

508 and 510 Church Street - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: May 2, 2022

To: City Council

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: Toronto Centre - Ward 13

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The properties at 508 and 510 Church Street comprise two adjoining structures, originally constructed as part of a row of six residences (508-518 Church Street) in c.1856-1858, along with a surviving nineteenth-century coach house to the rear of 508 Church Street. The primary structures constitute a unique example of semi-detached house-form buildings from the mid-nineteenth century, which have since evolved for commercial use. They are notable for their asymmetrical configuration and details that demonstrate the influence of the Romanesque Revival style.

Since 1994 the integrated properties have been the home of Crews, later Crews and Tangos, a storied venue for drag performances and queer gatherings. The properties are a cultural landmark within the Church and Wellesley Village and for Toronto's broader LGBTQ2S+ community. Additionally, the mural added in 2013 for World Pride contributes to the building's status as a visual landmark.

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street and determined that the properties meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, on the basis of their design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values. As such, the properties are significant built heritage resources.

An Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment application was submitted to the City in 2020, which proposes the partial retention of the primary structures at 508 and 510 Church Street and demolition of the coach house in the rear of the properties.

In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. The Bill 108 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act came into force on July 1, 2021, which

included a shift in Part IV designations related to certain Planning Act applications. Section 29(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act now restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act to within 90 days after the City Clerk gives notice of a complete application.

This application predates Bill 108, therefore the designation of this property is not subject to Section 29(1.2).

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required for all development applications that affect listed and designated properties and will be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved. An HIA for 506-516 Church Street was prepared by ERA Architects and submitted to the City in December 2021.

Designation also enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance: 508 and 510 Church Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3 to the report dated May 2, 2022 from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

In 2013, City Council adopted the Urban Design Guidelines for North Downtown Yonge. The subject properties fall within the boundary of the identified Church Street Village Character Area.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-61187.pdf>

At its meeting on January 29, 2020, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to develop long-term recommendations to support the retention and growth of independently owned and operated 2SLGBTQ+ small businesses and cultural space in Church-Wellesley and across the city.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM14.8>

On October 15, 2020 Toronto and East York Community Council adopted with amendments 2020.TE19.26 - 506-516 Church Street - Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications - Preliminary Report

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.TE19.26>

On April 7, 2021, City Council adopted a motion on "Protecting and Preserving Independent Live Performance Venues and Drag Bars." Crews and Tangos was identified as a stakeholder.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM31.33>

On January 21, 2022, the City's Economic and Community Development Committee received an update report from the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, regarding City Council's direction to protect 2SLGBTQ+ small businesses and cultural spaces (January 29, 2020).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.EC27.6>

This report will be considered by the Toronto Preservation Board on May 10, 2022.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.EC27.6>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Planning Framework

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

Good planning within the provincial and municipal policy framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance, and ensures the conservation of these resources are to be balanced with other provincial interests. Heritage resources may include buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community.

The Planning Act establishes the foundation for land use planning in Ontario, describing how land can be controlled and by whom. Section 2 of the Planning Act identifies heritage conservation as a matter of provincial interest and directs that municipalities shall have regard to the conservation of features of significant architectural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest. Heritage conservation contributes to other matters of provincial interest, including the promotion of built form that is well-designed, and that encourages a sense of place.

The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters shall conform to the Growth Plan and shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, both of which position heritage as a key component in supporting key provincial principles and interests.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on land use planning in Ontario and is to be used by municipalities in the development of their official plans and to guide and inform decisions on planning matters, which shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The Provincial Policy Statement articulates how and why heritage conservation is a component of good planning, explicitly requiring the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources, alongside the pursuit of other provincial interests. The Provincial Policy Statement does so by linking heritage conservation to key policy directives, including building strong healthy communities, the wise use and management of resources, and protecting health and safety.

Section 1.1 Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development states that long-term economic prosperity is supported by, among other considerations, the promotion of well-designed built form and cultural planning, and the conservation of features that help define character. Section 2.6 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology subsequently directs that "significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved". Through the definition of conserved, built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscape and protected heritage property, the Provincial Policy Statement identifies the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage conservation will be implemented.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) builds on the Provincial Policy Statement to establish a land use planning framework that supports complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment and social equity. Section 1.2.1 Guiding Principles states that policies in the plan seek to, among other principles, "conserve and promote cultural heritage resources to support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Metis communities". Cultural heritage resources are understood as being irreplaceable, and are significant features that provide people with a sense of place. Section 4.2.7 Cultural Heritage Resources directs that cultural heritage resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas.

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/place-grow-growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe>

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeology, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through listing on the City's Heritage Register, designation of individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or designation of districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

The Ontario Heritage Toolkit provides guidance on designating properties of municipal significance, including direction on the purpose of designating heritage properties and information about how the Provincial Policy Statement and the Ontario Heritage Act provide a framework for the conservation of heritage properties within the land use planning system. In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). The Bill 108 Amendments to the OHA came into force on July 1, 2021, which included, amongst other matters, amendments to the listing and designation processes. Guidance from the Province related to the implementation of Bill 108 Amendments is forthcoming.

[Ontario Heritage Tool Kit \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/gov/ontario-heritage-tool-kit)

The City of Toronto's Official Plan contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. Indicating the integral role that heritage conservation plays in successful city-building, Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan states that, "Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable City that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the City."

Policy 3.1.5.4 states that heritage resources on the City's Heritage Register "will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council."

Policy 3.1.5.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.5.26 states that, when new construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register does occur, it will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and will mitigate visual and physical impacts on it.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

<https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

COMMENTS

In 2013, City Council adopted the Urban Design Guidelines for North Downtown Yonge. The subject properties fall within the boundary of the identified Church Street Village Character Area.

An Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Amendment application was submitted to the City in 2020, which proposes the partial retention of the primary structures at 508 and 510 Church Street and demolition of the coach house at the rear of the properties.

This Notice of Intention to Designate report and its recommendations focuses on protection of real property – in this case, buildings – under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. In doing so, it also addresses the intersection between tangible and intangible cultural heritage value at 508 and 510 Church Street, primarily through recognition of the property's associative value. Additionally, 508 and 510 Church Street contribute to the contextual value of the Church and Wellesley Village.

Staff will undertake further research on the adjacent property at 518 Church Street to determine whether it merits inclusion on the City's Heritage Register given its potential relationship to identified historic contexts.

Independently, City Council has highlighted the importance of independent creative spaces and LGBTQ2S+ small businesses like Crews and Tangos and their contribution to the cultural vitality of the Village. At its meeting on January 29, 2020, City Council directed the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to develop long-term recommendations to support the retention and growth of independently owned and operated LGBTQ+ small businesses and cultural space in Church-Wellesley and across the city and this work has been initiated. The following year, City Council adopted a motion on "Protecting and Preserving Independent Live Performance Venues and Drag Bars." Crews and Tangos was identified as a stakeholder.

508 and 510 Church Street

Research and Evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06

While the research and evaluation of the property referenced above is, in staff's determination, sufficient to support the designation of the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street, it should be noted that access to the City of Toronto Archives and the ArQuives remained restricted during the preparation of this report due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. New and additional relevant information on the subject properties, further expanding on their heritage value, may be forthcoming following public access to these archival records and may provide further information to be incorporated in the final version of a Part IV designation by-law.

Recognizing these challenges in accessing archival material, as well as the fact that LGBTQ2S+ histories have not always been formally documented, staff also reached out to community members to inform the research summarized in this report.



Figure 1: Crews and Tangos, 508 and 510 Church Street, 2022 (Heritage Planning).

1. DESCRIPTION

508 and 510 Church Street - Crews & Tangos Building	
ADDRESS	508 and 510 Church Street
WARD	Toronto Centre - Ward 13
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	PLAN D88 LOTS 1 AND 2
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Church & Wellesley
HISTORICAL NAME	384-386 Church Street; 430-432 Church Street
CONSTRUCTION DATE	c.1856-1858
ORIGINAL OWNER	Earliest documented occupants: Arthur Holmested (508 Church Street), William Sladden (510 Church Street)
ORIGINAL USE	Residences
CURRENT USE	LGBTQ2S+ Bar/Club (Crews and Tangos)
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Undetermined
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick with wood and stone trim
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Vernacular/Romanesque Revival
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	Extensive mural added to primary elevation in 2013 for World Pride
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative, Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	NOL
RECORDER	Heritage Planning: Tatum Taylor
REPORT DATE	April 2022

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture, and context of the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street, and applies evaluation criteria as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the headings of historical/associative, design/physical, and contextual value to determine whether they merit designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest. The application of the criteria is found in Section 3 (Evaluation Checklist). The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in the Conclusion of the report. Maps and Photographs are located in Attachment 1. The archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Attachment 2. The Statement of Significance is contained in Attachment 3.

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
	The area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.
1793	John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, established the Town of York as Upper Canada's capital.
1834	The City of Toronto was incorporated.
1859	A row of six residences identified as 384-394 Church Street (later 508-518 Church Street), including the subject properties, first appeared in the municipal directory.
1873	The municipal directory indicates that the subject properties, formerly known as 384 and 386 Church Street, were by this time known as 430 and 432 Church Street.
1891	The municipal directory indicates that the subject properties were by this time known as 508 and 510 Church Street
1907-1965	Municipal directories record the longest residential occupant at 508 Church Street, Methven Cairncross, during this period.
1952	The City identified the Wood-Wellesley redevelopment area, including the location of the subject properties; the intended residential towers for the site did not manifest.
1967-1968	The properties shifted from residential to commercial use.
Early 1990s	A gay dance club called Ghetto Fag briefly operated at 508 and 510 Church Street.
1994	Crews (called Crews and Tangos by the late 1990s) opened at 508 and 510 Church Street.
2010	Crews and Tangos reopened under new ownership after a brief closure in 2009.
2014	World Pride took place in Toronto; in advance of the festivities (in 2013), the Crews and Tangos building was repainted with a large mural as part of the Church Street Mural Project.
2020	The City received Zoning Amendment and Official Plan Amendment Applications for 506-516 Church Street.

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties, which are the basis for determining "Historical and Associative Value" according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

In 1826, the future location of the subject properties was part of lands purchased by Alexander Wood, east of Yonge Street and north of Carlton Street. Wood, a Scottish merchant and public servant, had gained notoriety in Toronto for a scandal in 1810,

involving purported homosexual activity. He had fled back to Scotland for two years, but upon returning to Toronto had resumed his involvement in the city's civic and commercial life. The land he purchased became known as Molly Wood's Bush, which is said to derive from a nineteenth-century homophobic slur. The area's later identity as Toronto's Gay Village was considered to be a fortuitous coincidence. However, it must be noted that the mythology surrounding Wood's homosexuality is not fully supported by historic documentation. Furthermore, in recent years, information has emerged publicly that reveals Wood's direct associations with an early example of the residential school system, and thereby with the cultural genocide of Indigenous people. In 2021, the Church-Wellesley Village BIA called for the removal of a statue of Wood, installed in 2005 at the northwest corner of Church Street and Alexander Street, less than a block south of the subject properties.¹ The statue was destroyed in April 2022.

The area remained largely undeveloped until the 1850s. The existing semi-detached buildings at 508 and 510 Church Street were constructed between 1856, when the municipal directory recorded the land as vacant, and 1858, when the Boulton Atlas illustrated a row of six buildings on the west side of Church Street, extending southward from Maitland Street. According to the 1859 municipal directory, the properties' earliest occupants, respectively, were Arthur Holmestead (alternatively spelled as Holmsted), a clerk in the Chancery Court, at 384 Church Street (later 508 Church Street), and William Sladden, a parliamentary agent, at 386 Church Street (later 510 Church Street). The 1861 directory found 384 Church Street unoccupied, and Holmestead at 386 Church Street; it is unclear whether this shift in Holmestead's occupancy reflects a directory error or that the Holmestead family had relocated one door down. In the 1862 directory, Alexander Morton, an accountant, was identified at 384 Church Street, with Holmestead at 386 Church Street. The Morton family, including major landowners Benjamin and Mary Swanwick Morton, lived here through the 1860s. The Holmestead family remained until the early 1890s.

By the time of the 1873 directory, the properties had been renumbered to 430 and 432 Church Street; beginning with the 1891 directory, they were known by their current addresses of 508 and 510 Church Street. Much of Church Street had been built out around the subject properties by the 1880s. The six buildings from 508 to 518 Church Street were identified as wood structures in the 1889 and 1903 Goad's Atlases, and as brick by 1913, suggesting alterations may have taken place.

While the property at 510 Church Street experienced more turnover in terms of residents, and eventually became a rooming house, the longest occupant at 508 Church Street remained for nearly 60 years. Methven Cairncross, a carpenter, lived in the home with his family from 1907 through 1965. Born in 1875 to John Cairncross, an English carpenter, and Hannah Cairncross, an Irish Protestant, Methven was living near the subject property at 377 Church Street by 1896, along with his sister Margaret. In 1897 he married Edith Levallee. The municipal directory recorded his presence at 508 Church Street by 1907, and the 1911 Census documented his living in this location with Edith, their two children, and a number of other residents, presumably boarders. As of the 1935 Voters' List, the couple still resided here with their two daughters, both working as

¹ <https://mailchi.mp/584ea12c02b4/for-immediate-release-alexander-wood-statue>

stenographers by that time. Edith Cairncross died in 1958, and Methven continued to occupy 508 Church Street until 1965; he died two years later at the age of 91.

The location of the subject properties was part of an area identified by the City of Toronto in 1952 as a site for redevelopment, referred to as Wood-Wellesley. In the spirit of urban renewal, the Province had amended the Planning Act three years previously to allow municipalities to identify such areas. Wood-Wellesley encompassed fifteen acres defined by Wood Street, Wellesley Street, Church Street, and the right-of-way for the Yonge subway line, which had just opened. The City intended to expropriate the land and either sell or lease it to a developer for the construction of high-rise apartment buildings. After discussions with Ridout Real Estate Limited, which proposed eight high-rise slab towers on the site, the City put out a request for proposals in 1955. But by 1957, the plans fell apart over financing difficulties, and the City repealed the redevelopment bylaw for Wood-Wellesley.

Although the apartment towers did not manifest, the area surrounding the subject properties did evolve significantly between 1954 and 1965, as seen in aerial photographs. Parking lots replaced residential fabric on the northwest corner of Maitland and Church streets, as well as the houses at 512-516 Church Street to the north of the subject properties.

By the late 1960s, the subject properties had shifted from residential to commercial use. Sebert Productions Ltd., a commercial photo studio, was located at 508 Church Street. Building records show that George Sebert converted a rear building from a welding shop to a photographic studio and built a second-storey addition; this likely refers to the extant coach house. He also hired architects Robinson and Heinrichs to make alterations and a rear addition to the main building in the 1970s. 510 Church Street contained office spaces, occupied by management consultants, packaging designers, and film animation studios as of the 1968 municipal directory, and by graphic designers as of the 1969 directory. It is unclear when the interiors of the two structures were integrated.

In the meantime, the mid-century years saw a rising concentration of spaces for LGBTQ2S+ people along Yonge Street. Establishments such as the St. Charles Tavern and the Parkside Tavern gave queer people space to meet, mingle, and host events with dancing and drag at a time when homosexual activity was still criminalized. However, they also created a setting for the stigmatization of the queer community, including abuse from derisive bar proprietors, and spying and raids by police. Yonge Street in the 1960s and 1970s had gained a reputation as Toronto's red-light district or "Sin Strip," where the sex industry catered particularly to heterosexual men. In 1977, the murder of Emanuel Jaques, a 12-year-old shoeshine boy, on Yonge Street by four men was sensationalized in the media as a "homosexual murder," and prompted the City to take action to clean up and restore a sense of supposed morality to the strip. These efforts produced an immediate backlash against LGBTQ2S+ people. The police fixed heightened attention on the community, most notably by raiding the offices of the *Body Politic*, a counterculture newspaper for queer Torontonians, in December 1977. Another key turning point occurred four years later when police raided four gay bathhouses in downtown Toronto, the culmination of decades of tension between police and the queer community. The following day over 3,000 people participated in a protest against police

brutality and homophobia. These events fueled the movement for civil rights for LGBTQ2S+ people in Toronto.

The area surrounding the intersections of Church and Wellesley streets began to emerge in the mid-1970s as a queer enclave. In 1976, a year after the City purchased the building north of Church and Wellesley streets that would become the 519 Church Street Community Centre, the 519's Board of Directors approved a request for Huntley Youth Services to hold weekly meetings there for gay youth. This group was the first of many to use the 519 as a gathering place. Queer activists and organizations such as the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT) recognized Church and Wellesley as an LGBTQ2S+ neighbourhood by the late 1970s, and worked to establish safe spaces for queer people, including alternatives to bars and bathhouses. Fallout from the Jaques murder, the *Body Politic* raid, and the bathhouse raids hastened the shift from Yonge Street to Church Street as the centre of LGBTQ2S life and placemaking. Queer bars and businesses opened along Church Street during the 1980s. A set of steps to the entry of a coffee shop on the southwest corner of Church and Wellesley streets, known in the community as "The Steps," became a central gathering place from 1984 to 2004. By 1984, Toronto's Pride events, which had taken place in various public spaces since 1972, had moved to the Church and Wellesley Village.

The properties at 508 and 510 Church Street served as a venue for the LGBTQ2S+ community at least as early as c.1992, when the space at 508 and 510 Church Street briefly housed a club called Ghetto Fag. DJ Zahra spun South Asian-influenced house music, and DJ Blackcat threw weekly parties with hip-hop, dancehall, R&B, and soca, drawing diverse crowds at a time when these genres were not commonly heard in gay clubs.

Available documentation suggests that by 1994 Crews had taken over the subject properties. Building records from 1994 identify the existing use at 508 and 510 Church Street as a "communication and broadcast establishment and office building," and the proposed use as a "restaurant and office building." Soon after opening, Crews became known for holding drag performances and other LGBTQ2S+ events, such as fundraisers for the Toronto People with AIDS Foundation. The history of antagonism towards the queer community made such safe spaces all the more critical, and Crews' significance continued to grow.

"Tango," later "Tangos," was added to the name by the late 1990s and was advertised in the 2000s as having separate programming geared towards women. In 2006, the property underwent renovations to increase its capacity. When Crews & Tangos closed briefly in 2009 due to the financial crisis, community members lamented its loss and feared the building would be demolished: "Known for its drag shows, large dancefloors and eclectic mix of gays and lesbians, the two-storey complex was regarded by many as the very heartbeat of village nightlife. Its closure dealt a blow to the Church Street bar circuit." It reopened in 2010 with a new owner, who hoped to increase the bar's multicultural programming and "make Crews the headquarters of drag queendom in

Canada."² Since then, Crews and Tangos has continued to host drag performances as well as events such as the Miss Crews and Tangos pageant, and viewing parties for RuPaul's Drag Race and Canada's Drag Race, providing access to queer content on paid television. In 2020, Priyanka, beloved local drag queen and Miss Crews and Tangos (2018 and 2019), made history by winning the first season of Canada's Drag Race. Crews and Tangos has also brought the community together in times of tragedy, such as to mourn the death of Michelle Ross in 2021; an impromptu memorial to the legendary drag queen arose on the steps of 508 and 510 Church Street.

Because Crews and Tangos occupies a pair of former residences and a coach house, allowing it to spread across separate rooms and floors, it has the capacity to operate multiple bar spaces and dance floors simultaneously, catering to different activities and musical tastes. The establishment describes itself as an "entertainment hub," with a drag performance stage on the first storey ("Crews"), a dance floor upstairs ("Tangos"), and another dance floor ("The Zone") on the ground floor of the rear coach house. This range of offerings heightens the sense of inclusivity for which Crews and Tangos is noted.

Like many entertainment venues, bars, and restaurants, Crews and Tangos was shuttered temporarily during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In media coverage of the closure, patrons expressed concern for the survival of what they referred to as a "safe haven" and supportive environment that fostered connections in the LGBTQ2S+ community."³

Through the years, Crews and Tangos has cultivated its standing as an iconic venue for queer community gatherings, rituals, and cultural expression; it is now one of the city's longest operating queer bars. It has elevated the status of drag as a performance art in Toronto, and provided LGBTQ2S+ people with a place of connection. In particular, Crews and Tangos has served as a safe environment for people with non-confirming gender identities and expressions. Community members have called Crews and Tangos a safe space and even compared it to a place of worship, where all people – free from prejudice against their sexual orientation, gender, race, age, HIV status, etc. – are welcome to take refuge, congregate, and participate in communal celebration and exploration of the human urge for belonging.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property, which will establish the basis for determining "Design and Physical Value" according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Located on the west side of Church Street between Alexander and Maitland streets, the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street comprise two adjoining structures, originally

² Kyle Mooney, "New owner set to unveil revived Crews & Tango," Xtra Magazine, 17 March 2010 (<https://xtramagazine.com/culture/exclusive-new-owner-set-to-unveil-revived-crews-tango-10842>).

³ Alexander Schummer, "Popular Church Street club struggles to stay afloat during the pandemic," *On the Record*, 31 January 2022 (<https://ontherecordnews.ca/popular-church-street-club-struggles-to-stay-afloat-during-the-pandemic/>).

constructed as residences in c.1856-1858. The pair constitutes a unique example of semi-detached house-form structures from the mid-nineteenth century, which have since evolved for commercial use. They are notable for their asymmetrical configuration and details such as rounded arches and brickwork that demonstrate a vernacular application of Romanesque Revival stylistic influences, which were popular during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The properties are three storeys high with a complex cross-gabled roof. They are faced in brick with wood and stone trim, and have a raised basement level faced in rough stone. Asymmetrically composed, the primary elevation facing Church Street reads as four bays wide, with a wider portion of three bays united beneath a common roofline, and a fourth bay appearing as a gabled form to the north. The wider portion includes a two-storey bay window with segmentally arched openings on its southern half. The wider portion's northern half includes both of the individual entrances to 508 and 510 Church Street, separated by a thin brick pilaster. Above the entrance to 510 Church Street is a round-arched window accentuated by brick detailing. To the south, 508 Church Street features wood bracket details at the centre of a truncated front gable with return eaves. To the north, 510 Church Street includes arched transoms made of leaded glass above the first-storey openings, brick corbeling above the second storey, and half-cove wood shingles in the northern gable end. The properties have undergone alterations in their 160-year history, including the integration of their interiors.

In 2013, the painted brick exterior on Church Street was repainted with a mural by Nadijah Robinson and Elicser Elliott, depicting performers against a cobalt background. The artwork was one of 11 murals on 11 buildings as part of the Church Street Mural Project, led by Syrus Marcus Ware and James Fowler in association with the Church Wellesley Village Business Association and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. The initiative commemorated World Pride, which took place in Toronto in 2014.

At the rear of the properties, a two-storey coach house is situated on Donna Shaw Lane and visible from the parking lot to the north. It is connected to the primary structures via a one-storey addition. Faced in brick, the coach house has a gabled roof, and the projecting gable ends with brick corbeling form a parapet with an unusual stepped silhouette. Based on building records, the original nineteenth-century coach house appears to have gained a second-storey addition for use as a photographic studio in 1966. The coach house's ground floor currently includes a bar and a dance floor.

iv. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining 'Contextual Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The Crews and Tangos building is located in the centre of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood (also known as The Village), less than two blocks south of its eponymous intersection. Situated on the west side of Church Street between Alexander and Maitland streets, the properties contribute to an eclectic streetscape that is characterized by a variety of commercial typologies as well as a predominance of nineteenth-century residential buildings converted to commercial use. For over four

decades, Church and Wellesley has been the geographical heart of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ community, with a concentration of queer community spaces, clubs, bars, restaurants, among which Crews and Tangos is considered an anchor.

In recent years, Church and Wellesley has undergone a transformation, echoing a pattern seen in "gay village" areas across the western world; many have been considered to be in decline since the early 2000s, evidenced by the closure of LGBTQ2S+ businesses. On the one hand, this phenomenon might reflect an increased social acceptance in mainstream spaces of diverse sexual orientations and gender expressions and identities, as well the development of queer enclaves elsewhere in the city by communities who might not have felt included in The Village. On the other hand, the closure of LGBTQ2S+ spaces can be viewed as a form of cultural displacement. This general effect has been accelerated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which has disproportionately affected LGBTQ2S+ businesses, as well as businesses owned by women and other marginalized communities.⁴

3. EVALUATION AND APPLICATION OF O.REG 9/06 CRITERIA

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and the City of Toronto also uses these criteria when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. There are three categories for a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

The evaluation table is marked "N/A" if the criterion is "not applicable" to the property or "✓" if it is applicable to the property, with explanatory text below.

DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

Design or Physical Value	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	✓
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	N/A
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

Rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method

The pair of structures at 508 and 510 Church Street constitute a unique example of semi-detached house-form buildings from the mid-nineteenth century, constructed as part of a former row at 508-518 Church Street, and have since evolved for commercial use. They are notable for their asymmetrical configuration and details that demonstrate

⁴ Craig Patterson, "Retailers and Businesses in Gay Villages in Canada Struggle Amid the Pandemic: Study," *Retail Insider*, 13 July 2021 (<https://retail-insider.com/retail-insider/2021/07/retailers-and-businesses-in-gay-villages-in-canada-struggle-amid-the-pandemic-study/>).

the influence of the Romanesque Revival style. The properties also retain a nineteenth-century coach house, located to the rear of 508 Church Street; though altered, this structure represents an increasingly rare typology within Toronto.

HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	✓
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	✓
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

Direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community

The properties at 508 and 510 Church Street together hold direct associations with the evolution of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood and with the more recent history of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ community. As the location of Crews, later Crews and Tangos, since 1994, the properties are one of Toronto's longest operating queer bars. The Crews and Tangos building has historical value as an iconic venue for queer community gatherings, rituals, performances, and cultural expression. Because the venue occupies a pair of former residences and a coach house, allowing it to spread across separate rooms and floors, it has the capacity to operate multiple bar spaces and dance floors simultaneously. These spaces cater to different activities and musical tastes, heightening the sense of inclusivity for which Crews and Tangos is noted.

Yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture

As a longstanding venue in the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood, the Crews and Tangos building has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ communities and the creation of the area internationally renowned as "The Village.

CONTEXTUAL VALUE

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	✓
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	✓
iii. landmark	✓

Important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area

Located at the centre of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood (also known as The Village), less than two blocks south of its eponymous intersection, the subject properties are important in defining the character of the area. They contribute to an eclectic streetscape that is characterized by a variety of commercial typologies as well as a predominance of nineteenth-century residential buildings converted to commercial use,

including 508 and 510 Church Street. Crews and Tangos is a significant gathering place, performance venue, and safe environment for the LGBTQ2S+ community in Toronto, and is a key part of the concentration of such spaces in Church and Wellesley.

Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

The properties are physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to their surroundings within the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood. For over four decades, Church and Wellesley has been the geographical heart of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ community, with a concentration of queer community spaces, clubs, bars, restaurants, among which Crews and Tangos is considered an anchor.

Landmark

Operating since 1994, the Crews and Tangos building is a cultural landmark within the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood and for Toronto's broader LGBTQ2S+ community. Additionally, the mural added in 2013 for World Pride contributes to the building's status as a visual landmark.

CONCLUSION

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street and determined that the properties meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage, on the basis of their design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values. As such, the properties are significant built heritage resources.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) for 508 and 510 Church Street comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning
Tel: 416-338-1079 Fax: 416-392-1973
E-mail: Mary.MacDonald@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Maps and Photographs

Attachment 2 – List of Research Sources

Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)

MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:

ATTACHMENT 1

508 and 510 CHURCH STREET – CREWS AND TANGOS BUILDING

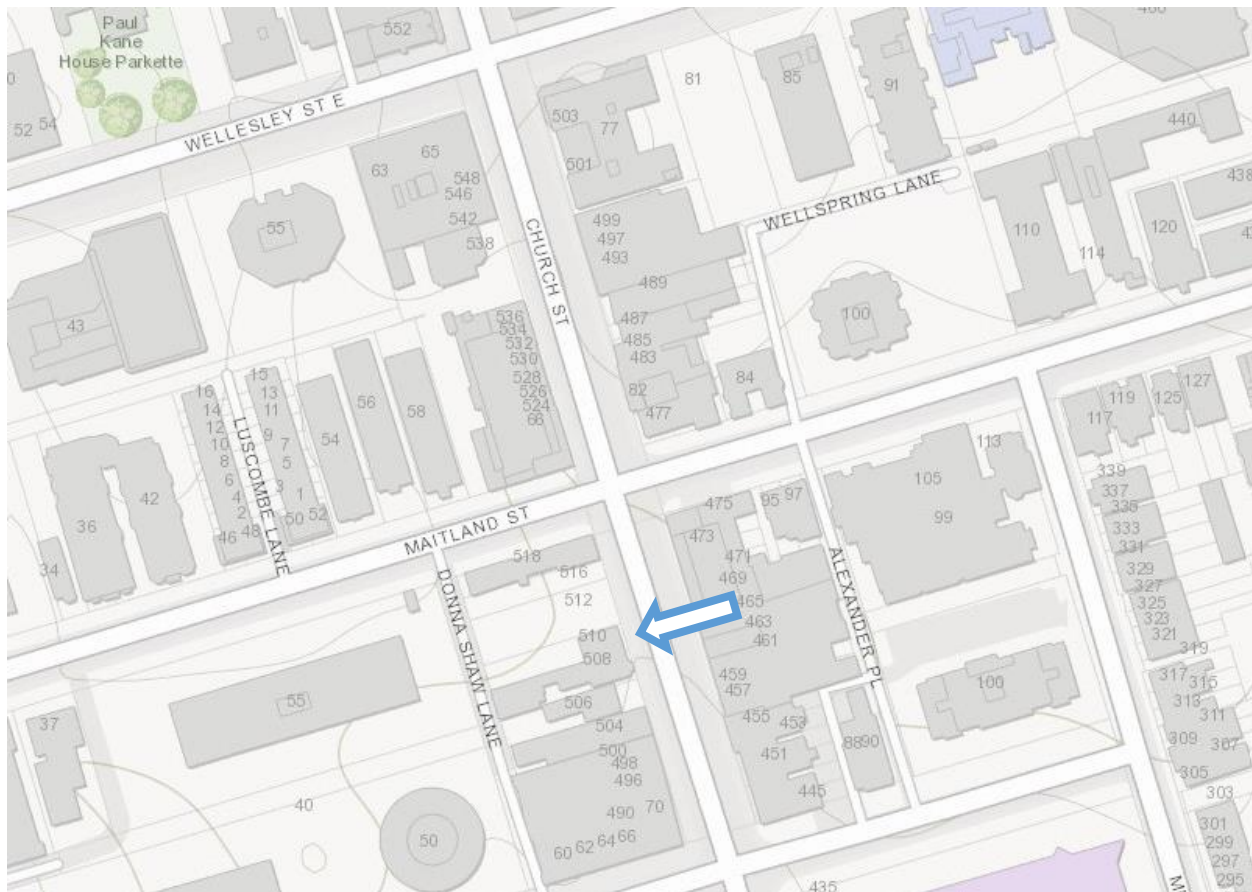


Figure 2: Location 508 and 510 Church Street, indicated by the arrows. Note: This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown. North is located at the top of the map. (City of Toronto mapping.)

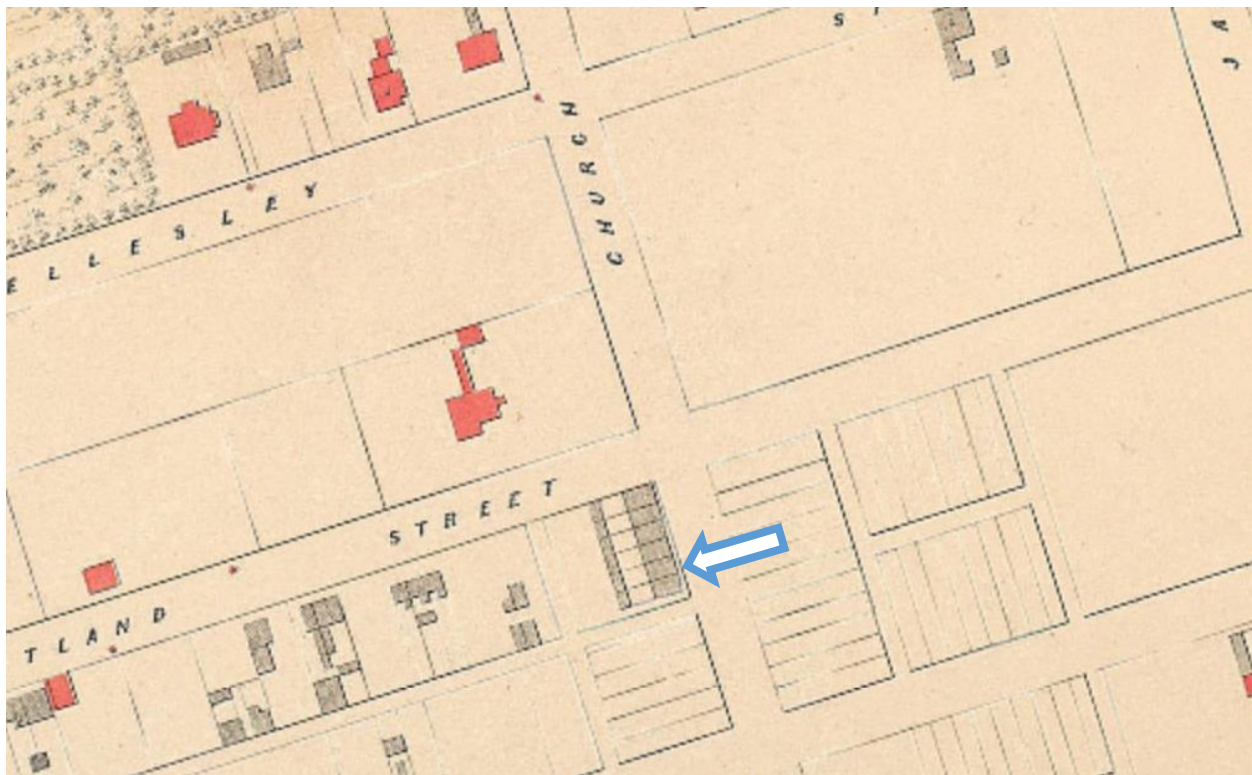


Figure 3: 1858 Boulton Atlas of the City of Toronto; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.



Figure 4: 1889 Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.



Figure 5: 1903 Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.

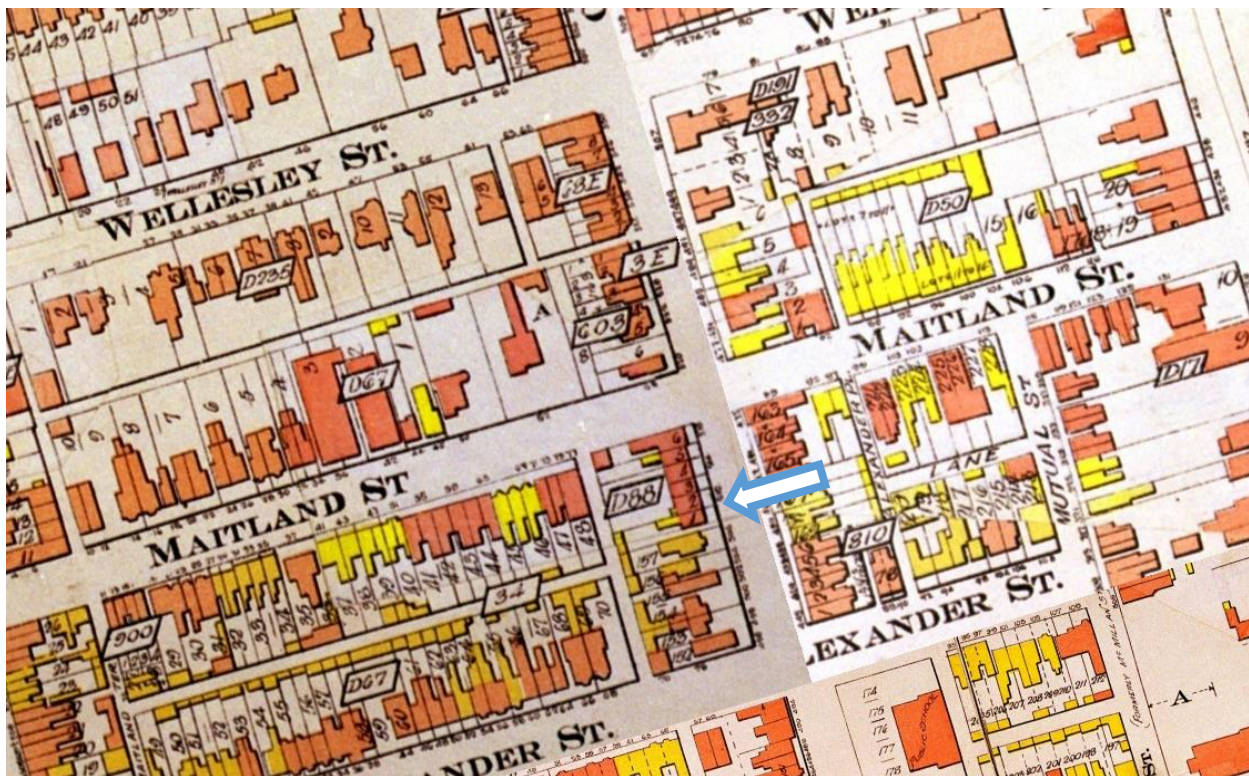


Figure 6: 1913 Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.

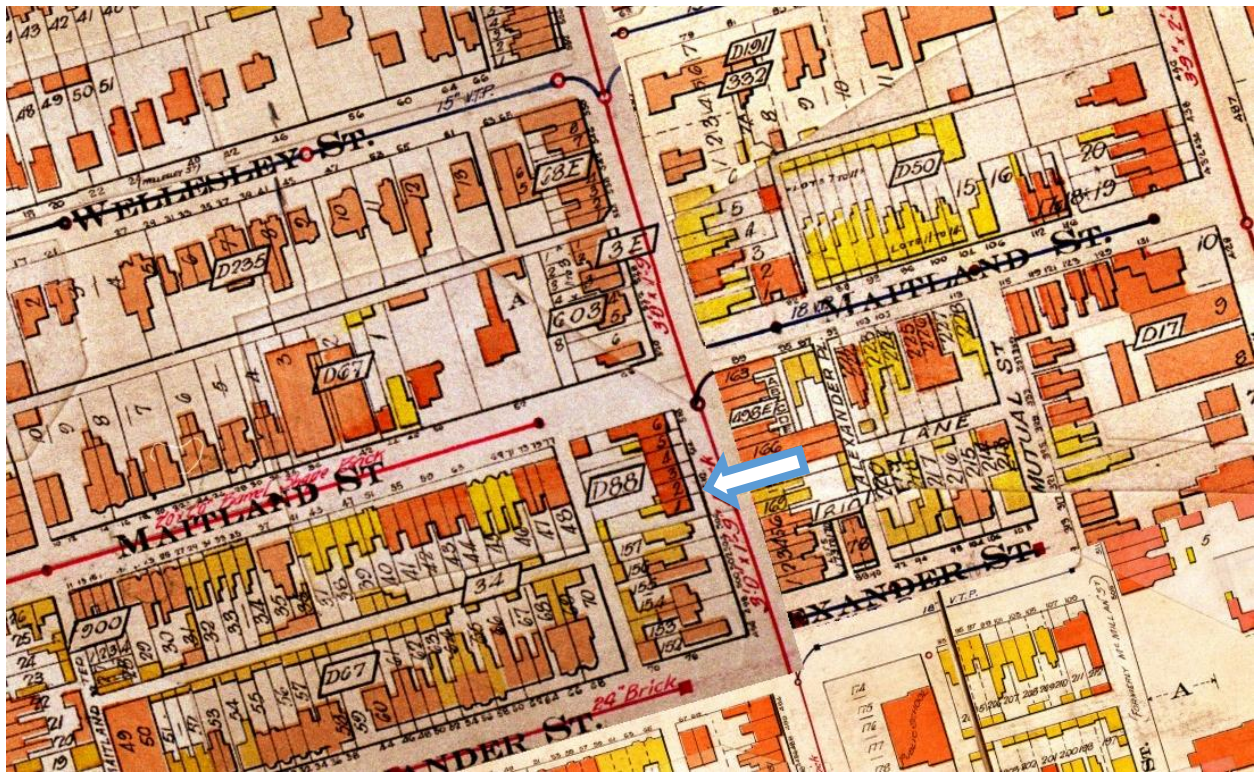


Figure 7: 1924 Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.



Figure 8: 1954 aerial photograph; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.



Figure 9: 1965 aerial photograph; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.



Figure 10: 1978 aerial photograph; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.

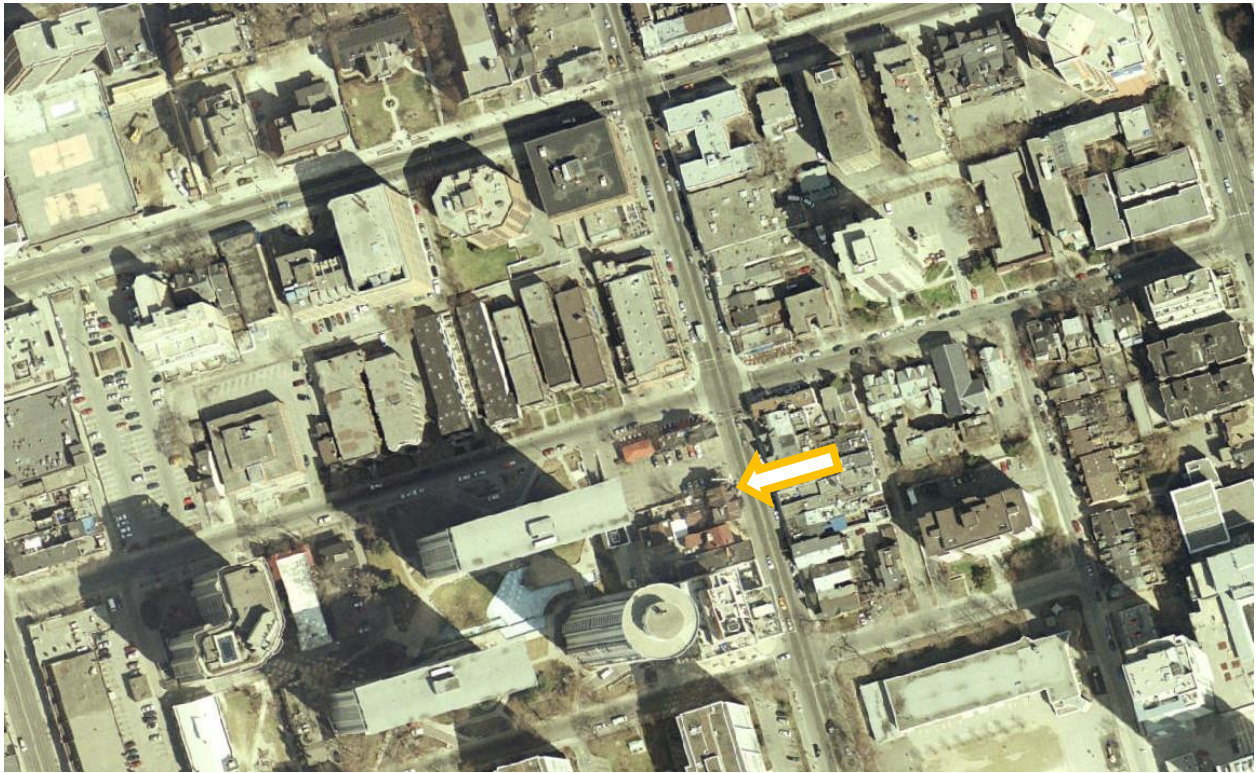


Figure 11: 2005 aerial photograph; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.

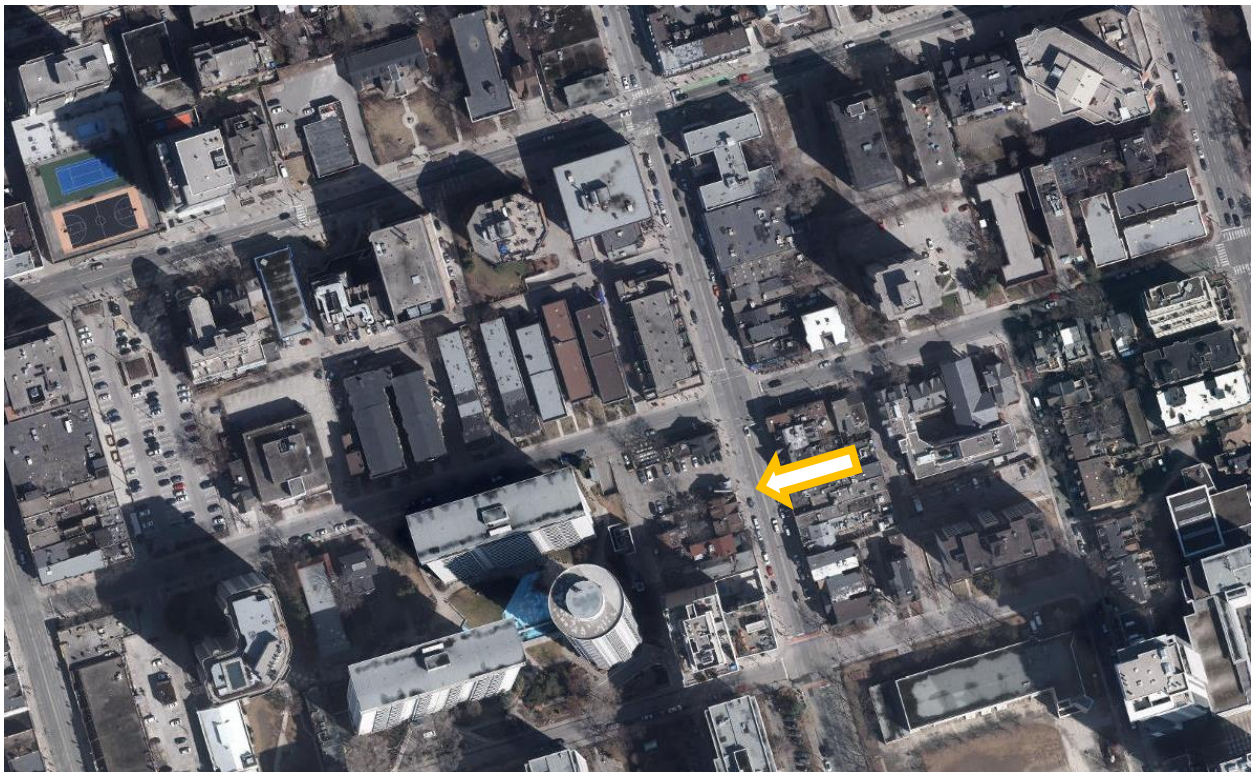


Figure 12: 2015 aerial photograph; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow.



Figure 13: Northwestward view of the subject property from across Church Street, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 14: Southwestward view of the subject property within its streetscape from the intersection of Church and Maitland streets, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 15: Eastward view from the parking lot immediately north of the subject property, with its north and rear elevations visible at right, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 16: The rear coach house, viewed from Donna Shaw Lane, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 17: View of the front elevation and the main entry to Crews and Tangos, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 18: Architectural detailing on the northernmost bay of the front elevation, 2022 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 19: Full historic row of six residential buildings at 508-518 Church Street; location of 508 and 510 Church Street indicated by the arrow; image dated to c.1945-1958. (<https://www.acotoronto.ca/building.php?ID=13162>)



Figure 20: Crews and Tangos c. 2009 or 2011 (Google Street View, via ACO TOBuilt: <https://www.acotoronto.ca/building.php?ID=13072>).



Figure 21: Crews and Tangos prior to the mural's installation in 2013 (<https://toronto.gaycities.com/bars/752-crews-tangos/photos/0>).



Figure 22: A memorial on the steps of Crews and Tangos for the iconic drag queen Michelle Ross, 2021. Photograph by Mitchel Raphael. (Courtesy of the photographer.)



Figure 23: Drag Race competition, 2010s. Photograph by Mitchel Raphael. (Courtesy of the photographer.)

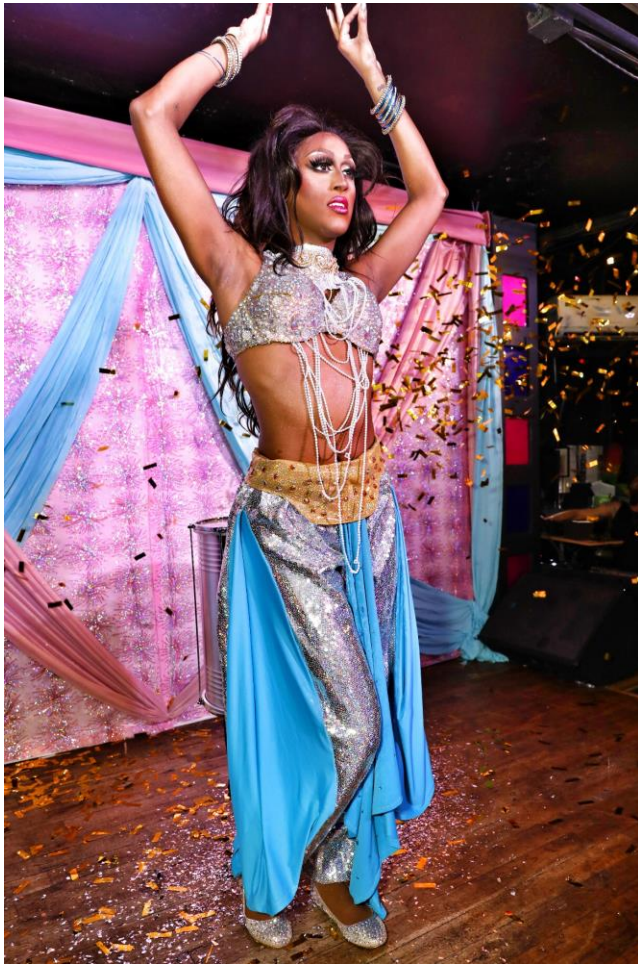


Figure 24: Priyanka performing at Crews and Tangos. Photograph by Mitchel Raphael. (Courtesy of the photographer.)



Figure 25: Miss Crews and Tangos 2018. Photograph by Mitchel Raphael. (Courtesy of the photographer.)

508 AND 510 CHURCH STREET – CREWS AND TANGOS BUILDING

Archival Sources

- Aerial photographs, City of Toronto mapping, 1939, 1954, 1965, 1978, 2005, 2015, 2020
- Boulton Atlas of the City of Toronto and Vicinity, 1858.
- Census of Canada, 1881, 1911.
- City of Toronto Building Records, Building Permits for 508-510 Church Street.
- Goad's Atlas of the City of Toronto, 1880, 1889, 1903, 1913, 1924.
- Toronto City Directories, 1850-1969 (<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/history-genealogy/lh-digital-city-directories.jsp>).

Secondary Sources

- Alexander Schummer, "Popular Church Street club struggles to stay afloat during the pandemic," *On the Record*, 31 January 2022 (<https://ontherecordnews.ca/popular-church-street-club-struggles-to-stay-afloat-during-the-pandemic/>).
- "A mural makeover in the gay village," *IN Magazine*, 25 November 2013 (<https://inmagazine.ca/2013/11/a-mural-makeover-in-the-gay-village/>).
- Catherine Jean Nash and Andrew Gorman-Murray, "Recovering the Gay Village: A Comparative Historical Geography of Urban Change and Planning in Toronto and Sydney," *Historical Geography*, Volume 43, 2015 (<https://d2cu82y6eo7f22.cloudfront.net/2020/01/09214101/07HG43-Nash.pdf>).
- Craig Patterson, "Retailers and Businesses in Gay Villages in Canada Struggle Amid the Pandemic: Study," *Retail Insider*, 13 July 2021 (<https://retail-insider.com/retail-insider/2021/07/retailers-and-businesses-in-gay-villages-in-canada-struggle-amid-the-pandemic-study/>).
- ERA Architects, 506-516 Church Street: Heritage Impact Assessment, 9 April 2021.
- Kevin Ritchie, "DJ Blackcat marks three decades behind the decks," *NOW Magazine*, 6 October 2021 (<https://nowtoronto.com/music/features/dj-blackcat-marks-three-decades-behind-the-decks>).
- Kyle Mooney, "New owner set to unveil revived Crews & Tango," *Xtra Magazine*, 17 March 2010 (<https://xtramagazine.com/culture/exclusive-new-owner-set-to-unveil-revived-crews-tango-10842>).
- Rhea Singh, "'It's our church.' DIY rave scenes are safe spaces for marginalized folks," *Xtra Magazine*, 4 March 2022 (<https://xtramagazine.com/culture/diy-rave-scene-queer-bipoc-219199>).
- Stephanie Chambers et al., *Any Other Way: How Toronto Got Queer*, Coach House Books, 2017.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT 3

508 AND 510 CHURCH STREET – CREWS AND TANGOS BUILDING

The properties at 508 and 510 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 provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under the categories of design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value.

Description

Located on the west side of Church Street between Alexander and Maitland streets, the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street comprise two adjoining structures, originally constructed as residences in c.1856-1858. The properties are three storeys high with a complex cross-gabled roof. They are faced in brick with wood and stone trim, and have a raised basement level faced in rough stone. The properties have evolved physically and undergone a series of alterations in their 160-year history, including the integration of their interiors and the loss of the adjacent resident units of the historic row (now a parking lot). The other surviving unit is located at the corner of Church and Maitland streets.

The adjoining structures at 508 and 510 Church Street currently house Crews and Tangos, a drag performance venue, bar, and gathering space for the LGBTQ2S+ community. At the rear of the properties, a two-storey coach house is situated on Donna Shaw Lane and visible from the parking lot to the north. It is connected to the primary structures via a one-storey addition. Faced in brick, the coach house has a gabled roof, and the projecting gable ends with brick corbeling form a parapet with an unusual stepped silhouette. The coach house's ground floor currently includes a bar and a dance floor.

In 2013, the painted brick exterior on Church Street was repainted with a mural by Nadijah Robinson and Elicser Elliott, depicting performers against a cobalt background. The artwork was one of 11 murals on 11 buildings as part of the Church Street Mural Project, led by Syrus Marcus Ware and James Fowler in association with the Church Wellesley Village Business Association and Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. The initiative commemorated World Pride, which took place in Toronto in 2014.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The pair of structures at 508 and 510 Church Street constitute a unique example of semi-detached house-form structures from the mid-nineteenth century, constructed as part of a former row at 508-518 Church Street, and have since evolved for commercial use. They are notable for their asymmetrical configuration and details such as rounded arches and brickwork that demonstrate a vernacular application of Romanesque Revival stylistic influences, which were popular during the second half of the nineteenth century. The properties also retain a nineteenth-century coach house, located to the rear of 508

Church Street; though altered, this structure represents an increasingly rare typology within Toronto.

The integrated properties hold direct associations with the evolution of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood and with the more recent history of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ community. The properties house Crews and Tangos (formerly Crews), one of Toronto's longest operating queer bars. The Crews and Tangos building has historical value as an iconic venue for queer community gatherings, rituals, performances, and cultural expression. Because the venue occupies a pair of former residences and a coach house, allowing it to spread across separate rooms and floors, it has the capacity to operate multiple bar spaces and dance floors simultaneously. These spaces cater to different activities and musical tastes, heightening the sense of inclusivity for which Crews and Tangos is noted.

Located at the centre of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood (also known as The Village), less than two blocks south of its eponymous intersection, the subject properties are important in defining the area's character. They contribute to an eclectic streetscape that features a variety of commercial typologies as well as a predominance of nineteenth-century residential buildings converted to commercial use, including 508 and 510 Church Street. The properties are also physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to their surroundings. For over four decades, Church and Wellesley has been the geographical heart of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ community, with a concentration of queer community spaces, clubs, bars, restaurants, among which Crews and Tangos is considered an anchor. Operating since 1994, the Crews and Tangos building is a cultural landmark within the neighbourhood and for Toronto's broader LGBTQ2S+ community. Additionally, the mural added in 2013 for World Pride contributes to the building's status as a visual landmark.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street as a unique example of mid-nineteenth-century semi-detached residences converted to commercial use, as well as a representative and rare example of a surviving nineteenth-century coach house:

- The scale, form, and massing of the primary building as a three-storey pair of former residences
- The primary building's material palette, consisting of brick with stone and wood detailing
- The primary building's asymmetrical composition on the front elevation, including a wider portion of three bays beneath a common roofline, and a fourth bay to the north
- The complex cross-gabled roof, with a truncated front gable above the building's wider portion and a narrow front gable above the northern bay
- Fenestration including segmentally arched openings on a two-storey bay window, and round-arched windows
- Architectural details including leaded glass transoms, brick corbeling and window details, wood brackets, and half-cove wood shingles

- The scale, form, and massing of the rear building as a two-storey former coach house

Historic and Associative Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street as a longstanding and iconic venue for queer community gatherings, rituals, performances, and cultural expression:

- The properties' siting and orientation on the west side of Church Street
- The World Pride mural covering the primary building's east and south elevations, depicting performers against a cobalt background
- The properties' scale, form, and massing as a three-storey pair of former residences with a two-storey former coach house, allowing different forms of programming to operate simultaneously across separate rooms and floors

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the properties at 508 and 510 Church Street as a character-defining building within the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood and a cultural landmark:

- The properties' siting and orientation on the west side of Church Street
- The scale, form, and massing of the primary building as a three-storey pair of former residences
- The primary building's material palette, consisting of brick with stone and wood detailing
- The World Pride mural covering the primary building's east and south elevations, depicting performers against a cobalt background