

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
634 AND 636 CHURCH STREET
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT NO. 6

The properties at 634 and 636 Church Street are worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the municipal criteria prescribed for municipal designation under all three categories of design, associative and contextual values. The properties were listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 1976.

Description

Located on the west side of Church Street between Charles Street East and Hayden Street, the properties at 634 and 636 Church Street contain a pair of semi-detached house form buildings that were commissioned in 1878 by Bernard Haldan, an insurance company manager who occupied a detached house directly south (later part of the Manhattan Apartments at 628 Church Street). The semi-detached houses were first occupied by Major Richard J. Evans, a mortgage company executive and retired soldier at present-day 634 Church, and the noted Toronto barrister James Holmes Macdonald at 636 Church. The Bernard Haldan Houses survived during the decline of the area and, with the revitalization of the Church Street neighbourhood in the late 20th century, the buildings were repurposed for commercial uses.

Statement of Significance

The properties at 634 and 636 Church Street have design value as well-crafted surviving examples of late 19th century semi-detached house form buildings with the features of the Second Empire style popularized for residential buildings during the late Victorian era. The Bernard Haldan Houses are particularly distinguished by their composition, with an entrance block flanked by full-height bay windows beneath the highly decorated mansard roofs and elaborate detailing that are hallmarks of the Second Empire style.

The Bernard Haldan Houses are historically associated with the development and evolution of the Church Street neighbourhood. The semi-detached houses are important surviving examples from the first phase of development on Church Street when, with the neighbouring Sherbourne and Jarvis streets, it was among the most sought after residential districts in Toronto where community leaders commissioned residences in the popular styles of the era.

Contextually, the properties at 634 and 636 Church Street are historically, visually and physically linked to their surroundings in the Church Street neighbourhood. With their placement next to the Manhattan Apartments (1909-11), the low-rise walk-up apartment complex at the northwest corner of Church and Charles streets, as well as their proximity to the late 19th century house form buildings at 64, 66 and 68 Charles Street East that share their Second Empire styling, the Bernard Haldan House form a surviving residential enclave of heritage properties adjoining this intersection.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Bernard Haldan Houses on the properties at 634 and 636 Church Street are:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the buildings on the west side of Church Street between Charles Street East and Hayden Street
- The scale, form and massing of the pair of 2½-storey semi-detached house form buildings
- The materials, with the buff brick cladding and the brick, stone, wood and slate detailing
- The mansard roofs covering the buildings, with the slate cladding, the extended eaves with the paired brackets, the brick chimneys, and the dormers with the round-arched window openings and the classical detailing
- The arrangement of the principal (east) elevations as mirror images with the central entrance block flanked by the two-storey bay windows
- The east entrances, which are placed side-by-side in the first (ground) floor in the flat-headed door openings with the transoms, with the paneled door with glass inserts on 636 Church
- On the east elevations, the fenestration with the round-arched window openings above the entrances that are set in brick surrounds, the two-storey bay windows with the round-arched openings, and the decorative brick and stone detailing with the quoins, band courses, flat arches, voussoirs, keystones and sills
- The north and south side elevations, which are visible from Church Street and continue the fenestration and decorative detailing from the principal (east) elevations