

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



ANSON JONES HOUSE
603 SHERBOURNE STREET, TORONTO

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

May 2010

1. DESCRIPTION



Anson Jones House at 603 Sherbourne Street in 1953
(Source: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Item 387, May 12, 1953)

603 Sherbourne Street: Anson Jones House	
ADDRESS	603 Sherbourne Street (northeast corner of Howard Street)
WARD	28 (Toronto Centre-Rosedale)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 44, Part Lots 6 & 7
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Howard Street Neighbourhood
HISTORICAL NAME	Anson Jones House
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1895
ORIGINAL OWNER	Anson Jones, financier
ORIGINAL USE	Residential (single detached house)
CURRENT USE*	Residential (multi-residential building) * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Edmund Burke, architect
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION	Brick cladding; brick, stone, wood & terra cotta trim
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Queen Anne Revival
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	None identified
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative & Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	May 2010

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 603 Sherbourne Street, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits 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
1851	John Howard registers Plan 44, subdividing the lands along the east side of Sherbourne Street, north of present-day Howard Street
1874	Builder Henry Joselin acquires three building lots on the northeast corner of Sherbourne & Howard
1875	According to the tax assessment rolls, Joselin owns three "unfinished houses" on the site
1878	Joselin sells the corner unit at 603 Sherbourne to Anson Jones
1894	Jones is issued Building Permit No. 1793 for a 2½-storey brick dwelling on the corner site, with Edmund Burke listed as the architect
1895	The assessed value of the building rises from \$1300 in 1894 to \$4600, indicating the new house is completed by September 1895
1974	Toronto City Council lists the property on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Howard Street Neighbourhood

The property at 603 Sherbourne Street is 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 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 Anson Jones House at #603 Sherbourne is an important reminder of the historical setting of the area.

Anson Jones House

The Anson Jones House is located at the northeast corner of Sherbourne Street and Howard Street on property that was subdivided under Plan 44 in 1852 and remained vacant until it was purchased by Henry Joselin in 1874. A builder, Joselin acquired and developed property in the neighbourhood, including the dwelling he occupied at 4 Howard Street. According to the tax assessment rolls compiled in 1875, three unfinished houses at the northeast corner of Howard Street were under construction on Joselin’s Sherbourne Street allotment. The row houses were extended to five units, which were initially rented out by members of the Joselin family. In 1878, the corner property at #603 Sherbourne Street was purchased by Anson Jones.

At the time he relocated to the row house at Sherbourne and Howard, Anson Jones worked as a “ledger keeper” for the Quebec Bank. His gradual success in banking circles was attested to by his appearance at stock holders’ meetings and society events, which were noted in Toronto newspapers. In 1894, Jones received a permit for a new dwelling at #603 Sherbourne, which was completed by September 1895 when the tax assessment rolls recorded a building that was valued at a substantially higher amount than its neighbours. Following Jones’s death in 1906, his widow remained in the house, which was sold by her executors in 1930.

Edmund Burke, Architect

Anson Jones’s status as a Toronto financier enabled him to engage the notable Toronto architect, Edmund Burke (1850-1919), to design his Sherbourne Street house. After apprenticing with his uncle, the important architect Henry Langley, Burke joined him and another uncle, Edward Langley in the firm of Langley, Langley and Burke. Following Edward Langley’s retirement in 1883, Burke assumed the role of chief designer in the renamed partnership of Langley and Burke. One of the firm’s many commissions of note was Haddon Hall (1883), the Bloor Street

East residence of department store titan Robert Simpson. This association proved beneficial when Simpson awarded the project for Toronto's first Chicago-style department store to Burke following the architect's establishment of a solo practice in 1892. During the three-year period before Burke entered into a new partnership with J. E. C. Horwood, the architect prepared the plans for the Anson Jones House on Sherbourne Street. At the end of his career when the firm was known as Burke, Horwood and White, the Prince Edward (Bloor Street) Viaduct was perhaps Burke's most recognized commission.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Anson Jones House is designed with features of the Queen Anne Revival, which was the most popular style for residential buildings at the close of the 19th century. With its variety of materials, asymmetrical compositions, and projecting gables and porches, the style was "based on a renewed interest in late medieval, early Renaissance architecture in Britain of the 16th and 17th centuries" and was exemplified by the designs of British architect Richard Norman Shaw.¹ Edmund Burke is credited with introducing the Queen Anne Revival style to Toronto with Haddon Hall, and its influence was immediate in the city's most fashionable neighbourhoods.

The Anson Jones House displays the hallmarks of the Queen Anne Revival style in its varied cladding, projecting gables and porches, and assorted window shapes. Rising 2½ stories with an asymmetrical plan, the structure is covered by a cross-gable roof with cornices, dentils and brackets, a hipped dormer on the south slope, a brick chimney intersecting the south gable, and a tall brick chimney on the southeast wing. The large south-facing gable, as well as the open and enclosed sun porches, are clad with shingles and supported with large brackets. While the main entrance is placed on the long south façade facing Howard Street, the narrow Sherbourne Street elevation is highlighted with roughly textured sandstone and, beneath the west gable, corbelled brickwork. The fenestration mixes flat-headed window openings with a Palladian window in the west gable and an oval window on the south façade.

iv. CONTEXT

Located at the west end of the Howard Street neighbourhood, the Anson Jones House anchors the northeast corner of Sherbourne Street and Howard Street where its north wall adjoins the first of two neighbouring row houses at #605 and #607 Sherbourne Street. Together, the three house form buildings, along with the Thomas Cruttenden Building at #601 Sherbourne at the southwest corner of the intersection, mark the west entrance to the Howard Street neighbourhood.

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

¹ Maitland, The Queen Anne Revival Style in Canadian Architecture, 13

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

Representative example of a Style and Type with a High Degree of Craftsmanship – The Anson Jones House is an excellent and well-crafted house form building that is typical of the style and type represented in Toronto’s upscale neighbourhoods during the late 19th century. The dwelling displays the hallmarks of the Queen Anne Revival style with irregular massing, a mixture of materials, and an elaborate roofline, all of which are executed with a high degree of craftsmanship and highlighted by the sandstone detailing and corbelled brickwork. The setting of the house on a corner lot where the two street-facing facades are given equal attention is an important aspect of its design.

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	X

Architect – The Anson Jones House is associated with Toronto architect Edmund Burke, who was among the city’s best known and most successful architects during a career that extended over half a century and included associations with a series of talented practitioners. It was during the three-year period when Burke practiced alone and was “at the peak of his career, truly independent” that he designed the house at 605 Sherbourne Street.²

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 Anson Jones at #605 Sherbourne is 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 Anson Jones Houses is an integral part.

² Carr, 3

Surroundings – The property at 603 Sherbourne Street is visually and historically linked to its surroundings in the Howard Street neighbourhood. As a late 19th century house form building with distinctive architectural features, the Anson Jones Houses stands with the adjoining house form buildings at #605 and #607 Sherbourne and the neighbouring Thomas Cruttenden Building at #601 Sherbourne in anchoring the west entrance to Howard Street.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 603 Sherbourne Street has cultural heritage value has a well-crafted late 19th century house form building with Queen Anne Revival features that was designed by the notable Toronto architect, Edmund Burke. While the Anson Jones House has individual design and associative merits, it also contributes contextually to the historical character of the Howard Street neighbourhood as the surviving late 19th- and early 20th-century residential enclave southeast of Sherbourne Street and Bloor Street East to which the detached house form building is historically and visually linked.

5. SOURCES

Archival Sources

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Architectural drawings, Horwood Collection, 20-21, 28, and 44
Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, St. Thomas's Ward, 1875-91, and Ward 2, Division 2, 1892 ff.
Building Permit #1793, November 13, 1894, City of Toronto Archives
Building Records, plans for alterations and additions to 603 Sherbourne Street, 1951-87
City of Toronto Directories, 1877 ff.
Goad's Atlases, 1884, 1890, 1894, 1899, 1903, 1910 revised to 1912, 1910 revised to 1923, and 1931 revised to 1941
Photograph, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Item 387, May 12, 1953, and Item 420, March 10, 1954
Underwriters' Insurance Atlas, 1931 revised to 1941

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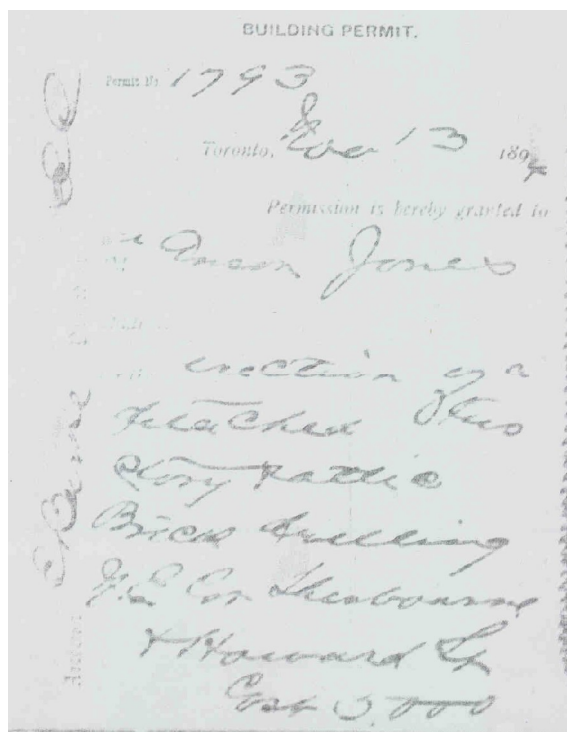
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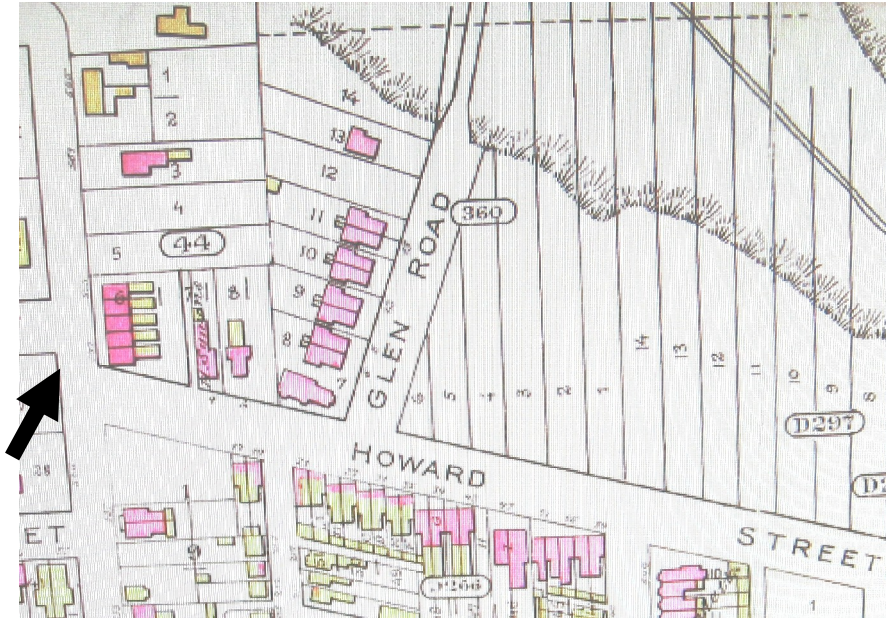
6. IMAGES



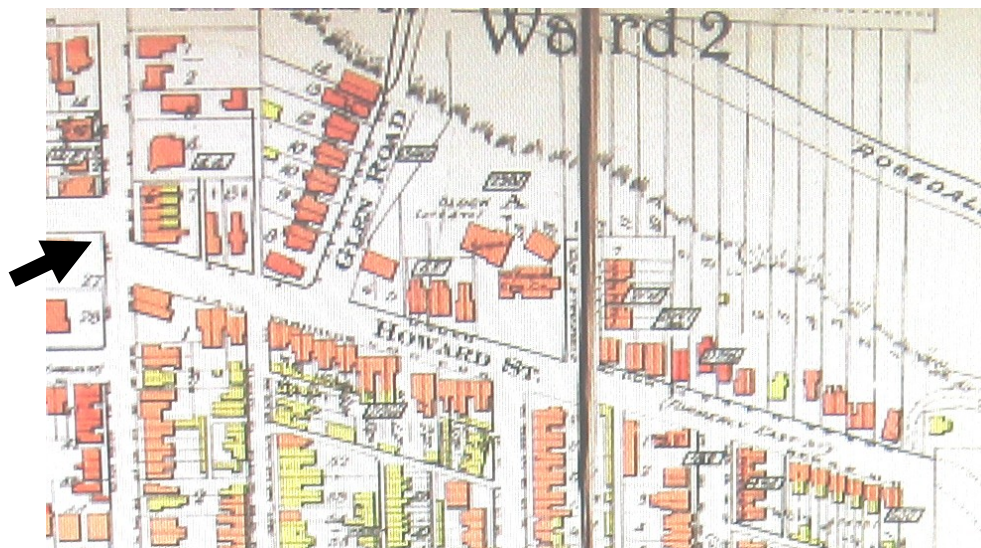
The Anson Jones House at 603 Sherbourne Street is shown on the right, with the surviving row houses at #605 (centre) and #607 Sherbourne (left), after the widening of the thoroughfare and the removal of the trees in the mid 1950s (Source: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Item 420, March 10, 1954)



Building Permit #1793 (November 13, 1894) for the Anson Jones House at 601 Sherbourne Street (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



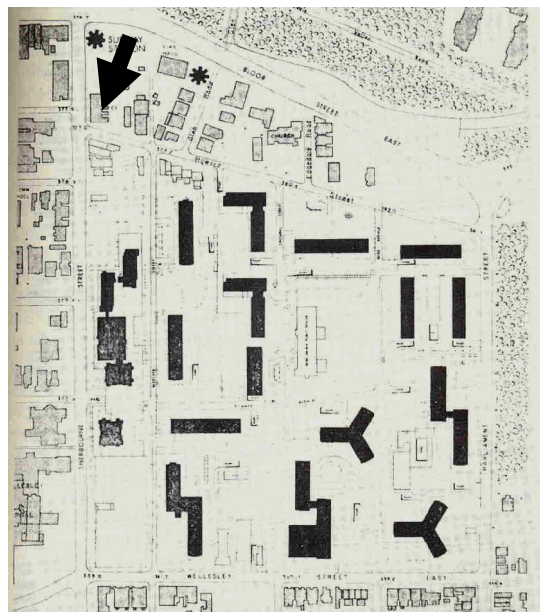
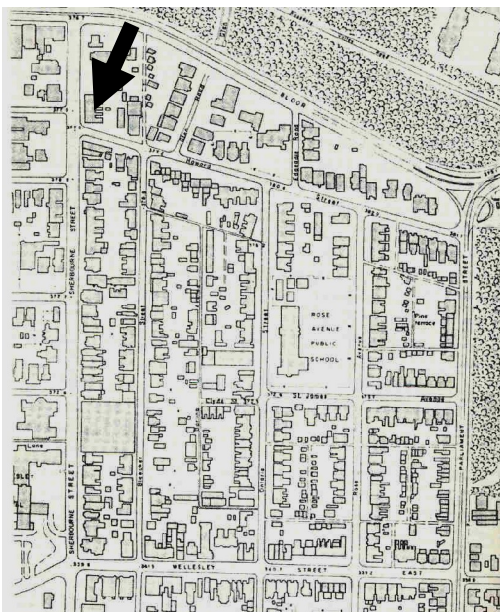
Extract, Goad's Atlas, 1884, showing the original structure at 603 Sherbourne Street, which was constructed as part of a row of house form buildings
 (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



On this extract from Goad's Atlas for 1910 updated to 1912, the Anson Jones House is clearly distinguished from its neighbours on Sherbourne Street
 (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



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



Property data maps, showing the context of the Anson Jones House prior to and following the development of St. Jamestown (the arrows mark the locations of the site) (Source: Sewell, 164-165)