

127 Strachan Avenue - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: November 10, 2022

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: 10 - Spadina-Fort-York

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the City of Toronto state its intention to designate the property at 127 Strachan Avenue under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Constructed in 1878, the property at 127 Strachan Avenue anchors the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West. Designed by celebrated architect David Brash Dick as one of his earliest individual commissions, the building is a representative example of the Second Empire architectural style that was popular in Toronto in the late-19th century. It contributes to the historic character of the surrounding residential neighbourhood by retaining its original scale, form, and massing as a 3-storey building with 1-storey rear wing, and its Second Empire style is reflected in many of its extant original design features. The property was purpose-built as a grocery with apartments above for original proprietor John H. Meyer and it maintained that use for close to 70 years. Since the 1990s it has been operating as a neighbourhood bar and restaurant.

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 127 Strachan Avenue and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under design and physical, historical and associative, and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

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.

Official Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment, and Site Plan Control applications were submitted to the City in 2021, which propose the retention of the primary structure at 127 Strachan Avenue and demolition of the rear one-storey wing and addition, as well as the demolition of some adjacent low-rise properties at 109-115 Strachan Avenue. A high-rise residential development would be constructed in their place.

The City Clerk issued a complete application notice on February 18, 2022. A waiver to extend the 90 day time period in which City Council must make a decision in respect of the submitted applications under the Ontario Heritage Act was received by the City with no deadline.

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. Designation also enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance. An HIA for 109, 111, 115, and 127 Strachan Avenue was prepared by GBCA Architects and submitted to the City in December 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 127 Strachan Avenue under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance; 127 Strachan Avenue (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3, to the report, November 10, 2022, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, 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 property 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

On February 24, 2021, item TE23.29, a residential demolition application for 127 Strachan Avenue was withdrawn from the Toronto and East York Community Council agenda. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.TE23.29>

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://files.ontario.ca/mmah-place-to-grow-office-consolidation-en-2020-08-28.pdf>

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/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 3.1.6 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 3.1.6.4 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 3.1.6.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.6.26 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

On November 20, 2020, an application was submitted to demolish the existing 3-storey mixed-use building at 127 Strachan Avenue. Following discussion with the owner, the item was withdrawn from the Toronto and East York Community Council agenda prior to consideration. Official Plan Amendment, Zoning Amendment, and Site Plan Control applications were submitted to the City in 2021, which propose the retention of the primary structure at 127 Strachan Avenue and demolition of the rear one-storey wing and addition, as well as the demolition of some adjacent low-rise properties at 109-115 Strachan Avenue. A high-rise residential development would be constructed in their place.

The existing building is currently occupied on the ground floor by a restaurant (with ancillary patio) and two dwelling units above.

127 Strachan Avenue

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 property at 127 Strachan Avenue, it should be noted that new and additional relevant information on the subject property further expanding on its cultural heritage value following community input and additional access to archival records may be incorporated in the final version of a Part IV designation by-law.



View of the property at 127 Strachan Avenue looking southeast (Heritage Planning, 2022)

1. DESCRIPTION

127 Strachan Avenue	
ADDRESS	127 Strachan Avenue
WARD	Spadina-Fort York - 10
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	RP 63R1208 PART 1 ORDNANCE RESERVE PT LOT 28
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	West Queen West ¹
HISTORICAL NAME	117 Strachan Avenue (until 1890)
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1878
ORIGINAL OWNER	John H. Meyer
ORIGINAL USE	Grocery

¹ As defined by City of Toronto Neighbourhoods Map and profiles

CURRENT USE*	Bar/Restaurant with Residential Above *This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	David Brash Dick (architect)
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick with wood and stone detailing
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Second Empire
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	Rear addition, storefront alterations
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative, Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	NOL
RECORDER	Heritage Planning: Megan Albinger and Emma Doedens
REPORT DATE	November 2022

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 127 Strachan Avenue, 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 it merits 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 Statements of Significance are 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	Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe sets aside an approximately 1000-acre tract for military purposes following the founding of York. The site was called the Military Reserve, also known as the Garrison or Ordnance Reserve.
1830s	Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Colborne auctions off the Military Reserve lands east of the creek to raise money for new military fortifications. These auctioned grants become lots for commercial and residential development as the town expands westward.

1850s	The north-south streets of Strachan and Stafford are laid out west of the creek with individual building lots, coinciding with the construction of railway lines through the former Military Reserve.
1875	The Crown grants Lot 28 on the east side of Strachan Avenue to John H. Meyer.
1878	The building at 117 Strachan Avenue (present day 127 Strachan Ave.) is constructed for use as a grocery store.
1879	Meyer vacates the property at 117 Strachan and moves to 53 York to sell cigars and confectionary.
1883	After a few years occupied by a shoemaker, 117 Strachan returns to function as a grocery store until 1955.
1890	City Directories indicate the address of 117 Strachan Avenue is changed to its present day address: 127 Strachan Avenue.
1960-1965	Demolition of house-form buildings on Strachan Avenue south of the subject property between 95-99 and 127 Strachan Avenue.
1997	Ontario Municipal Board authorizes the rezoning of the property to a restaurant. Subsequently, alterations are made to the front storefront.

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.

Ordinance Reserve Plan

The subject property occupies a lot on the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West (Figures 1-2). It is located within the original Military Reserve (also called the Garrison or Ordinance Reserve), which was an approximately 1000-acre tract of land set aside for military purposes by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, the first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, following the founding of York (Toronto) in 1793. Simcoe selected this site for its strategic location, which was both easily defensible within the bay and provided an ideal vantage point for the surveillance of Lake Ontario's waterways.²

By 1833, Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne needed to raise money for improvements to military fortifications (such as the new Fort York), and for the expansion of York itself. Colborne was authorized to auction off the easternmost portions of the Military Reserve to fund these changes, which consequentially opened up the area for subdivision and sale of lots for commercial and residential development. The following year in 1834, the City of Toronto was incorporated; its grid of streets extended to just beyond Bathurst Street to a creek that formed the new eastern edge of the Garrison lands, which was a natural boundary for development (Figure 3). Throughout the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, the original Military Reserve lands continued to be parceled off for institutional use and private development, and in 1857

² Patricia McHugh and Alex Bozikovic, *Toronto Architecture: A City Guide*. 2nd ed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2017, 948.

the Crown advertised a subdivision plan for the Ordnance Reserve comprising an area immediately west of Garrison Creek (Figure 4). Individual building lots were laid out along the new north-south thoroughfares of Strachan and Stafford, up to the eastern edge of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum and municipal Exhibition Grounds. The lots were also organized around a pre-existing estate on Queen Street West owned by John Farr, who established a brewery on the banks of Garrison Creek in 1819 (Figure 5).

127 Strachan Avenue (formerly 117 Strachan Avenue)

Land Registry records suggest the Crown began actively granting the lots in the Ordnance Reserve Plan starting in the early 1870s.³ One of the earliest lots to be developed was a prominent site on the northeast corner of Strachan Avenue and King Street West, where Assessment Rolls indicate that proprietor George White established the Palace Tavern.⁴ On the remaining lots, a small neighbourhood of wood-frame housing for the working class soon developed, with the west side of Strachan Avenue typically featuring single-storey, "rough-cast" houses, in contrast to the east side of Stafford Street, which saw a higher prevalence of two-storey, wood-frame houses with brick façades (Figure 6).⁵ In 1875, Lot 28 on the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West was purchased by John H. Meyer.⁶

Little is known about John Meyer, who commissioned the design and construction of the subject property. According to City Directories, he was the proprietor of the King's Hotel, located at the corner of York and Front streets, from 1866 to 1877 and may have concurrently owned a property on York Street that operated as a confectionery.⁷ His data entry in the 1871 Census suggests that he emigrated from Germany to Nova Scotia before relocating to Ontario,⁸ and the earliest references to him in the City Directories indicate that he managed the Steamboat Hotel located at the corner of Scott and Wellington streets for at least two years before the King's Hotel. In 1875, a fire broke out at the King's Hotel, causing "considerable" damage. The building was reportedly insured and Meyer obtained his liquor license for the property in 1876, suggesting he reopened the business before developing the property at 127 Strachan Avenue. After 1879, Meyer is no longer listed in the City Directories.

At the time of construction of the subject property in 1878, the area was undergoing a period of significant industrial development. Businesses were attracted by the proximity

3 John Farr, who operated the brewery at present-day Queen Street West and lived in a house on site, received an earlier grant dating to 1868 for one of the lots abutting his property.

4 The extant building (designated Part IV), designed by F.H. Herbert, was constructed in c.1889 to replace an earlier tavern on the site that is identified in City directories as early as 1870.

5 GBCA Architects, "Heritage Impact Assessment for 127 Strachan Avenue: including properties at 109, 111, and 115 Strachan Avenue Toronto, ON," December 22, 2021.

6 John H. Meyer is also frequently listed in City Directories with the alternative spelling of 'Myer', and 'Meyers'.

7 A Classified Ad in *The Globe* on October 17, 1877 advertises a confectionery store on York Street available to let, and directs inquiries to either the King's Hotel or the Strachan Avenue property.

8 His first three children are born in Nova Scotia, while his youngest two children are born in Ontario. The age of his wife (25) compared to the age of his eldest child (16) makes it likely that this was a second marriage. At 4 years of age in 1871, this indicates that John Meyer was in Ontario by 1867, which aligns with the City Directories.

of the rail lines: Western Railways, the Ontario Simcoe Line, Lake Huron Railway (later the Northern Railway), Grand Trunk Railway, and the Credit Valley Railway all had tracks that intersected in some way with the former Military Reserves. Notably, the Massey Manufacturing Company, an agricultural implement manufacturer from Newcastle, Ontario, purchased a site on the south side of King Street West just west of Strachan Avenue in 1879. They merged with A. Harris, Son & Co. Ltd in 1891 to become Massey-Harris Limited, which would become one of the largest agricultural equipment manufacturers in the British Empire.⁹ Their expansive complex, which occupied the entire block from Strachan Avenue to Armour Street, employed some 9,000 people at its peak and City Directories indicate that several employees of the company resided along Strachan Avenue (Figure 7). Other major industrial employers that were situated in the area were the Toronto Municipal Abattoir on Niagara Street, and the Inglis manufacturing facility on Strachan Avenue south of the railway.

The first recorded use of 127 Strachan Avenue was as a grocery, and under a series of different proprietors and with intermittent (but brief) vacancies, it was in near-continuous use as such until 1955. While technically non-consecutive, this marked the end of approximately 70 years of grocer operations for the local community. In the 1960s it housed a series of miscellaneous businesses, and by the 1970s it was being used as a storage building. In 1996, an application to the Committee of Adjustment to convert the building to a restaurant was denied, and the decision was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. On May 14, 1997, the OMB issued their decision V-96-451, authorizing the use to be permitted on the property. The alterations associated with the subsequent conversion of the property resulted in the first renovation of the subject property of note; up to this point, the property had generally retained its Second Empire detailing, including most of the original storefront designed by architect David Brash Dick.

Architect: David Brash Dick

David Brash Dick was born in Edinburgh in 1846 and studied at the Edinburgh School of Design. He began his career in his hometown with William Lambie Moffatt, after which he served as a draughtsman with the eminent Scottish architects, Peddie and Kinnear. In 1873 Dick immigrated to Chicago, where he participated in the city's rebuilding after the Great Fire of 1871.¹⁰ By 1874 Dick had settled in Toronto and formed a partnership with fellow Scottish expatriate, Robert Grant, who was already an established builder in the city. During their brief yet productive collaboration, Grant and Dick completed an office block for the Consumers' Gas Company at 17-19 Toronto Street - a project which would prove significant to Dick's career. After his formal partnership with Grant dissolved in 1876 following Grant's decision to focus primarily on property development, Dick retained Consumers' Gas as his client.¹¹ Dick designed several commercial and industrial buildings for the company, in addition to a glass conservatory for the mansion of its president, James Austin.¹² Dick established himself as the architect of choice for several other prominent clients, including William Mulock (president of the Dominion

⁹ The Massey-Harris Company became the Massey-Ferguson Company in the 1950s.

¹⁰ *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, 2016.

¹¹ OAA, Honour Roll entry for David Brash Dick.

¹² Hill, entry for David Brash Dick.

Bank), E.B. Osler, Sir Henry Pellatt, and Joseph Flavelle.¹³ In turn, these relationships led to further commissions for the design of bank branches such as the Dominion Bank (1877), Standard Bank (1884, since demolished), Quebec Bank (1886), the Canadian Bank of Commerce (1887), and the Bank of Hamilton (1888), among others.¹⁴

Dick was a prolific architect who designed for multiple building typologies in cities across Ontario, including residential, commercial, industrial, ecclesiastical, and commercial buildings in Hamilton, Collingwood, Sarnia, Guelph, and Toronto. His architectural designs vary, although he often featured the Richardsonian Romanesque and Queen Anne styles, especially towards the end of his career. Dick is perhaps best known for his contributions to the University of Toronto, where he was appointed the University Architect in 1878. While there, Dick designed the Biological Buildings in 1888-9 (since demolished), the University Library (1891-2), Wycliffe College (1890-2), and restorations for the University College after significant fire damage (1890-2).¹⁵ In addition to his architectural works, David Brash Dick was a founding member of the Toronto Architectural Guild in 1887; two years later, the Guild became the Ontario Association of Architects. Dick served on the O.A.A's first council, and he was its president in 1893.¹⁶ In 1902, Dick retired to England and died there in 1925. His legacy is recognized by the Ontario Association of Architects by being listed on their Honour Roll, which is only bestowed upon those who have made a significant contribution to the province's architectural heritage, either through their body of work or their influence in the wider community of design, education, and/or publication.

The Second Empire style building at 127 Strachan Avenue (Figure 9) is noteworthy in Dick's career because it is one of the earliest recorded buildings he designed as the sole contributing architect. Within Dick's architectural oeuvre his use of the Second Empire style is less common than the Romanesque and Queen Anne examples, however, he produced a very similar design for a commercial main street property at 1273 Queen Street West (1880) in Parkdale,¹⁷ and incorporated elements of the Second Empire style into his 1894 alterations of the manse for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Simcoe Street. 127 Strachan is a testament to Dick's versatility as an architect who was skilled in numerous architectural styles.

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.

The building at 127 Strachan Avenue features a rectangular plan, comprising a 3-storey front portion with a basement, and a 1-storey rear wing constructed in brick, with a later extension on the rear constructed in concrete block (both rear portions are slab-on-

¹³ OAA, Honour Roll entry for David Brash Dick.

¹⁴ Hill, entry for David Brash Dick.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ OAA, Honour Roll entry for David Brash Dick.

¹⁷ 1273 Queen Street West is a contributing property within the Parkdale Main Street Heritage Conservation District.

grade). The building features a variety of roof styles: the main structure has a mansard roof, the 1877 rear wing features a gable roof, and the later addition features a flat roof. Due to its location at the corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West, both the building's primary (west) and secondary (north) elevations are visible from the street, as well as the north elevations of the two rear portions of the building (Figure 10). Parking areas on the east end of the property abutting the laneway and on the adjacent property to the south currently permit the visibility of the building in the round. All exterior masonry including the chimneys has been painted, and the mansard roof is a patchwork of asphalt shingles.

The property's principal (west) elevation fronting Strachan Avenue features a storefront at the ground (first) floor, three segmental-arched windows at the second floor with overhanging brick hoods, and two round-arched dormers within the mansard roof that are accented by wood trim and bracket details. The building's mansard roof is supported by a bracketed cornice and truncated by a parapet firewall on the south end (Figure 11).

The building's storefront, which partially wraps the corner at ground level, has been altered. Renovations completed in 1999 during a conversion of the building from warehouse/storage use to a restaurant resulted in significant modifications to the building's storefront, including the reconfiguration of the entrance towards the south end of the building, rather than being flanked by storefront windows as per its original design (Figure 12). As part of this work, an ornate wooden cornice with a dentil course and brackets was removed. The storefront was renovated again in the early 2000s, and the current vertical wood siding was installed in 2017 (Figure 13).¹⁸

The subject property's secondary (north) elevation fronting Adelaide Street West features many of the same architectural details as the west elevation (Figure 14-15). Fenestration on the north elevation is concentrated towards the rear (east) end of the property. There are six openings on the ground level, including one small rectangular opening in the rear concrete block addition, two segmented arch windows in the original rear wing, and a large rectangular window opening located centrally on the main wing of the building (not original). A secondary entrance is located on the east end of the main structure. Although the original architectural drawings indicate a window at this location, the only archival photograph (taken in 1991, Figure 10) of the north elevation shows a wood door with transom that could date to the time of construction; at some point, the door was replaced and currently features a modern glazed door. Similar to the windows, the segmental-arched door opening is ornamented with a slightly overhanging brick hood. On the second floor, there are two windows positioned to the rear (east) end of the building and two dormer windows within the mansard roof, which feature the same detailing as the windows on the primary elevation. A brick chimney, inset within the building envelope, rises from the mansard roof on the north elevation, and the east end of the roof is truncated by a parapet firewall.

The south and east elevations of the building are mostly devoid of architectural detail (Figures 16-17). A utilitarian window and door are located on the east elevation of the concrete block addition, while a fire escape door is located on both the second and third

¹⁸ According to a condition assessment conducted by GBCA as part of the HIA submitted in 2021, a "sympathetic storefront appearance" may still exist under the current overcladding.

floors of the primary structure. Above the exit door are brick voussoirs forming a segmental arch, which has been infilled with header bricks, suggesting the opening was originally a window or door with transom. A chimney on the face of the east wall aligns with the ridgeline of the gable roof of the rear wing. Presently, it is capped at the roofline, although it originally projected above the firewall parapet. The south elevation features a single flat-arched window opening with plain lug sills and brick voussoirs on each of the second and third floors, two exit doors at ground level, and two rectangular window openings in the concrete block addition. According to archival aerial photographs, the rear concrete block addition appears to have been constructed by the 1930s and previously extended closer to the east property line, but was partially demolished in the late 1960s or early 1970s (Figure 8).

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 location of the property at 127 Strachan Avenue is shown on the map included as Figure 1 in Attachment 1 (Maps and Photographs). The property is located at the southeast corner of Adelaide Street West and Strachan Avenue in the West Queen West neighbourhood. As outlined above, this area of Toronto was originally part of the Military Reserve, which was parcelled off over time for a variety of government institutions, industry, and private development.

The subject property is centrally located within a small working-class residential district that arose between the Provincial Lunatic Asylum (1850) grounds on the west, Garrison Creek to the east, Queen Street West to the north, and the railway lines to the south, concentrated along Strachan Avenue and Stafford Street (Figures 18-19). This low-rise residential area was well-established by the mid-1870s, and supported a number of significant industrial facilities nearby, including the Massey-Harris and Inglis Manufacturing plants, and the Municipal Abattoir. The entrance to the Central Prison (1873), was also located on Strachan Avenue, south of the railway tracks. At the time of construction, the use of masonry construction for the building at 127 Strachan Avenue set it apart from the surrounding wood-frame residential buildings.

The area retains a collection of late-19th century residential buildings, including many in the bay-and-gable style, interspersed with several infill projects dating to later periods that feature the same low-rise scale and massing. As the businesses occupying the large industrial sites began to relocate away from the city centre after World War II and the buildings comprising these facilities were demolished, the surrounding area began to lose its industrial character. New residential development has occurred on several of the large, former industrial sites, including a number of low-rise townhouse-style condominium projects. Of the many Massey-Harris company buildings, the only one to survive to present day is the Office Building designed by E.J. Lennox c.1899 (designated Part IV under the OHA), which was converted to residential use in 2003.

The Palace Hotel and Tavern¹⁹ (1889), designated Part IV under the OHA in 2021, is located on the same block as the subject property, where it anchors the northeast corner of Strachan Avenue and King Street West. 127 Strachan Avenue is also two small blocks south of the proposed West Queen West Heritage Conservation District and the gates of the former Trinity College at Trinity Bellwoods Park. It is within Site and Area Specific Plan Area 2 of the Garrison Common North Secondary Plan, which permits a mix of employment and residential uses. Additionally, the property across the street at 120 Strachan Avenue is subject to SASP 153, which also permits a mix of employment and residential uses within any building.

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

Representative example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method

Constructed in 1878, the property at 127 Strachan Avenue has design and physical value as a representative example of the Second Empire architectural style that was popular in many prominent commercial, public, and residential buildings in Toronto from 1860 to 1900. The property retains its original scale, form, and massing as a three-storey building with a one-storey rear wing, and its design value as a representative example of the Second Empire style is reflected in many of its extant original features, including its brick construction with ornamental brick, wood, and stone details, segmental-arched windows on the north and west elevations, mansard roof supported by a bracketed cornice, and round-arched dormers. Although altered and presently overclad, the building also retains the distinguishing feature of a commercial storefront at grade, differentiating this building from the surrounding residential properties.

¹⁹ This property is also known as the Palace Arms and includes the addresses 938, 944, and 950 King Street West and 95, 97, and 99 Strachan Avenue.

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	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	✓

Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community

The subject property at 127 Strachan Avenue is valued for its association with the architect David Brash Dick (1846-1925). With architectural drawings dating to 1877, it is one of the earliest recorded buildings he designed as the sole contributing architect. During his career, Dick established himself as the architect of choice for several prominent clients including the Consumers' Gas Company and the University of Toronto, and is a recipient of the Ontario Association of Architects' Honor Roll, which is only bestowed upon those who have made a significant contribution to the province's architectural heritage, either through their body of work or their influence in the wider community of design, education, and/or publication.

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	N/A

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

Contextually, the building at 127 Strachan Avenue supports and maintains the historic character of the working-class neighbourhood that developed in the late 19th century and thrived due to the proximity of several large industrial complexes established near the railway. The property's materiality, scale and massing contribute to the low-rise residential streetscape, which has been reinforced through the introduction of several compatible infill projects along Strachan Avenue.

Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

The building at 127 Strachan Avenue is also historically, visually and physically linked to its setting, anchoring the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West. The property was one of the last buildings to be erected as part of the initial build-out of the neighbourhood in the 1870s, and was centrally located within the residential enclave on a prominent corner site. Relative to the surrounding house-form buildings, the larger scale and higher-quality materials used in its design and construction are indications of the commercial nature of the property and its important role in serving the local residential community.

CONCLUSION

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 127 Strachan Avenue and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

Constructed in 1878 according to the plans of David Brash Dick, the subject property at 127 Strachan Avenue has cultural heritage value as a representative example of a mixed-use building designed in the Second Empire style, which was popular in the late-19th century. It operated as a local neighborhood grocery for close to 70 years within the heart of a working-class residential enclave, which was built up to support the expansion of industry near the railway lands on the former Military Reserve, including the Massey Manufacturing facility to the southwest of the subject property. It contributes to the historic character of the surrounding residential neighbourhood by retaining its original scale, form, and massing, and its Second Empire style is reflected in many of its extant original design features.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) 127 Strachan Avenue, comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

Megan Albinger
Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning
Tel: 416-394-2789; Fax: 416-392-1973
E-mail: Megan.Albinger@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Maps and Photographs
Attachment 2 – List of Research Sources
Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)



Figure 1: Map showing the subject property's location outlined in red at 127 Strachan Avenue on the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Figure 2. Aerial View (base image 2016) showing the location of the property on the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West. The approximate boundary of the property is outlined in red (City of Toronto Mapping).



Figure 3: Excerpt from c. 1908 reproduction of an original 1850 map showing the Military Reserves and the land set aside for the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, by Lambert, W.F., Vavasour, H.W., and Robertson, J.R. The approximate location of the subject property is indicated by the arrow (Toronto Public Library Digital Collection, annotation by Heritage Planning).

ORDNANCE LANDS.



TORONTO RESERVE.

A PORTION of the Toronto Ordnance Reserve will be offered to public competition on **Wednesday, the 28th day of January next, at the hour of 1 o'clock, p.m., at the Auction Rooms of Messrs. WAKERFIELD, COATE & CO.**

This portion of the Reserve is divided into Building Lots, varying from 50 to 60 feet in front, and from 104 to 150 in depth. These Lots are situated on the extension of King, Adelaide and Dooro or Wellington Streets West, and on Strachan Avenue, a new thoroughfare, 80 feet wide, commencing at Queen street, opposite to the front of Trinity College.

A large number of most desirable Building Lots will also be found on St. Andrew street, a new street, lying parallel to, but on the East of Strachan Avenue.

The new streets and the extension of those of older date are in process of grading, and will be completed before the spring. An embankment and substantial stone Culvert maintain the communication on Dooro and Wellington streets.

Libertyped Plans of the Property, streets and Lots, showing the dimensions of each and all, are in progress, and will be procurable at the office of Messrs. Smith, Boulton & Co., Civil Engineers and Land Surveyors, 167 King street West, Toronto, on and after the 15th January, 1857.

Terms.—One-fourth of purchase money to be paid down at the time of sale; the balance in nine equal annual instalments, with interest semi-annually upon all monies remaining unpaid, on 24th July and 24th January. Further conditions made known at the day of sale.

WM. T. COFFIN,
 Ordnance Lands Agent.
 Toronto, Dec. 29, 1844.

Figure 4: The sale of lots in the Ordnance Plan was advertised in *The Globe* in 1857.

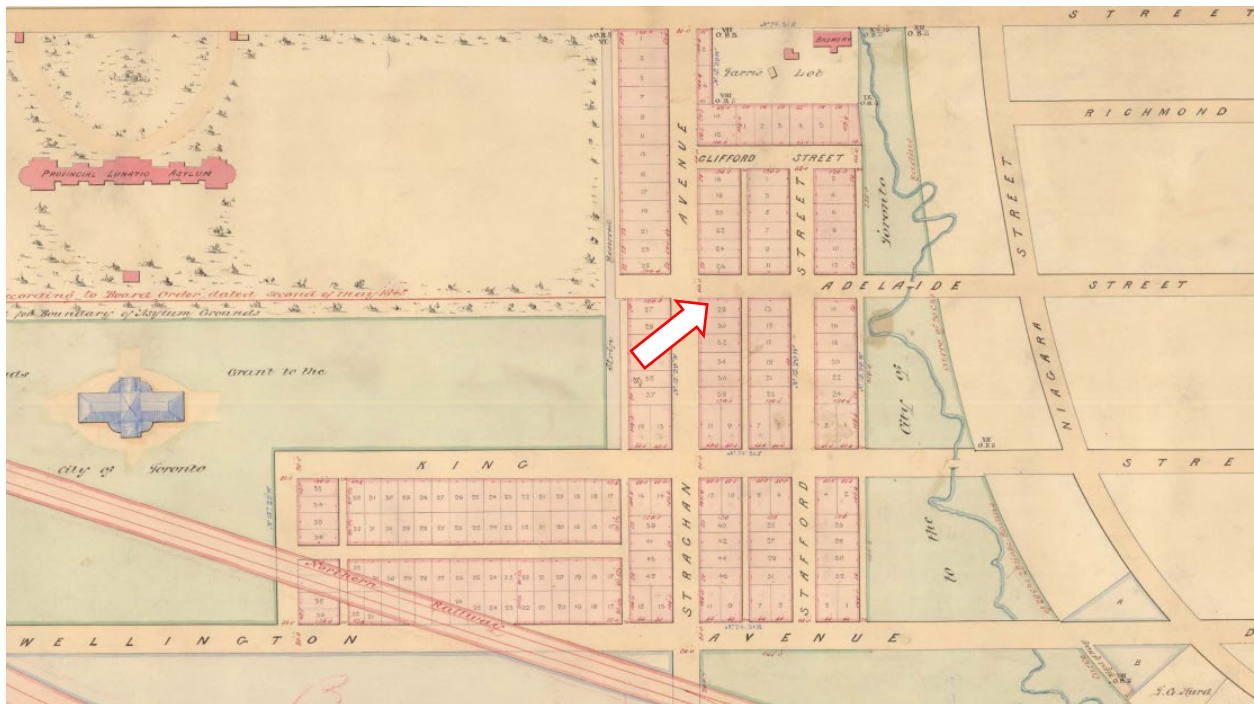


Figure 5: Excerpt from 1862 Plan of the Ordnance Reserve at Toronto Canada, J.S. Dennis. The Lunatic Asylum and Crystal Palace are drawn on the map, though the Central Prison was not yet built at this time. John Farr's house and brewery are indicated on the south side of Queen Street at Garrison Creek. The Crystal Palace was dismantled in 1878 and relocated to the new exhibition grounds closer to the Lake. Lot 28 is indicated by the arrow (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources via Ng).



Figure 6: 1889 Goad Map with annotation indicating the construction of a brick building on the corner of Strachan Avenue and Defoe Street (now Adelaide Street West), the only masonry structure on the block aside from the Palace Tavern and Hotel. The map shows the fine-grain wood frame house-form buildings on Strachan and Stafford, and the large Massey-Harris industrial complex to the southwest of the subject property.

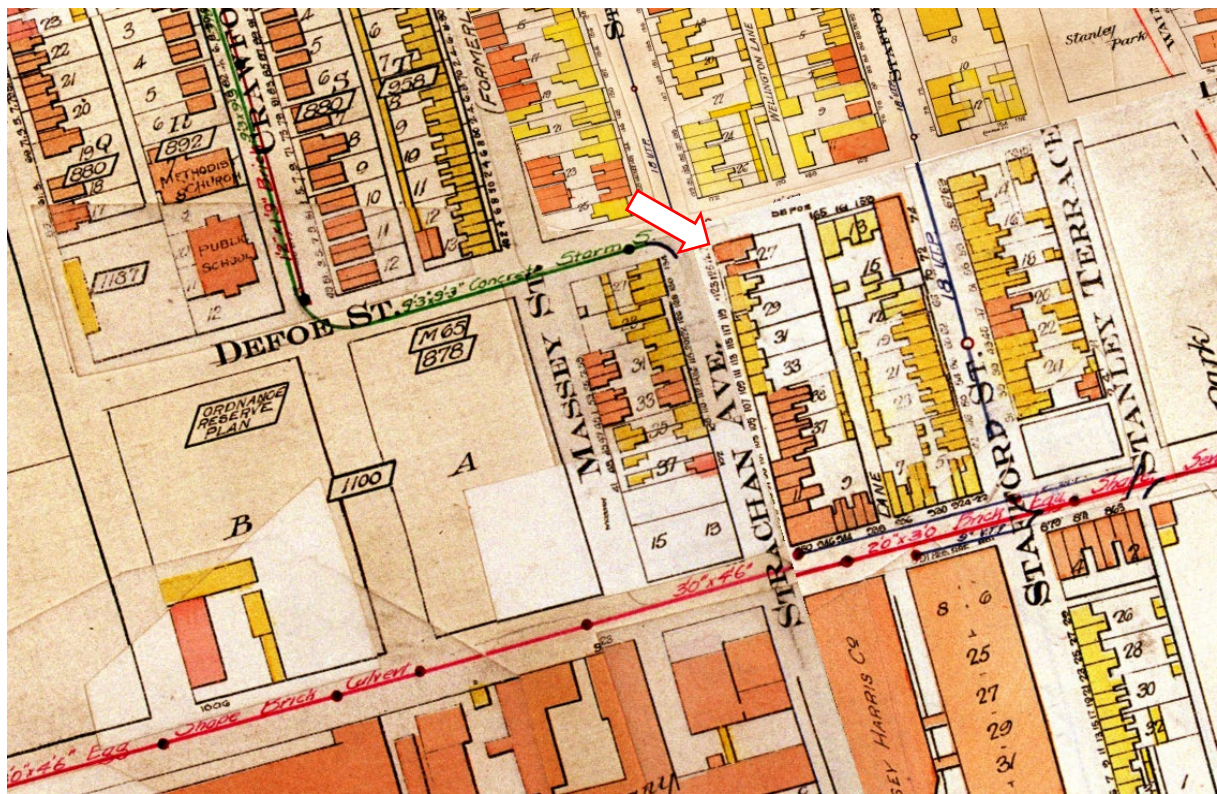


Figure 7: 1924 Goad Map with annotation showing the expansion of the Massey Harris Company across Strachan Avenue and the construction of a secondary brick building adjacent to the subject property. On the same block, 95-107 Strachan Avenue had been replaced with brick buildings by this time.



Figure 8: 1967 aerial photograph of the subject property with extended rear addition still intact. The buildings across the street had been demolished in the early 1950s. The house-form buildings on the east side of Strachan Avenue were demolished within a five year period between 1960 and 1965, and replaced with an automobile mechanic shop and parking lots (City of Toronto Archives).



Figure 9: The 1877 drawing of Meyer's store in Toronto, Ontario, by David Brash Dick, illustrate the architect's original intention for the building, including the primary structure with storefront and the one-storey rear wing (Archives of Ontario).



Figure 10: Archival image from 1991, showing the property at 127 Strachan Avenue, which was used for storage at the time. The bricks are painted and the building shows signs of disrepair, although many elements of the original storefront are still present and the storefront configuration resembles the original architectural drawings (Toronto Historical Board).



Figure 11. Principal (west) elevation of 127 Strachan Avenue (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 12: Archival images from 1999 and 2002, showing the first alterations to the storefront following approval by the Ontario Municipal Board to rezone the property and convert the building into a restaurant with apartments on the upper floors. (Patrick Cummins, Full Frontal T.O.).



Figure 13. Storefront detail, 127 Strachan Avenue (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 14. Secondary (north) elevation of 127 Strachan Avenue (Google Streetview, 2020).



Figure 15. Secondary (north) elevation and primary elevation of 127 Strachan Avenue (Adam Wynne, 2020).

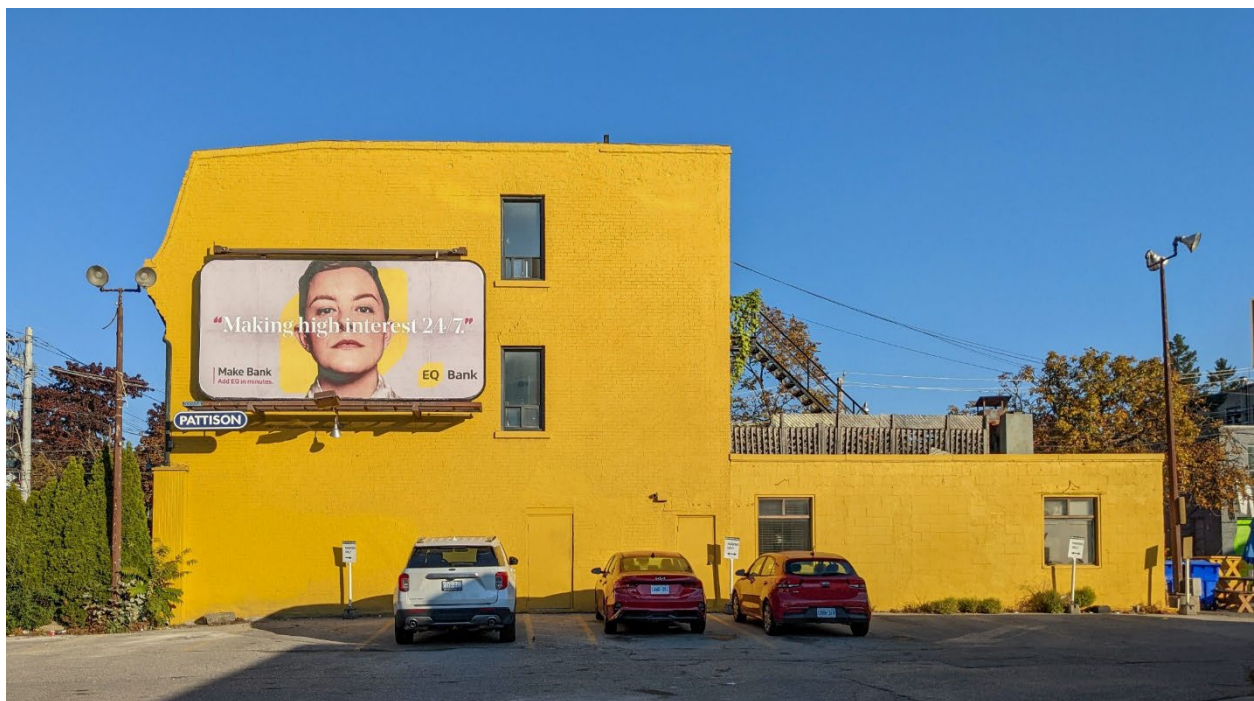


Figure 16. Side (south) elevation of 127 Strachan Avenue (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 17. Rear (east) elevation of 127 Strachan Avenue (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 18. View looking southeast towards 127 Strachan Avenue from Adelaide Street West (Heritage Planning, 2022).



Figure 19. View looking northeast towards 127 Strachan Avenue (Heritage Planning, 2022).

Archival Sources

- Boulton, W.S., & H.C., Atlas of Toronto, 1858.
- Browne, J. O. and Ellis, J., Map of the Township of York in the County of York Upper Canada, 1851 (Ng, via CTA)
- Building Records, Toronto and East York, Building Records Files No. 082459 (1996), 112607 (1999), 132652 (2000)
- Census of Canada, 1871, 1881.
- City of Toronto Archives [CTA], Photographic Collection.
- Dennis, J. Stoughton P.L.S., Plan of the Ordnance Reserve at Toronto Canada, Feb 28, 1862
- Dick, David Brash, drawing of Meyer's store in Toronto, Ontario, J.C.B. and E.C. Horwood Collection, Archives of Ontario.
- Goad, Charles, Atlas of the City of Toronto and Suburbs, 1880 -1924. (CTA)
- Lambert, W.F., Vavasour, H.W., and Robertson, J.R., Plan shewing the military reserves containing about 182 acres exclusive of the portion leased to the Corporation, 1850 (TPL)
- Land Registry Office Records, Metro Toronto, Book 109A, Plan Ordnance Reserve Lot 28.
- Might's Greater Toronto City Directories, 1859-1969.
- Toronto Public Library [TPL], Photographic Collection.

Secondary Sources and Articles

- Arthur, Eric, Toronto: No Mean City, 3rd ed., revised by Stephen A. Otto, 1986.
- "City News: Fire," *The Globe*, August 25, 1875, p.4.
- "Classified Ad: Store and Dwelling to Let," *The Globe*, October 17, 1877, p.1.
- Cummins, Patrick, Full Frontal T.O.: exploring Toronto's architectural vernacular, 2012
- Dictionary of Scottish Architects, entry for David Brash Dick, 2016. Accessed online http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200681
- Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architects, Heritage Impact Assessment for 127 Strachan Avenue, December 22, 2021.
- Hill, Robert, editor, Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950; entry for David Brash Dick. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1639>
- McHugh, Patricia, and Bozickovic, Alex, Toronto Architecture: A City Guide, 2nd ed., 2017.
- Ng, Nathan. Historical Maps of Toronto. (website) <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html>
- "Ordnance Lands Toronto Reserve", *The Globe*, January 28, 1857, p.3.
- Ontario Association of Architects [OAA] Honour Roll Recipients; entry for David Brash Dick, https://oaa.on.ca/Assets/Common/Shared_Documents/Awards/Honour%20Roll/DICK,%20David%20Brash.pdf
- "The License Law," *The Globe*, April 29, 1876, p.5.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 127 Strachan Avenue, is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design/physical, historical/associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 127 Strachan Avenue is located in Toronto's West Queen West neighbourhood, prominently situated on the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West. It contains a three storey mixed-use commercial building that dates to 1878. In 1999, alterations to the building resulted in a reconfiguration of the storefront. The building was originally constructed as a grocery for John H. Meyer, a former hotel proprietor, to support the surrounding working-class neighbourhood. It continued to operate primarily as a grocery until the 1950s. More recently, it has served as a restaurant with a popular summer patio on the north side of the building.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Constructed in 1878, the property at 127 Strachan Avenue has design and physical value as a representative example of the Second Empire architectural style that was popular in many prominent commercial, public, and residential buildings in Toronto from 1860 to 1900. The property retains its original scale, form, and massing as a three-storey building with a one-storey rear wing, and its design value as a representative example of the Second Empire style is reflected in many of its extant original features, including its brick construction with ornamental brick, wood, and stone details, segmental-arched windows on the north and west elevations, mansard roof supported by a bracketed cornice, and round-arched dormers. Although altered and presently overclad, the building also retains the distinguishing feature of a commercial storefront at grade, differentiating this building from the surrounding residential properties.

The subject property at 127 Strachan Avenue is valued for its association with the architect David Brash Dick (1846-1925). With architectural drawings dating to 1877, it is one of the earliest recorded buildings he designed as the sole contributing architect. During his career, Dick established himself as the architect of choice for several prominent clients including the Consumers' Gas Company and the University of Toronto, and is a recipient of the Ontario Association of Architects' Honor Roll, which is only bestowed upon those who have made a significant contribution to the province's architectural heritage, either through their body of work or their influence in the wider community of design, education, and/or publication.

Contextually, the building at 127 Strachan Avenue supports and maintains the historic character of the working-class neighbourhood that developed in the late 19th century

and thrived due to the proximity of several large industrial complexes established near the railway. The property's materiality, scale and massing contribute to the low-rise residential streetscape, which has been reinforced through the introduction of several compatible infill projects along Strachan Avenue.

The building at 127 Strachan Avenue is also historically, visually and physically linked to its setting, anchoring the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West. The property was one of the last buildings to be erected as part of the initial build-out of the neighbourhood in the 1870s, and was centrally located within the residential enclave on a prominent corner site. Relative to the surrounding house-form buildings, the larger scale and higher-quality materials used in its design and construction are indications of the commercial nature of the property and its important role in serving the local residential community.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 127 Strachan Avenue as a representative example of a Second Empire, purpose-built mixed-use property within a residential enclave:

- The scale, form, massing, and rectangular-shaped plan of the property as a three-storey building with one-storey rear wing
- The mansard roof with the extended parapet firewalls on the south and east ends, supported by a cornice featuring ornamental brackets, and gable roof on the rear wing
- The materials, with the brick masonry construction featuring stone, brick and wood detailing (the masonry has been painted)
- The round-arched dormers with the wood detailing and brackets on the west and north slopes of the mansard roof
- The brick chimney that projects from the north slope of the mansard roof
- The vertically-oriented, segmental-arched window openings on the west and north elevations, with stone sills and overhanging brick hoods
- A ground floor storefront featuring an increased proportion of glazing compared to the upper stories
- The location of the entrance to the upper floors on the south side of the Strachan Avenue (west) elevation

Historical or Associative Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 127 Strachan Avenue as a representative example of the work of architect David Brash Dick:

- The scale, form, and massing of the property as a three storey building with a rectangular-shaped plan
- The subject property's architectural detailing in the Second Empire style, which is demonstrative of the architect's versatility

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 127 Strachan Avenue as defining, supporting and maintaining the historic character of the area and being historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to its setting:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building prominently anchoring the southeast corner of Strachan Avenue and Adelaide Street West, with its principal elevation fronting Strachan Avenue
- The scale, form, and massing of the property as a three storey building with a rectangular-shaped plan
- The property's material palette, consisting of brick with wood and stone detailing
- The subject property's architectural detailing in the Second Empire style, which was popular for residential and commercial properties during the period in which the surrounding working-class neighbourhood was built up
- A storefront and entrance to the upper floors on the Strachan Avenue (west) elevation

Note: The concrete block rear addition is not considered a heritage attribute