

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

Date: June 15, 2026

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Ward: 13 - Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 32 Bright 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.

The subject property at 32 Bright Street, known as Costigan Cottage, is located on the west side of Bright Street, between King Street East and Queen Street East, within the Corktown neighbourhood of Toronto. It contains a detached, single-storey wood-frame worker's cottage constructed c. 1862. The property was home to the Costigan family from its earliest period of occupation until c.1928 and is among the oldest residential properties on Bright Street and within the Corktown neighbourhood. The house is a rare surviving example of the modest worker's cottage typology, predating the two-storey bay-and-gable rowhouses that were constructed on Bright Street in the 1870s and 1880s. It forms part of the historic streetscape of Bright Street, comprised primarily of residential house form buildings constructed in the mid- to late 19th century. Costigan Cottage serves as a physical reminder of Corktown's working class history.

A location map and current photograph of the heritage property are included in Attachment 2.

The subject property at 32 Bright Street was listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register following its identification through a Cultural Heritage Resources Assessment as part of the King-Parliament Secondary Plan review on December 16, 17, and 18, 2020.

This property is one of eighteen pre-1870 listed properties citywide which have been identified as candidates for designation through the City's implementation of the Bill 23 amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act and its ongoing prioritization strategy for listed

properties that must be designated or removed from the Heritage Register by January 1, 2027.

Part of the strategy for the review of listed properties on the Heritage Register includes the procurement of qualified heritage consultants to research, evaluate, and prepare heritage evaluation reports for a subset of listed properties prioritized for designation. City Planning retained the services of Alex Corey Heritage Consulting ("the Consultant") to research and evaluate a citywide group of eighteen pre-1870 listed properties which includes the subject property at 32 Bright Street. The Consultant evaluated the subject property and determined that it meets the provincial criteria.

The Consultant's research on the subject property is included in Attachment 3 of this report. The research, analysis, and evaluation contained within Attachment 3 reflect the Consultant's professional expertise and opinion. Staff have independently reviewed the Consultant's research and heritage evaluation and concur with the determination that the property at 32 Bright Street has cultural heritage value and meets four 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 two or more of the nine criteria.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 32 Bright Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 32 Bright Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1, to the report, June 15, 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 meeting of October 23, 2019, City Council adopted item TE9.32: King-Parliament Secondary Plan Review - Proposed Secondary Plan containing the King-Parliament Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA). The CHRA identified over 275 properties of potential cultural heritage value, including the subject property at 32 Bight Street.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.TE9.32>

At its meeting of December 16, 17, and 18, 2020, City Council adopted item TE21.21 - Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register - King-Parliament Area Properties and included the property at 32 Bright Street on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.TE21.21>

On October 30, 2024, the Planning and Housing Committee received for information the item 2024.PH16.9 - Updates on Implementation of Bill 23 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act regarding phase two of the City's response to Bills 23 and 200. This report outlined the citywide prioritization framework developed to prioritize subsets of listed properties located within areas where growth is anticipated for designation under the Act and described the proactive strategy under development that will be used to monitor the listed properties that are deemed removed from the Register after January 1, 2027.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH16.9>

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 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

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 by the Consultant on the property at 32 Bright Street (Attachment 3). The research and heritage evaluation was reviewed by staff, who concur with the Consultant's determinations of cultural heritage value that provides the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

The property at 32 Bright Street meets the following four out of nine criteria:

- **Criterion 1:** The property has design and physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method.
- **Criterion 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.
- **Criterion 7:** The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area.
- **Criterion 8:** The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

For more detailed explanations of how each criterion is met, see Attachments 1-3 of this report for the Statement of Significance; Location Map and Current Photograph; and Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources pertaining to the property at 32 Bright Street, as these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this staff report.

CONCLUSION

Staff have independently reviewed the research and heritage evaluations prepared by the Consultant and agree with the determination that the property at 32 Bright Street has cultural heritage value and meets four of the nine criteria as outlined by Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section

29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Therefore, the property merits designation and staff recommend that Council designate this property.

The Statement of Significance: 32 Bright Street (Reasons for Designation) included as Attachment 1 to this report 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 Photograph
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

32 BRIGHT STREET
COSTIGAN COTTAGE
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT 1

The property at 32 Bright Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria for municipal designation.

Description

The subject property at 32 Bright Street is located on the west side of Bright Street, between King Street East and Queen Street East, within the Corktown neighbourhood of Toronto. Constructed c.1862, the property contains a detached, single-storey wood-frame worker's cottage known as Costigan Cottage. The property was home to the Costigan family from its earliest period of occupation until c.1928 and is among the oldest surviving structures on Bright Street and within the Corktown neighbourhood. The house is a rare surviving example of the modest worker's cottage typology predating the two-storey bay-and-gable rowhouses that were constructed on Bright Street in the 1870s and 1880s. It forms part of the historic streetscape of Bright Street, comprised primarily of residential house form buildings constructed in the mid- to late 19th century.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Design or Physical Value

The property at 32 Bright Street has design and physical value as a rare, representative example of the mid-19th century worker's cottage typology within the Corktown neighbourhood and broader City of Toronto. The Ontario Worker's Cottage, a vernacular building form prevalent throughout what was then known as Upper Canada through the 19th century, is characterized by its single-storey massing, symmetrical or near-symmetrical principal (east) elevation, side-gable or hipped roof, and modest ornamentation reflective of the means of its working-class occupants and builders. The subject property displays these defining features through its single-storey wood-frame form, medium-pitched side-gable roof, and an asymmetrical, three-bay principal elevation organized around an off-centre entrance flanked by two rectangular window openings.

As one of very few surviving worker's cottages within Corktown, the subject property at 32 Bright Street is a rare physical remnant of the pre-Confederation era cottage housing typology that was once ubiquitous in the area. Its survival within a row of two-storey Bay-and-Gable rowhouses constructed along Bright Street beginning in the 1870s increases the legibility of the subject property as a representation of the earlier and more modest residential character of Corktown.

Historical or Associative Value

The property at 32 Bright Street has historical and associative value as it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of the Corktown neighbourhood, the working-class immigrant communities who settled there through the mid-19th century, and the broader evolution of residential development in the area. The construction of the cottage c.1862 coincided with the first significant wave of residential subdivision within the former Government Reserve lands, which had been opened for private development in the first half of the 19th century. By the mid-19th century, the area had attracted large numbers of Irish immigrants, many of whom arrived in the aftermath of the Great Famine of the late 1840s, who sought affordable housing in proximity to industrial employment in the distilleries, breweries, and railway industries of the surrounding area.

The property is directly associated with Joseph Costigan, an Irish immigrant who was the first owner of and resided at 32 Bright Street from c.1862, and the Costigan family, who retained ownership and occupied the property for over half a century until 1928. The longevity of the Costigan family's ownership with the property is notable, at a time when many working-class residents of Corktown resided in tenanted accommodation, both Costigan and his neighbour at 34 Bright Street owned the properties they inhabited, a distinction that speaks to the economic circumstances and aspirations of these early Irish immigrants and their families. The Costigan family's 66-year stewardship of the subject property is directly connected to its survival within a streetscape that was otherwise substantially altered through the 1870s and 1880s.

Contextual Value

The property at 32 Bright Street is valued for its role in defining and maintaining the mid-19th century historic context of Bright Street and the Corktown neighbourhood. As the sole surviving worker's cottage on the west side of Bright Street, and a rare surviving example within Corktown, the subject property provides a tangible connection to the earliest period of residential settlement on Bright Street and the neighbourhood's evolution from a working-class immigrant enclave to the present day. The contrast in scale between 32 Bright Street and the adjacent two-storey, Bay-and-Gable rowhouses illustrates the successive waves of residential development that defined Bright Street through the second half of the 19th century.

The property at 32 Bright Street also has contextual value as it is visually and historically linked to its surroundings. Situated within a continuous row of heritage properties on the west side of Bright Street, the subject property provides an understanding of the history and evolution of the street from its earliest subdivision and modest working class dwellings in the 1860s, to the attempt to "clean up" the street with the introduction of middle-class Bay-and-Gable type housing in the 1870s-1880s, and the subsequent regeneration of the historic streetscape seen today. The distinctive angle of Bright Street, which breaks from the city grid and creates an iconic viewpoint in the neighbourhood, further reinforces the visual prominence and contextual significance of Costigan Cottage within this setting.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

Attributes that contribute to the design and physical value of the property at 32 Bright Street as a rare, representative example of the mid-19th century worker's cottage typology include:

- The scale, form, and massing of the detached, single-storey house-form building on a rectangular plan
- The medium-pitched, side-gable roof
- The three-bay composition of the principal (east) elevation, comprising an off-centre entrance flanked by two rectangular window openings
- The elevation of the raised main entrance on the principal (east) elevation

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 32 Bright Street in defining and maintaining the low-scale, 19th century residential character of the area:

- The single-storey scale, form, and massing of the property on its rectangular plan with side-gable roof.
- The orientation of the primary (east) elevation towards Bright Street, and its siting at the angle in the street that contributes to a distinctive and locally recognized viewpoint within the Corktown neighbourhood.

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 32 Bright Street as being visually and historically linked to its surroundings:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the property on the west side of Bright Street.

LOCATION MAP AND CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH

32 BRIGHT STREET

ATTACHMENT 2

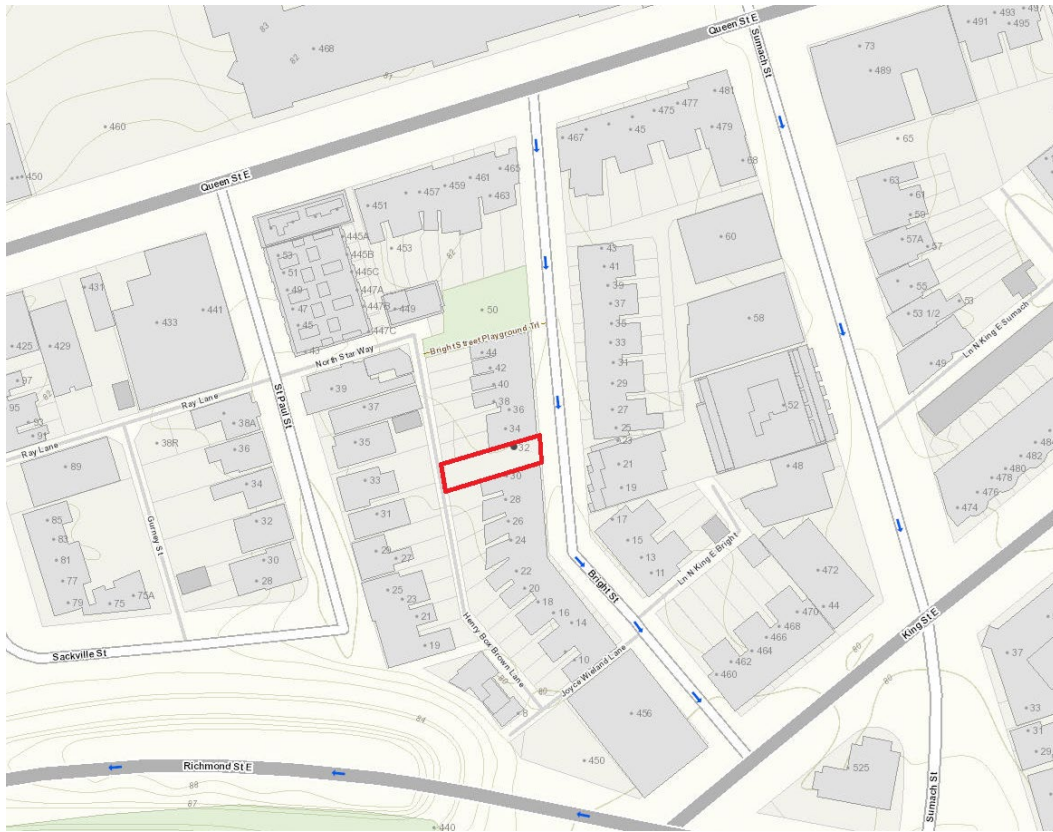


Figure 1. This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red outline depicts the location of the subject property (City of Toronto iView Mapping, 2026).



Figure 2. 32 Bright Street, primary (east) elevation (Alex Corey, May 2026).

32 BRIGHT 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.



Figure 3. 32 Bright Street, primary (east) elevation (Alex Corey, May 2026).

1. DESCRIPTION

32 BRIGHT STREET - COSTIGAN COTTAGE	
ADDRESS	32 Bright Street
WARD	13 - Toronto Centre
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Corktown
CONSTRUCTION DATE	c. 1862
ORIGINAL USE	Residential
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law	Residential
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Unknown
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	N/A
LISTING DATE	December 16, 2020

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 32 Bright 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.

32 Bright Street - Costigan Cottage

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.	N/A
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.

Corktown

Present-day Corktown is located within the southeast area of downtown Toronto and is generally considered to be bound by Queen Street to the north, Berkeley Street to the west, Eastern Avenue to the south, and the Don River to the east. To the north is the residential pocket of Trefann Court, and to the south is the Canary District neighbourhood. The St. Lawrence neighbourhood is located directly to the west.

Historically, the Corktown area was part of the Government Reserve, a portion of land set aside following the establishment of the Town of York in 1793. Located east of Berkeley Street along the western banks of the Don River, the reserve was initially

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

milled for lumber, and was later intended to house government buildings, a jail, and school.⁴ From 1797 until 1813, the reserve was the location of the First and Second Parliament buildings near the intersection of Front and Parliament Streets and was later the location of the Home District Gaol, from 1837 to 1840.

In 1819, the Government began to subdivide portions of the reserve for private use. In 1830, a survey was filed on behalf of York General Hospital, which had been granted portions of the southern reserve to subdivide and sell to generate income (Figure 4). Formal and informal settlement within the reserve began soon after, particularly among working class immigrants in what was considered an undesirable, marshy, and industrial landscape. The establishment of the Gooderham and Worts distillery in 1832 and Enoch Turner's brewery provided employment and attracted residents to the area.

The City of Toronto Act of 1834 established the lands east of Parliament Street as "the Liberties," with a population of approximately 300 residents.⁵ The area's proximity to the Don River and Lake Ontario was well suited for noxious industries: distilling, slaughterhouses, rendering plants, and barns that provided employment while creating undesirable living conditions.

The first significant population growth experienced within the Corktown neighbourhood occurred between 1847 and 1854, coinciding with Ireland's Great Famine that saw in the first year close to 40,000 Irish refugees pass through Toronto Harbour at a time when the City's population was half of that. While most of the refugees moved elsewhere, a significant number settled in Toronto and found work, refuge, and community in Corktown. The presence of St. Paul's Catholic Church on Power Street, and Little Trinity Church on King Street, were catalysts for community and attracted both Catholic and Protestant refugees to the neighbourhood. The rapid growth of cottage housing in Corktown, primarily occupied by working class immigrants, saw wealthier residents move to more suburban districts, and established a bias against those who called Corktown home. Toronto historian Henry Scadding derided the area as "a row of dilapidated wooden buildings inhabited for the most part by a thriftless and noisy set of people,"⁶ a common stigma shared among many of Toronto's wealthier residents.

The first significant period of development within Corktown occurred between 1850 and 1914, during which the area saw the expansion of both residential and industrial uses.⁷ By the mid-19th century, Toronto was an Irish city by population, with hundreds of cottages erected in working class neighbourhoods like Corktown to accommodate waves of new residents.⁸ In Canada West, later Ontario, English-born immigrants numbered at 93,000, Scottish at 90,000, and Irish at 227,000.⁹

The industrial development of the southern area of the former Government Reserve – comprising the present-day West Don Lands neighbourhood – further attracted working

4 Penina Coopersmith, *Cabbagetown*, 23

5 Ibid., 23

6 Don Loucks and Leslie Valpy, *Modest Hopes*, 108

7 King-Parliament Historic Context Statement in City of Toronto, 2020: 19-23.

8 Loucks and Valpy, 109

9 Dunae and Woodcock, *English Canadians*

class residents to Corktown, many of whom sought employment in the distilleries but also in railway related industries, and food processing business such as the William Davies Pork Packing Plant. The arrival of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1855, coinciding with the in-filling of Toronto Harbour, dramatically changed both the physical and employment landscape of the area; the Don Improvement Plan of 1886, which straightened the river and claimed additional land at the mouth of the river for industrial use, alongside the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1892, resulted in the Corktown neighbourhood becoming one of, if not the largest, industrial and transportation districts in Toronto by the turn of the 20th century.

While the initial growth of industry and associated employment was the primary driver for residential construction in Corktown through the mid- to late 19th century, by the early 20th century, the same forces began to displace residents, both through claiming formerly residential areas for industrial construction, and infrastructure projects that resulted in the expropriation of land for new roads.

The most significant changes to the physical fabric of Corktown arose from transportation infrastructure: the construction of the Don Valley Parkway (late 1950s), Eastern Avenue and Richmond Street off-ramps (1961) resulted in the expropriation and demolition of large swathes of residential properties (Figure 9), and dramatically increased vehicular traffic. The construction of the off-ramps resulted in the demolition of the historic House of Providence, as well as approximately 200 houses, in addition to severing the north-south connections between Queen and King Street East.¹⁰

Like the King-Spadina district on the west side of downtown, Corktown and the surrounding King-Parliament area experienced a decline in industrial activity in the post-war period, coinciding with the relocation of industry to more affordable suburban locales. Similarly, suburban residential development drew residents out of the downtown, offering improved living conditions near new suburban employment areas.

Today, Corktown is a mixed-use neighbourhood comprising pockets of historic worker's cottages, interspersed with warehouses and contemporary infill development. Alongside the adjacent Trefann Court, St Lawrence, and Moss Park neighbourhoods, Corktown is celebrated as one of the oldest neighbourhoods in downtown Toronto, including a collection of built heritage and archaeological sites that reflect over 200 years of colonial settlement and Indigenous heritage. Corktown is particularly well-known for the historic residential streets that were spared demolition and that were subject to early preservation initiatives – Berkeley Street, Percy Street, Wilkins Avenue, and Ashby Place. The present-day historic context reflects the Corktown neighbourhood's evolution from the initial Government Reserve, subsequent waves of immigration and industrial development, urban renewal and contemporary redevelopment, and collectively make for a diverse, urban neighbourhood on the edge of downtown Toronto.

10 City of Toronto Planning Board, "Housing in King-Parliament," 10.

32 Bright Street

The subject property is located on Bright Street, which runs between Queen Street East and King Street East one block west of Sumach Street. Bright Street, like many of the remaining roads in Corktown, differs from the city grid due in part to the alignment of King Street as it cuts diagonally from Parliament to River Street to merge with Queen, and due to the piecemeal subdivision by owners in the 19th century. Notably, Bright Street features a sharp angle partway between King and Queen Streets, creating what has become an iconic viewpoint in the neighbourhood.

Bright Street first appears on city maps in 1858 (Figure 6), with at least three wood frame structures erected on the east side of the Street. By 1862, land records indicate that two new owners resided on the street; the first resident of 32 Bright Street was Joseph Costigan, an Irish immigrant who had previously lived on North Park Street (present-day Shuter Street) since at least 1850. The neighbouring house at 34 Bright Street was home to Anne O'Rourke, who had similarly moved from North Park Street and whose second-youngest son was godson to Joseph Costigan.¹¹ Significant to note is that both Costigan and O'Rourke owned the land and the cottages they resided in at a time when many working-class immigrants were tenants.

Joseph Costigan lived at 32 Bright Street with his wife, Julia, and seven children – Ann, Margaret, William, Sarah, Matthew, Patrick, and Joseph. The 1871 Canadian Census identifies Joseph as a labourer, while their eldest daughter Ann was employed as a seamstress. After Joseph passed away in 1878, the property went to his son Matthew, who continued to reside at the property as recorded in the 1891 census with his widowed mother and youngest brother, Joseph, and was employed as a labourer at Dalton Brothers, a coffee and spice mill factory at Front Street East and Berkeley Street. William lived at 32 Bright Street until his own passing in 1928.

In 1872, an investor named Richard Brooking Butland purchased many of the surrounding cottages and undeveloped lots along Bright Street, with the vision of improving the area with middle-class housing. Neither O'Rourke nor Costigan sold to Butland, who proceeded to construct the two-storey bay-and-gable houses on Bright Street to the north and south of numbers 32 and 34. By 1875, the present-day built form of Bright Street was largely complete.

Despite Butland's attempts to establish a wealthier pocket of residential housing on Bright Street, the development did not result in improved living conditions, with newspaper reports through the late 19th and into the 20th centuries describing incidents of petty crime, theft, assault, and vagrancy. 32 Bright Street remained throughout this period within the ownership of the Costigan family and was not sold outside of the family until 1928 when it was purchased by Frederick Johnston and Eva Moriarty.¹²

The property passed through multiple owners in the mid-20th century, and by 1968 was leased out to tenants at \$80 per month. The property had seen few investments and minimal maintenance according to a newspaper article from the same year (Figure 11), which despaired of the quality of the structure and the living conditions of those who

¹¹ Loucks, 184.

¹² Ontario Land Registry Records, Plan 226 Lot 23

resided there.¹³ Nonetheless, the property remained inhabited through the following decades, and by the 1980s the neighbourhood began to see renewed investment coinciding with the gentrification of urban residential neighbourhoods across the city.

32 Bright Street passed through a series of owners, many of whom invested in the restoration and renovation of the property to improve the living conditions and bring the house up to contemporary standards. Today, 32 Bright Street is a local landmark owing to the rarity of a historic worker's cottage in the area, the angle at which the house is situated in contrast to the adjacent rows of bay-and-gables, and the care and consideration owners of the home have invested in its continued maintenance.

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 subject property at 32 Bright Street comprises a single storey detached house-form building, set within a row of two-storey bay-and-gable rowhouses located on the west side of Bright Street between King Street East and Queen Street East. 32 Bright Street is believed to have been built circa 1862 when the first registered owner, Joseph Costigan, appeared in City Directories.

Architecturally, the single-storey house form building is a representative example of a worker's cottage from the early to mid-19th century: a wood-frame structure with horizontal wood clapboard siding and a side-gable medium-pitched roof. The front façade is organized into three portions, comprising a single off-centre door raised from street level, and two rectangular window openings on either side. Ornamental details applied in more recent years include decorative wood shutters, and ornamental pendant drops attached to an eave board running the length of the front façade. The exposed portion of the southern return wall is similarly clad in horizontal wood clapboard. A white picket fence encloses the irregular front yard.

The property at 32 Bright Street fits within the Ontario Worker's Cottage building typology, a term that is used to describe single-storey cottages constructed through the 19th century across what was then referred to as Upper Canada (present-day Ontario). Typologically, these structures are generally one-storey, with a symmetrical façade of three to five bays, a hipped or gabled roof, and Regency style ornamentation (Figure 13). They may be clad in brick, stucco, or clapboard, and the size can vary from two to five rooms, with or without a sleeping loft and cellar.

32 Bright Street is an example of a modest worker's cottage, and when first built likely comprised four rooms: two bedrooms, a parlour, and a kitchen at the rear (Figure 14). Over time, a basement has been added, however when first constructed, the house was elevated above street level. The asymmetrical front façade reflects the historic interior arrangement – the bedroom on the south was afforded less space than the foyer and parlour room on the north.

¹³ Globe and Mail, "Garbage, All Garbage," 1968.

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 32 Bright Street.

Contextually, the subject property at 32 Bright Street is part of a continuous row of houses on the west side of Bright Street, from 10 Bright Street at the south to 50 Bright Street to the north. 32 Bright Street breaks from the prevailing two-storey bay-and-gable context established on the west side of Bright Street and is the only marker of the former cottage character that was present on Bright Street and the surrounding Corktown neighbourhood prior to the construction of the adjacent two-storey houses through the 1870s and 1880s.

The east side of Bright Street has more variation in built form, with two-storey mansard roof cottages, contemporary infill townhouses, and two-storey bay-and-gable rowhouses. Collectively, the house form buildings on Bright Street inclusive of the subject property at 32 Bright Street reflect the history and evolution of the street from its earliest days of residential subdivision in the 1860s to the present-day and maintains a character of fine-grained urban housing within the Corktown neighbourhood.

The subject property at 32 Bright Street is located within the Corktown neighbourhood located in the south east corner of downtown Toronto; to the north are the Trefann Court and Moss Park neighbourhoods, to the south are the West Don Lands and Distillery District, to the west is the St Lawrence Neighbourhood, and to the east are the Don River and Riverside neighbourhood. All the house form buildings on Bright Street (except for the contemporary townhouses) are listed on the Heritage Register, as well as the house form, religious, and storefront properties at the intersections of Bright Street with King Street East and Queen Street East. Few properties within the Corktown neighbourhood have been designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act: those that have include the house-form buildings at 6 - 12 Sumach Street, and the former industrial building at 544 Queen Street East.

4. VISUAL RESOURCES

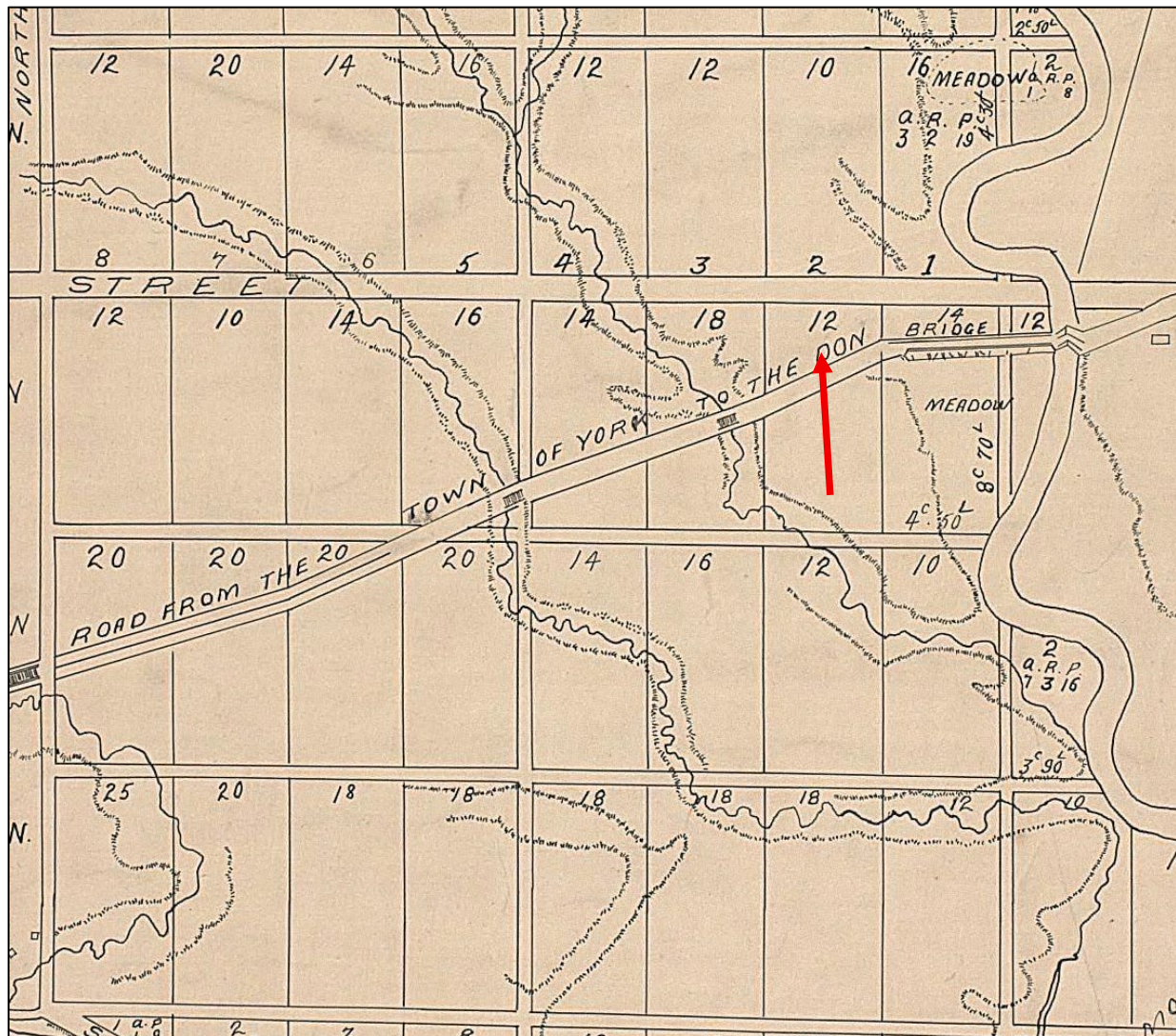


Figure 4. Excerpt from 1811 Wilmott Survey, annotated to show the approximate location of 32 Bright Street.

Figure 5. Excerpt from the 1830 Chewetts Plan, showing the residential subdivision of former Reserve lands for residential construction south of South Park Street (present-day Eastern Avenue).

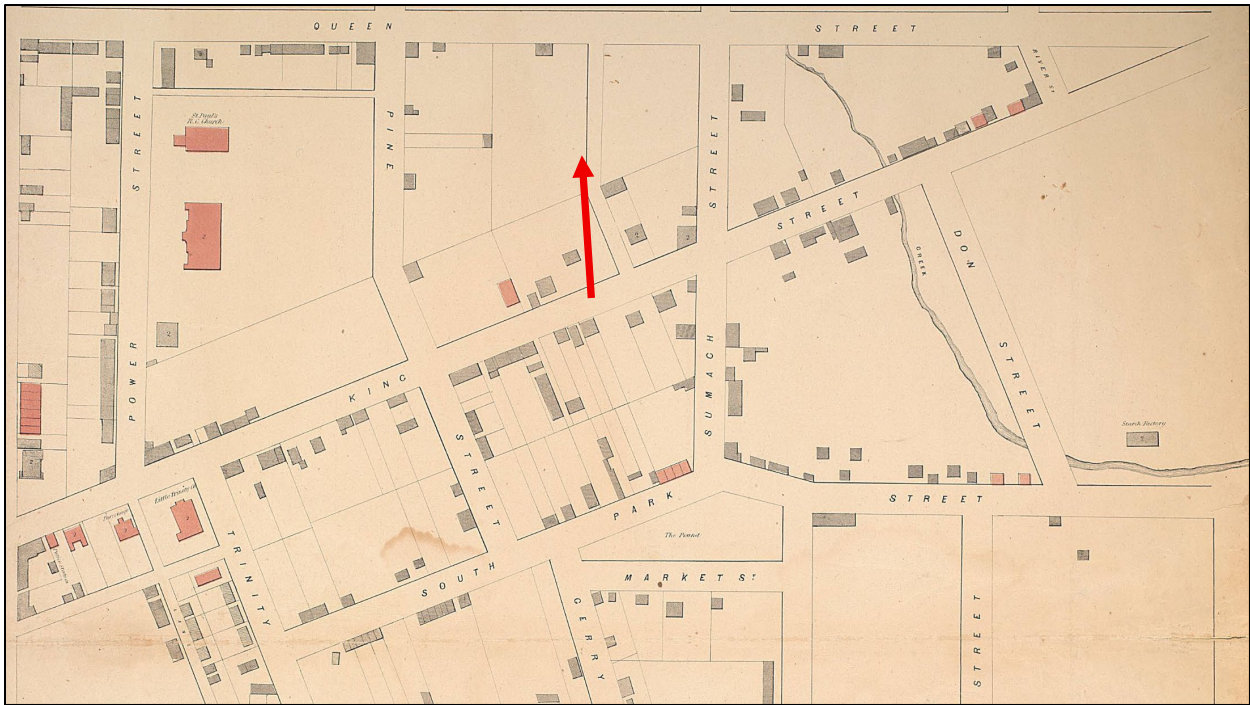


Figure 6. Excerpt from the 1858 City of Toronto Atlas, annotated to show the approximate location of 32 Bright Street. Note the prevailing adjacent development of wood frame houses including three structures on the east side of Bright St.

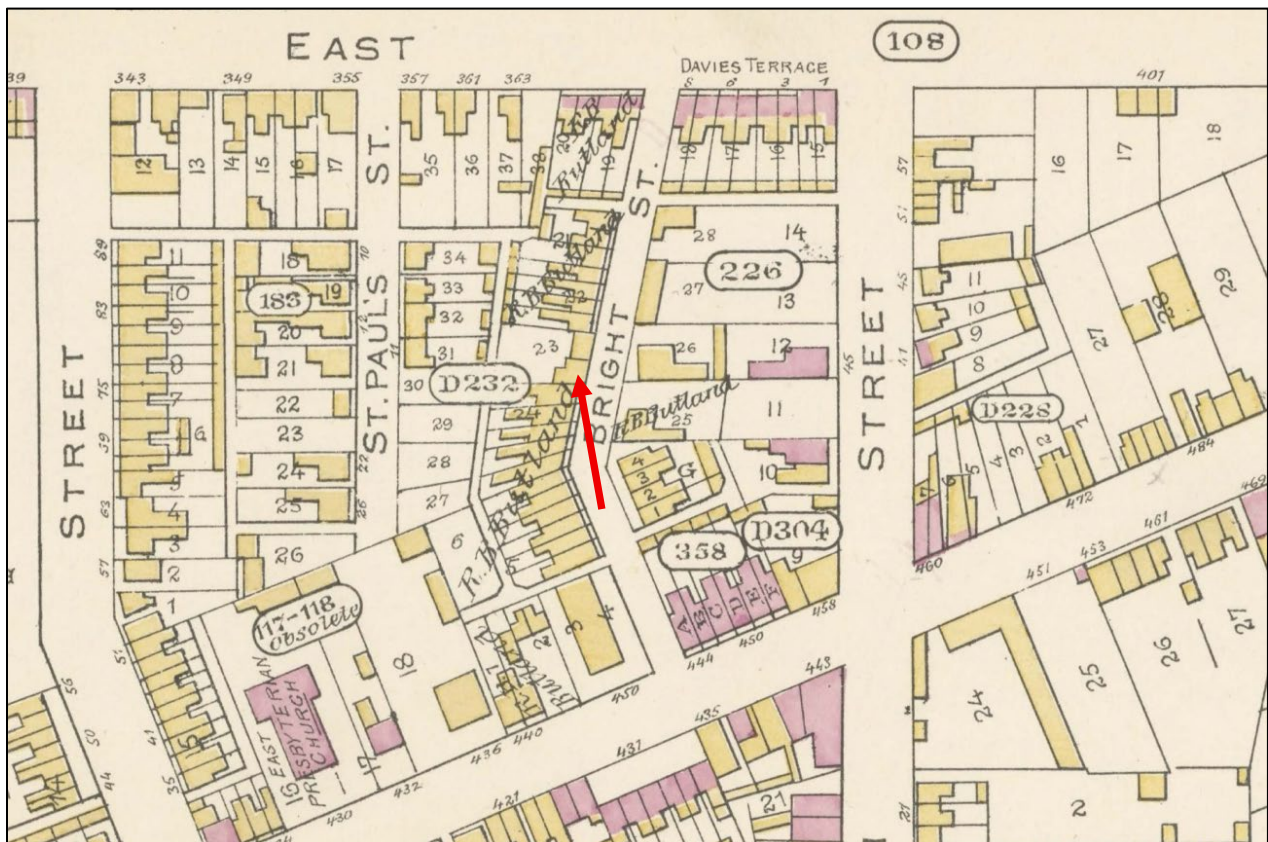


Figure 7. Excerpt from the 1884 Goads Atlas, annotated to show 32 and 34 Bright Street. Note the ownership of adjacent houses by R. Butland to the north and south.

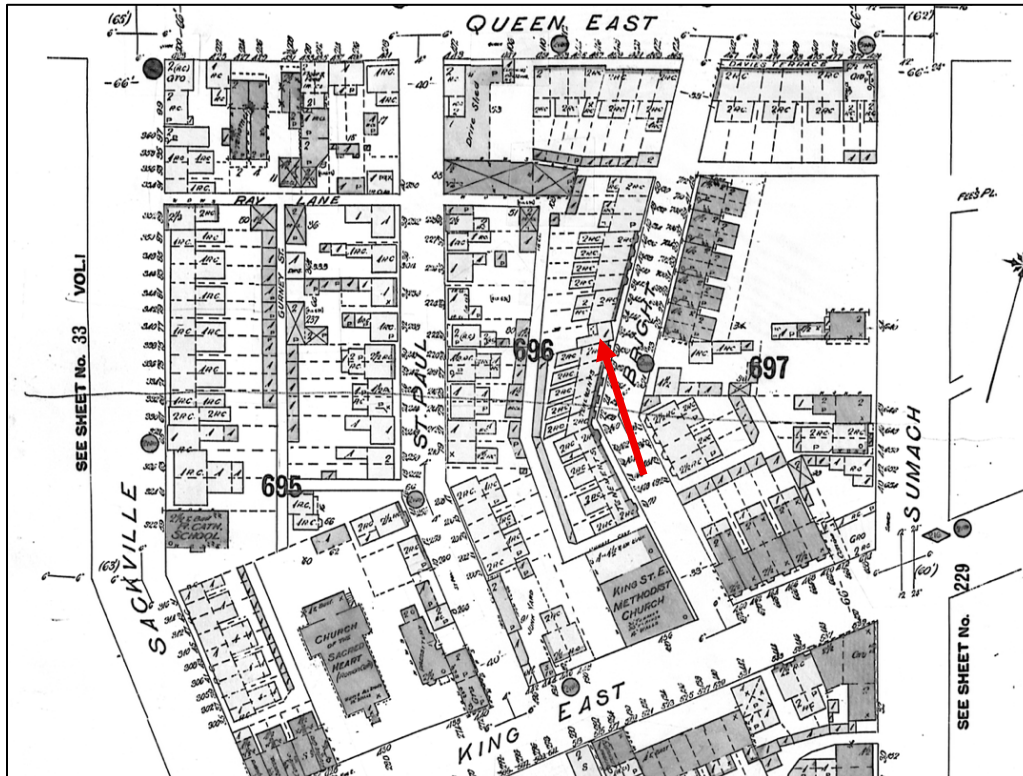


Figure 8. Excerpt from the 1911 City of Toronto Fire Insurance Atlas, annotated to show the location of 32 Bright Street. Note the angle of the front facade. By this time the prevailing character of Bright Street had been established.



Figure 9. 1970 Aerial Photograph of Corktown, annotated to show the location of 32 Bright Street. Note the presence of the Richmond-Adelaide Overpass immediately to the south.



Figure 10. The People's Church, north-west corner of King Street East and Bright Street, showing the bay-and-gable houses on the west side of Bright Street, c.188-. Toronto Public Library.

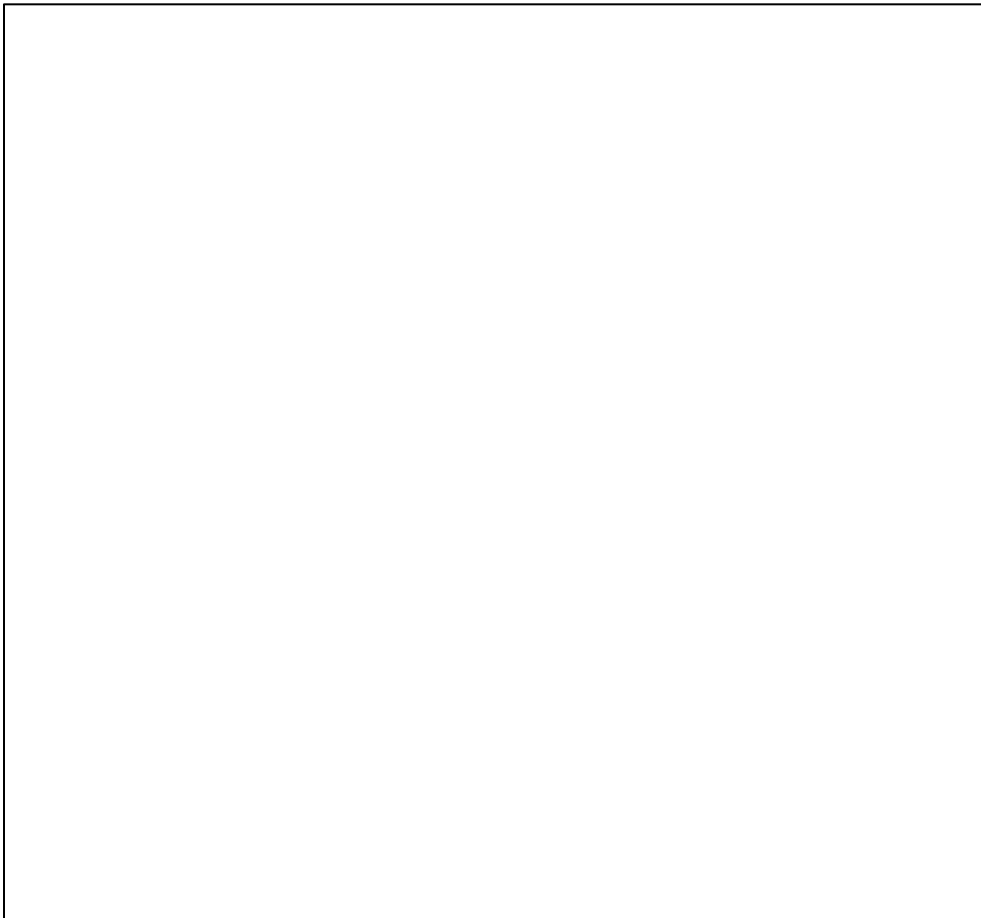


Figure 11. 32 Bright Street, 1968. Globe and Mail.



Figure 12. 32 Bright Street, 1981. City of Toronto Archives.

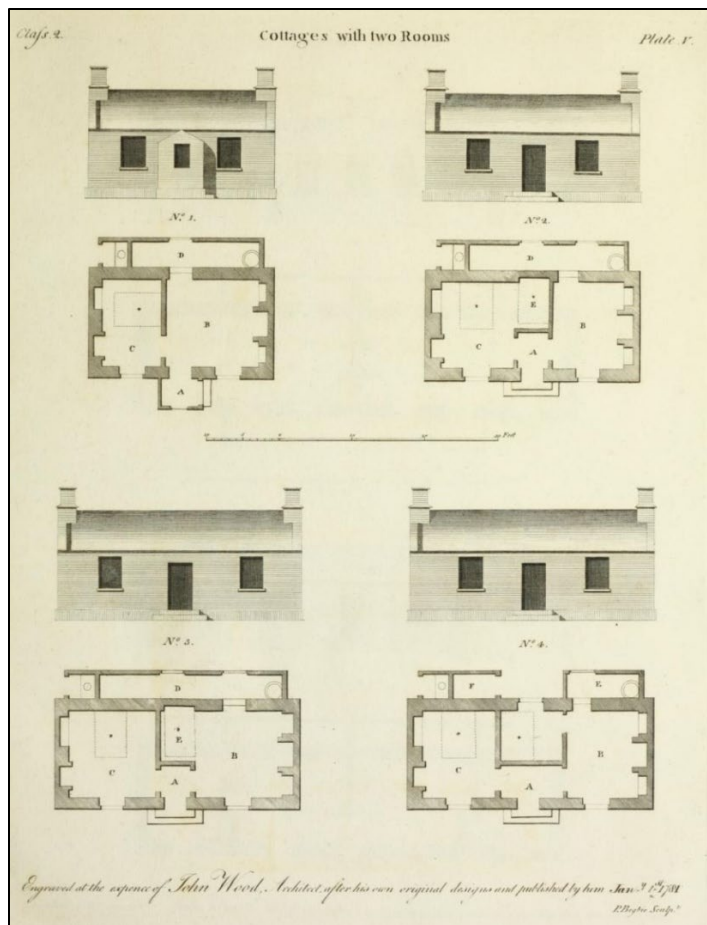


Figure 13. Examples of modest worker's cottages, from John Wood's "A Series of Plans for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer Either in Husbandry, or the Mechanic Arts, Adapted as well to Towns as the Country, 1806.

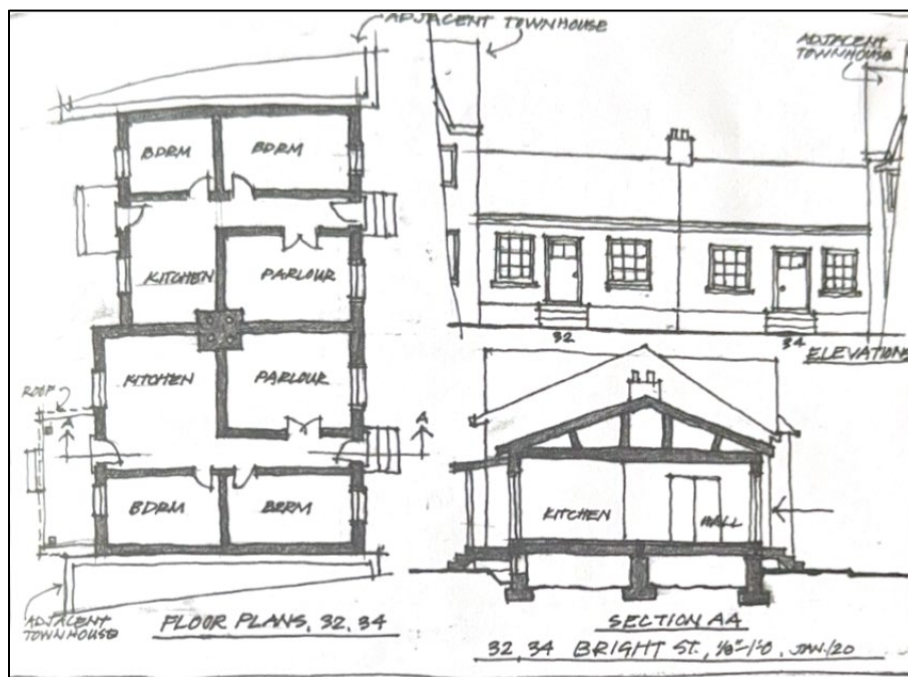


Figure 14. Plan, section, and elevation of 32 and 34 Bright Street. Don Loucks and Leslie Valpy, Modest Hopes, 185.



Figure 15. View looking south on Bright Street from south of King Street East, annotated to show 32 Bright Street (Alex Corey, May 2026).



Figure 16. 32 Bright Street, primary (east) elevation (Alex Corey, May 2026).



Figure 17. View looking southwest to 32 Bright Street, showing the rowhouses immediately to the south (Alex Corey, May 2026).



Figure 18. View looking northwest towards 32 Bright Street, showing the rowhouses immediately to the north (Alex Corey, May 2026).

5. LIST OF SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- City Directories, Toronto Public Library
- City of Toronto Building Records.
- City of Toronto Planning Board. Housing in King-Parliament. City of Toronto, date unknown.
- Ontario Land Registry. Plan 226, Lot 23
- The Globe and Mail. "Garbage, All Garbage: Blight on Bright Street." Susan Anderson, August 23, 1968.
- Toronto Historical Board Image Library

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Coopersmith, Penina, and Vincenzo Pietropaolo (photographer). Cabbagetown: The Story of a Victorian Neighbourhood. Lorimer, 1998.
- Dunae, Patrick A., and George Woodcock. "English Canadians." The Canadian Encyclopedia. Last modified March 6, 2020.
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/english>.
- City of Toronto. King-Parliament Historic Context Statement. City of Toronto Heritage Planning, 2020.
- Loucks, Don, and Leslie Valpy. Modest Hopes: Homes and Stories of Toronto's Workers from the 1820s to the 1920s. Dundurn Press, 2021.
- Wood, John. A Series of Plans for Cottages or Habitations of the Labourer, Either in Husbandry or the Mechanic Arts, Adapted as Well to Towns as to the Country. London, 1806.