

Heritage Analysis and Evaluation

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Date: December 2022

Building Name: Crabtree House

Address: 559 Lang's Road, Ottawa, ON, K1K 2J4

Legal Description: Plan 486 Lot 3 LANGS E PIN: 042750004

Neighbourhood: Viscount Alexander Park (Fairhaven)

Construction Date: c. 1962



Figure 1: Image provided by the current owner P. van der Roest & B. de Bruijn

Architectural Description



Figure 2: City of Ottawa 2022

The Crabtree House, 559 Lang's Road is a two-storey flat roofed structure consisting of simplified, rectangular forms, and is clad primarily with vertical California redwood panelling, contrasted with white stucco and concrete breeze blocks. Constructed in 1962, it also features floor-to-ceiling wood framed windows, balconies with simple metal railings and deep soffits, with an Art-Deco inspired brise-soleil. The structure also features a rectilinear plan, with an upper-level lofted living space, and an integrated carport on the lower floor.

A fenced-in in-ground pool and pool shed can be found on the eastern side of the property.

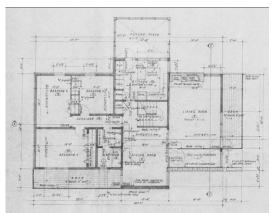


Figure 3: Living Space Floor Plans Figure 4: (BP48557 City of Ottawa 1961) (BP48557 Cit

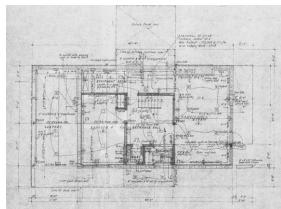


Figure 4: First-storey Floor Plans (BP48557 City of Ottawa 1961)

Description of Facades

North Façade

The north façade is clad in vertical wood panelling. The overhanging eaves extend over the west façade's balcony, which forms the front section of the incorporated carport. There is little in the way of architectural ornamentation.



Figure 5: North Façade (City of Ottawa 2022)

South Façade

The lower floor of the south façade is partially below grade; the right-side of the façade is partially obscured by trees. The left of the façade features floor-to-ceiling windows that are mirrored on the upper floor, separated by a similarly designed glass door. The cantilevered portion of the structure can be seen on the left of the façade. An open-ended balcony on the upper floor features the same metal-box railings seen throughout and continues to the edge of the structure allowing for access to the backyard.



Figure 6: South Façade (City of Ottawa 2022)

East (Rear) Façade

The east façade is primarily clad in white stucco on the south side and wood panelling to the north side. The façade is also levelled to the top of the hillside, with an entryway into the backyard located at the center. Floor to ceiling windows can be found on the far-left side of the façade. Two additional floor-to-ceiling windows can be found on the right portion of the structure.

A series of windows are located towards the centre of the structure adjacent to the kitchen door. A second set of windows can be found on the section just below the two circular chimneys near the left. There are steps on the balcony from the south façade that exit out into the backyard as well as steps leading out of the cantilevered section of the kitchen.



Figure 7: East Façade (City of Ottawa 2022)

West (Front) Façade

The north section of the west façade is clad in vertical-wood panelling, while the south section near the brise-soleil is clad in concrete blocks. The wooden front door is modest in its design and is set back into the building underneath the overhanging eaves. A large floor-to-ceiling wood framed window is situated next to the integrated carport on the northern side of the façade. A cantilevered portion of the house positioned over the front entryway connects to the second-storey balcony, which stretches over the integrated carport and main entrance and is primarily clad in white stucco. The railing on the balcony is a metal-box railing that wraps around a portion of the west facade. The second storey also features a floor-to-ceiling window just above the carport and a second window to the north.

A two-storey concrete brise-soleil screen constructed from cinder and concrete blocks is featured prominently on the south side of the facade. The brise-soleil is not attached to the balcony on the south façade and connects the overhanging flat roof to the foundation below. The brise-soleil screen also partially obscures the balcony on the south façade.



Figure 8: West Façade (City of Ottawa 2022)

Architectural Analysis

The Crabtree House is an excellent example of an International-style house. Key features of the style, include its use of minimalism throughout the exterior and interior of the structure and its overall integration into its wooded, natural landscape.

Architectural Features and Minimalism

The property's use of simple, geometric lines within its architectural features are common in modernist architecture. The Modernist philosophy emphasised the use of clear, simple forms that follow the function of the building. The general lack of exterior finishes also helps to emphasise the cantilevered elements on the south and west facades of the structure (Figure 9).

Additional minimalist and geometric elements can be found in the house's concrete brise-soleil located on the west façade (Figure 11-13). As a result of the minimalist approach, the brise-soleil stands out as a decorative element of the house and acts as an accent piece that emphasizes the minimalist design. (Figure 10)

This design philosophy continues through the interior of the structure. The interior finishes (i.e., door and window frames, railings, walls, etc.) are simple allowing for certain interior elements to stand out. These elements include the floor-to-ceiling cork-board wall (Figure 14). The cork-board wall was purpose-built for Graham Crabtree as a studio wall where he could work on his art pieces (Figure 16). The

wall also doubled as a space where he could display his completed artwork and other interior décor, acting as accent pieces to the home, mirroring the brise-soleil on the exterior.

Architectural Features and Minimalism (Photos)



Figure 9: Cantilevered Elements on the West Façade (City of Ottawa 2022)



Figure 10: Cantilevered elements on the south façade (Library and Archives Canada 2022; ZMS Fonds; 3266-02)



Figure 11: The brise-soleil as seen during the nighttime (Image provided by the current owner P. van der Roest & B. de Bruijn)





Figure 12 & 13: View of the brise-soleil (City of Ottawa 2022)



Figure 14: The interior of the atrium and the floor-toceiling corkboard (City of Ottawa 2022)

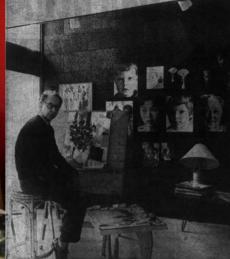


Figure 15: Graham Crabtree utilising the corkboard wall to display reference material and art pieces (The Ottawa Journal; 08 Jun 1964)



Figure 16: West Façade demonstrating the modernist Figure 17: South Façade architectural features (City of Ottawa 2022) displaying the brise-soleil



Figure 17: South Façade displaying the brise-soleil and integration of the property into the natural landscape (City of Ottawa 2022)

Architectural Features & Themes of Nature

Stankiewicz's design of 559 Lang's Road incorporates the modernist idea of living in harmony with nature as opposed to "conquering" it. This is demonstrated through its setback into the natural terrain of the property, integration into the changing grade, and the natural tree cover surrounding the property. The property is constructed to have a minimal impact on its surroundings and incorporates the hillside as a feature of the house. The natural rocky landscaping can be seen on the south elevation of the house, with the home's basement being partially exposed (Figure 17) and partially obscured by vegetation and rocky landscaping (Figure 18).

Architectural features such as the floor-to-ceiling windows and a continuation of its interior elements to exterior elements to further the blend of the indoor living space to the outdoors. (Figure 22 & 23) The floor-to-ceiling windows of the upper and lower floors allows for a more natural incorporation of natural elements into the living space (Figure 19), while the lofted living space emulates the idea of living among the treetops (Figure 19).

The connection between nature and the living space is subtly played with using wooden panelling on the exterior and interior of the space (Figure 23). The balconies also offer a connection between the inside and outside spaces, acting as an exterior dwelling space that is also physically connected to the interior space.

The concept of living within nature is further emphasised by using multiple types of cladding materials. The vertical wood panelling emulates the trees surrounding the property (Figure 26), the concrete blocks pay homage to the rocky landscape

of the property (Figure 28), and the white stucco acts as a contrasting material for the wooden and concrete elements to stand out.

Architectural Features & Themes of Nature (Photos)



Figure 18: The south façade demonstrating the integration of the property into the natural landscape. The effect is enhanced with the natural vegetation growing near the property (Image provided by the current owners P. van der Roest & B. de Bruijn)



space from the south façade (City of Ottawa the east façade (City of Ottawa 2022) 2022)



Figure 19: Viewscape from the lofted living Figure 20: Viewscape of the property from



Figure 21: The south façade demonstrating the integration of the property into the natural landscape (Library and Archives Canada 2022; ZMS Fonds; 3266-23)



Figure 22 & 23: View of the Lofted Living Space as seen from the atrium (Library and Archives Canada 2022; ZMS Fonds 3266-06, 3266-15)





Figure 24 & 25: The incorporation of the property into the natural landscape demonstrates its strong connection to natural landscape (City of Ottawa 2022)



panelling is present throughout and emulates the wooded setting of the home (City of Ottawa 2022)



Figure 26: The wooden Figure 27: The minimalist front Figure 28: The concrete entryway harkens back to the modernist theme and allows for the use of different cladding material to stand out (City of Ottawa 2022)



breeze blocks complement the surrounding rocky landscape (City of Ottawa 2022)

History and Associations

The Crabtree House, 559 Lang's Road was constructed in 1962 for Graham and Dorothy Crabtree and designed by Ottawa architect Matthew Stankiewicz. The property is associated with the development of the Fairhaven Cooperative, the expansion and decentralization of the public service in Ottawa in the post WWII period, and the work of both Graham and Dorothy Crabtree.

Fairhaven Community Cooperative

The Fairhaven Community Co-operative was created in 1947 by a small group of employees of the National Research Council who were working at the Montreal Road Laboratories at the time. Joined together by a shared set of ideas and objectives, these individuals, composed of young engineers, architects, artists, and scientists, wanted to own their own homes and adopt a modern way of life. As such, they decided to form a co-operative so that they could create their own community to maintain control over aspects such as urban planning and architectural design of their homes. This co-operative would be the first of its kind in Canada and would later serve as inspiration for Briarcliffe's Cooperative.

The cooperative grew in the years following its creation, spreading through word of mouth as more and more NRC employees and their spouses showed interest. The members also developed a set of regulations that all members had to abide by with regards to development within the neighborhood. These were all intended to align with the modernist ideals that initially brought the coop together and included:

- Any new development had to be designed by an architect and be approved by the co-operative's architectural committee prior to construction
- Minimal landscaping was to take place during the construction of the home;
 the trees of the area were to be retained as much as possible

Graham and Dorothy Crabtree

Graham Crabtree

Graham Crabtree was a contributor to Ottawa's art and film-making industries in the mid-20th century. His career included working as an artist, animator, and art director at Crawley Films, one of Canada's first film production companies and later the National Film Board (NFB) as a liaison officer.

Some of his most notable accomplishments include the sets he designed for the film *The Loon's Necklace*, which would go on to become Film of the Year in 1949 at the inaugural Canadian Film Awards. Crabtree's experience



Figure 29: Graham Crabtree (The Ottawa Citizen; 16 May 1939)

with film and animation at Crawley Films later led to his involvement in the creation of the NFB's technical animation department.

His work as a NFB's liaison officer also led to his involvement with the creation of *Hinterland Who's Who* in 1962, a collaboration between the NFB, Environment Canada, and the Canadian Wildlife Federation, that was made to generate public interest in the environment and Canadian wildlife. Since its launch, *Hinterland Who's Who* has cemented itself as a Canadian icon.

Graham Crabtree was also a well-established artist within Ottawa in the 1960s. His artwork was often represented in gallery exhibitions (Wells Gallery) and would later be selected for the Spring Exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art in 1964, a showcase of contemporary Canadian art. While his primary career revolved around his artistic contributions to film, Crabtree later went on to work for UNESCO to help set up visual aid centres and teach art and design in Indonesia and Thailand. His time spent in south-east Asia later influenced interior elements and furnishings of his home at 559 Lang's Road.

Graham Crabtree's Works



Figure 30: A scene from *The Loon's Necklace*. Graham Crabtree served as an artist and animator for the project. (Fonds 1997-265)



Figure 31: Dorothy and Graham Crabtree working together on The Loon's Necklace during their time at Crawley Films (Academic Films for the Classroom: A History)



Figure 32: Original Caption for Figure Hinterland Who's Who. (https:/(CBC.ca)



Figure 33: 50th Anniversary Logo. (https://www.hww.ca/en/about-us/50th/)

Dorothy Edna Crabtree (nee Dorothy Munro)



Figure 34: Dorothy Crabtree (https://www.findagrav e.com/memorial/13326 9126/dorothy-ednacrabtree/photo)

Dorothy Munro was born on July 1927 in Ottawa. She met Graham Crabtree while both were working at the animation department at Crawley Films in the 1940s. After marrying Graham in 1950, she later went with him to Indonesia for his work at UNESCO. She took a job as an English tutor for the President of Indonesia's Personal Guards. After returning to Canada, she and Graham purchased the lot parcel at 559 Lang's Road and was employed as a technical draftsman for the National Research Council, likely working in their Aeronautical Research Building. Some of her most notable work includes the original drawings for the Space Shuttles' Canadarm.

Matthew Stankiewicz



Figure 35: Matthew Stankiewicz (Briarcliffe HCD Plan)

The Crabtree House is an example of the work of local architect Matthew Stankiewicz.

Matthew Stankiewicz was born in 1926 in Wilno, Poland (modern-day Vilinius, Lithuania). He attended University of Liverpool's School of Architecture, after which he practised in England before immigrating to Canada in the early 1950s. Initially he was employed by the Department of Public Works and the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission in Ottawa, but later launched his own practise in 1958 called Z. Matthew Stankiewicz.

Stankiewicz would go on to design several architectural projects in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. His work on

residential properties have also been recognised on a local, national, and international scale.

The property at 559 Lang's Road had been featured on the February 8th, 1964 edition of the Ottawa Journal (Figure 40), while a property designed by Stankiewicz at 3 Commanche Drive (Figure 39) was awarded the "Home of the Year" in 1965 by Canadian Home Magazine. Two houses (12 and 16 Briarcliffe Drive) located within the Briarcliffe HCD, a neighborhood characterised by its modernist architecture and forested setting, were also designed by Stankiewicz (Figures 37 & 38)

Stankiewicz also worked on public architecture projects such as the University Centre at Carleton University (Figure 41) and the Canadian Pavilion for the 1967 World Expo in Montreal (Figure 40), the latter of which received international attention due to the innovative designs of its structures.

Stankiewicz was known for drawing on modernist themes and incorporating them within his designs. Residential properties he designed often were set back into their natural, unaltered landscapes and utilised multiple cladding materials and large floor-to-ceiling windows to allow for a blend of the indoor and outdoor spaces of the homes.

Stankiewicz was also known for drawing inspiration from the Miesian tradition of architecture. This form of architecture emphasised the idea of minimalism, use of structural elements as an aspect of the design, as well as its signature use of the "horizontal look", where designs emphasised shadow lines created from a continuous foundation. An example of this style in Ottawa includes the Butler House (1 Kindle Court) located in the Briarcliffe HCD and designed by modernist architect Brian Barkham. Much like Barkham, Stankiewicz also took elements (such as the use of forms) from different elements of Miesian architecture and adapted them into his own designs, as demonstrated in 559 Lang's linear forms.

His accomplishments have been honoured through the creation of a scholarship through Carleton University called the Z. Matthew Stankiewicz Memorial Bursary. Established in 1980 by Stankiewicz's associates, friends, and family, this bursary is awarded annually to a student entering or is enrolled in the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism.

Stankiewicz' Works



Figure 36: 12 Briarcliffe Drive, Ottawa (Heritage Survey Form – Briarcliffe HCD Study)



Figure 37: 16 Briarcliffe Drive, Ottawa (Heritage Survey Form – Briarcliffe HCD Study)



Figure 338: Commanche Dr, (ZMS Figure 39: Commanche Dr, (ZMS Fonds 6403-508) Fonds 6403-119)



Figure 40: Ottawa Journal Article Featuring the Crabtree House (The Ottawa Journal; 08 Feb 1964)

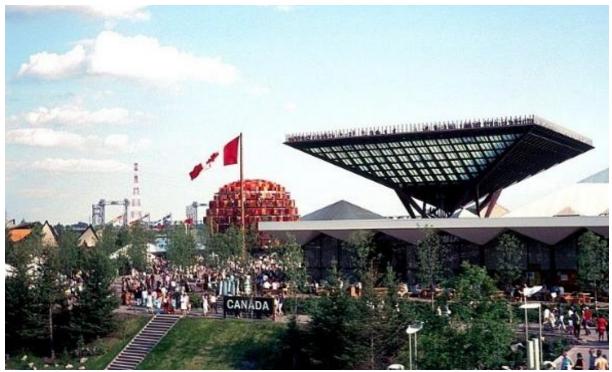


Figure 41: Canadian Pavilion, Expo '67 (expo'67.ca)



Figure 42: Unicentre, Carleton University (https://schoeler.on.ca/carleton-university-unicentre)

Historical Analysis

The property's historical significance is mostly derived from its inclusion into an expansion of the Fairhaven Cooperative. The Cooperative and Fairhaven's development were the direct result of like-minded individuals who shared the similar ideas and wanted to live with others who held similar ideals and wanted to lead similar modernist lifestyles. Many of the homes within the Co-operative built during the 1950s and 60s still had to abide by the regulations. These properties, such as 559 Lang's

Road, stand as a testament to the ideas that the Fairhaven Community held and are a reminder of the unique architecture of the modernist era.

The Crabtree House's is also a representation of the growing public sector. Many public servants who worked at the nearby National Research Council campus on Montreal Road lived in Fairhaven and nearby Briarcliffe. As an NRC employee and an artist, Dorothy and Graham Crabtree exemplify the typical people who lived in these new east end neighbourhoods in the post-war period. Their interests in science and the arts and the experimental architecture of their home illustrates their attitudes towards progressive ideas in the expanding national capital.

Graham and Dorothy Crabtree were both also known for their involvement in various projects within the public sector during the mid- 20th century in Ottawa. Graham Crabtree was an artist, animator, and art director who had direct involvement in various pieces of iconic Canadian media. These include his set design work for Crawley Films' *The Loon's Necklace* and his collaborative work with the Canadian Wildlife Federation (now associated with Environment Canada) that formed the short film series *Hinterland Who's Who*.

Dorothy Crabtree was employed as a technical draftsperson at the nearby National Research Council working on major projects such as the early technical drawings for the Canadarm, which supported NASA Space Shuttle missions for over 30 years and remains Canada's most famous technological achievement in the field of robotics.

The property is also an excellent example of Matthew Stankiewicz's residential works, whose modernist ideas are displayed in the architecture of the house. Stankiewicz's most well-known works include the UniCentre at Carleton University and the Canadian Pavilion at the 1967 World Expo.

Context

The property is located within the neighborhood of Fairhaven, the site of an experimental community cooperative that was active during the mid 20th century. Its proximity to the National Research Council's headquarters and membership in the cooperative reflect the shared interests of a modern lifestyle and general demographic of its community.

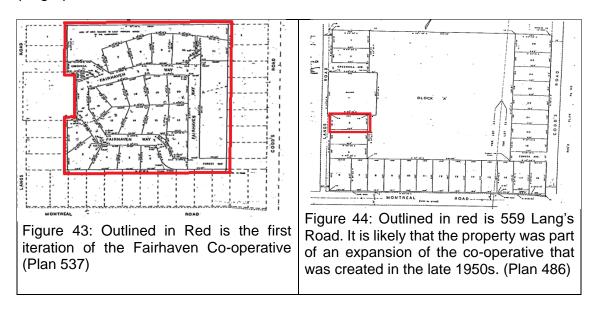
The History of the Fairhaven Development

The Co-operative initially purchased a 16-acre block of land for residentials in 1951 and divided it into 20 half-acre irregular lots (Figure 43), with the first resident moving into the community in the same year. An expansion of the development was created in 1958, with 25 rectangular lots fronting Lang's, Montreal, and Codd's Road (Figure 44).

Fairhaven's early development (occurring in the 1950s) was constructed with the personal automobile in mind, with no sidewalks and curved roads that encouraged

drivers to go slower (Figure 43). These planning decisions were made by the cooperative to recreate the feeling of living within a forested setting, playing into the modernist idea of living harmoniously with nature.

Conversely, the subdivision plans of the Fairhaven expansion (occurring in the 1960s) were grid-like and rectangular, likely an indicator of an increased demand for housing in the area (Figure 44). The irregularity in the lots and curved roads characteristic of the original development likely had to be put aside in favour of keeping up with the demand.



Contextual Analysis

What made Fairhaven, and by extension 559 Lang's Road, unique was that the neighborhood was not born out of urban planning commissioned by the public sector, but rather formed through a community association with like-minded individuals. Additionally, many of the co-op members were heavily involved in the construction and planning of the neighborhood, which emphasised the community aspect of Fairhaven. As a result, their decisions in these areas spoke true to their visions for this new community and thus brings to light the ideas and modernist lifestyles that these individuals once led.

Despite the tree cover surrounding the property, the Crabtree house's location at the top of the hill and at the edge of the Fairhaven development make it a visual landmark within the community. Its unique architectural design also helps the property to stand out as a landmark within the subdivision and serves as a reminder of Fairhaven's original concept as a modernist development.

Evaluation Chart

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE/ INTEREST				
A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if it meets one of more of the following criteria. Ontario Regulation 09/06				
Architecture Is the property a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method?	YES	NO		
The property is an excellent example of International architecture within Ottawa. It demonstrates features that are characteristic of this style, including overhanging eaves, a flat roof, cantilevered elements, simple front entrance, multiple cladding material, large floor-to-ceiling windows, limited ornamentation, and an integrated carport, the latter of which highlights the changes occurring in architecture as a result of the suburban movement of the mid-20 th century.				
Craftsmanship/Artistic merit Does the property display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit?	YES	NO		
The property displays a high degree of craftmanship through its unique architectural details such as its brise-soleil, geometric built forms, contrasting cladding material, and the careful integration of the property into its unaltered landscape. This craftsmanship effectively demonstrates the themes within modernist architecture, including minimalism and harmony with nature.				
Context Is the property physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings?	YES	□ 2		
The property is physically and visually linked to its surroundings through its intentional incorporation into the natural landscape, resulting in its partial integration below grade.				

Technical/Scientific merit Does the property demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement?	YES	NO		
The property does not demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement				
Historical Associations Does the property have direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community?	YES	NO		
The property has direct associations with Graham and Dorothy Crabtree. Graham Crabtree's work at Crawley Films and the National Film Board included working on pieces of Canadian media that helped develop Canada's identity as a nation in the mid 20 th century. Dorothy Crabtree's work at the National Research Council contributed to the development of the Canadarm, which stands as one of Canada's most significant scientific contributions. The Crabtrees house on Lang's Road represents the growth in the public sector in the post-war period, particularly the growth the NRC experienced during this period.				
Community History Does the property yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture?	YES	NO		
The property is a representative example of architecture within the Fairhaven Cooperative, which was created in 1947 by a small group of employees of the National Research Council. The cooperative established a set of regulations to shape the architecture of the neighbourhood to ensure it aligned with modernist ideals. The cooperative was the first of its kind in Canada.				

Representative Work Does the property demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, building, designer or theorist who is significant to a community?	YES	NO		
The property is an excellent representative work of well-known Ottawa architect Matthew Stankiewicz who designed many modernist buildings in Ottawa. His work can be found in the Briarcliffe HCD and was also responsible for the designs for public buildings such as the UniCentre and the Canadian Pavilion at the 1967 World Expo.				
Community Character Is the property important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of the area?	YES	NO		
The property is important in defining the character of the area due to its location within Fairhaven and association with the cooperative. The property's connections to both helped to influence its architecture, setback, and surrounding landscaping. The property's location within the neighborhood is a physical reminder of the community that Fairhaven once envisioned for themselves.				
Landmark Is the property a landmark?	YES	NO		
The property is not a landmark.	'			

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