

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



**WILLIAM MCBEAN STORES AND HOUSES
21-35 HOWARD STREET, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

May 2010

1. DESCRIPTION



William McBean Houses at 25-35 Howard Street, with #35 on the left. The William McBean Stores at 21-23 Howard Street are shown on the right and on the cover of this report

21-35 Howard Street: William McBean Store and Houses	
ADDRESS	21-23, 25-27, 29-31 & 33-35 Howard Street (south side, east of Bleeker Street)
WARD	28 (Toronto Centre-Rosedale)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	21 Howard: Plan D172, Part Lot 51; 23, 25, 29-31 & 31-35 Howard: Plan 266, Lots A-E; 27 Howard: Plan D172, Part Lot 50
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Howard Street Neighbourhood
HISTORICAL NAME	William McBean Stores and Houses
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1876
ORIGINAL OWNER	William McBean, builder
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial & Residential
CURRENT USE*	Commercial and Residential * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	William McBean, builder (attribution) ¹
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION	Brick cladding; brick, stone & wood detailing
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Second Empire
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	25 Howard: c. 1988, rear addition; 27 Howard: 1982, 3 rd floor addition
CRITERIA	Design/Physical & Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Cultural Heritage Evaluation
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	May 2010

¹ While building permits do not survive for the 1870s, William McBean was listed in City Directories and other publications as a Toronto builder and realtor

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the properties at 21-35 Howard Street, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether they merit designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in Section 4 (Summary).

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
1874	Plan D172 is registered on lands owned by "Miss MP Sullivan", including the properties on the south side of East (now Howard) Street & east of Bleeker Street; following registration of the plan, William McBean acquires a series of buildings lots along East Street
1875	In April 1875, McBean's properties remain vacant according to the tax assessment rolls
1876	By April 1876, McBean is identified in the tax assessment rolls as the owner of eight "unfinished houses" on the south side of East Street, directly east of Bleeker Street
1877	In 1877, the city directory first records the addresses at #21-35 Howard
1878	William McBean registers Plan D266 as a further subdivision of the lands along the south side of East (now Howard) Street
1884	The buildings are illustrated on Goad's Atlas for 1884
1974	Toronto City Council lists the properties on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Howard Street Neighbourhood

The properties at 21-35 Howard Street are located in the Howard Street neighbourhood, which developed as part of the residential enclave southeast of Bloor Street East and Sherbourne Street. The origins of the area date to the late 18th century when it was one of the 100-acre "Park Lots" extending between present-day Queen Street and Bloor Street that were awarded to associates of the Provincial government as the setting of country estates. Park Lot 4 was granted to John White and, following his death in a notorious duel with John Small, his estate transferred the acreage to members of the Ridout family. Working with the neighbouring landowner, in 1845 Thomas Gibbs Ridout authorized construction along the west boundary of a road that became Sherbourne Street. This opened the area to residential development, and part of the tract was subdivided in 1852 when surveyor and architect John Howard laid out building lots northeast of Sherbourne Street and East (now Howard) Street. The earliest surviving houses in the area date to the 1870s. The 1884 Goad's Atlas (an extract of which is reproduced in Section 6 of this report) shows the build up of the Howard Street neighbourhood to that point. By the early 20th century, a dozen plans of subdivision – some of which were further divisions of earlier registered plans – were in place for the lands as development spread east of Sherbourne Street to Parliament Street. During this era, the area was among the desirable upscale residential neighbourhoods accessible to downtown Toronto, and its buildings reflected contemporary architectural styles. Within the community, St. Simon the Apostle (Anglican) Church (1888) was joined by a school

and fire hall (later demolished). The Howard Street neighbourhood provided a link to Rosedale via the “iron bridge” on Glen Road north of Howard Street.

With the construction of the Prince Edward (Bloor Street) Viaduct during World War I, Bloor Street was extended east of Sherbourne Street. While this development brought streetcar service directly to the Howard Street neighbourhood, it also removed the ravine setting that had previously formed the north edge of the area (as illustrated on Goad’s Atlases), as well as some of the residential buildings. Following World War II and the growth of middle class suburbs around the city, the neighbourhood along Howard Street went into a decline and many of the single family residences were converted into rooming houses. This situation coincided with trends in post-war planning that favoured the replacement of low-scale dwellings with high-rise buildings to meet the demand for rental housing in Toronto. Beginning in the 1950s, a development consortium acquired the majority of the properties in the area bounded by Bloor, Sherbourne, Wellesley and Parliament as the site of St. Jamestown, a collection of nearly 20 publicly and privately owned apartment towers. The proximity of St. Jamestown to the Howard Street neighbourhood is illustrated on the maps reproduced in Section 6 of this report. With the removal of the majority of the building stock, the William McBean Stores and Houses at 21-35 Howard Street are surviving reminders of the historical setting of the area.

William McBean Stores and Houses

The properties at 21-35 Howard Street are located on the southeast corner of Howard Street and Bleeker Street. The area south and east of Sherbourne Street and East (now Howard) Street was first subdivided into building allotments in 1874, after which William McBean acquired land in the 70-lot subdivision. Described in contemporary accounts as a “real estate owner and dealer”, McBean founded the McBean and Brother Building Company and constructed over 200 houses in the twenty-period between 1865 and 1885.² McBean was “generally considered as the pioneer of the northeastern section of the city,” which included the Howard Street neighbourhood.³

McBean retained some of the lots in his new subdivision, which remained vacant in 1875. By April 1876, he was assessed for eight unfinished houses on the south side of East Street, east of Bleeker. The semi-detached buildings were completed the following year, with some of the units occupied by McBean’s tenants. A grocer and butcher operated businesses in the corner building at #21-23 Howard, while the occupants of the three sets of semi-detached dwellings included a minister, widow, traveller and merchant. In 1878, McBean registered another smaller plan of subdivision on Howard Street between Bleeker Street and Ontario Street, after which he began selling the properties at 21-35 Howard Street. McBean oversaw the construction of additional buildings on the south side of Howard Street as illustrated on Goad’s Atlases for the late 19th century. The buildings east of the subject properties were demolished by the end of the 1950s.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The William McBean Stores and Houses are designed in the Second Empire style with the distinctive mansard (double slope) roofs that are its distinguishing feature. The origins of the

² History of Toronto and the County of York, 349

³ *Ibid*, 349

style date to mid-19th century France and the revitalization of Paris with the appearance of the New Louvre. Blending elements from Italian Renaissance and classical French architecture, the Second Empire was named for the reign of Napoleon III. Transported to North America, the style was first favoured for institutional buildings. In Toronto, the first residential application of the Second Empire style was the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario's official residence at King Street West and Simcoe Street (completed in 1870, the site is the location of present-day Roy Thomson Hall and illustrated in Section 6 of this report). Afterward, the Second Empire style appeared on both grand and modest buildings with different uses throughout the city.

The William McBean Stores at the southeast corner of Howard Street and Bleeker Street consist of 2½-storey semi-detached buildings that are clad with red brick and trimmed with contrasting buff brick, stone and wood. The rectangular plans are covered with mansard roofs with decorative slate shingles, paired brackets and round-headed dormers with wood detailing. The highlight of the design is the angled northwest corner, which is embellished with quoins that also mark the outer edges of the north and west elevations. Above the first-floor storefronts (which have been altered over time and are not described as heritage attributes) and on the exposed west wall, round-arched openings display hood moulds, keystones, corbels and, on the windows, sills with brackets. A secondary entrance is found on the west wall.

The William McBean Houses consist of three pairs of semi-detached houses, which are attached to the east end of the William McBean Stores. Extending west to east, each pair is set back in relation to its neighbour to follow the angled line of Howard Street. Featuring narrow rectangular plans, the 2½-storey structures have red brick cladding with stone and wood trim, and contrasting buff brick is applied for the window detailing and corner quoins (the façade at #25 Howard has been painted). Firebreak walls with brick chimneys separate the pairs of buildings, with portions of the east elevations exposed (some of the chimneys have been altered). The mansard roofs retain their decorative slate shingles and paired wood brackets. Each pair of buildings has three round-arched dormers with round-arched openings, with the central dormer containing a pair of windows. The semi-detached houses are organized as mirror images with the main entrances in the centre bays and the outer bays stepped forward. The segmental-arched door openings and the round-arched window openings have hood moulds with keystones and corbel stops. The semi-detached houses at #33 and #35 Howard display single-storey bay windows with iron cresting in the outer bays, while the remaining houses have single-storey storefronts (which are not identified as heritage attributes). The entire east elevation of #35 Howard is exposed as the end unit.

iv. CONTEXT

The properties at 21-35 Howard Street are located on the southeast corner of Howard Street and Bleeker Street in the Howard Street neighbourhood. The group of four pairs of adjoining semi-detached buildings represents the only remaining 19th century structures on the south side of Howard Street between Sherbourne Street and Parliament Street. The William McBean Stores and Houses are placed opposite the entrance to Glen Road, where they terminate the vista looking south along Glen Road to Howard Street.

3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. While the criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto uses it when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property or X if it is applicable, with explanatory text below.

Design or Physical Value	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	X
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	X
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

Early and Rare Examples of a Style and Type with a High Degree of Craftsmanship – The William McBean Stores and Houses are well-designed residential and commercial buildings from the mid 1870s that are among the earliest surviving structures in the Howard Street neighbourhood. The buildings bear the hallmarks of the popular late 19th century Second Empire style with the mansard roofs with patterned shingles and round-arched dormers with wood detailing. While the shop fronts have evolved over time, the upper stories of the stores and dwellings display the decorative patterned brickwork that contributes to their visual appeal. With the neighbouring Henry Joselin House at #4 Howard, the William McBean Stores and Houses are the only surviving buildings in the Howard Street neighbourhood designed in the Second Empire style.

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

No historical or associative values have been identified for the properties at 21-35 Howard Street.

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	X
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	X
iii. landmark	N/A

Character – The William McBean Stores and Houses are part of the collection of surviving heritage buildings dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries that characterizes the Howard Street neighbourhood as it originated as a desirable upscale residential enclave east of Sherbourne Street and south of Bloor Street East. With St. Simon the Apostle (Anglican) Church as the centerpiece of the historic community, the development of the area along Howard Street and the adjoining streets from the 1870s to World War I can be traced through the remaining built form, of which the William McBean Stores and Houses are integral parts.

Surroundings – The William McBean Stores and Houses are visually and historically linked to their surroundings in the Howard Street neighbourhood. As the only surviving heritage buildings on the south side of Howard Street between Sherbourne Street and Parliament Street, the William McBean Stores and Houses also anchor the Glen Road intersection. The group is highly visible in the Howard Street neighbourhood, where they are related by their provenance to the surviving row housing at 605 and 607 Sherbourne Street and the Henry Joselin House at 4 Howard Street.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the properties at 21-35 Howard Street have cultural heritage value as a group of late 19th century semi-detached residential and commercial buildings designed in the Second Empire style that are among the earliest surviving buildings in the Howard Street neighbourhood. While the William McBean Stores and Houses have individual design merit, they also contribute contextually to the historical character of the surviving late 19th- and early 20th-century residential enclave southeast of Sherbourne Street and Bloor Street West to which the buildings are historically and visually linked.

5. SOURCES

Archival Sources

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan D266, Blocks A-E, and Plan D172, Lots 50-51

Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, St. David's Ward, 1875-91, and Ward 2, Division 2, 1892 ff.

Building Records, plans for alterations and additions to 21-35 Howard Street, 1948-1996

City of Toronto Directories, 1875 ff.

Goad's Atlases, 1884, 1890, 1894, 1899, 1903, 1910 revised to 1912, 1910 revised to 1923, and 1931 revised to 1941

Photograph, Library and Archives Canada, #25590, 1912

Underwriters' Insurance Atlas, 1931 revised to 1941

Secondary Sources

Arthur, Eric, Toronto: no mean city, 3rd ed., revised by Stephen A. Otto, 1986

Blumenson, John, Ontario Architecture: a guide to styles and building terms, 1990

Cameron, Christina, and Janet Wright, Second Empire Style in Canadian Architecture, 1980

Crawford, Bess Hillery, Rosedale, 2000

History of Toronto and the County of York, Vol. 2, C. Blackett Robinson, 1885

Lundell, Liz, The Estates of Old Toronto, 1998

Maitland, Leslie, Jacqueline Hucker, and Shannon Ricketts, A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles, 1998

McHugh, Patricia, Toronto Architecture: a city guide, 2nd ed., 1989

Sewell, John, The Shape of the City, 1993

6. IMAGES



Photograph: 21-23 Howard Street (right), with 25 Howard Street on the left (April 2010)



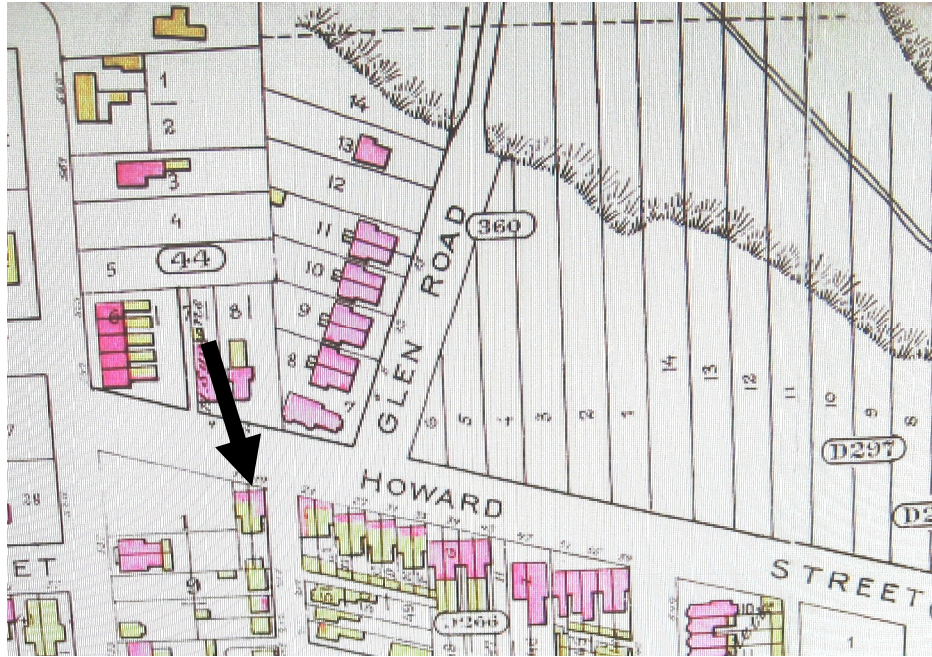
In centre, #29-31 (left) & #25-27 Howard (right) (April 2010)



Photograph, 33-35 Howard Street (April 2010)



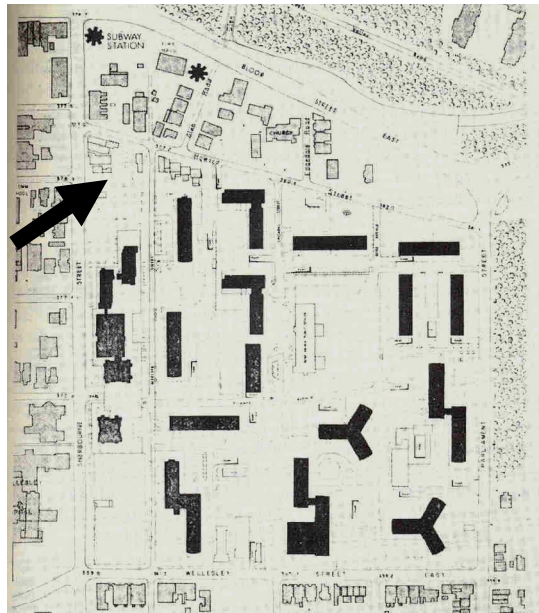
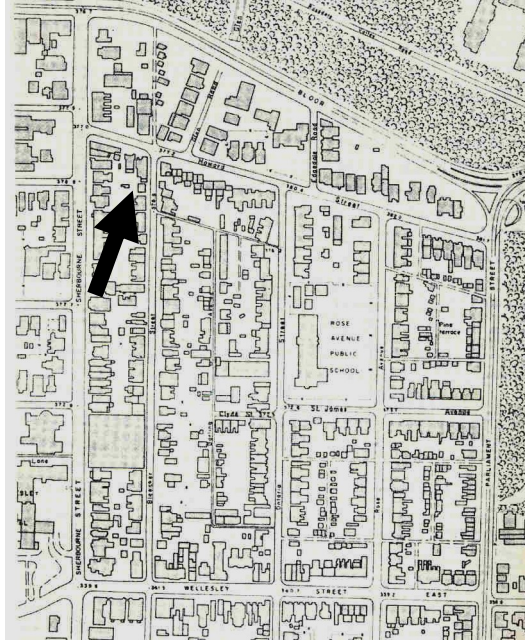
Photograph of Government House at King Street West and Simcoe Street, which introduced the Second Empire style for residential buildings in Toronto (Source: Library and Archives Canada, #25590, 1912)



Extract, Goad's Atlas, 1884, showing the properties at 21-35 Howard Street, consisting of four sets of semi-detached buildings with brick-clad north facades (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Extract, Underwriter's Insurance Atlas, 1931 revised to 1941 (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Property data maps, showing the context of the William McBean Buildings prior to and following the development of St. James town (the arrows mark the locations of the site) (Source: Sewell, 164-165)