

Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register - 28, 38-52 & 66-74 Belmont Street

Date: February 6, 2019

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: 11 - University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council include 14 properties identified in Recommendation 1 of this report on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. The subject properties are located in the Yorkville neighbourhood, on the north side of Belmont Street, and contain a two and a half-storey detached house-form building completed by 1873 and 13 two-storey row houses that were completed between 1881 and 1886.

The houses on Belmont Street have their origin in the century-long brickmaking industry of Toronto. Brickyards spread north to Yorkville in 1835, and gained prominence to the extent that a brick mould is featured in the Yorkville coat of arms.

The properties at 40, 42, 46 & 48 Belmont Street were nominated for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register at the same time as the community's nomination for a Heritage Conservation District study in 2015.

In 2016 City Council authorized the Belmont-Hillsboro Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study and it is included the City Planning Division's Work Program, however, it is on hold awaiting prioritization. A HCD study does not preclude Council from listing properties on the City's Heritage Register or designating individual properties in the study area under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

In August 2018, the Committee of Adjustment deferred consideration of an application seeking variances to permit alterations and additions to the property at 40 Belmont Street pending a report from Heritage Preservation Services regarding the site's potential heritage value. This application was recently withdrawn by the property owner.

Following research and evaluation, it has been determined that the 14 properties at 28, 38-52 and 66-74 Belmont Street meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained in accordance with the Official Plan Heritage Policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council include the following 14 properties on Belmont Street on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register:

28 Belmont Street
38 Belmont Street
40 Belmont Street
42 Belmont Street
44 Belmont Street
46 Belmont Street
48 Belmont Street
50 Belmont Street
52 Belmont Street
66 Belmont Street
68 Belmont Street
70 Belmont Street
72 Belmont Street
74 Belmont Street

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

The 14 properties identified in Recommendation 1 of this report are located within the Council-authorized Belmont-Hillsboro HCD study area, which was given Council authorization at its July 12, 2016 meeting:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.TE17.33>

The Council-authorized Belmont-Hillsboro HCD study area was given prioritization along with initiation of a CHRA study at its January 31, 2018 meeting:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG25.4>. This report is the result of preliminary work toward completion of the Council-approved CHRA study.

At its April 4, 2017 meeting, Toronto & East York Community Council adopted the report recommending the preparation of a new Site and Area Specific Policy for the Bloor-Yorkville Area, including Belmont Street:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.TE23.62>

The property at 40 Belmont Street has recently been the subject of a Committee of Adjustment application seeking to add a third-floor addition and a second-storey rear addition to the existing two-storey row house. Consideration of the application was deferred by the Committee of Adjustment at its August 29, 2018 meeting to allow Heritage Preservation Services time to research and evaluate the property for possible inclusion on the Heritage Register and protection under the Ontario Heritage Act: <http://app.toronto.ca/DevelopmentApplications/associatedApplicationsList.do?action=init&folderRsn=4351754&isCofASearch=true&isTlabSearch=false>

COMMENTS

The subject (14) properties are located in the Yorkville neighbourhood, on the north side of Belmont Street, and contain a two and a half-storey detached house-form building completed by 1873 and 13 two-storey row houses that were completed between 1881 and 1886). The property at 54 Belmont Street is not being recommended for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register as part of this continuous row, due to significant alterations that have compromised the integrity of the principal (south) elevation.

Belmont Street includes a consistent row of modest homes built for labourers in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. The exceptionally narrow widths and two-storey rooflines, regularly interspersed with gables, provide its variety of Victorian-era architectural styles with a harmonious symmetry to the historic streetscape.

The properties on the north side of Belmont Street - between Hillsboro lane in the west and McMurrich Street in the east, along with the John Sheppard House and the terrace row toward Yonge Street, already listed on the City's Heritage Register, provides an understanding of the built character of the this working-class area associated with the local Yorkville brickmaking industry in the 1880s and 1890s.

Listing on the City's Heritage Register

Official Plan Policy 3.1.5.14 directs that potential and existing properties of cultural heritage value or interest, including cultural heritage landscapes and Heritage Conservation Districts, will be identified and included in area planning studies and plans with recommendations for further study, evaluation and conservation.

Pro-active listing of properties is intended to give greater clarity to property owners with regards to the City's interest and the application of Official Plan policies. The primary aim will be to achieve an informed, timely listing of properties in tandem with local area studies including HCD studies. An understanding and articulation of contextual value will be prioritized and, where information is readily available, additional values may be identified.

The multiple-listing process is an efficient and effective practice that balances the need to respond to growth within Toronto with the need to account for the cultural heritage value that adds character to our neighbourhoods. Non-designated listed properties do not have any protection under the Ontario Heritage Act, except insofar as an owner must give the City a 60-day notice of his or her intention to demolish the listed property.

The 14 properties in Recommendation 1 have been evaluated according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, which the City also applies when considering properties for its Heritage Register. All of the properties meet the criteria under all three categories of contextual, historical/associative and design value.

CONTACT

Tamara Anson-Cartwright, CAHP
Program Manager
Heritage Preservation Services
Tel: 416-338-1083; Fax: 416-392-1973
E-mail: tamara.anson-cartwright@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
Urban Design, City Planning

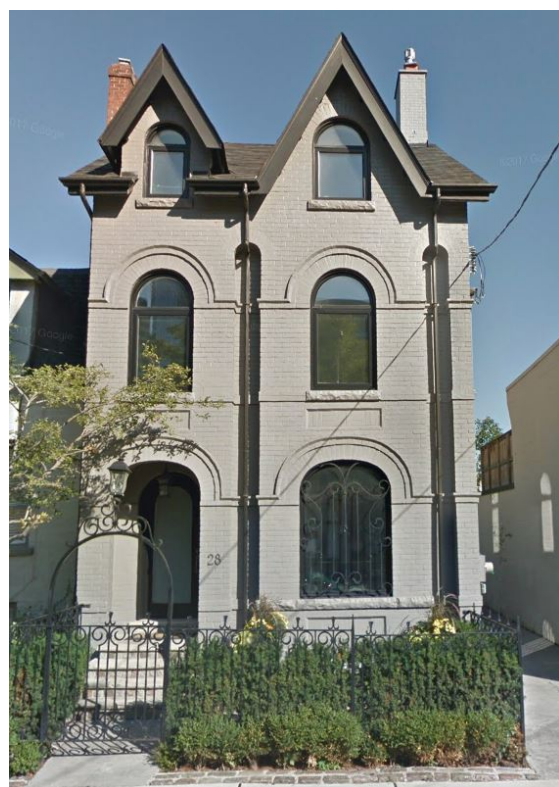
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Location Map, Photograph, Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion): 28 Belmont Street
Attachment 2 – Location Map, Photograph, Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion): 38-44 Belmont Street
Attachment 3 – Location Map, Photograph, Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion): 46-52 Belmont Street
Attachment 4 – Location Map, Photograph, Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion): 66-70 Belmont Street
Attachment 5 – Location Map, Photograph, Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion): 72-74 Belmont Street
Attachment 6 - Historical Overview

The following location maps are for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown. On each map, the arrow marks the location of the subject property.

Attached images from Google Street View, 2014-2018

LOCATION MAP, PHOTOGRAPH AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
28 BELMONT STREET



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
28 BELMONT STREET
JOHN SHEPPARD HOUSE
(REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The property at 28 Belmont Street is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

Description

Located on the north side of Belmont Street, west of Yonge Street, the property at 28 Belmont Street is a 2.5-storey detached house-form building, originally owned by local brick and tile manufacturer, John Sheppard (Sr.), whose brickyards were located directly to the north of Belmont Street at what is known today as Ramsden Park.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The John Sheppard House is valued as a fine example of a Victorian-era, detached private residence. With its regular plan constructed on a raised base, the principal (south) elevation of this 2.5-storey brick dwelling is uniquely organized into two vertical bays by two recessed channels rising two storeys with round-arched heads that lend a rhythmic articulation and interest to the elevation. Other elements of well-preserved brickwork on the south and east elevations include the brick string-courses linking the round-arched window heads at the first and second storeys.

The property at 28 Belmont Street is also valued for its association with the local resident, property owner and brick manufacturer, John Sheppard. Sheppard is associated with the brick-making industry in Yorkville as early as 1835 and archival records indicate that the subject house was completed for him by 1873 (with an initial address of 14 Beverley Street). Sheppard also owned all of the property east of his own house on the north side of Belmont Street, toward Yonge Street, and commissioned the first phase of the existing Georgian terrace row houses at this location in 1889-1891.

Contextually, the John Sheppard House is valued as the largest and oldest house-form building on the north side of Belmont Street. Its grandeur signals Sheppard's social and economic prominence, while also supporting and defining the historical character of Belmont Street in the late-1800s as a working-class community where families occupied the otherwise modest row housing adjoining local industry, particularly the brickyards owned by John Sheppard directly to the north of Belmont Street, that reflect the early development of Yorkville.

The property at 28 Belmont Street is historically and visually linked to its setting along the north side of the street and the southern edge of Ramsden Park, which is the former brickyards site that employed many of the area's early residents in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 28 Belmont Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on its lot on the north side of Belmont Street
- The scale, form and massing of the 2.5-storey regular plan with 2-storey rear wing set above a raised base
- The materials with the brick cladding and the brick and stone detailing (all are currently painted)
- The gabled roof with its cross gable over the eastern bay of the principal (south) elevation and the gabled roof dormer over the western bay on the principal (south) elevation
- On the principal (south) elevation, the two 2-storey recessed channels with their round-arched heads that organize the elevation into two vertical bays
- The two recessed, rectangular, blind brick spandrels between the first and second storeys on the principal (south) elevation
- The placement of the round-arched and segmental-arched openings of the main entry and all windows on the principal (south) and east elevations
- On the principal (south) and east elevations, the decorative brick and stone detailing on the window openings, with their rusticated stone sills and brick string courses linking the window heads

LOCATION MAP, PHOTOGRAPH AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
38-44 BELMONT STREET



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
38-44 BELMONT STREET
(REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The four properties at 38, 40, 42 & 44 Belmont Street are worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

Description

Located on the north side of Belmont Street, west of Yonge Street, the four properties at 38-44 Belmont Street are part of a continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses that were completed between 1881 and 1886. The subject properties were owned and built in 1882 by local builder and bricklayer, George Davis, who lived at 38 Belmont Street until 1884. The three attached properties at 40, 42 and 44 were first occupied by tradespeople who were likely employed at the nearby brickyards located at today's Ramsden Park.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The properties at 38-44 Belmont Street are valued for their design as part of the intact, continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses on this section of the north side of Belmont Street dating to the late 19th century and typical of the modest row housing identified with the early development of Yorkville. With their shared scale and the organization of the principal (south) elevations, the row houses are unified by the rhythm of the placement of their window and door openings.

The properties at 38-44 Belmont Street are also valued for their association with the local resident, property owner, bricklayer and builder, George Davis. In 1881, Davis purchased the land and constructed the four subject row houses. Davis is also known to have owned at least three other properties on the north side of Belmont Street, including the row houses at 70, 72 and 74, and briefly lived at 72 Belmont Street in 1881 before moving into the completed dwelling at 38 Belmont Street the following year.

Contextually, the properties at 38-44 Belmont Street are valued for their role as part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street by supporting and defining the historical character of this part of Yorkville in the late-1800s as a working-class community where families occupied modest row housing, particularly the brickyards directly north of Belmont Street, at the site of today's Ramsden Park, which reflect the early development of the area.

As part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street, the properties at 38-44 Belmont Street are historically and visually linked to their setting along the southern edge of Ramsden Park, which is the former brickyards site that employed many of the area's early residents in the second half of the nineteenth century.

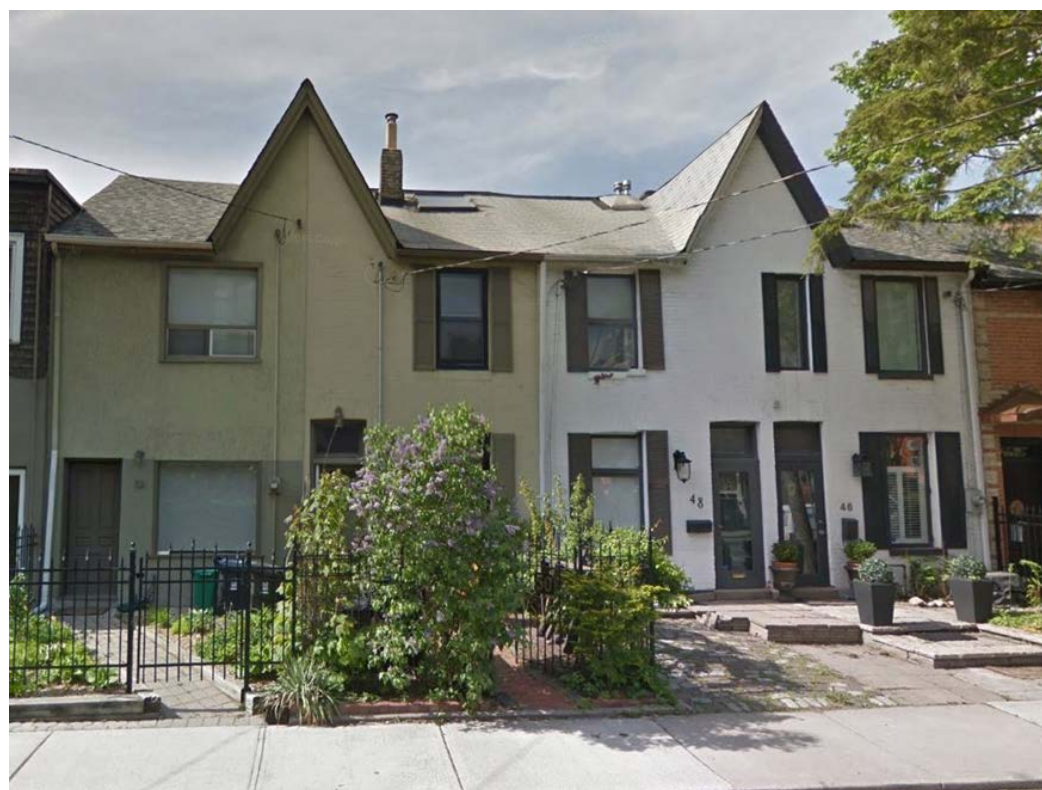
Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the properties at 38-44 Belmont Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the buildings as a group of four row houses constructed together and located within their property boundaries on the north side of Belmont Street
- The scale, form and massing of the buildings with their 2-storey height and pitched roofs, and cross-gabled roof at 38 Belmont
- On the principal (south) elevations, the materials with the brick cladding and detailing (Note: the brick at 40 Belmont is currently covered with stucco)
- On the principal (south) elevations, the symmetrical placement of the first and second-storey window openings, and the first-floor bay window at 38
- On the principal (south) elevations, the placement of the segmental-arched doorway opening with transom light above the door at all four properties
- The pointed-arched attic opening in the gable on the principal (south) elevation at 38

Note: the cross-gable with its round-arched attic window opening on the principal (south) elevation at 42 Belmont Street is a later addition and not considered a heritage attribute.

LOCATION MAP, PHOTOGRAPH AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
46-52 BELMONT STREET



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
46-52 BELMONT STREET
(REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The four properties at 46, 48, 50 & 52 Belmont Street are worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

Description

Located on the north side of Belmont Street, west of Yonge Street, the four properties at 46-52 Belmont Street are part of a continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses that were completed between 1881 and 1886. The subject properties were completed by 1886 and continuously owned by the Bevan family for over fifty years.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The four properties at 46-52 Belmont Street are valued for their design as part of the intact, continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses on this section of the north side of Belmont Street dating to the late 19th century and typical of the modest row housing identified with the early development of Yorkville. With their shared scale and the organization of the principal (south) elevations, the row houses are unified by the rhythm of their paired and mirrored window and door openings and cross gabled rooflines.

The properties at 46-52 Belmont Street are also valued for their association with the Bevan family. In 1885, builder Owen T. Bevan purchased the land and may have built the four subject row houses himself. Following Owen T. Bevan's death in the early 1890s the properties were subsequently owned by his wife Susan, a dressmaker, followed by their son Walter, a carpenter, through the 1930s.

Contextually, the properties at 46-52 Belmont Street are valued for their role as part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street by supporting and defining the historical character of this part of Yorkville in the late-1800s as a working-class community where families occupied modest row housing, particularly the brickyards directly north of Belmont Street, at the site of today's Ramsden Park, which reflect the early development of the area.

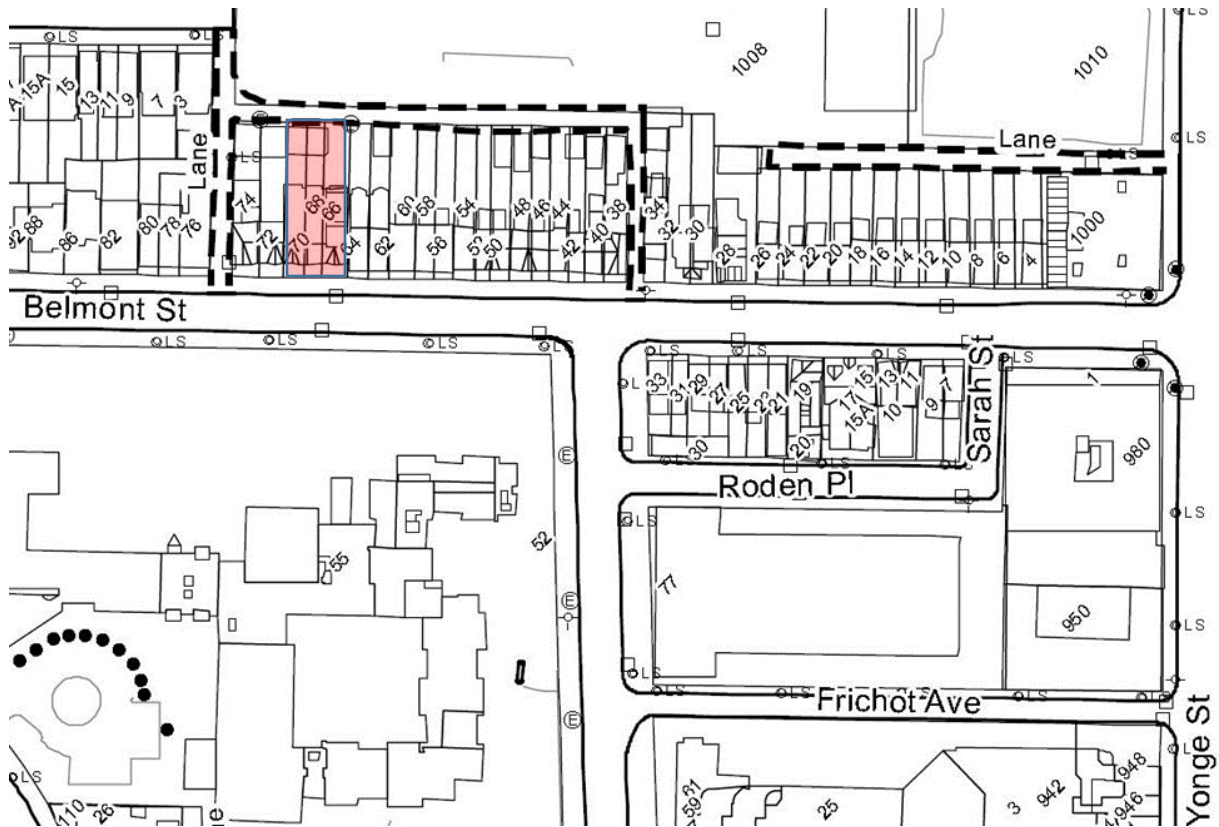
As part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street, the properties at 46-52 Belmont Street are historically and visually linked to their setting along the southern edge of the former brickyards site, which employed many of the area's early residents.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the properties at 46-52 Belmont Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the buildings as a group of four row houses constructed together and located within their property boundaries on the north side of Belmont Street
- The scale, form and massing of the four 2-storey height row houses with their regular plans with its cross-gabled roof and 1-storey rear wing
- On the principal (south) elevation, the organization of the four properties into two pairs, each pair with its shared, centred cross gable at the roofline and the paired and mirrored organization of the window and door openings
- The flat-headed transom light above the main entry at the first-floor level on the principal (south) elevation of 46, 48 and 50

LOCATION MAP, PHOTOGRAPH AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
66-70 BELMONT STREET



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
66-70 BELMONT STREET
(REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

Description

Located on the north side of Belmont Street, west of Yonge Street, the three properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are part of a continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses that were completed between 1881 and 1886. The subject properties were completed by 1881, and first occupied by tradespeople who were likely employed at the nearby brickyards located at today's Ramsden Park.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The three properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are valued for their design as part of the intact, continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses on this section of the north side of Belmont Street dating to the late 19th century. Along with the two adjacent properties at 72 and 74 Belmont Street, these three row houses represent the earliest and most ornate set. Their fine, High Gothic Revival detailing is evident in the polychrome brickwork, pointed-arched attic openings in the gabled roofs and decorative wooden bargeboards in the gables. With their shared scale and the organization of the principal (south) elevations, this set of three row houses is unified by the rhythm of the identical placement of window and door openings, and cross gabled rooflines.

The properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are also valued for their association with the local resident, property owner, bricklayer and builder, George Davis. In 1881, Davis owned the property at 70 Belmont Street. While the archival record is incomplete for the preceding year, it is possible that Davis may have previously owned 66-68 as well and perhaps even built the group of three identical houses. Davis also owned the adjacent properties at 72 and 74 Belmont Street, as well as 38-44 Belmont Street.

Contextually, the properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are valued for their role as part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street by supporting and defining the historical character of this part of Yorkville in the late-1800s as a working-class community where families occupied modest row housing, particularly the brickyards directly north of Belmont Street, at the site of today's Ramsden Park, which reflect the early development of the area.

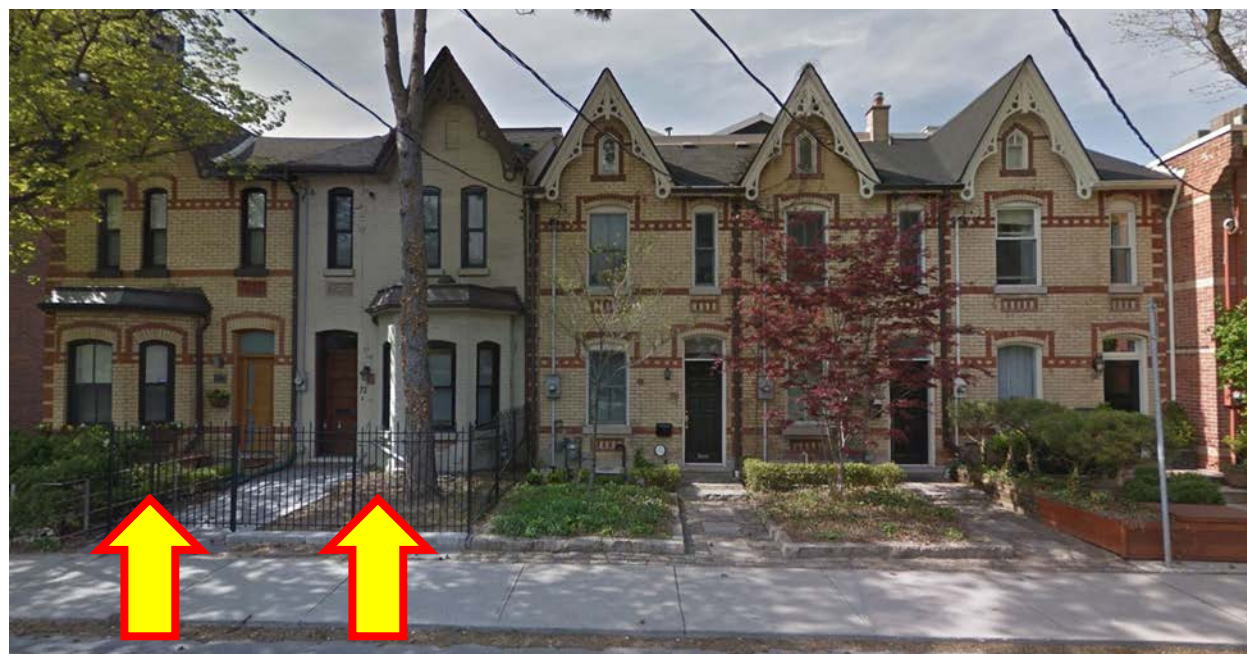
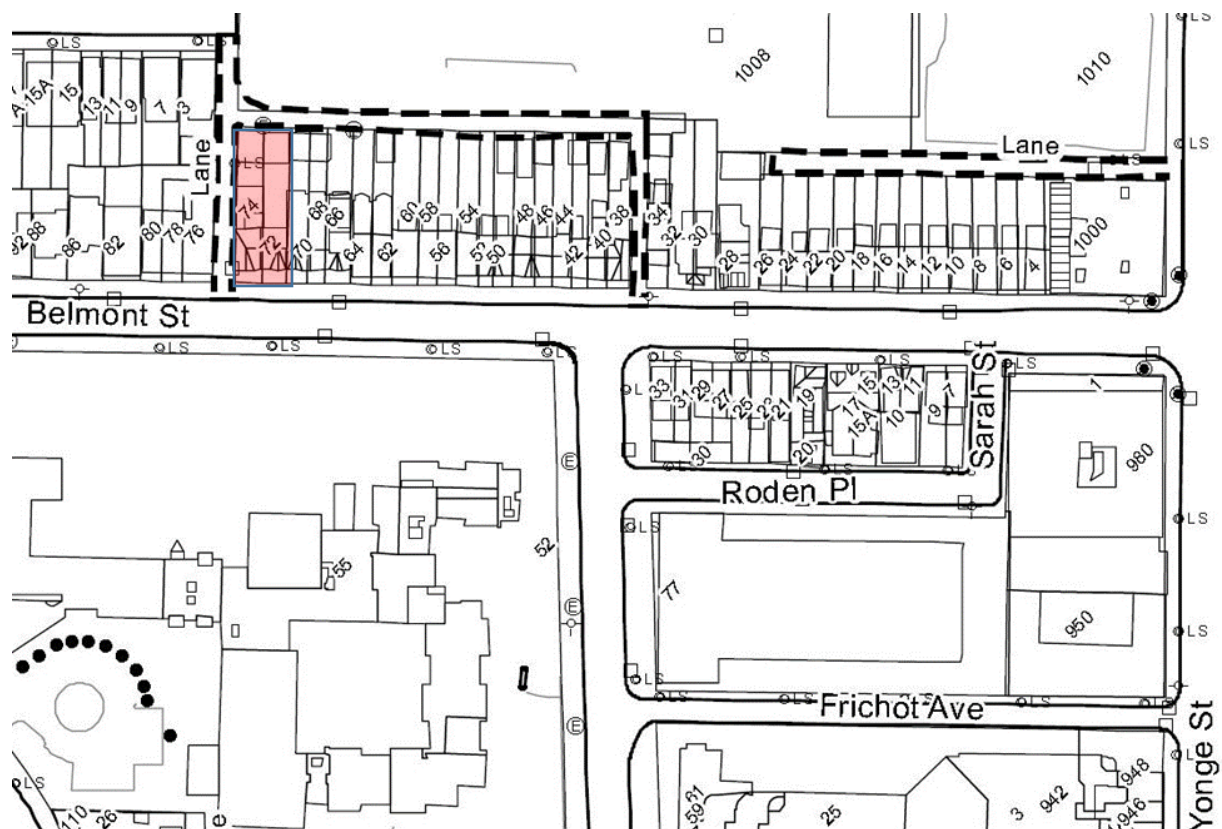
As part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street, the properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are historically and visually linked to their setting along the southern edge of Ramsden Park, which is the former brickyards site that employed many of the area's early residents in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the properties at 66-70 Belmont Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the buildings as a set of three row houses located within their property boundaries on the north side of Belmont Street
- The scale, form and massing of the group with its two storey height and each including a cross gable above the eastern bay on the principal (south) elevation
- The materials with the brick cladding and brick, stone and wood detailing
- On the principal (south) elevation at all three properties, the symmetrical placement of all of the segmental-arched window and door openings, including the transom light above the main entries
- On the principal (south) elevation at all three properties, the pointed-arched attic opening below the gable with its decorative wooden bargeboard

LOCATION MAP, PHOTOGRAPH AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
72-74 BELMONT STREET



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
72-74 BELMONT STREET
(REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City of Toronto also applies when evaluating properties for its Heritage Register.

Description

Located on the north side of Belmont Street, west of Yonge Street, the two properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are part of a continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses that were completed between 1881 and 1886. The subject properties were owned and built in 1882 by local builder and bricklayer, George Davis, and first occupied by tradespeople who were likely employed at the nearby brickyards located at today's Ramsden Park, including George Davis who lived at 38 Belmont Street until 1884.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The two properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are valued for their design as part of the intact, continuous row of nineteen 2-storey Victorian-era row houses on this section of the north side of Belmont Street dating to the late 19th century. Along with the two adjacent properties at 72 and 74 Belmont Street, these three row houses represent the earliest and most ornate set. Their fine, High Gothic Revival detailing is evident in the polychrome brickwork, pointed-arched attic openings in the gabled roofs and decorative wooden bargeboards in the gables. With their shared scale and the organization of the principal (south) elevations, this set of three row houses is unified by the rhythm of the identical placement of window and door openings, and cross gabled rooflines.

The properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are also valued for their association with the local resident, property owner, bricklayer and builder, George Davis. In 1881, Davis owned the land on which both houses were built and, upon completion, lived at 72 for a brief time while he completed construction of his four properties at 38-44 anchoring the east end of the continuous row on the north side of Belmont Street.

Contextually, the properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are valued for their role as part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street by supporting and defining the historical character of this part of Yorkville in the late-1800s as a working-class community where families occupied modest row housing, particularly the brickyards directly north of Belmont Street, at the site of today's Ramsden Park, which reflect the early development of the area.

As part of the continuous row of nineteen 2-storey row houses on the north side of the street, the properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are historically and visually linked to their setting along the southern edge of Ramsden Park, which is the former brickyards site that employed many of the area's early residents in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the properties at 72-74 Belmont Street are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the buildings as a pair of row houses located within their property boundaries on the north side of Belmont Street and anchoring the west end of a continuous row of nineteen 2-storey attached dwellings
- The scale, form and massing of the pair with their two storey height and mirrored placement of cross gables and first-storey bay windows on their principal (south) elevations
- The materials with the brick cladding and brick, stone and wood detailing (the brick on the principal elevation at 72 Belmont Street is currently painted)
- On the principal (south) elevation at all three properties, the symmetrical, mirrored placement of all of the segmental-arched window and door openings, including the transom light above the main entries
- On the principal (south) elevation at all three properties, the flat-headed attic opening below the gable with its decorative wooden bargeboard

BELMONT STREET: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



Top left: 1885 photograph looking southwest over the brickyards then located at the site of today's Ramsden Park on the west side of Yonge Street between Belmont Street and Marlborough Avenue (Toronto Public Library); *Top right:* advertisement in the 1883 Toronto City Directory for John Sheppard's brick and tile manufacturing company (City of Toronto Archives) *Bottom:* View of terrace row houses on the north side of Belmont Street near Yonge Street (Good Street View)

Belmont Street in the Yorkville Neighbourhood

The properties at 28, 38-52 & 66-74 Belmont Street are situated in what is known today as the Yorkville neighbourhood, comprised by the area bounded by Bloor Street in the south, Bedford Road in the west, Sherbourne Avenue in the east and the CP rail tracks in the north. Yorkville takes its name from the former Town of York that instead became Toronto in 1834.

By the mid-1800s, Yorkville had become a thriving town at the city's northern edge that offered both a healthier atmosphere than the downtown core with its location two miles from Toronto City Hall and booming local industry including two successful breweries owned by Joseph Bloor and John Severn and a long-standing brick manufacturing industry based out of the area known today as Ramsden Park, west of Yonge and north

of Belmont Street. By 1883, the incorporated Village of Yorkville was the first suburb to be annexed to and by the City of Toronto.

The houses on Belmont Street have their origin in the century-long brickmaking industry of Toronto. Brickyards had already spread north to Yorkville in 1835, and gained prominence to the extent that a brick mould is featured in the Yorkville coat of arms. The clay deposits in the area between Yonge Street and Avenue Road north of Belmont Street were a bluish white colour, leading to the popular nickname "The Blue Hill" for the stretch of Yonge between Belmont and St. Clair.

John Sheppard and William Townsley appear in 1850 as the earliest brick manufacturers listed in the City Directories, both with their addresses cited as "Yonge, Yorkville." Having peaked in the 1870s and '80s, brick production ceased by the end of the nineteenth century, shortly after John Sheppard Sr. oversaw the building of the north-side row houses from 1889 to 1891 extending east of his own home at 22 Belmont (now 28 Belmont) towards Yonge Street (4 to 16 Belmont). An 1885 photograph of the Yorkville yards directly north of Belmont Street in what is now Ramsden Park, shows the huge drying racks employed in the brick manufacturing process (above left).

The north side of Belmont Street - between Hillsboro lane in the west and McMurrich Street in the east, along with the John Sheppard House and the terrace row toward Yonge Street - comprises a comprehensive understanding of the built character of the this working-class area associated with the local brickmaking industry in the 1880s and 1890s. The exceptionally narrow widths and two-storey rooflines, the pitched rooflines regularly interspersed with a cross gable on the principal (south) elevation, provide its stylistic variety of Victorian-era row house dwellings with a sense of harmonious symmetry to the historic streetscape. Currently, only five of the nineteen row houses that form a largely intact, continuous row along the north side of the street between 38 and 74 Belmont, only five are currently included on the City Heritage Register (56-64 Belmont).

Most of the Victorian-era homes preserved in Toronto are of a larger scale, built for a wealthier social class. The assessment rolls for Belmont Street, however, list the occupations of its residents during the late nineteenth century as bricklayers, teamsters, drovers, carpenters and builders.

The Sheppard Family, Brick Manufacturers

Mathew Sheppard (1793-1866) came to Canada from Yorkshire with several children after the first of his two marriages. John Sheppard (1817-1900) was learning the art of brickmaking in Yorkville as early as 1836, the year his sister Mary was buried in Potter's Field. John married Sarah Stibbard in Yorkville in 1843 and had the following children: William Stephen, James, John (Jr), Frederick, and a daughter, Mary. With his second wife, Mary Mee, who died in 1860, he had Peter, Sarah Ann, Hannah V, and Mary. His third wife, Johanna Ann Redi (1826-1888) committed suicide. The majority of John's son would become brickmakers employed in the family business and all lived along Belmont Street.

The 1850 Toronto Directory lists a John Sheppard, brickmaker north of the first toll bar on Yonge Street. In the same year, a listing for York County gives nine Sheppards, with Mathew on Lot 21, Concession 2 (Yorkville), and John on Lot 21, Concession 3 (the latter may be an error). Subsequent entries in the city directories, assessment rolls, census tracts, and family history indicate that by 1860 the Sheppard family was the dominant one on Belmont Street and, in 1886, *The Industries of Canada* published the following account:

John Sheppard, Brick and tile manufacturer, 22 Belmont St., North Toronto—this business, which is one of the oldest and largest in Toronto, was established thirty-five years ago. There are two large yards comprising an area of 550 x 300 hundred thousand tiles. As a manufacturer of tiles Mr. Sheppard is without rival in the business, both as regards the quantity turned out and the quality of the material, which is first-class. Agricultural drain tiles are a speciality. During the past four years Mr. Sheppard has taken the first prize in tiles at the Industrial Exhibition at Toronto. He enjoys a wide reputation for thorough work, and gives every satisfaction. Mr Sheppard uses steam in his factory and is thus enabled to turn out not only a very large quantity of bricks and tile, but is enabled to offer special inducement to the trade. Mr Sheppard is a self-made man, and has achieved his present position by industry, and by and honest endeavour to produce the best material on the market. (pg. 201)

Of all the brickmakers of Yorkville, the Townsleys and the Nightingales were most prosperous and the Sheppards most numerous and dominant at the south edge of the clay deposits. The records show that the Sheppards tried to buy land along the length of Belmont and were well established at the east end, but they were not wealthy and defaulted on mortgages. The size of the family grew in a direction opposite to their wealth. Over the years they are recorded in many houses on Belmont Street, and there were still Sheppards living on the street in the 1920s.

At the same time as the clay deposits were becoming exhausted, an economic depression hit the city and by the 1890s brickmaking in Yorkville ceased. Patriarch John Sheppard's last building venture on the north side of Belmont Street was to tear down the frame buildings at the east end of the street near Yonge and begin building the eastern portion of the terrace row houses which now run from #4 to #26. The building of the first portion of the terrace bankrupted Sheppard, though, and it was not completed in his lifetime. (Following Sheppard's death at the turn of the twentieth century, the subsequent owner of his properties along Belmont Street, W. E. Hunter, was issued a building permit in 1907 to complete the four westernmost row houses in the group to the designs of architect E. R. Babington.) The Sheppard gift to the Yorkville area and the wider City of Toronto over the course of sixty years in the local brickmaking industry is evident both in the construction of private residences along Belmont Street as well as on landmark institutions such as St. Michael's Cathedral and University College, which are also constructed of brick derived from the "the Blue Hill".

George Davis, Builder

George Davis was an avid speculative builder in the Yorkville area in the late nineteenth century. Archival records indicate that Davis owned and sold at least seven properties on the north side of Belmont Street between 1881-1885 (38-44 and 70-74), before

moving on to nearby Hayden Street where he purchased a vacant lot in 1885 and built the pair of dwellings at 9-11. The house-form building at 11 Hayden Street still stands today and its 2-storey height with entry to one side and a one-storey bay window beneath a gabled roof is indicative of his work and similarly employed at 38, 72 and 74 Belmont Street. After completing the dwellings on Hayden Street, Davis relocated to the city's west end where he built four row houses at 3, 5 7 & 9 Gwynne Avenue near Queen and Dufferin Streets. While further research is necessary to trace George Davis's entire building career and relationship to the brickyards in the Yorkville neighbourhood, it is clear that this builder and bricklayer played an instrumental role in developing the now-historic row house streetscape of Belmont Street in the late-nineteenth century for the area's working class residents, including himself.

SOURCES

Archival Sources:

- Abstract Indices of Deeds, Concession 2 Part Lot 21
- Archival Maps, 1802-1842, <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html>
- Archival Photographs, Toronto Archives and Toronto Reference Library
- Assessment Rolls: Village of Yorkville, 1865ff; St. Paul's Ward, 1882-1893; Ward 3, Division 3, 1894-1910; Ward 3, Division 7, 1913-1920; Ward 3, Division 8, 1925-1935.
- Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York: Belmont Street
- City of Toronto Directories, 1879 ff.
- Cotterell, Alfred T. *Map of Yorkville and its Vicinity*, 1878.
- Goad, Charles E. *Atlas of the City of Toronto and Suburbs*, 1884-1924 (CTA)
- Liddy, *Incorporated Village of Yorkville in the County of York and Province of Canada*, 1852
- Miles & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York*, 1878
<http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/2013/01/1878-illustrated-historical-atlas-of.html>
- Ng, Nathan. *Historical Maps of Toronto*. <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.com/>
- Tremaine, George R. *Tremaine's Map of the County of York Canada West*, 1860.
<http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.com/2013/02/1860-tremaines-map-of-county-of-york.html>

Secondary Sources:

- Blumenson, John, *Ontario Architecture*, 1990
- Careless, J. M. S., *Toronto to 1918*, 1984
- Hutcheson, Stephanie. *Yorkville in Pictures, 1853 to 1883*, nd
- Kinsella, Joan C. *Historical Walking Tour of Deer Park*, 1996
- Maitland et al, *Canadian Architectural Styles*, 1992.
- Middleton, J. E., *The Municipality of Toronto: A History*, 1923
- "Communities of the Davenport Route" in *The Davenport Trail: celebrating the ancient route*, Community History Project, 1995.