower

**Queen Anne Revival (1880-1915)**

The Queen Anne Revival is a High Victorian style that was popular for residential buildings. Queen Anne buildings typically have an irregular outline and asymmetric plan composed of towers, gables, projecting two storey bays, multi-sloped roofs, verandahs and balconies. Gables and dormers are often decorated with wood shingles. Classical motifs such as Palladian windows, pediments and columns are often employed.
Regency (1830-60)
Regency was a popular style for early Ontario residential buildings inspired by colonial bungalows in tropical regions of the British Empire. The Regency Cottage is a one or one-and-a-half storey building with a low horizontal emphasis. It typically has large floor to ceiling windows that open to provide ample ventilation. Windows are often French style doors that open onto covered balconies or deep porches that provide shade. Porch roofs typically have a bell cast profile and are supported by decorative wood or iron treillage. Other elements, such as entry doors, window surrounds and decorative friezes are typically Neoclassical and finely detailed.

Vernacular
The term “vernacular” is typically used to describe buildings or structures that are locally crafted, using local materials and built by local craftsman. Usually such structures do not fit into defined stylistic
categories as with others identified here, although they may borrow individual architectural elements or decorative features. These buildings are diverse in character, size and age. A few simple commercial buildings constructed in the late 19th and early 20th century fall into this category. There are a number of significant 19th century buildings included in this category including a very early residence (321 Lakeshore), the granary (105 Robinson), the radial railway terminal (159 Thomas), a worker’s row-house (159 Trafalgar) and a single-storey commercial building with a cast iron storefront (251 Lakeshore).

321 Lakeshore Road East (c. 1830)

105 Robinson Street (c. 1855)

159 Thomas (1905)

159 Trafalgar Road (c. 1857)

251 Lakeshore Road East (c. 1900)