

6 Henry Street: Beverley Place (Hydro Block)Description

The property at 6 Henry Street is recommended for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. Beverley Place, also known as the Hydro Block, was completed in 1978 on property bounded by Henry Street (east), Baldwin Street (south), Beverley Street (west) and Cecil Street (north). Built on land once reserved by the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission for a transformer station, the site was developed as an early project of CityHome, the City of Toronto's not-for-profit housing company. The innovative complex retained 12 late-19th century house form buildings on Beverley Street and introduced new construction on the remainder of the site. Extending along the west side of Henry Street, the four-storey Modern apartment building is identified for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The four-storey apartment building at 6 Henry Street has design or physical value as an important example of Modern architecture in Toronto that was planned to complement through its height, materials and massing the adjoining low-scale residential buildings. In the design, "the highrise form was turned on its side and laid along the street," showing "how high density housing could be achieved with architecture on a human scale" (Carter, Works: The Architecture of A. J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Company, 1968-1995, 1996, 21). The interior organization is expressed on the exterior. The lower floors contain two-storey units with individual entrances on Henry Street and Cecil Street and private yards to the rear. The smaller apartments on the upper two levels are accessed from a glazed corridor on the third storey that overlooks the streets below.

Beverley Place has historical value for its direct association with an event of significance to the urban development of Toronto. In the early 1970s, a series of late 19th century house form buildings along Baldwin, Henry and Cecil streets were demolished for a proposed Toronto Hydro transformer station. Local residents and heritage activists joined forces to protest the plans in one of the first successful combinations of citizen activism and heritage preservation in Toronto. As a result, Beverley Place was constructed, blending new construction and saving heritage buildings in an established residential neighbourhood.

Historically, Beverley Place also reflects the practice of the notable Toronto architect A. J. Diamond. After his partnership with Barton Myers ended in 1975, Diamond formed his own company that evolved into the firm of A. J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Company in 1989. While Diamond is best known for projects including the Metropolitan Toronto Central YMCA (1983), the Earth Sciences Centre at the University of Toronto (1989), and the Canadian Opera House (2006), his role in adapting heritage buildings was

reflected in the Eclipse Whitewear Building (built 1903; altered 1970) at 322 King Street West and Berkeley Castle (built 1871; altered 1988) at 2 Berkeley Street, which are recognized on the City's heritage inventory. In 1975, Diamond's firm designed Sherbourne Lanes, which illustrated the successful incorporation of the 19th century housing stock at #241-285 Sherbourne into a contemporary residential project. At Beverley Place, the architect worked with area residents and CityHome officials to create a low-rise high-density complex that complemented the existing heritage buildings.

Beverley Place has contextual value as it maintains and supports the late 19th century character of the Grange neighbourhood as it developed around the present-day Art Gallery of Ontario. Along the west edge of Beverley Place, the six semi-detached houses at 187-197 Beverley Street are included on the City's heritage inventory.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of Beverley Place relating to its design or physical value as a representative example of Modern styling applied to an apartment building are found on the exterior walls and the flat roof, with particular attention to the elevations facing Henry Street (east) and Cecil Street (north). Rising four stories, the structure is clad with red brick with concrete coping. The principal (east) façade consists of a long street wall along Henry Street that is broken by recessed areas where paired entrances and flat-headed window openings are placed in the first floor and balconies are introduced on the corners. The solidity of the wall is countered by the large window openings in the second floor, the glazing that illuminates the interior corridor on the third level, and the balcony doors in the upper storey. The fourth floor is set back, with angled brick walls dividing the units. The features described above continue on the north elevation on Cecil Street.