

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: 628 CHURCH STREET ATTACHMENT NO. 5
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

The property at 628 Church Street (including the convenience addresses at 68 and 70 Charles Street East) is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under all three categories of design, associative and contextual values. The property at 628 Church Street was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 1979.

Description

Located at the northwest intersection of Church Street and Charles Street East, the property at 628 Church Street contains a two-storey apartment building known historically as the Manhattan Apartments. The building was completed in three phases from 1909 to 1911 when James Grand Curry and his wife, Mary Jane (Minnie) Purdon converted an existing detached 19th century house form building into an apartment complex through a series of complementary additions.

Statement of Significance

The property at 628 Church St has design value as a well-crafted example of an early 20th century apartment complex with Edwardian Classical detailing. Linked to the “apartment boom” that began in Toronto in the early 1900s, the Manhattan Apartments was one of the earliest low-rise walk-up apartment complexes in the Church Street neighbourhood. The building’s design is distinguished by the decorative detailing and finishes that complement the adjoining late 19th century residential buildings on Church and Charles streets.

The Manhattan Apartments are historically associated with the development and evolution of the Church Street neighbourhood south of Bloor Street East with the introduction of the first residential subdivisions along Church, Jarvis and Sherbourne in the 19th century. The Manhattan Apartments were part of the residential transformation of this area in the early 1900s when low-rise apartment buildings were introduced to infill sites and adjoining prominent intersections.

The Manhattan Apartments are historically linked to Toronto architect J. A. Harvey who designed the complex. Noted as one of the first practitioners in the city to specialize in small-scale walk-up apartment buildings, Harvey designed the Manhattan Apartments to fit into the surrounding neighbourhood, and they remain an important surviving example from his firm’s portfolio.

Contextually, the property at 628 Church Street is historically, visually, and physically linked to its setting on the northwest corner of Church Street and Charles Street East. The Manhattan Apartments complement in their scale, materials and high quality design the adjoining house form buildings at 634 and 636 Church Street and 64, 66 and 68 Charles Street East, which form a residential enclave of heritage properties. With their appearance and placement anchoring the corner of an important intersection, the Manhattan Apartments are a local landmark in the Church Street neighbourhood, south of Bloor Street East.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Manhattan Apartments on the property at 628 Church Street (including the convenience addresses of 68 and 70 Charles Street East) are:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the apartment building on the northwest corner of Church Street and Charles Street East
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey plan above a raised base with window opening
- The materials, with the buff brick cladding and the brick, stone and wood detailing
- The roofs, with the extended eaves supported on the oversized brackets, the parapets and, at the north end of the east elevation, the stepped parapet
- The arrangement of the building into three distinct, yet complementary sections on Church Street, the northwest corner of Church and Charles streets, and Charles Street East
- The symmetrical organization of each section of the building with the central entrance that is protected by the classically-detailed porch or enclosure and flanked by the two-storey bay windows
- The fenestration on all three sections of the building, where the symmetrically-placed flat-headed window openings have stone detailing
- The two-storey tower with the decorative brick and stone detailing that overlooks the intersection of Church and Charles streets
- The interior entrance lobby at 628 Church Street, with the panelled wood wainscoting and the door surround (separating the lobby from the stairhall to the north) with the three-part transom and the paneled wood sidelights, both of which contain coloured glass in geometrical patterns
- The interior entrance lobby at 70 Charles Street East, with the curved double staircase with the wood spindles, bannisters and newel posts, the paired panelled wood doors with the glass inserts on the landing and, inside the entrance and on the landing, the tiled floors, which incorporate the name “Manhattan” on the landing