

REVISED REASONS FOR DESIGNATION:  
21 GRENVILLE STREET (STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)

ATTACHMENT NO. 3

John Irwin House

Description

The property at 21 Grenville Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the south side of Grenville Street, west of Yonge Street, the John Irwin House (1872-73) is a 2½-storey house form building. City Council listed the property on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2007.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 21 Grenville Street has design value as the site of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century house form building with features of the Second Empire styling. While the style with its distinctive mansard roof was popular for domestic architecture during the Victorian era, the John Irwin House is a rare surviving example of its application in the former residential neighbourhood northwest of Yonge Street and College Street.

The John Irwin House bears the name of its original owner, a contractor who developed a series of properties along Grenville Street where he resided at #21 in 1879. Irwin was also a municipal politician who was associated with the development of parkland on the Toronto Islands. The property at 21 Grenville Street was inherited by his grandson, Irwin John Ardagh, a noted athlete, whose family retained the site until 1935.

Methodist minister and publisher William Briggs occupied the property at 21 Grenville Street for nearly forty years beginning in 1880. Briggs was a prominent leader of the Methodist Church in Canada who served as pastor of Metropolitan Methodist Church (now Metropolitan United Church) in Toronto. Coinciding with his occupancy of the Grenville Street property, from 1879 to 1918 Briggs was the business manager of the Methodist Book and Publishing House in Toronto. Under Briggs' leadership, secular works were added to the existing catalogue of religious material, turning the company into one of the largest publishing enterprises in Canada in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Contextually, the property at 21 Grenville Street is historically linked to its surroundings as it is the last remaining intact 19<sup>th</sup> century house form building in the residential subdivision developed on the Elmsley Villa Estate west of Yonge Street and north of College Street. As the area evolved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the northward extension of Bay Street and the introduction of commercial and industrial buildings, the John Irwin House survived as a reminder of the neighbourhood's domestic origins.

## Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 21 Grenville Street are:

- The 2½-storey detached house form building
- The scale, form and massing of the structure, with the main house and rear (south) wing
- The materials, with red brick cladding, and brick, stone and wood trim
- The mansard roof, with the pair of segmental-arched dormers on the north slope and the pair of brick chimneys on the east end
- The principal (north) facade, where the main entrance is placed in the right (west) bay
- The fenestration, with the two-storey bay window on the north facade, the single segmental-arched openings in the raised base, above the north entry and on the east elevation
- The decorative detailing, with contrasting buff brick applied for the quoins, string courses and hood moulds
- ~~The view of the north façade and the east elevation from Yonge Street~~
- **The placement within the streetscape and the setback of the house form building on the south side of Grenville Street**