

55 Elm Street - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: July 6, 2026

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Ward: 11 - University-Rosedale

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance, which includes a description of heritage attributes, found in Attachment 1.

Anchoring the southwest corner of Bay and Elm streets, the subject property contains a three-storey commercial building designed in the Renaissance Revival style and completed in 1891 for the Canadian Temperance League in the city's historic St. John's Ward ("The Ward") neighbourhood. The subject property is valued as part of a broader collection of 26 heritage buildings located along three contiguous blocks of Elm Street that comprises the most intact, surviving grouping of Ward-era built fabric in a range of typologies and historic uses that provide an understanding of the city's first immigrant neighbourhood, including housing, local institutions and charitable organizations that supported its working class residents. A location map and current photographs of the subject property are found in Attachment 2.

The subject property was included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in March 2021.

Staff have determined that the property at 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) has cultural heritage value and meets 5 of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets 2 or more of the 9 criteria.

As of July 1, 2021, Section 29(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act to within 90 days of a "Prescribed Event".

The subject property is subject to a Prescribed Event. On January 12, 2026, the City received an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application to construct an 18-storey building containing 234 hotel suites and retail space (#26101832STE11OZ). The application proposes partial retention of the property at 55 Elm Street and full demolition of the properties at 57-67 Elm Street.

The City Clerk issued a Notice of Complete Application on May 8, 2026. In order to meet prescribed timelines under the Ontario Heritage Act, Council must make a decision at its July 29-31, 2026 meeting to provide sufficient time for the City Clerk to issue a Notice of Intention to Designate.

A Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (CHER) and a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), both authored by ERA Architects Inc. and dated November 7, 2025, were submitted in support of the development application on the site of the subject property. The CHER and HIA conclude that the subject property has cultural heritage value.

Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the properties 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 property at 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1 to the report, July 6, 2026, 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 property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its March 10-12, 2021 meeting, City Council adopted item TE23.25 - Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register- 55 Elm Street (650 Bay Street) and 57-71 Elm Street <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.TE23.25>

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Plans and Policies

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

Further, the policies and definitions of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented.

[Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13)

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 two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

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

Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision making within the City. It 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. The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. The Official Plan can be found here:

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

COMMENTS

Evaluation Analysis

The following evaluation analysis is based on the comprehensive research conducted on the subject property (see Attachment 5) and provides the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

The property at 55 Elm Street (including entrance address at 650 Bay Street) meets the following 5 out of 9 criteria:

The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method

The subject property is valued as a representative example of Renaissance Revival architecture, which was a popular Victorian-era style derived from 16th-century Italy and favoured for commercial architecture in late-19th century Toronto. Features typical of the astylar version of the style and found in the design of 55 Elm Street include the Florentine-esque preference to forego columns and ornate applied decoration; the hierarchical arrangement of the flat-headed and arched window openings at the second and third storeys, respectively, with their stepped, brick drip moulds and continuous string-coursing; the flat roof with parapet and finials (the latter element has been removed); and, the defining tripartite Palladian windows at the first-floor level.

The property has historical value or associative value because it has the potential to yield information about a community or culture

The property at 55 Elm Street is also valued for its ability to yield information about the historic St. John's Ward community bounded by Yonge Street, Queen Street West, University Avenue and Bloor Street West. Also known as 'The Ward' and Toronto's first immigrant neighbourhood, the area's historic character was defined as a low-scale, predominantly residential area interspersed with social and cultural institutions and charitable organizations serving the local working-class residents from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. Today, the largest contiguous collection of The Ward-era heritage properties is located along three blocks of Elm Street between Yonge Street and University Avenue where it continues to provide an understanding of the building types and uses associated with this significant historic community. Among that collection stands the three-storey heritage property at 55 Elm Street, located along the historic spine of The Ward at the corner of Bay (then Teraulay Street) and tenanted over the course of that time by institutions significant to The Ward community.

The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community

Throughout its history, The Ward attracted various social reformers who sought to influence the neighbourhood's working-class population and the property at 55 Elm Street is valued for its direct historical association with the rich social history of institutions and organizations in The Ward. Firstly, the property is valued for its direct association with the Canadian Temperance League and its associated Temperance League Coffee House Company who commissioned and initially tenanted the subject property which was designed to address the perceived social ills of alcohol in working-class communities. Secondly, the property is valued for its direct association with the notable dentist, Dr. John Gennings Curtis Adams, whose Dental Institute was located here from 1897-1913. Dr. Adams is considered the father of public health dentistry in Canada, devoting his practice to providing free dental care to families in poverty,

particularly children. Also noted as the first dentist of record employed at Sick Kids hospital in 1883, Dr. Adams' significant efforts helped establish the model for public health dentistry in local public schools beginning in 1911.

The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area

The property at 55 Elm Street, along with more than twenty other Ward-era heritage properties located along Elm Street between Yonge Street and Chestnut Street, is valued for maintaining the historic St. John's Ward character defined by social and cultural institutions and organizations interspersed among house-form buildings, and exhibiting an eclectic array of Victorian-era styles with an overall 2-4 storey scale, brick and/or stone materiality and little to no setbacks.

The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

Anchoring the southwest corner of Bay and Elm streets, the property at 55 Elm Street is visually and historically linked to its surroundings where it knits together the city's largest contiguous collection of surviving properties associated with the historic St. John's Ward neighbourhood. Stretching along three contiguous blocks of Elm Street between Yonge and Chestnut streets, this significant collection includes the heritage properties on both sides of Elm Street, east of Bay with those west of Bay including the abutting row of house-form buildings at 57-71 Elm Street and the former House of Industry at 87 Elm Street, west of Elizabeth Street.

See Attachments 1, 2 and 3 of this report for the Statement of Significance, Location Map and Current Photographs, and Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources pertaining to the property at 55 Elm Street, as all of these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this staff report.

CONCLUSION

Staff have determined that the property at 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) meets 5 out of 9 criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. As such, the subject property merits designation and staff recommend that Council support the designation of the subject properties at 55-65 Elm Street.

The Statement of Significance for 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) attached to this report as Attachment 1 comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Thorne
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)
Attachment 2 – Location Map and Current Photographs
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

(ENTRANCE ADDRESS AT 650 BAY STREET)**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)****Description**

Located at the southwest corner of Bay and Elm Streets in the historic St. John's Ward neighbourhood, the property at 55 Bay Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) contains a 3-storey commercial building constructed in 1891 along with the abutting row of house-form buildings at 57-65 Elm Street.

In 2015, Heritage Toronto recognized the property with a historical plaque commemorating the notable public health dentist, Dr. John G. C. Adams, whose public health dental clinic was located there in the late 19th - early 20th century. The plaque stands in the public right-of-way directly across from the building's main entrance at the southwest corner of Bay and Elm streets.

The subject property was listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in March 2021.

Design and Physical Value

The subject property is valued as a representative example of Renaissance Revival architecture, which was a popular Victorian-era style derived from 16th-century Italy and favoured for commercial architecture in late-19th century Toronto. Features typical of the astylar version of the style and found in the design of 55 Elm Street include the Florentine-esque preference to forego columns and ornate applied decoration; the hierarchical arrangement of the flat-headed and arched window openings at the second and third storeys, respectively, with their stepped, brick drip moulds and continuous string-coursing; the flat roof with parapet and finials (the latter element has been removed); and, the defining tripartite Palladian windows at the first-floor level.

Historical and Associative Value

The property at 55 Elm Street is also valued for its ability to yield information about the historic St. John's Ward community bounded by Yonge Street, Queen Street West, University Avenue and Bloor Street West. Also known as 'The Ward' and Toronto's first immigrant neighbourhood, the area's historic character was defined as a low-scale, predominantly residential area interspersed with social and cultural institutions and charitable organizations serving the local working-class residents from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. Today, the largest contiguous collection of The Ward-era heritage properties is located along three blocks of Elm Street between Yonge Street and University Avenue where it continues to provide an understanding of the building types and uses associated with this significant historic community. Among that collection stands the three-storey heritage property at 55 Elm Street, located along the historic

spine of The Ward at the corner of Bay (then Teraulay Street) and tenanted over the course of that time by institutions significant to The Ward community.

Throughout its history, The Ward attracted various social reformers who sought to influence the neighbourhood's working-class population and the property at 55 Elm Street is valued for its direct historical association with the rich social history of institutions and organizations in The Ward. Firstly, the property is valued for its direct association with the Canadian Temperance League and its associated Temperance League Coffee House Company who commissioned and initially tenanted the subject property which was designed to address the perceived social ills of alcohol in working-class communities. Secondly, the property is valued for its direct association with the notable dentist, Dr. John Gennings Curtis Adams, whose Dental Institute was located here from 1897-1913. Dr. Adams is considered the father of public health dentistry in Canada, devoting his practice to providing free dental care to families in poverty, particularly children. Also noted as the first dentist of record employed at Sick Kids hospital in 1883, Dr. Adams' significant efforts helped establish the model for public health dentistry in local public schools beginning in 1911.

Contextual Value

The property at 55 Elm Street, along with more than twenty other Ward-era heritage properties located along Elm Street between Yonge Street and Chestnut Street, is valued for maintaining the historic St. John's Ward character defined by social and cultural institutions and organizations interspersed among house-form buildings, and exhibiting an eclectic array of Victorian-era styles with an overall 2-4 storey scale, brick and/or stone materiality and little to no setbacks.

Anchoring the southwest corner of Bay and Elm streets, the property at 55 Elm Street is visually and historically linked to its surroundings where it knits together the city's largest contiguous collection of surviving properties associated with the historic St. John's Ward neighbourhood. Stretching along three contiguous blocks of Elm Street between Yonge and Chestnut streets, this significant collection includes the heritage properties on both sides of Elm Street, east of Bay with those west of Bay including the abutting row of house-form buildings at 57-71 Elm Street and the former House of Industry at 87 Elm Street, west of Elizabeth Street.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as being representative of a late-19th century commercial building designed in the Renaissance Revival style:

- The flat roof (currently missing its brick parapet)
- The arrangement and type of window openings with their stone sills on the two principal (east and north) elevations, including Palladian, round-arched and flat-headed
- The round-arched main entrance at the base of the northeast chamfer corner fronting onto the intersection of Bay and Elm Streets

- The red brick detailing, including voussoirs, stepped drip moulds and continuous string-courses

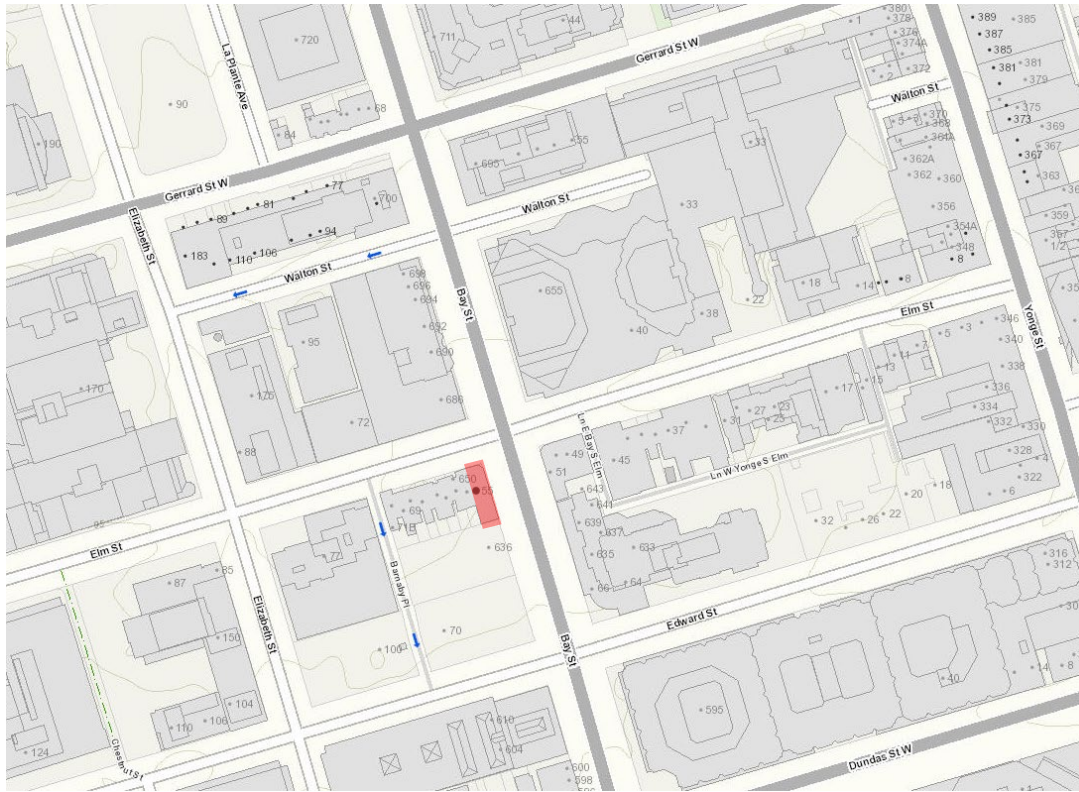
Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as maintaining the character of the historic St. John's Ward neighbourhood:

- The scale, form and massing of the 3-storey commercial building on a rectangular plan with two principal (east and north) elevations and chamfered northeast corner
- The materials with the red brick cladding and brick and stone detailing

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the subject property as being visually and historically linked to its surroundings:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on its lot at the southwest corner of Bay and Elm streets, and abutting the historically associated, Ward-era house-form buildings at 57-71 Elm Street

55 ELM STREET

55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) is shaded in red. Note: This location map is for information purposes only; the boundaries of the properties are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



55 Elm Street, looking southwest, at the east and north elevations (Heritage Planning, March 2026)

55 ELM STREET

In undertaking this research and evaluation, we recognize that 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.



View of 55 Elm Street, looking southwest (Heritage Planning, February 2026)

1. DESCRIPTION

55 ELM STREET	
ADDRESS	55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street)
WARD	11 - University-Rosedale
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Bay Street Corridor
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1891
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law	Vacant since 2019
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	N/A
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 3
LISTING DATE	March 10, 2021

2. ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06 CHECKLIST:

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The following checklist identifies the prescribed criteria met by the subject property at 55 Elm Street (entrance address at 650 Bay Street) for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if the property meets two 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.

55 ELM STREET

1.	The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2.	The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	N/A
3.	The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N/A
4.	The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	✓
5.	The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	✓
6.	The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	N/A
7.	The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	✓
8.	The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	✓
9.	The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	N/A

3. RESEARCH

This section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property. Visual resources related to the research are located in Section 4. Archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Section 5 (List of Sources).

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

For time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Ojibway oral histories speak of Ice People, who lived at a time when ice covered the land.¹ Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge and Humber rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. Beads made from seashells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated most of their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors², contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their village in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York. As evidenced by the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan Treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, the Haudenosaunee continued to have an interest in the resources of the area.

Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved into the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Anishinaabe people continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe

1 With thanks to Philip Cote for the reference to Benton-Banai, Edward, *The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway* (Indian Country Press, 1985), p. 26.

2 <https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east>; Gary Warrick, "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds., *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), p. 72.

people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.³

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km², including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island).

The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold. Following the Toronto Purchase, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

The City of Toronto remains 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 also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

i. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Macaulaytown and The Ward⁴

The subject property is located within Park Lot 10, patented by Dr. James Macaulay in 1793. Born in Scotland in 1759, Macaulay was a surgeon with Simcoe's regiment during the American Revolution. Macaulay originally was granted Park Lot 10 in 1793.⁵ In 1797, Macaulay switched his grant for Park Lot 9, and Park Lot 10 went to Chief Justice

³ Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." n.d.

⁴ The content in this section is derived from the following two sources: City of Toronto Staff Report, 15 Elm Street: Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act (April 12, 2023) and ERA Architects Inc, 55 Elm St (650 Bay Street) & 55-67: Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (November 7, 2025).

⁵ "Teraulay Cottage, The Church of the Holy Trinity and Henry Scadding's House," Lost Rivers, accessed November 23, 2021, <http://www.lostrivers.ca/points/macaulay.htm>

John Elmsley. In 1799, Macaulay and Elmsley divided their two lots into northern and southern halves and Macaulay assumed the southern portion of Park Lots 9 and 10, bounded by present-day Queen Street, Yonge Street, Chestnut Street, and College Street.⁶ By 1818, Macaulay had built a house just north of Queen Street called "Teraulay Cottage" with Taddle Creek coursing south of the house and gardens.⁷

Following the passing of James Macaulay in 1822, his two sons began subdividing the property. John Simcoe Macaulay received the southern portion of the property fronting on Lot Street (now Queen Street) and James Buchanan Macaulay received a parcel at the north end of the estate. By 1833, John Simcoe Macaulay's subdivided lands became York's first working-class housing subdivision, with the portion north of present-day Queen Street initially known as "Macaulay Town" (or "Macaulaytown").⁸ In 1834, the Town of York incorporated as the City of Toronto and Macaulay Town became part of the new St. John's Ward with the ward boundaries at present-day Bloor Street, Yonge Street, Queen Street, and University Avenue. Shortly after the formation of St. John's Ward, the area south of College St became known as "The Ward" with predominantly Protestant, working-class inhabitants.⁹

Immigration was a large driver of population growth within The Ward. The Irish potato famine of 1847 prompted mass emigration from Ireland, and 38,000 Irish migrants arrived in Toronto that same year. There was migration of formerly enslaved people from the United States of America into Southwest Ontario. The Black community had connections to the Underground Railway, which was an informal network of people and safe houses to help enslaved peoples escape slavery. Many Black people that were formerly enslaved settled in The Ward. Between 1856 and 1861, Toronto had a population of 47,000, and half of its 1,000 Black residents lived in the southern section of The Ward.¹⁰

By the early 1880s, streets lined with house-form buildings had expanded north to College Street and many institutions had been built just outside The Ward's boundaries including University College, the Ontario Legislature, and the Victoria Hospital for Sick Children. In the same period, Italian migrants began arriving in Toronto and settling around Edward Street and Chestnut Street.

During the late 19th century, the demographics of The Ward began to shift dramatically as new immigrants from Italy, Eastern Europe and China arrived in the neighbourhood.

Between 1871 and 1911, Toronto's population grew from 56,000 to 376,000. In 1911, the population of The Ward was 11,000 which increased to 17,000 in 1918.¹¹ To promote the standardization of health regulations, Toronto medical officer of health Dr. Charles Hasting had the city photographer Arthur Goss document the conditions of The

6 Smith, Wendy. "The Toronto Park Lot Project." The Toronto Park Lot Project by Wendy Smith, 2012.

7 "Teraulay Cottage" in Lost Rivers

8 John Lorinc et al., The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood (Toronto, ON: Coach House Books, 2015).

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

Ward. The published photos ignited a moral panic about the living conditions and inhabitants of the neighbourhood as many of the Ward's residents lived in overcrowded conditions with no indoor plumbing or toilets. In the 1920s, The Ward underwent ethnic succession as Jewish communities moved to Kensington Market, and The Ward became home to many Chinese migrants, businesses, and communities centred at Dundas and Elizabeth Street (known presently as "Old Chinatown").

In 1934, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor Herbert Bruce led a Royal Commission that recommended the demolition of Toronto's worst slums district.¹² During the post-war period, The Ward became part of Toronto's first designated urban renewal study area, with the southern portion of the lands already expropriated for the construction of new City Hall in the late 1940s.

In 1954, the Yonge Subway Line was constructed and Dundas Station opened south of the Site. By 1958, two-thirds of Old Chinatown south of the Site was expropriated and demolished. The Chinese community moved either west to Spadina Avenue and Dundas Street, east to Broadview Avenue and Gerrard Street, or into the new suburban communities of Metropolitan Toronto. Following the construction of the new City Hall in 1965, concerns of further expropriation drove community members to organize and save what remains of Old Chinatown. By the 1970s, a number of high-rise buildings were constructed in the area that included a mix of uses in the lower levels with hotel, residential, or office uses on upper levels. The process of land assembly and demolition in the neighbourhood continued into the 1990s. Toronto's then mayor Barbara Hall reformed zoning in the 1990s to allow for mixed-use developments, which brought significant residential investment to the downtown, and which continues to this day. Since 2010, institutional development has affected the growth of the area, with investments in the University Health Network west of the subject property.

Site History

In April 1891, Robert Scott and John Graham purchased the property at 650 Bay Street (55 Elm Street) on behalf of the Canadian Temperance League.¹³ Three months later, they were issued a building permit to replace the existing 1-storey roughcast cottage on the site with a 3-storey coffee house at a cost of \$19,000.¹⁴

Significant Owner/Occupant: The Canadian Temperance League & Temperance League Coffee House Company

The Canadian Temperance League was part of a worldwide temperance movement during the late 19th century, which promoted abstinence from alcohol due to the belief that it was responsible for social problems. Building on the efforts of earlier temperance organizations (e.g. the Toronto Coffee House Association), the Temperance League Coffee House Company was chartered in Toronto in 1890 with the intention of providing

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Land Registry Office 80, Book 252-2

¹⁴ Building Permit #404, 1891; two months later, the Canadian Temperance League was issued a second permit (#503) for the erection of five attached, two-storey (plus attic) brick houses located at 57-65 Elm Street, which were listed on the City's Heritage Register along with the subject property in March 2021.

working-class men an alternative to taverns and saloons in the form of coffee houses; several temperance coffee houses had already been established in Toronto in the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁵

Writing in 1891 to the *Globe* newspaper, Peter McIntyre, the company's secretary executive, noted the importance of "providing a tavern where the general public can get refreshments and lodging, where men can meet, converse, smoke, read the newspaper, etc., and without the evil influence of strong drink."¹⁶ He also stated that the company was chartered with the "view of providing public houses." By April 1891, the company had plans to open up to a dozen branches across the city and were preparing to construct their first coffee house on the southwest corner of Elm Street and Terauley (Bay) Street, operating another coffee house one block south at Edward Street in the meantime.¹⁷

The 1891 coffee house was likely designed to resemble a tavern/public house, which were often integrated with corner hotels on main streets in the late 19th century (e.g. Kormann House at 229 Queen Street East and Bromell House at 935 Queen Street West).

On the evening of November 27, 1891, a large audience assembled for the official opening of the coffee house, which was originally topped with an ornate parapet and contained dining rooms, a public hall, bedrooms, and reading and recreation parlours. The coffee house offered affordable meals and coffee to the Ward's working-class men before closing by 1895.¹⁸

Significant Occupant: Dr. John Gennings Curtis Adams

Between approximately 1897 and 1913, after briefly being occupied by the St. John's Ward Liberal Association, the former Temperance League Coffee House building was home to Dr. John Gennings Curtis Adams's Christ Mission Hall and Dental Institute.¹⁹ A drugstore was also recorded at 55 Elm Street beginning in 1904 (until 1920).²⁰ The Dental Institute offered free dental care to the Ward's poor residents, especially children. Lectures on dental care were held in the Christ Mission Hall, which were attended by prominent individuals such as the mayor and representatives from the school boards.

J.G. Adams, known as the father of Canadian Public Health Dentistry, was well known as a dental missionary, driven by his Methodist faith to provide free dental care to children. Adams operated numerous free dental clinics and practices around Toronto throughout the late 19th century, although most closed due to lack of financial support. He also served as the first dentist of record at the Hospital for Sick Children in 1883. A

¹⁵ Georgiou, 2021

¹⁶ The *Globe*, April 18, 1891

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ The *Globe*, Nov 28, 1891

¹⁹ City Directories, 1898-1914

²⁰ City Directories, 1904-1921

historical plaque commemorating Adams' contributions to public health dentistry was erected outside the property at 55 Elm Street by Heritage Toronto in 2015.²¹

In addition to operating free dental clinics, Adams lobbied municipalities and school boards to provide dental inspections and treatment. In part due to Adams work, the Toronto Board of Education initiated dental inspections for children in 1911. In 1913, the City of Toronto's Health Department opened the first public dental clinic in Canada, inspired by Adams's Dental Institute.²²

Between 1908 and 1912, the building at 55 Elm Street was also tenanted by the Presbyterian Mission to the Jews.²³ Also known as a "Christian Synagogue", the mission aimed to convert The Ward's growing Jewish population to Christianity by preying on their poverty, offering free meals and holding lavish Christmas parties.²⁴ Since 1914, the building has been occupied by a variety of other tenants, including Jewish garment manufacturers (1914-1919); the Chinese Methodist Mission (1922-1928); the Communist Party of Canada and its newspaper, *The Worker* (1930); a butcher and grocer (1928-1942); In Luck Rooming House (1943-1945); New Asia House Tourist Home, a hotel (1946-1980s); Elm-Bay Grill, a restaurant (1947-1970s); physicians offices (1980s); the Inn on Bay, a hotel (1990s-2000s); Sliced sandwich shop (2012-2016); Sixfifty Hotel (2014-2018); and, concurrently, Food Society eatery (2017-2018). The property has been vacant since 2019.²⁵

ii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining design or physical value of Criteria 1, 2 or 3 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The property at 55 Elm Street is a representative example of a three-storey commercial building designed in the Renaissance Revival style. Renaissance Revival architecture in Ontario (1870-1910) is derived from 15th and 16th century Italian Renaissance architecture. Particularly fashionable in Toronto in the late-19th century, the revival represents a transferral of the understated designs of the Renaissance, most elegantly presented by Palladio for whom the tripartite Palladian window is named. Two sub-types of Renaissance Revival architecture are astylar (includes pilasters rather than columns in the manner of earlier 16th century Venetian architecture) and columnar (includes in-the-round columns reflective of later Venetian pallazzi in Rome or Florence). Constructed in 1891, the arrangement and type of openings (round-arched and flat-headed in singles and pairs), the tripartite Palladian window openings, the pilasters and roof parapet with finials (currently missing) are all typical of the astylar sub-type of the Renaissance Revival style manifest in the design of 55 Elm Street.

21 Heritage Toronto, 2015.

22 Dale, 2005

23 City Directories, 1909-1913

24 Lorinc et al, 55.

25 City Directories

Located at the southwest corner of Bay and Elm streets, the subject property is constructed on a rectangular plan with a chamfered northeast corner fronting the intersection and containing the main entrance. As such, the property has two principal (north and east) elevations which are constructed of red brick with stone detailing atop a stone foundation. Fenestration on the principal elevations includes a combination of round-arched and flat-headed openings arranged in singles and pairs, as well as full-height brick pilasters drip moulds and continuous string-coursing. The south and west elevations are also red brick construction, with the west currently over-clad with stucco). The upper storeys of the west elevation contain rectangular window openings where not obscured by the abutting house-form building at 57 Elm Street; the south elevation is a brick panel wall with a single rectangular window opening at the third storey level.

Alterations to the property over time include removal of the parapet some time between 1930 and 1947, based on archival photographs. By the 1970s, two ground floor openings on the east (Bay Street) elevation were altered and the brick cladding overpainted on the principal (east and north) elevations. By 2012, a dark tile veneer was applied to the first-storey level on the principal (east and north) elevations and the uniform red brick of the upper two storeys overpainted to simulate dichromatic (red and buff-coloured) brickwork. A small stairwell exit was also added atop the roof around this time.

iii. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining contextual value of Criteria 7, 8 or 9 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The City of Toronto Property Data Map attached (Attachment 2) shows the site of the property at 55 Elm Street.

The area surrounding the subject property is a mixed-use neighbourhood consisting of residential and/or commercial and institutional buildings dating from the second half of the 19th century and some infill development during the second half of the 20th century. Historically located within St. John's Ward (The Ward), one of Toronto's most important neighbourhoods in the 1840s-1950s, the property at 55 Elm Street forms part of the collection of late-19th-century buildings that maintain this historic context along three contiguous blocks of Elm Street today, between Yonge and Chestnut streets. This collection includes 16 heritage properties east of Bay, the subject property plus the abutting house-form properties at 57-71 Elm Street between Bay and Elizabeth streets, and the former House of Industry at 87 Elm Street, between Elizabeth Street and Chestnut Street. Together, these 26 heritage properties of various historic building types and uses provide an understanding of some of the historic socio-cultural condition of The Ward.

4. VISUAL RESOURCES

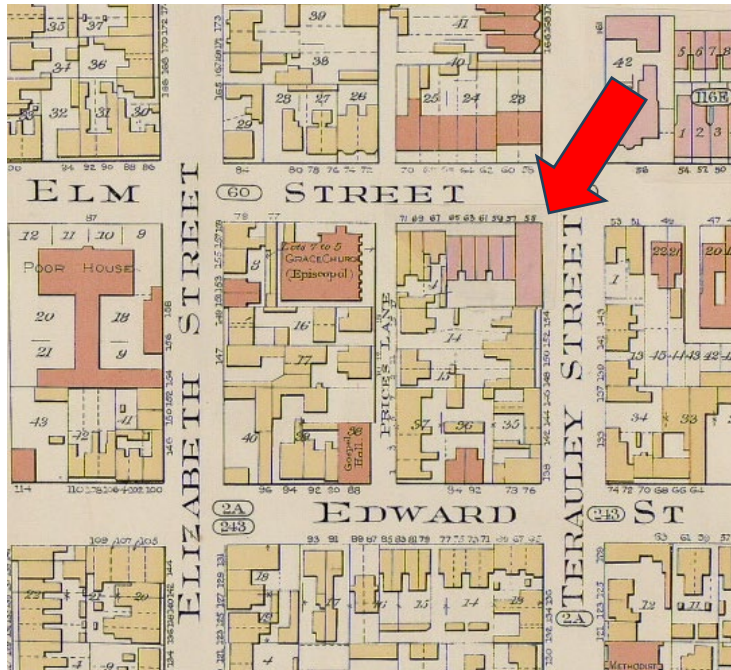
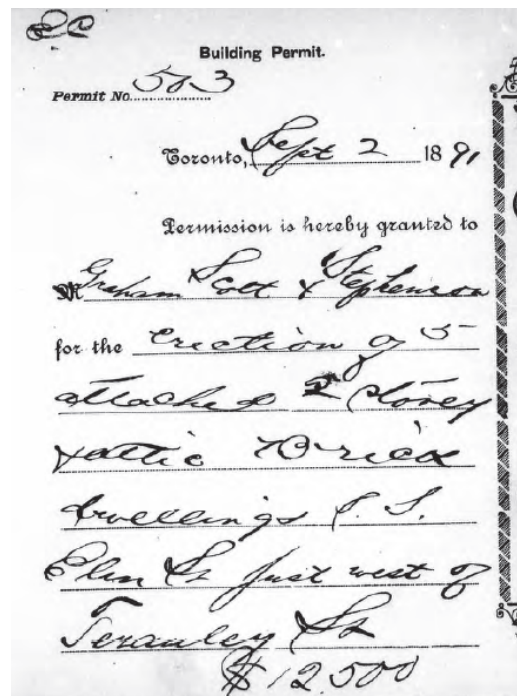
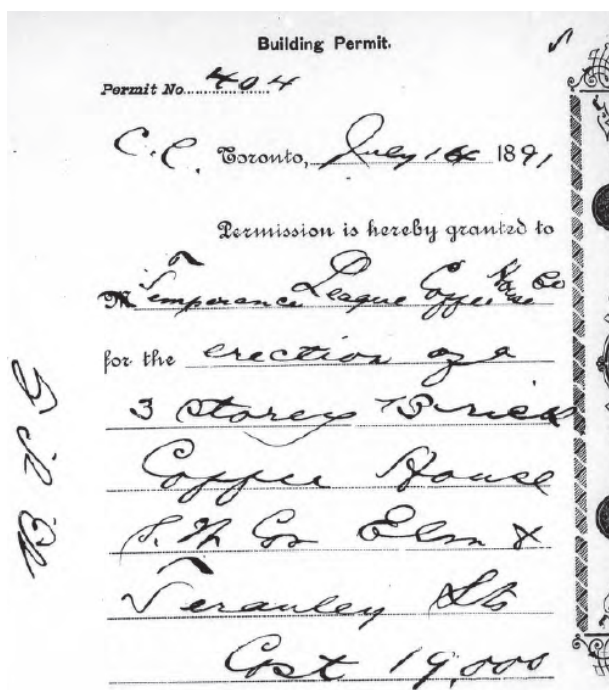
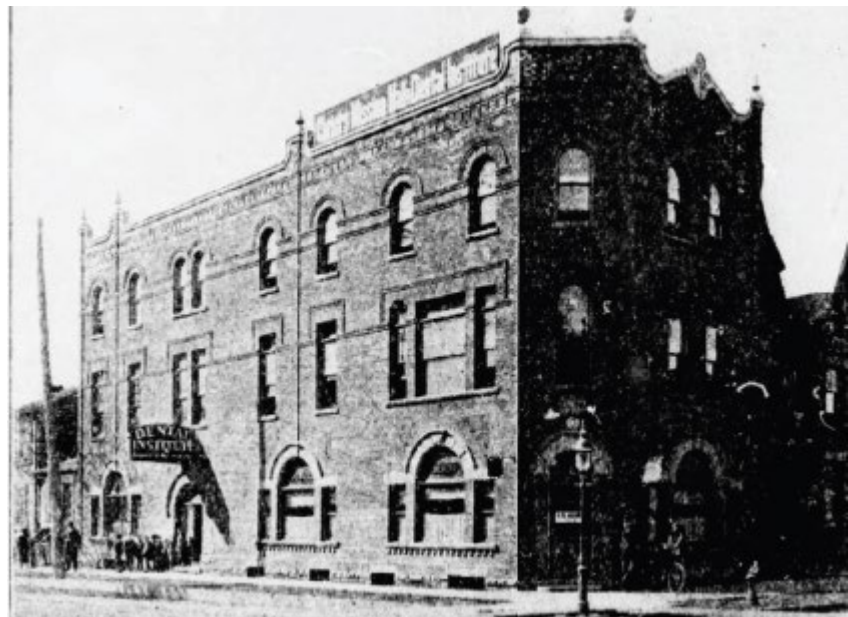


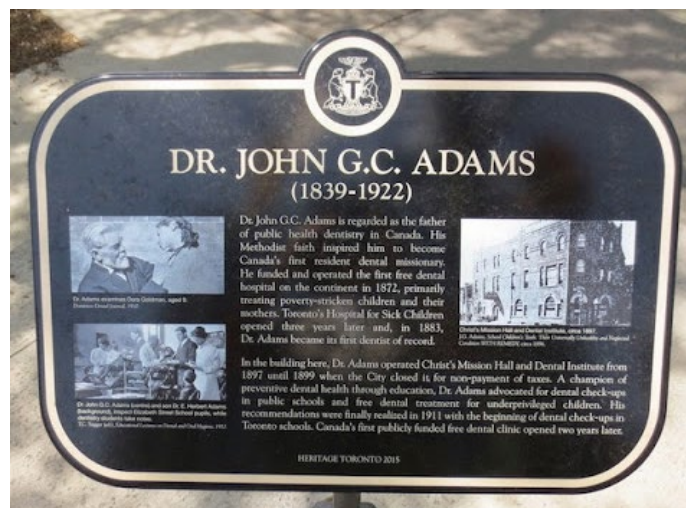
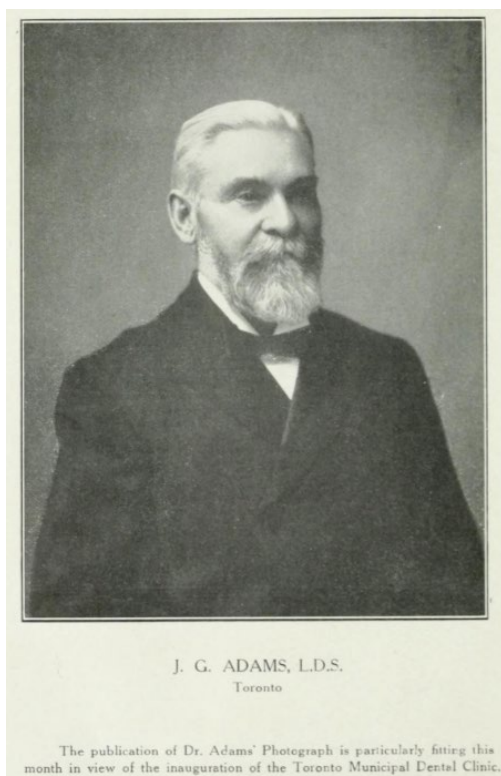
Figure 1: 1893 Goad's Historical Atlas Map showing the subject property for the first time, indicated by the red arrow. (Ng)



Figures 2 and 3: July 14, 1891 building permit issued to members of the Canadian Temperance League for the erection of the subject property (left); and September 2, 1891 building permit issued to same for the construction of the five abutting house-form buildings at 57-65 Elm Street (right). (Building Records)



Figures 4 and 5: The Globe, Nov 28 1891 article and illustration about the subject property (left); c.1896 photo of the subject property from Dr. G. C. Adams' 1896 book, School-children's teeth (right).



Figures 6 and 7: Photograph of Dr. Adams in the 1913 vol 3 issue of Oral Health Journal (left); 2015 Heritage Toronto plaque commemorating Dr. Adams and located near the southwest intersection of Bay and Elm streets.



Figure 8: 1972 archival photograph, looking southwest from Bay and Elm streets at the north and east elevations of the property. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 9: current photograph, looking southwest from Bay and Elm streets at the north and east elevations of the subject property. (Heritage Planning, February 2026)



Figure 10: current photograph, looking west across Bay Street to the east elevation of the subject property. (Heritage Planning, March 2026)



Figure 11: current photograph, looking northeast at the west and south elevations of the subject property. (Heritage Planning, February 2026)

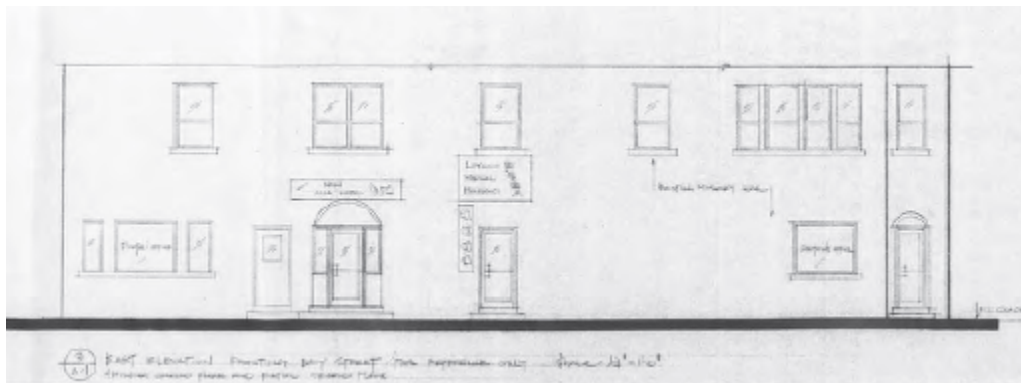


Figure 12: 1980 architectural drawing showing openings on the first two storeys of the east elevation only. (Building Records)



Figure 13: 2010 architectural drawing showing alterations to openings on the east elevation of the subject property, plus a rooftop stairwell addition (Building Records)



Figure 14: contextual photograph showing the Ward-era former House of Industry located at 87 Elm Street (Heritage Planning, March 2026)



Figure 15: contextual photograph looking west along Elm Street, showing some of the broader collection of Ward-era heritage buildings located on the south side of Elm Street between Yonge and Bay streets, with the subject property indicated by the red arrow. (Heritage Planning, February 2026)

5. LIST OF SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

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- City of Toronto Building Records
- City of Toronto Directories
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