

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
593-595 MARKHAM STREET

ATTACHMENT NO. 4M

The properties at 593 and 595 Markham Street are worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value.

Description

The properties at 593-595 Markham Street contain a pair of 2½-storey semi-detached house form buildings that are found on the east side of the street, north of Lennox Street. Archival records indicate that buildings, along with the neighbouring detached house at present-day 597 Markham were commissioned by land owner George Hall and in place by September 1888, making them the oldest buildings in Mirvish Village. 595 Markham was occupied in 1889 by John Davidson, the owner of a planing mill, while Robert Watt relocated from present-day 610 Markham to this location the next year. Acquired by local entrepreneur Edwin "Honest Ed" Mirvish in the early 1960s for Mirvish Village, the building at 595 Markham Street was the location of "Gaston's Restaurant," a high-end eatery designed to make the enclave a destination for both local residents and tourists.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The properties at 593-595 Markham Street have cultural heritage value for the design of the late 19th century house form buildings as representative examples of their type with features derived from the popular styles at the close of the Victorian era, including the Gothic Revival and Italianate. The houses are distinguished by the individual detailing, and retain their architectural integrity with the original surviving features.

The semi-detached houses at 593-595 Markham Street are historically linked to Mirvish Village, the famed artists' enclave created by Ed Mirvish and his family on Markham Street between Bloor Street West and Lennox Street. Originally acquired for additional parking for the nearby "Honest Ed's" retail complex, the houses were saved and converted as an artists' enclave with studios as well as restaurants and unique shops. Mirvish Village became a cultural and tourist destination in Toronto, including the properties at 593-595 Markham Street.

Contextually, properties at 593-595 Markham Street assist in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of Mirvish Village, which consists of the collection of preserved detached, semi-detached and multi-unit house form buildings dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries that contribute to this special area within the Palmerston neighbourhood.

The properties at 593-595 Markham Street are also visually, historically, physically and functionally connected to their setting on the east side of Markham Street in Mirvish Village where they complement the neighbouring house form buildings in scale, setback and vintage detailing.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the semi-detached house form buildings on the properties at 593-595 Markham Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the buildings on the east side of Markham Street, north of Lennox Street
- The scale, form and massing of the 2½-storey rectangular plans above stone bases
- The materials, with the brick cladding and the brick, stone and wood detailing
- The gabled roofs with twin gables on the west slopes
- The principal (east) elevations, which are symmetrically organized with the main entrances placed side-by-side in the first (ground) floor
- The east elevation of 593 Markham Street, with the two-storey bay window in the right (south) bay that has the round-arched window with the stained glass transom in the first floor, the flat-headed window openings with stone lintels and wood sills above, and the round-arched opening in the attic level, as well as the single flat-headed window opening above the entry
- On the east elevation of 595 Markham Street (where the first-floor fenestration has been altered), the pair of flat-headed window openings in the second storey, with the brick flat arches and stone keystones and, in the attic level the round-arched opening that is flanked by decorative brickwork