

Authority: Downtown Community Council Report No. 1, Clause No. 23,
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on January 30, 31 and February 1, 2001
Enacted by Council: February 1, 2001

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW No. 50-2001

To designate the property at 56 Spruce Street (David Cornell House) as being of architectural and historical value or interest.

WHEREAS authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 56 Spruce Street (David Cornell House) as being of architectural and historical value or interest; and

WHEREAS the *Ontario Heritage Act* authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historical or architectural value or interest; and

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the land and premises known as 56 Spruce Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Notice of Intention to designate the property and has caused the Notice of Intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "A" to this by-law; and

WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation was served upon the Clerk of the municipality;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. The property at 56 Spruce Street, more particularly described in Schedule "B" and shown on Schedule "C" attached to this by-law, is designated as being of architectural and historical value or interest.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "B" to this by-law in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owners of the property at 56 Spruce Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 1st day of February, A.D. 2001.

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

NOVINA WONG,
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

SCHEDULE “A” HERITAGE PROPERTY REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is the “Long Statement of Reasons for Designation” for the designation of the property at 56 Spruce Street (David Cornell House) under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It contains the Heritage Property Profile, as well as sections on the Historical Occupancy, Architectural Description and Significance of the property. Sources are included. The introduction, below, forms the “Short Statement of Reasons for Designation”, intended for publication.

The property at 56 Spruce Street is recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons. The house was constructed in two parts, with the two-storey tail added after the front section was completed in 1872. David Cornell, a baggage master and conductor on the Grand Trunk Railway, was the first owner. Beginning in 1896, three generations of the Etwell family resided in the house.

The David Cornell House is a worker’s house that is constructed of frame, clad with stucco and trimmed with wood. Rising two stories, the ell-shaped plan is organized into a main body and a rear (north) wing that are covered by gable roofs with a brick chimney at the west end. Important features on the principal (south) façade are the segmental-headed window openings with wood surrounds, sills and windows, the main entrance with the single-leaf panelled wood door with a glazed panel, wood surround and transom, and the open verandah with a shed roof, gable with shingle cladding, and wood detailing. There are flat-headed window openings on the narrow south wall of the main body and on the west wall of the rear wing. The east elevation abuts the neighbouring house at 58 Spruce Street. The rear (north) wall of the wing is not included in the “Reasons for Designation”. On the interior, the side-hall plan of the house is identified as an important feature. There is a double parlour on the west side of the main floor. On the east wall, a staircase extends from the first to the second storey. Between the staircase and parlour, the hall leads to the former kitchen on the first floor of the rear wing. The interior retains original features; of particular note are the wood floors, the wood mouldings and trim and, in the kitchen, the pressed tin ceiling.

The property at 56 Spruce Street is located on the north side of the street in the block between Dermott Place and Sackville Street. Completed in 1872, the David Cornell House was retained for half a century by the original owners and for over 100 years by their successors. One of the earliest surviving buildings on Spruce Street, it is an intact example of worker’s housing in Toronto. The David Cornell House is one of a number of architecturally and historically significant buildings on Spruce Street and an important feature of the Cabbagetown neighbourhood.

1.1 HERITAGE PROPERTY PROFILE

DAVID CORNELL HOUSE

ADDRESS:	56 Spruce Street (north side, between Dermott Place and Sackville Street)
WARD:	25
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY:	Cabbagetown
HISTORICAL NAME:	David Cornell House
CONSTRUCTION DATE:	1872
ORIGINAL OWNER:	David Cornell
ORIGINAL USE:	Residential (single family house)
CURRENT USE: *	Vacant (* this does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law)
ARCHITECT:	None found
BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN:	None found
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:	Worker's Cottage
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS:	Date unknown, two-storey rear addition; 1983, stucco repaired, roof cladding replaced, and verandah restored
HERITAGE CATEGORY:	Category C
RECORDER:	Kathryn Anderson, Heritage Preservation Services
REPORT DATE:	March 2000

2.0 HISTORIAL OCCUPANCY AND SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 CABBAGETOWN

Following the founding of the Town of York in 1793, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe authorized the division of the lands north of present-day Queen Street and west of the Don River into a series of Park Lots. The allotments were awarded to the community's political and military elite as the setting of country estates. Park Lots 1 and 2, on the west side of the Don River, were initially set aside as a government reserve named King's Park (also known as King's Common) and the intended location of a naval shipyard. Simcoe secured the patents for the two lots in the name of his four-year-old son, Francis. In 1796, a small house called "Castle Frank" was completed above the Don Valley (while the original building was demolished, the site is listed on the *City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties*).

Simcoe brought John Scadding (c.1754-1824), the manager of his Wolford Estate in Devonshire, to North America where he served as his secretary from 1791 to 1796. Scadding managed Simcoe's Castle Frank property and received a lot on the east side of the Don River. Following Scadding's death, his son and namesake bought the Castle Frank lands. John Scadding, Jr., donated part of this parcel as the location of St. James' Cemetery, laid out by architect John George Howard in 1845. During the next decade, the non-sectarian Necropolis opened to the southeast.

The name "Cabbagetown" historically refers to the area bounded by the Don River, Queen Street East, Parliament Street and Gerrard Street East. Subdivision of the district began as early as 1819. Perceived as an unhealthy area proximate to the Don swamps, it became a working class neighbourhood inhabited by poor immigrants. North of Gerrard Street, the proximity of the cemeteries and the Peter R. Lamb and Company glue factory (established north of the Necropolis in 1848) discouraged residential development. While a few houses were in place by the 1850s, a new wave of immigration in the 1880s spurred the growth of the area. Unlike the Sherbourne and Jarvis Street neighbourhoods to the west where the streets were organized according to class distinction, the north part of Cabbagetown blended working class cottages with more elaborate houses (McHugh, 129).

2.2 DAVID CORNELL HOUSE

Spruce Street is first recorded in a commercial directory in 1855. The street was residential, apart from the presence of the Toronto General Hospital and Trinity Medical College. The second Toronto General Hospital occupied the block bounded by Gerrard, Sackville, Spruce and Sumach Streets from 1856 until the building was demolished in 1922. At the west end of Spruce Street, the Trinity Medical College opened in 1871. Established in 1859 as part of Trinity College, the facility was absorbed by the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto in 1903.

The house at 56 Spruce Street was completed in 1872 when David Cornell was listed in municipal assessment rolls as the owner and occupant of the site. Cornell (c. 1844-1913) worked as a baggage handler, then a conductor, for the Grand Trunk Railway. David Cornell resided on Spruce Street with his wife, Mary, and their three children until 1889-1890. The house at 56 Spruce Street was rented to a series of tenants until 1896 when the Etwell family began a long-term occupancy of the site.

William Etwell, a traveller, moved to Spruce Street with his wife, Annie, his sons, William George and Alexander, their wives and one grandchild. In 1930, William George Etwell and his wife, Maria Eva, purchased the house from the Estate of Mary Cornell. William George Etwell worked as a piano maker at Heintzman Gerhard Pianos, which operated a factory at 69-75 Sherbourne Street from 1890 until 1927. Near the end of his career, Etwell served as a court constable in the City Sheriff's department. His sons, Alexander and Frank, retained the property until their deaths at the close of the 20th century.

The property at 56 Spruce Street was listed on the *City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties* in 1979. Apart from the restoration of the exterior in 1983, the David Cornell House remained virtually unaltered.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 CONTEXT

The property at 56 Spruce Street is located on the north side of the street between Dermott Place and Sackville Street. It shares its setback with the other residential buildings in the block.

The David Cornell House is part of an early residential street in Cabbagetown. On the south side of Spruce Street, the Charles B. MacKay House (1867) at #35 is an excellent example of an Ontario Cottage. The Trinity Mews row houses at 41 Spruce Street incorporate the Trinity Medical School (1871). The properties at 35 and 41 Spruce Street are designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. On the north side of the street, the Spruce Court Apartments at #74-86, designed by architect Eden Smith in 1913, were Toronto's first government-funded housing project for low-income families. The complex (converted to cooperative housing) is recognized on the *City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties*.

3.2 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE AND DATE

The David Cornell House reflects the type of modest housing described in the book, Cabbagetown Remembered:

“The typical working-class house had a door to one side of the front wall, with one window or a small three-windowed bay looking out from the parlour at the front of the house. Behind this room was usually another, of approximately equal size, which might serve as the dining room if the family also occupied the upper floor, or a bedroom, if they did not. Behind that room was the kitchen, usually in the “tail” of the house, a part which indented behind the second room, ensuring that every room in the house had a window...On the second floor, two windows looked into the master bedroom at the front, behind which might be a bathroom and one or two smaller bedrooms.” (Rust-D’Eye, 35).

3.3 EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The David Cornell House is constructed of frame, clad with stucco and trimmed with wood. Rising two stories, the ell-shaped plan incorporates a two-storey main body with a two-storey rear (north) wing recessed behind it. Both the main body and the wing are covered by gable roofs. A brick chimney is positioned on the west end of the roof over the main body. The principal (south) façade is symmetrically organized into two bays. At the east end of the first story, the principal entrance is set in a wood surround. A transom surmounts a single-leaf panelled wood door with a glazed insert. To the left (west) of the entry, a large segmental-headed window opening has a wood surround and sill. An open verandah with a shed roof, a gable with shingled infill, and wood detailing protects the lower storey. In the upper floor, two segmental-headed window openings (the one in the east bay is narrower than its counterpart) are positioned above the first-floor openings. The window openings contain double-hung wood windows.

There are flat-headed window openings on the narrow rear (north) wall of the main body where it extends beyond (west of) the adjoining wing. The flat-headed window openings are repeated on the west wall of the wing. The east elevation of the house abuts the neighbouring building at 58 Spruce Street. The rear (north) wall of the wing is not included in the “Reasons for Designation”.

3.4 INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

On the interior, the side-hall plan of the house with stairs, hall and double parlour, and the former kitchen are identified in the “Reasons for Designation”. In the main body of the house, the original stairs are placed inside the entrance along the east wall and lead to the second storey. A double parlour is located on the left (west) side of the first floor. Between the stairs and the parlour, the hall leads to the former kitchen in the rear wing. The house retains original features; of particular note are the wood floors, the wood mouldings and trim and, in the kitchen, the pressed tin ceiling.

4.0 SUMMARY

The original owners retained the property at 56 Spruce Street for over 50 years. Beginning in 1896, three generations of the Etwell family occupied the site for nearly a century. The David Cornell House is an important surviving example of worker’s housing in the City of Toronto that remained virtually unaltered for over 100 years. It is one of the earliest houses on Spruce Street, a residential street with a number of historically and architecturally important buildings, and an important feature of the Cabbagetown neighbourhood.

5.0 SOURCES

Arthur, Eric. Toronto: No Mean City. 3rd ed. Rev. and ed. by Stephen A. Otto. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1986.

Assessment Rolls, St. David’s Ward and Ward 2, City of Toronto, 1854 ff.

City of Toronto Directories, 1854 ff.

Decennial Censuses of Canada, 1881 and 1901.

Goad’s Insurance Atlases, 1880 ff.

Lundell, Liz. The Estates of Old Toronto. Erin, Ont.: Boston Mills Press, 1997.

Martyn, Lucy Booth. Toronto: 100 Years of Grandeur. Toronto: Pagurian Press, 1978, 1984.

McHugh, Patricia. Toronto Architecture: A City Guide. 2nd ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989.

Rust-D’Eye, George H. Cabbagetown Remembered. Erin, Ont.: Boston Mills Press, 1984.

Touring Old Cabbagetown. Toronto: Cabbagetown Preservation Association, n.d.

Subject: By-law: Designation of premises 56 Spruce Street (David Cornell House)
under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act
(Ward 28-Toronto Centre-Rosedale)
File: S118-G4

SCHEDULE "B"

In the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of part of Block A on Plan D-30 registered in the Land Registry Office for the Metropolitan Toronto Registry Division (No. 64), the boundaries of the land being described as follows:

COMMENCING at a point in the southerly limit of Block A being the northerly limit of Spruce Street distant 22.56 metres measured westerly thereon from the westerly limit of Sackville Street at a point in the production southerly of the centre line between the houses known in 1920 as numbers 56 and 58 Spruce Street;

THENCE northerly to and along the said centre line 15.98 metres to the northerly face of the northerly wall of house number 56 Spruce Street;

THENCE continuing still northerly along the westerly face of the westerly wall of house number 58 Spruce Street and along the easterly face of the frame shed attached to the northerly wall of house number 56 aforesaid and along the fence line between the rear of premises of said houses and along the frame shed standing in 1920 at the rear of premises known as 56 Spruce Street in all a further distance of 13.74 metres, more or less, to a point in the southerly limit of a lane at the rear of said premises;

THENCE westerly along the southerly limit of said lane a distance of 6.20 metres to a point;

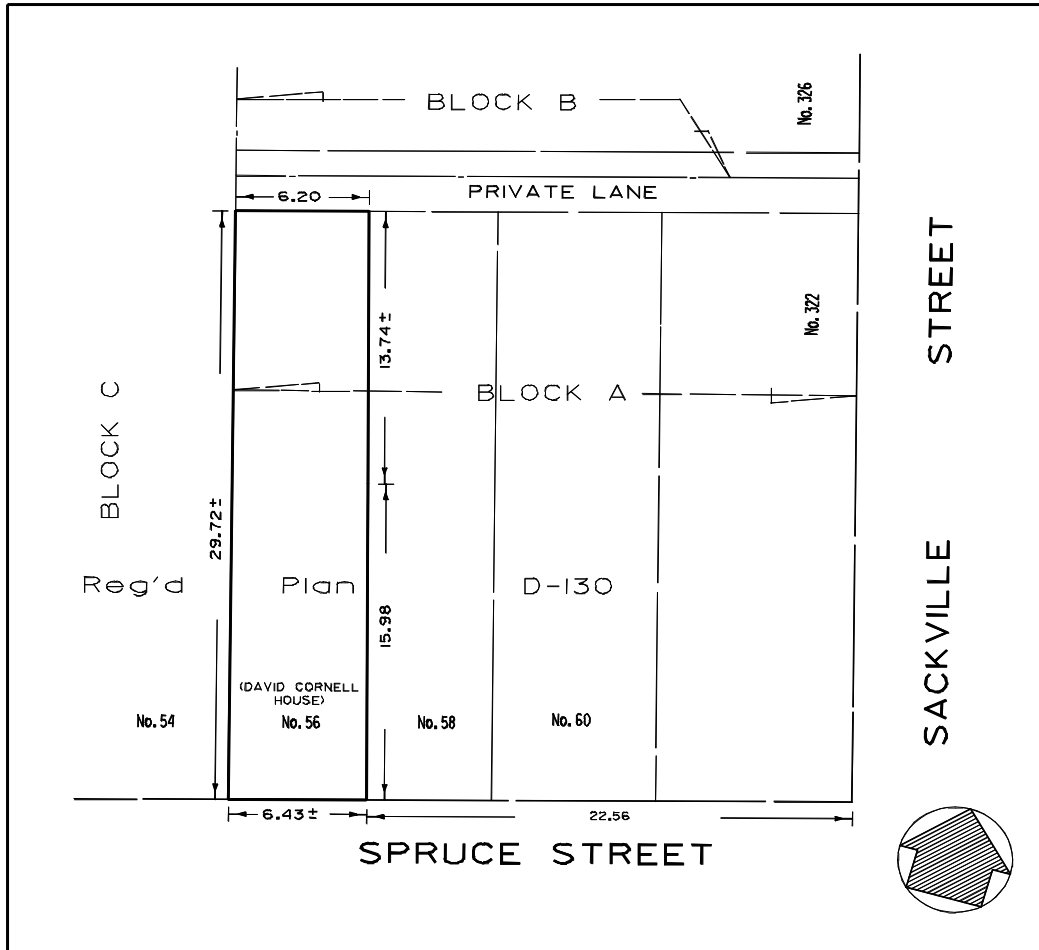
THENCE southerly in a line drawn parallel to the westerly limit of Sackville Street a distance of 29.72 metres more or less to a point in the northerly limit of Spruce Street;


THENCE easterly along the last mentioned limit a distance of 6.43 metres more or less to the point of commencement.

The said land being most recently described in Instrument CA658158.

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Plan SYE 2957 dated January 15, 2001, as set out in Schedule "C".

Schedule "C"




 Premises No. 56 SPRUCE STREET

NOTE:
 THIS SKETCH IS NOT A PLAN OF SURVEY
 AND HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM SURVEY
 NOTES AND OFFICE RECORDS, IT SHALL
 NOT BE USED EXCEPT FOR THE PURPOSE
 INDICATED IN THE TITLE BLOCK.

Toronto
 WORKS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE
 LAND DESIGNATED AS
 BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND
 HISTORICAL VALUE OR INTEREST

RATIO 1:250
 Metres  Metres

Drawn ME
 Checked W.J.M.
 Date: JAN 15, 2001

W.Kowalenko-City Surveyor

FILE
 S118-G4

PLAN SYE2957

SYE2957