



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Conservation Review Board Report, Amendment of
Reasons for Designation and Passage of Designating
By-law - 24 Mercer Street**

Date:	May 25, 2013
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division
Wards:	Ward 20 - Trinity-Spadina
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Toronto City Council with advice on the decision of the Conservation Review Board (CRB) regarding Council's notice of intention to designate the property at 24 Mercer Street (Alexander Johnston House). This report also provides recommendations to Council regarding the completion of the designation of the property.

On May 6, 2013, the CRB issued its decision resulting from the hearing for the appeal to the notice of intention to designate the property at 24 Mercer Street. The CRB recommends that the subject property be protected under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value or interest, but recommends that the third storey of the Alexander Johnston House be excluded as a heritage attribute in the Reasons for Designation.

In consideration of the decision of the CRB, this report also provides recommendations on changes to the original Reasons for Designation adopted by Council at its meeting of March 4, 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that

1. City Council pass a by-law designating the property at 24 Mercer Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

2. City Council replace the original Reasons for Designation adopted by Council on March 4, 2012 with the Revised Reasons for Designation found in Attachment No. 3 to the report (May 25, 2013) from the Acting Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The property at 24 Mercer Street was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in April 1983. The site contains a two-storey house form building dating to 1858, which is one of the earliest surviving structures in the city and a rare extant example of the practice of early Toronto architect John Tully. Additions were added for a factory in the early 20th century and, more recently, the property is used as office space.

In 2011, the property owner submitted a development application to construct a new residential building on the property that retained the lower two stories of the Alexander Johnston House. The recommendations in a staff report (December 20, 2011) concerning the designation of the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act were adopted by the Toronto Preservation Board (January 16, 2012) and the Toronto East York Community Council (February 14, 2012). Council stated its intention to designate the property at its meeting of March 4, 2012, and the property owner appealed the proposed designation to the CRB.

The CRB convened four pre-hearing conferences between September 2012 and January 2013, and a separate meeting between City staff and the property owner took place in December 2012. The hearing was held on February 4, 2013 and lasted one day.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

As a result of the pre-hearing conferences and a meeting between the City and the property owner, the parties agreed that the designation of the portion of the property containing the surviving two stories of the historic Alexander Johnston House (1858) was undisputed. During these discussions, the parties also agreed to remove the east wall from the list of heritage attributes in the Reasons for Designation because it will be concealed when the adjoining condominium tower (under construction in May 2013) is completed. However, no agreement was reached concerning the identification as a heritage attribute of the third-floor addition to the original house, and this became the sole focus of the hearing.

In its report issued on May 6, 2013 (Attachment No. 1), the CRB determined that "based on the evidence heard, the Review Board supports the joint position of the parties as it pertains to the designation of the property, and thus recommends that the property be protected under s.29 of the Act for its cultural heritage value or interest. However, in light of the position of the City with regard to the exclusion of the rear additions (whose historical significance is more evident than the third storey façade), the Review Board

recommends the adoption of the revised wording outlined in Exhibits 3A/B, which expressly excludes the third storey, south (street) façade in any description of the heritage attribute of the property known municipally as 24 Mercer Street in the City of Toronto" (page 10).

COMMENTS

The original Reasons for Designation are attached (Attachment No. 2). At the Conservation Review Board hearing, the City offered testimony that based on archival evidence the factory additions to the rear of the Alexander Johnston House, as well as the third-storey addition to the house form building occurred in the early 20th century after the Great Fire of 1904 and the conversion of the formerly residential neighbourhood where it is located to an industrial one. The City submitted that the third-storey addition to the Alexander Johnston House represented the transformation of the building from a residential to an industrial one and thus has significance. The owner questioned the date, use and significance of the third floor addition.

In its detailed analysis of the evidence (pages 7-10), the CRB responds that "Given the City's approach to seek protection of the street façade of the building, omitting the seemingly important industrial three-storey factory in the rear, the Review Board agrees with the Owner that the integrity and meaning of the third-storey façade, in isolation, is significantly diminished" and it does not meet the test of Regulation 9/06 (page 9). As a result, "the Review Board is of the opinion that the City could have supported the historical significance of the transformation of the neighbourhood from residential to industrial, by reference to the more directly associated changes at the rear of the property, rather than relying solely on how the transformation may be reflected through contextual elements of the street façade" (page 9).

The CRB concluded that the cultural heritage value of the third-storey façade is "greatly diminished" without the inclusion of the factory additions to the rear (north end) of the property. Staff continue to believe that the third storey is significant. However, in reviewing the decision, staff concur that the staff report evaluating the site failed to give detailed consideration to the independent value of the factory additions to the historic house form building and provide the documentary evidence linking the construction of the third storey to the factory additions.

Following receipt of the CRB's decision, staff have consulted with City Legal about how to proceed. The CRB's decision is advisory; it is not binding on Council. In view of the CRB decision, one option would be for City Council to revise the Reasons for Designation to include all of the additions to the Alexander Johnston House. However, staff feel in all of the circumstances, including that during the CRB appeal process the parties agreed to remove reference to the east wall of the Alexander Johnston House, this would not be appropriate. Staff recommend that Council adopt the Revised Reasons for Designation (Attachment No. 3) as prepared by staff. The Revised Reasons are not identical to those outlined in Exhibit 3A/B (referenced in the CRB decision), but follow the CRB's recommendation in removing the reference from the heritage attributes to the third-storey addition to the house form building. The Revised Reasons also remove from

the list of heritage attributes the east wall of the Alexander Johnston House as previously agreed to by the parties. Heritage Preservation Services is satisfied in the circumstances that the Revised Reasons for Designation preserve the core heritage attributes and values of the property at 24 Mercer Street.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Robert Freedman
Director, Urban Design
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Conservation Review Board Hearing Report, 24 Mercer Street
Attachment 2: Original Reasons for Designation
Attachment 3: Revised Reasons for Designation

**Environment and Land Tribunals
Ontario**

Conservation Review Board

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ISSUE DATE: May 6, 2013

IN THE MATTER OF subsection 29(5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended

Objector/Owner:	2071430 Ontario Inc.
Subject:	Notice of Intention to Designate (Alexander Johnston House)
Property Address:	24 Mercer Street
Legal Description:	Plan 57, Lot 14 (Mercer Street, north side)
Municipality:	City of Toronto
CRB Case No.:	CRB1203

Peter A.P. Zakarow, Chair
Jerry V. DeMarco, Member
Marc Denhez, Member

APPEARANCES

Counsel for the City of Toronto:
Amanda Hill, Legal Services, City of Toronto

Counsel for the Owner, 2071430 Ontario Inc.:
Dawne Jubb, Glover & Associates

OVERVIEW

This Hearing was convened under s. 29(8) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18, as amended ("Act"), for the purpose of reporting to the Council of the City of Toronto ("City"), whether, in the opinion of the Conservation Review Board ("Review Board"), the property known as 24 Mercer Street (Alexander Johnston House) ("property") should be protected by by-law under s. 29 of the Act.

The Owner, 2071430 Ontario Inc. ("Owner") and the City disagree on only one aspect of the proposed designation, namely whether all three storeys of the south (street) elevation façade of the brick building at 24 Mercer Street are elements of cultural heritage value or interest, or just two storeys. The Owner proposes that only the first and second storeys of the façade be included in the description of heritage attributes while the City proposes that all three storeys of the façade be included.

For the reasons set out below, the Review Board recommends that the property be designated for cultural heritage reasons, but that only the first and second storeys of the south (street) façade be included in the description of heritage attributes.

BACKGROUND

At 24 Mercer Street in Toronto, there is an architect-designed 1858 brick building, with two or more additions and other modifications. The City filed a Notice of Intention to Designate the property under the Act. The Owner objected, and that matter was referred to the Review Board.

The Review Board held three pre-hearing conferences on September 27, 2012, December 4, 2012, and January 15, 2013, where dispute settlement was sought in a private, without prejudice discussion with both parties. In due course, the parties made it clear that they were in agreement that:

- (i) the designation of the property itself was uncontested, specifically with reference to the first two storeys of the façade; and
- (ii) there was no significant interest, on the part of either party, in the designation referring to any elements other than the south elevation façade (more specifically, there was agreement that the east elevation should not be included, even though it had been included in the Notice).

The parties were not in agreement on the protection under the Act of the third storey of

the south elevation façade. As a result, the Review Board and the parties agreed that the best way to address the outstanding issue in dispute would be to hold a Hearing with a tightly scoped focus on the inclusion of the third storey of the façade. The parties were instructed to develop an agreed statement of fact and file it with the Review Board along with their case documents during the disclosure period. Upon the commencement of the Hearing, no such agreed statement of fact had been submitted.

Notice of this Hearing was served by the Review Board on the parties and was published in the *Toronto Star* on January 11, 2013, in the manner required under the Act. The Statement of Service was filed as Exhibit 1.

The Hearing took place from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 4, 2013, at the Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario offices at 655 Bay St., Toronto. Prior to the Hearing, the Review Board panel met with the parties for a site visit at 8:30 a.m. While it is regular practice for the Review Board to set aside time to hear statements from members of the public, no members of the public attended the Hearing.

Lists of the exhibits filed at the Hearing and the witnesses who testified are found at Schedules 1 and 2, respectively.

IDENTIFIED ISSUE

The Hearing focused on whether the third storey, south (street) façade of 24 Mercer Street holds cultural heritage value or interest as prescribed by Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the Act, and thus whether it should be identified in a future designation by-law. More specifically, as acknowledged by the parties, the only issue in dispute was whether the third storey holds contextual value as prescribed by Regulation 9/06.

Regulation 9/06 prescribes the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest at the municipal level. It has three categories: design or physical value, historical or associative value, and contextual value. The candidate property must be evaluated according to each category, but only needs to satisfy one criterion to meet the requirement for protection under s. 29 of the Act. In this case, the parties focused solely on the third criterion: contextual value.

CASE FOR THE MUNICIPALITY

The City argued that the third storey of the south (street) elevation façade possesses contextual value as prescribed by Regulation 9/06.

The City filed a Document Book (Exhibit 4), which contains numerous background documents, the Witness Statement of Kathryn H. Anderson (Exhibit 5), and copies of relevant maps (Exhibit 6).

Kathryn Anderson provided evidence as an expert in heritage preservation with a specialization in heritage/historical architecture. She is a long-standing preservation officer with Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto.

Ms. Anderson reviewed the heritage practices of the City of Toronto, including the 21 Heritage Conservation Districts that have been created in Toronto under Part V of the Act. She provided an overview of the City's practices in the context of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's *Ontario Heritage Tool Kit* ("Tool Kit") and the City's experience in applying the criteria in Regulation 9/06. Ms. Anderson reviewed the staff report on the subject property and highlighted some of the key information that led to the recommendation to City Council to designate.

The subject property is in the King-Spadina area of the City and within an area currently being assessed as a Heritage Conservation District. There was no dispute that this property has handsome features facing the public realm. The original two-storey, red brick house was designed in 1857-1858 by architect John Tully, for a client named Alexander Johnston. The original structure had a conventional house form, with a roof sloping upward and away from the street.

In 1904, Toronto had a "Great Fire" in its industrial district, prompting substantial relocation of industrial uses into other neighbourhoods, notably King-Spadina. In 1909, the Mercer Street property was purchased by Herbert Shaw, president of the Toronto Hat Block Company, to use as an industrial site to produce forms for hat manufacture. The City said that it was that conversion from residential to industrial use that led to the survival of the house.

In the period 1915-1920, additions were undertaken. According to the City's review of archival documents, these were not only at the rear of the building. The City submitted that a third storey was added by extending the roof at a shallower angle from its crest, thus creating the third storey where the front roof slope of the two storey structure had been. This addition respected the symmetry of the window openings; however, the windows looked different (they were visibly smaller, and instead of prominent stone lintels, there was brickwork above the windows). The third storey was done in mottled brick (like some of the rear additions), instead of uniform red brick. The City inferred that this new shape probably dated from around 1920, and was intended not only to add

industrial space, but give the building a more industrial look.

The City added that the third storey is culturally important as it relates to the building additions that took place on the back portion of the property in 1920. While the City is not seeking to protect these back portions, it wants to capture the significance of the industrial conversion through the preservation of the third storey of the street façade.

Regarding the property as a whole, Ms. Anderson's staff report notes that all three criteria in Regulation 9/06 are applicable. This denotes significant cultural heritage value or interest. Specifically, the design value of the structure, the historical importance of architect John Tully, and its contextual connection to the streetscape as it evolved in the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1904 are emphasized.

Within the narrow scope of inquiry set for this Hearing, focusing only on the third storey façade, the City relied exclusively on the contextual value criteria of Regulation 9/06 to justify the inclusion of the third storey façade in any future heritage by-law. The City asserted that industrial/commercial use buildings define the streetscape of Mercer Street, and the structure at 24 Mercer Street underwent a transformation from residential to industrial. The City argued that, absent the conversion of the building from residential to industrial use, the structure likely would have been replaced by a newer industrial building, as occurred elsewhere in this area.

Ms. Anderson recounted a saying used in the heritage preservation field: "Queen Anne in the front, Plain Jane in behind." She noted that modifications to the industrial buildings in this area were made to improve the streetscape. The third storey and parapet of the subject building enhanced its appearance and presence on the streetscape.

Under cross-examination, Ms. Anderson noted that the City does not seek to preclude development of the site, but rather is seeking to preserve the street façade of the building.

Ms. Anderson concluded that the significance of the early 20th century transformation of the building from residential to industrial is the fundamental reason for including the third storey façade as an element.

In argument, Amanda Hill, Counsel for the City, submitted that this property meets the test of Regulation 9/06 as a candidate for protection under s. 29 of the Act, and that inclusion of the third storey façade meets the test for value or interest even when based exclusively on its contextual value. She stated that there is significant contextual value

in the area, which is why the City is assessing the creation of a Heritage Conservation District for this neighbourhood. Ms. Hill stated that one does not need to understand the complete story of the building as a citizen walking past on the street, but its contextual value should be enough to pique someone's interest and lead him or her to question why that old structure remains in an area dominated by newer buildings.

Ms. Hill noted that Ms. Anderson was the only qualified heritage witness before the Review Board and that her testimony should carry more weight as an expert.

In summary, the City proposed that the property should be protected under by-law with the existing wording found in the Notice of Intention to Designate, minus the reference to the east elevation.

CASE FOR THE OBJECTOR (2071430 ONTARIO INC.)

The Owner argued that the third storey of the façade does not possess contextual value under Regulation 9/06.

The Owner filed its proposed changes to the wording of the description of the property's heritage attributes (Exhibits 3A and 3B), a Document Book (Exhibit 7), and copies of relevant plans (Exhibit 8).

The Owner is involved in a proposal to build a highrise project on the property. It is zoned for 12 storeys; one proposal currently under discussion is for 21 storeys. The Review Board was advised that the overall project is the subject of an appeal filed with another tribunal at Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario (ELTO), namely the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

Ashley Wilson, a long practicing professional architect, was admitted as a witness for the Owner providing evidence on architecture and the history of the building. Given his association with the Owner (which has a financial stake in this proceeding), the Review Board did not admit Mr. Wilson as an expert witness. Mr. Wilson is an employee of Scott Morris Architects Inc., as thus works for Debra Scott who is also an owner of 2071430 Ontario Inc. There was no separate retainer for his participation in this case. In addition, Mr. Wilson has limited experience in heritage issues and noted that he did not write his own witness statement, though he was involved in its development with Ms. Scott.

Mr. Wilson focused almost exclusively on reading historical architectural drawings for

the subject building, to assert that the third storey may have been added much later than 1920. More particularly, Mr. Wilson called attention to the depiction of the roofline and third storey windows on various plans to conclude that the changes to the third storey façade did not necessarily occur in the early 20th century.

The Owner questioned whether the third storey addition:

- (a) was in fact ever put to industrial use (suggesting that this portion of the building might have been in residential use), and
- (b) was in fact built at that time of the rear additions, which facilitated industrial use (suggesting it might have been built decades later).

In argument, Dawne Jubb, Counsel for the Owner, outlined how the Owner is very supportive of designation of this property, but without including the third storey façade. She referenced the *Tool Kit* discussion of the “integrity” of property to refute the City’s emphasis on the importance of the third storey in capturing the context of historical significance. Specifically, the *Tool Kit* notes that “cultural heritage value or interest may be intertwined with location or an association with another structure or environment. If these have been removed, the integrity of the property may be seriously diminished.”

Ms. Jubb asserted that there is no conclusive evidence as to exactly when the third storey was built and when the use of the building transformed. She pointed to Mr. Wilson’s testimony that there is no architectural significance to the windows. She also submitted that there is no remaining contextual value relative to other buildings on the street. In the context of the City’s case, Ms. Jubb submitted that someone walking by the building would not identify the significance of the third storey with respect to industrial conversion, nor is there a clear connection to the context of nearby buildings. The subject property now abuts a modern hotel and a new condominium on either side.

The Owner concluded that the third storey façade should not be included and that the Owner’s revised wording submitted as Exhibit 3B should be used.

ANALYSIS

Section 29 of the Act protects real property. A by-law under s. 29(6)(a)(ii) of the Act requires “a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and a description of the heritage attributes of the property” (“Statement”).

The heritage attribute identified for the subject property is the existing, three storey, brick structure. In describing this heritage attribute, the City is proposing to include only

the first, second, and third storey facades of the south (street) elevation of this structure. The owner agrees to this except for inclusion of the third storey façade. The task for the Review Board was to assess whether the third storey façade should be identified in the Statement.

The arguments heard with regard to the third storey facade specifically relied on the category of contextual value as prescribed under s. 1(2)3 of Regulation 9/06:

3. The property has contextual value because it,
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
 - iii. is a landmark.

Although no agreed statement of fact was submitted, both parties are supportive of protection (designation) of the property under s. 29 of the Act. The Review Board agrees that a general application of the Regulation 9/06 criteria supports designation, for many of the reasons outlined in the City of Toronto's staff report. The building on the property is an example of a mid 19th century, urban house that was modified for industrial purposes. The property as a whole, including the rear additions, reflects the historical development and evolution of the neighbourhood.

With respect to the third storey, south façade, the City is justifying its inclusion based on an alleged historical link to the 1915 through 1920 construction activity on the property that transformed its use from residential to industrial. It is clear from the documentary evidence that a three storey factory was constructed on the rear of the property in two stages. The City of Toronto's staff report points out that tax rolls show a substantial increase in assessed property value in the 1915/1916 time period as a single storey factory was added to the rear of the house form building. The City provided evidence in support of the proposition that, in 1920, two storeys were added to the rear factory.

At some point, modifications were made to the south (streetscape) façade of the original building. The City submits that these modifications were likely part of the early 20th century attempt to tie the look of the formerly residential building to the new reality of industrial use on the property and in the neighbourhood generally. This was likely important as other buildings on Mercer Street at that time had more of an industrial/commercial appearance, consistent with their use. This is the essence of the City's "historical link" argument regarding the third storey façade and the way in which the streetscape appearance was changed to better associate with other buildings in the area.

On the question of precisely when the two storey, residential structure was modified to

its present three storey form, the evidence provided by the parties is not conclusive. It is possible that the modifications date to 1920. It is also possible that the modifications are more recent. All that can be concluded is that changes were made to the house at some point, and that the changes included the replacement of the gable roof with a parapet to create the third storey. Based on the limited evidence, it appears unlikely that these changes were made at the same time as the rear factory addition in 1915/1916. It is more likely that the changes were made either around the time of the second addition at the rear (possibly 1920) or at an even later date.

The third storey was a significant departure from, and lacks continuity with, the original residential architecture of this building. There have been alterations and additions to the original structure that, on the one hand, diminish the value of the property as an intact example of an early urban house (though the remaining portion is of cultural heritage value), but on the other hand, represent the transformation in use that actually contributed to the preservation of the building, albeit in a modified form. Without the industrial modification, the Review Board agrees that the original house likely would have been completely replaced by an industrial building.

The City submits that the Great Fire of 1904 led to the transformation of the King-Spadina area from residential to industrial (which is not in dispute) and that the third storey modifications assist in telling that story of neighbourhood transformation. If, as the City argues, the third storey was added even as early as around 1920, this is still long after the neighbourhood transformation that followed the Great Fire of 1904. The evidence is clearer that the first of the rear industrial additions occurred about 1915, closer in time to 1904. The same may be true for the second round of rear additions. Yet, these additions are not included in the proposed Statement.

Given the City's approach to seek protection of only the street façade of the building, omitting the seemingly important industrial, three storey factory in the rear, the Review Board agrees with the Owner that the integrity and meaning of the third storey façade, in isolation, is significantly diminished. The Review Board is of the opinion that the City could have supported the historical significance of the transformation of the neighbourhood from residential to industrial, by reference to the more directly associated changes at the rear of the property, rather than relying solely on how the transformation may be reflected through contextual elements of the street façade.

In the application of Regulation 9/06, the Review Board finds that the third storey, south façade, viewed in isolation, does not meet the test of Regulation 9/06 (recalling that this is the only issue in dispute between the parties). While it is possible that the third storey modifications date back to around 1920, the Review Board finds that without the factory

additions to the rear of the structure, whose origins from that time period are much clearer from the evidence, the cultural heritage value of the third storey façade on its own is greatly diminished.

Based on the evidence heard and in consideration of the criteria of Regulation 9/06, the Review Board concludes that the third storey, south (street) façade lacks significance commensurate with the original two storeys, which are a rare surviving example of an urban house designed by Toronto architect John Tully. The Review Board does not agree that the third storey, south (street) façade should be included in the description of the heritage attribute of this property.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the evidence heard, the Review Board supports the joint position of the parties as it pertains to the designation of this property, and thus recommends that the property be protected under s. 29 of the Act for its cultural heritage value or interest. However, in light of the position of the City with regard to the exclusion of the rear additions (whose historical significance is more evident than the third storey façade), the Review Board recommends the adoption of the revised wording outlined in Exhibits 3A/3B, which expressly excludes the third storey, south (street) façade in any description of the heritage attribute of the property known municipally as 24 Mercer Street in the City of Toronto.

“Peter A.P. Zakarow”

Peter A.P. Zakarow, Chair
May 6, 2013

“Jerry V. DeMarco”

Jerry V. DeMarco, Member
May 6, 2013

“Marc Denhez”

Marc Denhez, Member
May 6, 2013

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SCHEDULE 1

EXHIBITS LIST

- Exhibit 1: Affidavit of Notice of Hearing being served, as required under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, 4 pages, tabled by the Conservation Review Board.
- Exhibit 2: Placeholder for the Agreed Statement of Fact, when submitted by the parties (as of decision writing, still not received by the Review Board).
- Exhibit 3A: One page of amended wording by Owner of proposed heritage elements for a NOITD and/or by-law (in track changes)
- Exhibit 3B: One page of amended wording by Owner of proposed heritage elements for a NOITD and/or by-law (in final form)
- Exhibit 4: Document Book of the City of Toronto
- Exhibit 5: Witness Statement for Kathryn Anderson
- Exhibit 6: Colour prints of various atlas maps of the area.
- Exhibit 7: Document Book of 2071430 Ontario Inc. (Owner)
- Exhibit 8: Enlargements of original design plans for building

SCHEDULE 2

LIST OF WITNESSES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Kathryn H. Anderson, Preservation Officer, Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto

Ashley A. Wilson, Project Architect, Scott Morris Architects Inc.

The original Reasons for Designation (2011), showing the revisions to the text in ~~strikeout~~ and **bold**, to be replaced by the Revised Reasons for Designation (2013).

Alexander Johnston House

Description

The property at 24 Mercer 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 values. Located on the north side of Mercer Street between John Street and Blue Jays Way, the Alexander Johnston House (1858) was constructed as a two-storey town house that was expanded with ~~the addition of the a~~ **third-storey addition, as well as rear (north) wings for a factory.** The site was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1983.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 24 Mercer Street contains the Alexander Johnston House (1858), which is a rare surviving example of an urban town house in Toronto and among the oldest surviving buildings in the city. While altered for factory use in the early 20th century ~~when the third floor was added~~, the structure retains its appearance as a house form building from the mid 1800s.

The design of the Alexander Johnston House is credited to early Toronto architect John Tully, and remains one of the few extant examples of his work in the city.

Contextually, the property at 24 Mercer Street is historically linked to the King-Spadina neighbourhood as it evolved from its origins as an institutional and residential enclave to a commercial and industrial sector in the late 19th century. The Alexander Johnston House was converted to a hat block producing factory after the turn of the 20th century, a transformation that ensured its survival during the era when most of the original residential housing in King-Spadina was replaced by commercial buildings and industrial warehouses.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 24 Mercer Street are:

- **The Alexander Johnston House on the north side of Mercer Street**

- The scale, form and massing of the structure that rises ~~two~~ **three** stories above a raised base with window openings
- **On the principal (south) façade,** ~~t~~The brick cladding, with brick and stone detailing, including the pattern brickwork with quoins ~~on the west facade~~
- ~~The flat roof above the attic storey with its corbelled brickwork, oversized brackets and segmental-arched window openings~~
- The symmetrical organization of the principal (south) façade into three bays, with the main entrance elevated and recessed in the left (west) bay
- The flat-headed window openings in the first two stories, with stone lintels, six-over-six sash windows (that are characteristic of the 19th century), and sills
- ~~The east elevation, which is viewed from Mercer Street~~

Alexander Johnston House

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Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 24 Mercer Street are:

- The Alexander Johnston House on the north side of Mercer Street
- The scale, form and massing of the structure that rises two stories above a raised base with window openings
- On the principal (south) façade, the brick cladding, with brick and stone detailing, including the pattern brickwork with quoins
- The symmetrical organization of the principal (south) façade into three bays, with the main entrance elevated and recessed in the left (west) bay

- The flat-headed window openings in the first two stories, with stone lintels, six-over-six sash windows (that are characteristic of the 19th century), and sills