

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION SUMMARY: 297 AND 299 SHERBOURNE STREET



William Elliott Houses: principal (west) elevations (Heritage Preservation Services, 2016)

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Key Date	Historical Event
1857 Feb	Part of Park Lot 4 on the east side of Sherbourne Street between Dundas (south) and Gerrard (north) is subdivided and registered as Plan 193
1858	The subject properties remain vacant as illustrated on Boulton's Atlas
1884	On the first Goad's atlas depicting the neighbourhood, the subject properties contain a single detached rough cast (stucco) house
1886 Sept	According to the tax assessment rolls, William Elliott, Sr. owns the stuccoed house on Sherbourne Street, which he rents to his son and namesake (the men are identified as "painters")
1887 Sept	Elliott's properties contain "unfinished houses" according to the tax assessment rolls and the city directory ¹
1888 Sept	The tax assessment rolls indicate that Elliott rents the semi-detached house at

¹ Building permits are missing for the period from September 1886 to September 1887 when the houses were constructed and they are not identified in the Globe's tender calls. Elliott's properties are numbered 267 and 267 Sherbourne until 1889

	present-day 297 Sherbourne to manufacturer John S. Williams (the adjoining residence at 299 is vacant)
1888	According to the City Directory for 1889 (with information dating to the previous year), sculptor MacCarthy Hamilton is the occupant of present-day 299 Sherbourne ²
1889 Sept	Williams continues to occupy 297 Sherbourne, while the new tenant of 299 Sherbourne is William Pearson, general manager of the Consumers' Gas Company
1890	Elliott's semi-detached houses are depicted on the update to Goad's Atlas
1896	William Elliott's estate retains the subject properties, which are rented under the direction of his executor
1899 June	George Gooderham is the new owner of the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street
1956 Feb	A building application is made to convert the dwellings to lodging houses, with Richard Fisher identified as the architect
1973	An archival photograph shows the properties before alterations are made to the west elevations (Image 9)
1992	An application is made for the rear (east) addition and new porch railings on the west elevations
2012	Following City Council's authorization to study the Garden District as a potential Heritage Conservation District (under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street are included within the study area boundaries

The properties at present-day 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street are located in the Toronto neighbourhood now known as the Garden District for its proximity to Allan Gardens (the City-owned park that occupies most of the block bounded by Gerrard, Sherbourne, Carlton and Jarvis streets). The lands adjoining the southeast corner of Gerrard and Sherbourne streets originated as part of one of the 100-acre Park Lots surveyed following the founding of York (Toronto) and awarded to associates of the provincial government as the setting of country estates. Park Lot 4 was patented in 1797 and, following a series of transactions, the west part was acquired by Thomas Gibbs Ridout, Cashier for the Bank of Upper Canada (Image 2).³ In 1845, Ridout and William Allan (owner of the adjoining land to the west) opened Sherbourne Street along the boundary separating their park lots. Ridout built a country house named "Sherborne Villa" (sic) on part of Park Lot 4, with the remainder of the acreage sold and subdivided prior to and following his death in 1861. The portion on the east side of Sherbourne Street between present-day Dundas and Gerrard streets was subdivided under Plan 193 in 1857 (Image 3) and illustrated on Boulton's Atlas the next year (Image 4). The first Goad's Atlas for the area in 1884 showed the development to date, when William Elliott, Sr., owned the detached house form building with stucco cladding on the subject properties (Image 5).

² MacCarthy Hamilton (1846-1939) was noted for his bronze sculptures of historical figures, including those on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and at Queen's Park, the Royal Ontario Museum and Ryerson University in Toronto

³ Park Lot 4 was granted to John White, Attorney General for the Province of Upper Canada (Ontario) who was killed in York's first duel in 1818

Elliott commissioned the pairs of semi-detached houses at present-day 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street, which were described as unfinished when the tax assessment rolls were compiled in September 1887. The houses were first illustrated on the update to Goad's Atlas in 1890 (Image 5). Elliott rented the house at 297 Sherbourne to John S. Williams, manager of the McAlpin (sic) Tobacco Company. According to the city directories, the notable Canadian sculptor MacCarthy Hamilton was the first occupant of 299 Sherbourne Street, followed by William H. Pearson, the general manager of the Consumers' Gas Company (Image 7).⁴

William Elliott's estate conveyed the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street to George Gooderham, member of the founding family of the Gooderham and Worts Distillery, as part of his real estate portfolio.⁵ Following World War II and the conversion of the buildings to lodging houses, the properties were illustrated on updates to the Underwriters' Survey Bureau's atlases and shown in archival photographs (Images 6 and 8-9).

The William Elliott Houses display features of the Queen Anne Revival, which was the most elaborate of the styles popular for residential architecture in the late Victorian era. Inspired by the designs of British architect Richard Norman Shaw and his contemporaries and popularized in North America via periodicals and pattern books, the style is identified by its blend of picturesque compositions, the variety of materials, window shapes and roof types, and the elaborate detailing. The Queen Anne Revival styling of the William Elliott Houses is seen in the clipped gable roof covering the buildings, the asymmetrical treatment of the principal (west) elevations with polygonal versus square bay windows to distinguish the separate units, as well as the shingled jetty on 297 Sherbourne versus the variety of window shapes on 299 Sherbourne. While the William Elliott Houses have been altered over time with additional or extended openings on the west elevations and an extensive rear (east) addition, they retain the integrity of their designs and communicate their values and attributes.

Contextually, the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street are located on the east side of Sherbourne Street, south of Gerrard Street East (Image 1). The William Elliott Houses are part of an extended block of low-rise residential buildings, including those preserved as part of Sherbourne Lanes (241-285 Sherbourne Street), the innovative low-rise housing development that represented an innovative approach to urban design and renewal in the 1970s.⁶ With the removal over time of the house form buildings anchoring the southeast corner of Gerrard and Sherbourne streets, the properties at 297 and 299

⁴ Hamilton afterward occupied the adjoining property at 301 Sherbourne Street (which is no longer extant), while Pearson later commissioned his own residence on Sherbourne Street. While Pearson was linked to the subject properties for a longer period than Hamilton, both men are valued through their historical associations with the community now known as the Garden District where they lived in more than one dwelling, rather than through their occupancies of 299 Sherbourne

⁵ Gooderham owned the properties during the period when he served as president of the Bank of Toronto (1882-1905), afterward amalgamated as the Toronto-Dominion Bank

⁶ Polo, 37

Sherbourne Street bookend the intersection along with the neighbouring semi-detached houses at 201 and 203 Gerrard Street East (Image 8).

EVALUATION: Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed by the Province of Ontario for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

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

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

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

The properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street have cultural heritage value as fine representative examples of late 19th century semi-detached houses designed with features of the popular Queen Anne Revival style. The William Elliott Houses reflect the style in the clipped gable roof, the individual treatment of the units on the principal (west) elevations with the different types of bay windows, the shingled jetty on 297 Sherbourne, the variety of window shapes on 299 Sherbourne, and the decorative brickwork.

The William Elliott Houses are valued for their historical associations with the Toronto neighbourhood now known as the Garden District, which developed in the 19th century as one of the most sought-after residential enclaves in Toronto where the city's community leaders lived. The subject properties were owned or occupied by prominent citizens, including William Pearson, general manager of the Consumers' Gas Company, and George Gooderham of the Gooderham and Worts Distillery.

Contextually, the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street contribute to the character of the Garden District as it developed as an upscale neighbourhood adjoining Allan Gardens where Sherbourne Street and other routes were lined with elaborate residential buildings. The William Elliott Houses are also historically, physically and visually linked to their setting on Sherbourne Street, south of Gerrard Street where they form part

of a streetscape of heritage buildings that includes Sherbourne Lanes and others recognized on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. .

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics of the William Elliott Houses at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the buildings on the east side of Sherbourne Street, south of Gerrard Street East
- The scale, form and massing of the 2½-storey house form buildings above the raised stone bases with the window openings (the openings have been altered)
- The materials, with the red brick cladding and the brick, stone and wood detailing, including the brick detailing and stone sills on the window openings
- The clipped gable roof covering the buildings, with the chimneys (now altered) and, on the west slope, the two gables with the wood trim and the shingled jetty with the wood detailing on 297 Sherbourne Street
- The arrangement of the principal (west) elevations, with the entrances placed side-by-side in the centre of the first (ground) storey (the doors have been replaced)
- Flanking the entrances on the west elevations, the polygonal bay window with the flat-headed window openings on 297 Sherbourne, and the square bay window that mixes round- and segmental-arched window openings on 299 Sherbourne
- The side elevations (north and south) with the flat-headed and round-arched window openings
- The corbelled brickwork on the principal (west) and side (north and south) elevations

On the west elevation, the below-grade entrances to the basements, the door openings in the second storey (which are not original) and the enlarged window openings in the centre of the attic storey are not identified as heritage attributes, as well as the large rear (east) addition.

SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street have cultural heritage value and merit inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. The William Elliott Houses have design, associative and contextual values as fine representatives of late 19th century semi-detached house form buildings with Queen Anne Revival detailing that are historically associated with the development of the area as a high-end residential enclave. Contextually, the properties support the character of the Garden District where they are historically, visually and physically linked to their settings adjoining the intersection of Gerrard and Sherbourne streets.

SOURCES

Archival photographs, City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Historical Board (individual

citations with the images)

Assessment Rolls, St. Thomas Ward, 1886-1891, and Ward 2, Division 1, 1892 ff.

Boulton, Atlas of the City of Toronto, 1858

Building Records, Toronto and East York, 1956 and 1992

City Directories, 1875 ff.

Crookshank, Tom, and John De Visser, Old Toronto Houses, 2003

Goad's Atlases, 1884-1923

Land Records, Plan 193, Lots 18-19

Lumsden, Liz, The Estates of Old Toronto, 1997

Maitland, Leslie, The Queen Anne Revival Style in Canadian Architecture, 1990

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

Newman, Peter C., ed., Debrett's Illustrated Guide to the Canadian Establishment, 1983

Pearson family records, www.ancestry.ca

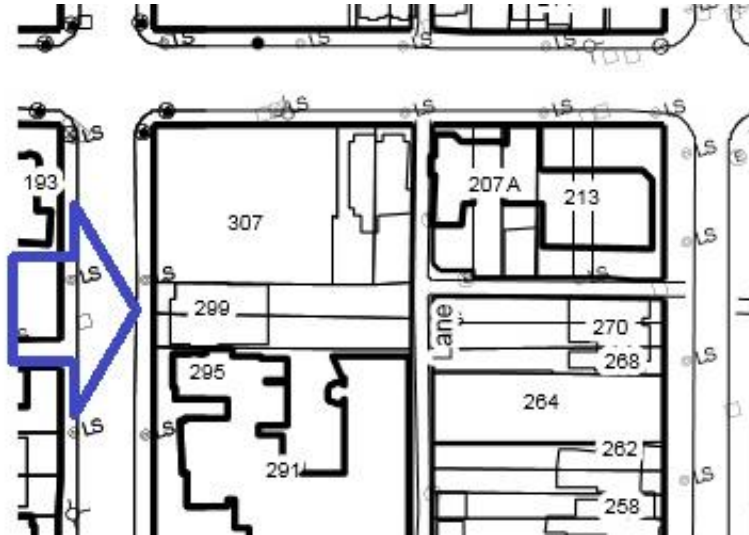
Pearson, W. H., Recollections and Records of Toronto of Old, 1914

Polo, Marco, "Sherbourne Lanes," entry in East/West: a Guide to Where People Live in Downtown Toronto 2000

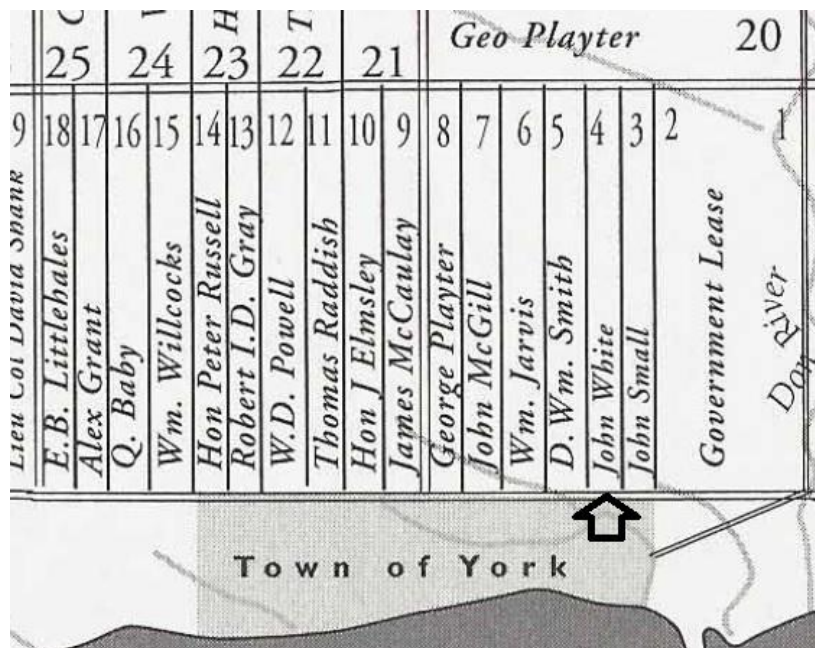
"Richard Alexander Fisher," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, <http://www.dictionarhofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1968>

Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1921 revised to 1943, and 1954

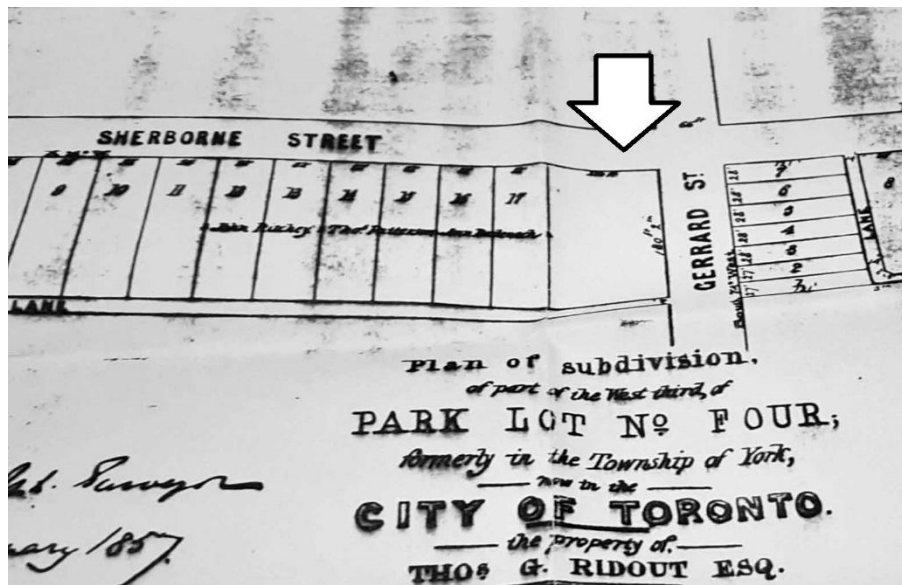
IMAGES - maps and atlases are followed by other archival images. **Arrows** mark the locations of the subject properties. All maps are oriented with north on the top unless indicated.



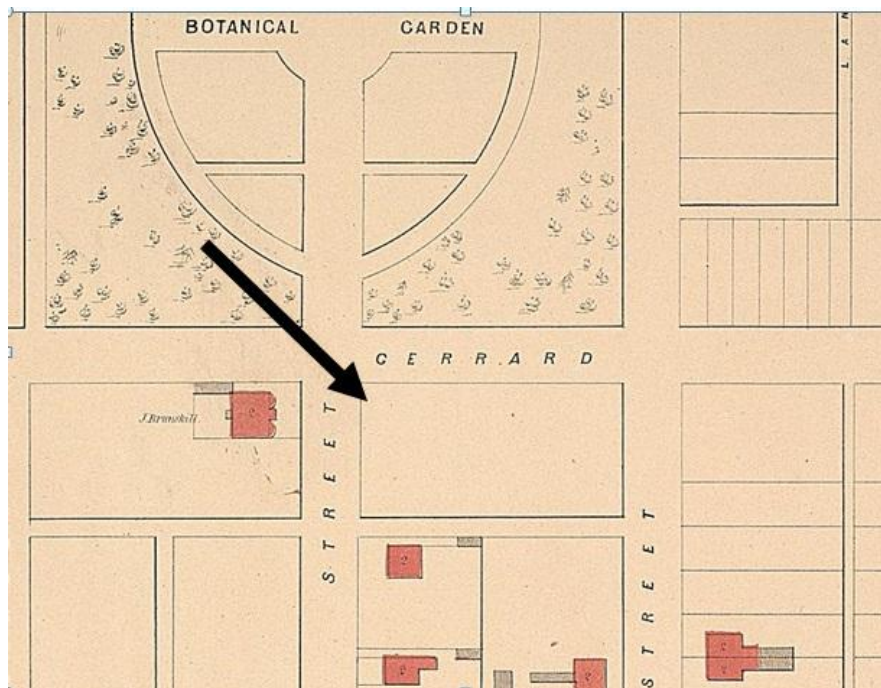
1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of the properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street near the southeast corner of Sherbourne and Gerrard streets.



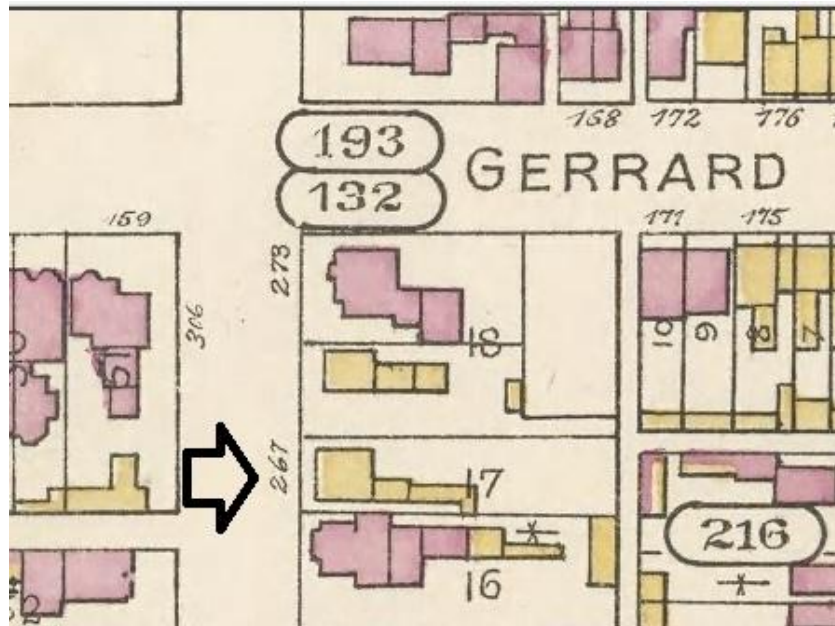
2. Location Map, Park Lots: the subject properties are located on part of former Park Lot 4 (Lundell, 10).



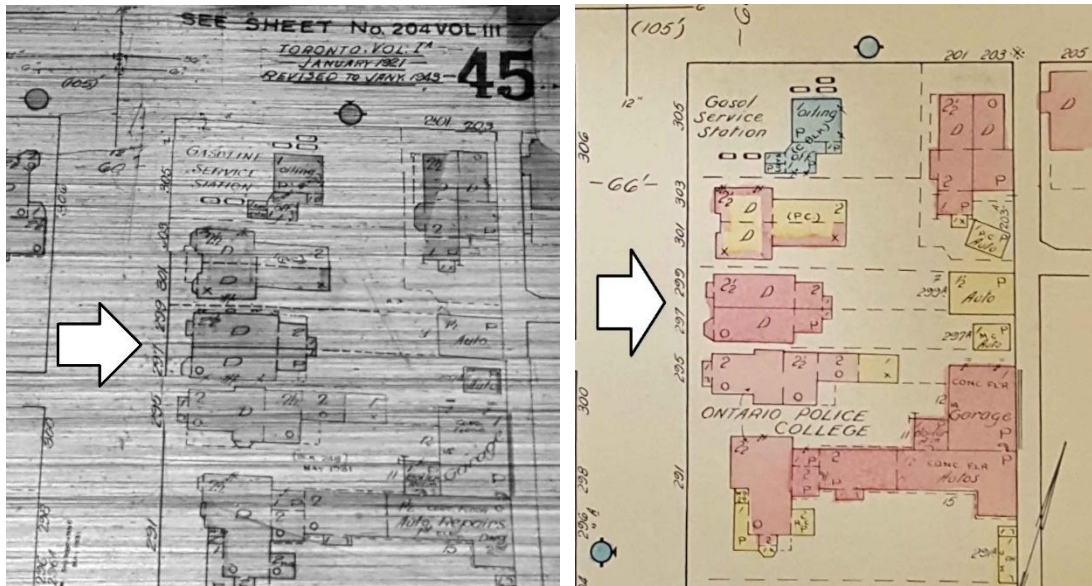
3. Plan 193, 1857: showing part of the residential subdivision registered on part of Park Lot 4 where the subject properties were subsequently developed on the unnumbered block adjoining the southeast corner of Gerrard and Sherbourne streets (the plan is oriented with north on the right) (Toronto Land Registry Office).



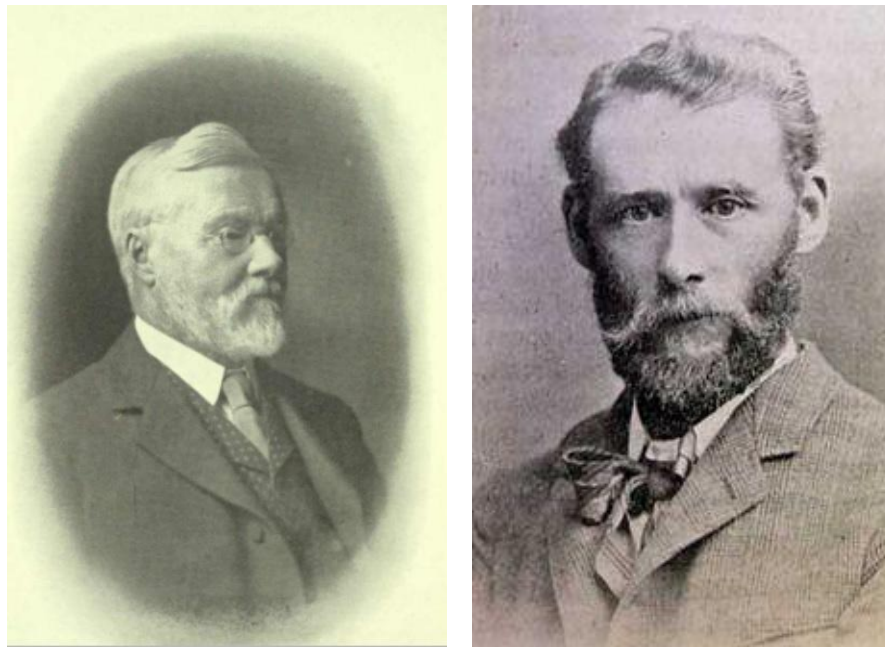
4. Boulton's Atlas, 1858: the first fire insurance atlas for Toronto shows the undeveloped land adjoining the corner of Gerrard and Sherbourne streets where the subject properties are now located.



5. Goad's Atlases, 1884 (top) and 1890: the single detached house form building (described as roughcast or stucco in archival records) occupied the subject properties when Goad's first illustrated the area (above), but the subject semi-detached houses were shown when the atlas was updated (below).



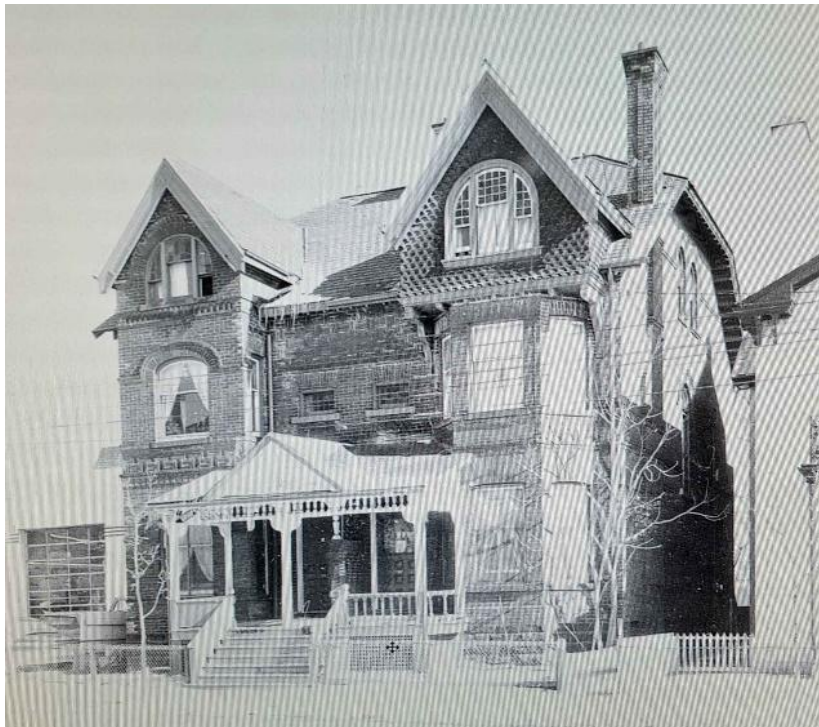
6. Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1921 revised to 1943 (left) and 1954 (right): showing the subject properties during and following World War II after the building on the corner of Sherbourne and Gerrard streets was replaced by a gas station and before the removal of the semi-detached houses at 301 and 303 Sherbourne (see also Image 8 below).



7. Archival Photographs, William Henry Pearson (left) and MacCarthy Hamilton (right): images of the general manager of the Consumers' Gas Company and the notable Canadian sculptor who were early occupants of 299 Sherbourne Street (Pearson, overleaf, and http://thecanadasite.com/art/art34a_maccarthy1.html).



8. Archival Photograph, Southeast Corner of Gerrard Street East and Sherbourne Street, 1960s: after the house form buildings adjoining the corner were replaced, the subject properties at 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street (right) remained to bookend the intersection with the neighbouring semi-detached houses at 201 and 203 Gerrard Street East (left) (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Item 5595).



9. Archival Photograph, 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street, 1973: showing the William Elliott Houses prior to the alterations to the principal (west) elevation (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 2043, Series 1587, Files 1 and 253).



10. Current Photograph, 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street, 2016: looking southeast from Allan Gardens and showing the William Elliott Houses (right), which bookend the intersection of Sherbourne and Gerrard streets along with the semi-detached house form buildings on the neighbouring properties at 201 and 203 Gerrard Street East (left) (Heritage Preservation Services).



11. Current Photograph, 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street, 2016: in the view looking north along the east side of Sherbourne Street to Gerrard Street East, the William Elliott Houses (left) are shown in context with the neighbouring house form buildings, which are listed on the City's Heritage Register (Heritage Preservation Services).



12. Current Photographs, 297 and 299 Sherbourne Street, 2016: showing the north elevation from Gerrard Street East (above), the west and south elevations (below left), and the rear (east) elevation (below right) (Heritage Preservation Services).