

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: 93-95 BERKELEY STREET ATTACHMENT 3
(STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)
Christie, Brown & Co. Stables (1906)

Description

Located mid-block on the east side of Berkeley Street north of Adelaide Street East, the Christie, Brown & Co. Stables (1906) is a two-storey, red brick-clad structure with stone decoration and trim and a single-storey, stucco-clad extension at the rear of the property.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 93-95 Berkeley Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value as it meets the criteria stated in Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the three categories of design, associative and contextual values.

The Christie, Brown & Co. Stables has design value as a fine representative and well-crafted example of a stable building designed in relation to the nearby main factory complex of Christie, Brown & Co. on Adelaide Street East. The stables displays the similar use of materials, red brick with contrasting trim (here stone), the organizing principle of an arcade across a double-story façade with semi-circular and segmental-arched headed windows. The stables represents the new taste for Beaux Art Classicism, a style favoured for civic buildings at the turn of the twentieth century. While not a typical choice for a stable, it was part of a building complex for a prominent business whose success in the world of biscuit-making provided top quality biscuits across the nation and was a significant employer of biscuit makers. The building interior demonstrates a high degree of technical achievement in stable architecture as it included an elevator for the wagons, the use of "granolithic" a contemporary floor material first known to be used in 1881, segregated "hospital" stalls located outside of main building, a horse cleaning room at the centre under the skylight, red oak stalls, and a special system of delivering feed to the horses.

The Christie, Brown & Co. Stables is associated with the history of the nationally significant company of Christie, Brown & Co. which in its various iterations flourished from 1853 to 1928 when it was absorbed by Nabisco. Its founder William Mercer Christie began his life in Toronto in 1848 as a 19-year old immigrant making bread in the early hours and delivering the fresh goods to consumers in Yorkville before the day's break. By the time of his death in 1900 his goods evolved from being hand-crafted to machine-made employing two of every three biscuit makers in Toronto and delivering over 400 types of biscuits and cakes across Canada. The stables has direct association with Canadian culinary and food manufacturing and distribution. The design and detailing also yields information about the provisions for the care and accommodation of horses employed in delivery for commercial businesses at this time and for the wagons and stables.

The stables is valued for its association with the architects Sproatt and Rolph, partners in one of Toronto's leading firms from 1900-1934, with a reputation for its range of commissions for residential, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings. The practice extended its influence across Ontario and as far away as Manitoba and Nova Scotia. Important projects included the Birge Carnegie Library, Victoria College (1908-10), Hart House (1911-19), Upper Canada College (1923-4), Canada Life Building (1930-31), Royal York Hotel (1927-29 with Ross and Macdonald), and Eaton's College Park (1929-30 with Ross and MacDonald) and the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission Building (1934-5) now the Princess Margaret Hospital.

The property has contextual value because of its long established presence on Berkeley Street, one of Toronto's first streets originating with the layout of the Town of York in 1793. The Christie, Brown & Co. Stables contributes to an understanding of the evolution of the street which from its earliest date combined institutions of civic importance (the first two parliament buildings, the courthouse and jail - all demolished, and Fire Hall no. 4) as well as those of commercial and industrial importance (shops from the 1840s at the north east corner of King Street and Berkeley Street and the Consumers Gas Building 1882) as well as numerous residential properties from as early as the 1870s. Along with these other structures the stables visually maintains the historic character of the street and its subsequent evolution.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 93-95 Berkeley Street are:

- The Christie, Brown & Co. stables located on the north edge of the property facing Berkeley Street with a laneway on the southern side.
- The scale, form and massing on a two-storey rectangular plan with one storey extension with a flat roof.
- The materials, including brick, stone, and stucco.
- The decorative stone trim at the parapet, windows and sills and the two stone rondels.
- The flat roofline, with its stepped parapet on the west façade.
- The west façade with its shallow brick, double-storey arches.
- On the south and west façades the thermal window openings with their tripartite divisions, arched heads.
- The entrance set in the central bay of the west façade.