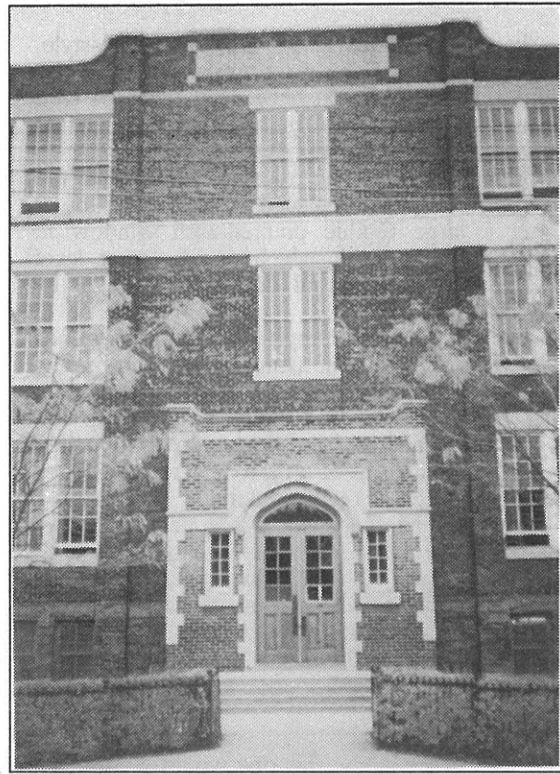


Award of Merit for St. Helen's School



At left: The original main entrance to the school circa 19XX which faces west onto Brock Avenue just north of College Street and shows the original grandeur of the building's facade.

Below: A view from the opposite southwest corner at Brock and College, showing the old face of St. Helen's Catholic School along with the newly constructed modern portion of the building, complete with a round entrance.



Faced with the reality that their school overflowed with students and no longer met a good many basic building requirements, the members of the St. Helen's Catholic School Parent-Teacher Association were forced to act. But the call to action created a dilemma: should they tear down the existing school and start fresh, constructing an entirely state of the art structure, as another board was currently doing? Or, should they go out of their way to preserve the existing school and add

required facilities to it? They chose preservation.

But the choice was only the first step. What followed was months of fighting for their choice. But their hard work resulted in the transformation you see above. And it is for their choice and hard work that the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy would like to recognize the members of the St. Helen's PTA, led by Daniel Belissimo, with an Award of Merit which shall be presented during the fall school term.

New Program of Architectural Tours Launched

by Paul Dilse

June 2, 1995 marked the beginning of a new program of architectural tours offered through provincial council and Paul Dilse, the organization's consulting heritage manager. A pleasant day was spent touring the Don River's parks, gardens and ravines as well as nearby buildings, by van and on foot. Complementing Paul's tour guiding was a presentation by Ken Duncan at Edwards Gardens. Ken, who had planted many of the shrubs he described, walked the group through an outstanding collection of azaleas and rhododendrons in bloom.

A week later, another group toured the subdivision of the Rusholme estate in west central Toronto. Cheryl Goleski, a

stained glass artist, added to Paul's description of buildings and conservation projects by speaking to the history and making of stained glass. The walking tour ended at St. Anne's Anglican Church where a special performance was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. The group sat in the same pew as Nicholas Goldschmidt, conductor of *Noye's Fludde!* Benjamin Britten's Chester miracle play travels to Ottawa, Montreal and San Francisco.

A fall tour to Niagara, the Shaw Festival and Buffalo will complete the 1995 program of special tour events. In addition, half day walking tours are also available.

For tickets to *Niagara Countryside, Theatre and Buffalo Architecture*, call Paul Dilse at (416) 921-5324.

TRAC

Summer 1995

The Newsletter of the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy

Main street restoration: Rebuilding Toronto's history



A view of the historic streetscape on the south side of Queen Street West at Macdonnell and Lansdowne Avenues.

Walking around Toronto, one cannot help but notice the history lining both sides of the street. History that the City of Toronto, backed by both the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the Province of Ontario, decided to revive in 1990 by way of a challenge. A design competition entitled "Housing on Toronto's Main Streets" was sponsored to stimulate the design of buildings that would blend in with the existing structures and also be viable housing. Too many American cities have found their downtown cores deteriorating into ghost towns as industry and people flow into the less costly suburbs. Restoring Toronto's main streets might stop a similar debacle north of the border.

Certain criteria and goals were set out for the proposal and are discussed inside by the TRAC's Anthony Lever, who has chosen five Queen Street sites which are ripe for residential intensification.

The following are the five sites chosen:

- ♦ 639-655 Queen Street East near Broadview
- ♦ 318-324 Queen Street East at Berkeley and Parliament
- ♦ 495-505 Queen Street East at McDougall Lane and Augusta Avenue
- ♦ 1142-1148 Queen Street West at Beaconsfield and Lisgar Streets
- ♦ 1482-1494 Queen Street West at Macdonnell and Lansdowne Avenues

A brief history, description and possible restoration solution

Please Main Street Restoration on page 4. 

Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy

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A branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Inc.

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OMB rules on plan for Gooderham & Worts

by Alec Keefer

At 2 p.m. on Tuesday May 23, 1995 the Ontario Municipal Board announced its decision on the appeal of the Gooderham & Worts. The Board supported the development proposal. During the hearing that started on March 28 the developers presented a series of reports on various aspects of their proposal. Among these was the Heritage Master Plan. All the reports were well-illustrated, detailed and meticulous. They demonstrated that the developer has made a strong commitment to the site.

In stages, the development plan will mean much change for Ontario's industrial masterpiece. The development will be directed by a By-law and Official Plan Amendment (passed by City Council in May 1994) --an updated version of which was passed by Council on March 27 one day before the OMB hearing itself. During the hearing, the City stated that a further change was under discussion.

When the redevelopment is realized what will we find at the foot of Parliament Street, the former G & W Distillery?

Some of the one or 1 1/2 storey buildings will receive additional floors. These original warehouses will become the base for commercial towers or new apartment buildings.

One of the most complicated transformations will concern the Paint House. Many consider this building to be one of the "jewels" of the G & W collection. The north and west walls will be retained in-situ, the roof removed, and parking placed below it. Then the east and south walls will be reconstructed and probably parts of the roof. This will then serve as an open sculpture court and entrance to an office tower.

Some of the structures that will be demolished will reappear later, as in the case of Rack House G, which is slated to serve as a conservatory or restaurant.

Structures on Trinity Street will be renovated for new uses. The types of uses are named in the By-Law. An interpretation centre will be housed on the second floor of the Stone Distillery Building.

Rack House D, at the northeast corner of Trinity and Mill Streets, will be converted into a museum of early childhood. Most people agree that D, as it exists today intact, is one of the marvels of engineering on the site. New offices and apartment towers will be built on the westerly lands at Parliament Street south of Mill Street and at the southeast side of the site over on Cherry Street. They will range up to heights of 23 storeys or 65 metres.

Over the last five years there have been many changes to the proposal. We ask that the City be vigilant over the next decade to ensure that all future owners and their tenants respect the agreements called easements that are in place to protect Gooderham & Worts.

By early fall, the TRAC Executive will have responded to the OMB report and process.

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1482-1494 Queen Street West

(north side between Macdonnell and Lansdowne Avenues)

Built: 1892

History

This six-unit commercial block was developed in the early 1890's, shortly after the 1889 annexation of Parkdale by the City of Toronto. Extravagant buildings on both sides of the street were being built and this block was one of the most stunning. In 1891, James G. Macdonnell owned all six lots, (each 18' x 120'), on then vacant site. He was the grandson of Alexander Macdonell, who bought up large amounts of what is now the west end of the city. Macdonnell Avenue was named after the family and James G. Macdonnell lived at #11 Macdonnell, around the corner.

Assessment records reveal that by 1892 ownership had changed: A. J. Thompson owned six unfinished stores on the site. Land registry records also reveal that in the same year a mechanic's lien of \$765.00 (later removed) was placed by the architectural firm of Dick and Wickson against the site. Ownership and mortgages held on the site seem to rotate between members of the Thompson and Clark families and the Building and Loan Co. Original occupants of the buildings included a drug store, a dressmaker's, and a confectionery, as well as the Metropolitan College of Music (at #1492-94), but the latter did not appear until 1895.

Description

Originally a three-storey, six-unit, red brick commercial block with a central doorway and a pair of four-storey towers, the block has suffered the ignominious fate of losing half of itself. This missing half has been replaced by a single-storey retail outlet. The remaining half is comprised of two rather plain units (each featuring a single segmentally-arched window on the second storey, above which is a pair of narrower single windows), and the central unit. The central or tower unit has a picturesque squared tower with a steeply pitched hip roof, in what might be called a Chateau-style, with a distinctly Swiss-German flavour. The

tower unit features variations on stone, Gothic-style, tracery windows at each of the three upper levels. These three remaining units would then have been repeated as a mirror image on the other half of the site. From the visual evidence provided by a vintage photo postcard (which confirms the presence of the twin towers), one can see the existence of a central portion placed between the tower units, featuring a large Gothic pointed-arch window in stone at the third-storey level, which on its lower level would have allowed for a central doorway between the storefronts.

The facade relies on an interplay between flat planes of unornamented brick, the contrasting cut stone window surrounds and Gothic inspired tracery of the tower units --which leads the eye over and up. To break up the horizontality of the facade and to accentuate the window arrangements. A stylized form of a narrow vertical buttress appears across the facade at regular intervals. Stylistically, one can see parallels to another work by the firm of Dick & Wickson, of the same period. The Oddfellow's Hall, 2 College Street at Yonge (1891-92), displays a similar use of chateau-roofed, Gothic-style ornamentation, and contrasting stone window surrounds and detailing.

Solution

Of all the sites in the study, this one would seem to be the most desperate. Once the knowledge is gained of its original grand, two-tower status, one cannot really see the site without both towers. By making the block a unified whole again and rebuilding the three to four-storey "missing tooth" complete with towers, the proposed residential density of the site would automatically double and much of the prominence and dignity of the whole city block would be restored. The site's four-storey, turreted neighbour at the north-east corner of Macdonnell and Queen also gives some indication of the dramatic profile and roof lines that this section of Parkdale once possessed and to which it could still aspire.

Kingsway book a runaway best seller

Selling like hot cakes you say? Yes, and not only in the Kingsway.

The Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy's latest foray into the literary world has been a huge success. The recent effort, entitled Kingsway Park: Triumph in Design, has been selling briskly since its launch in mid-November. To date, over 1,200 books have been sold. The launch, which was held in a beautiful room overlooking the Humber River at the Old Mill, was well attended by both TRAC members and Kingsway area residents.

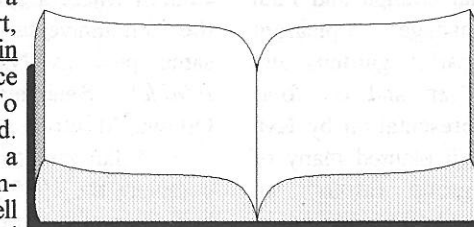
The work was co-authored by A.C.O. President Mr. Alec Keefer and Elizabeth Ingolfsrud over the last 6 years. Ms. Ingolfsrud is Chair of the Etobicoke Historical Board. Longstanding TRAC members and Park residents were key

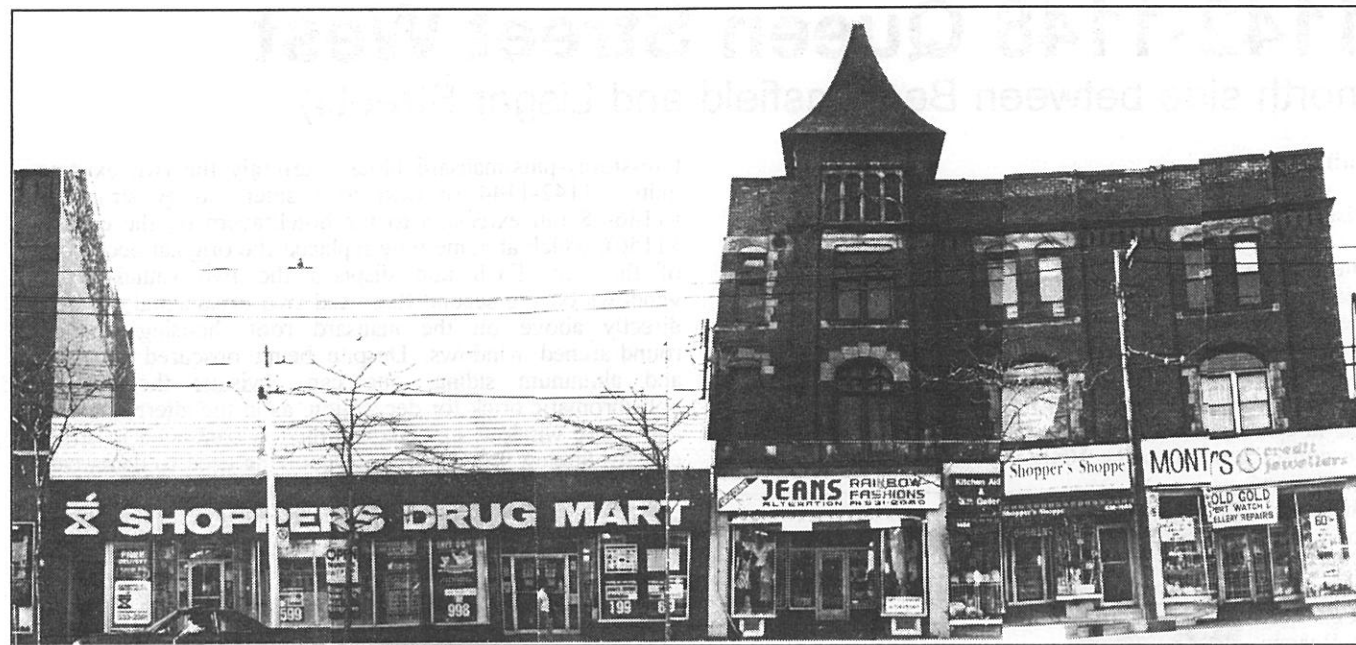
Kingsway Park: Triumph in Design is an in-depth study of the Home Smith houses in the Kingsway area and includes a detailed and comparative look of the architectural devices of the 1920s, as evidenced in the structures, as well as numerous photographs of the homes discussed. An index of homes, builders, architects and first owners is included at the back of the book.

In response to the brisk sales, Mr. Keefer could only comment, "It's marvelous! Simply marvelous!"

He added that enough copies have been sold to cover the printing costs of the book and then some, as well as encourage future projects of this kind. works.

TRAC acknowledges the financial assistance of the Heritage Etobicoke Foundation, whose loan made the





Built in 1892, this six-unit commercial block consisted originally of three-storey, red brick commercial buildings with a central doorway and a pair of four-storey towers. However, the block has since lost half of itself to progress, the passage of time, and most specifically to Shoppers Drug Mart. The remaining half is comprised of two rather plain units (each featuring a single segmentally-arched window on the second storey, above which is a pair of narrower single windows) and the central unit. The central or tower unit has a picturesque squared tower with a steeply pitched hip roof, in what might be called a Chateau-style, with a distinctly Swiss-German flavor.



Of all the sites in the study, this one would seem to be the most desperate. Once the knowledge is gained of its original grand, two-tower status, one cannot really see the site without both towers. By making the block a unified whole again and rebuilding the three to four-storey "missing tooth" complete with towers, the proposed residential density of the site would automatically double and much of the prominence and dignity of the whole city block would be restored. Towering over Queen Street West, once restored, this block would be a throwback to the grandeur of Parkdale that once was.

A response to main street restoration

by Anthony Lever

make up a substantial and important

In 1990, the City of Toronto, with the backing of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the Province of Ontario, sponsored a design competition entitled "Housing on Toronto's Main Streets." Working on the assumption that Toronto's main streets provided an ideal location for additional needed housing and that there were numerous underdeveloped sites along these streets, a challenge was put forth to architects, planners and other interested parties "to develop appropriate building typologies" while avoiding any negative impact that "intensification of housing" may have on its surroundings.

Among the stated goals and criteria of the competition was the suggestion that "the design proposal should have regard for the historic built form and architectural traditions of Toronto's Main Streets." Also mentioned (as it applied to at least one of the test sites chosen for the competition) was the fact that "the challenge here is to add residential units that do not result in demolition and that fit in with the historic and architectural character of the block." The calls for solutions, however, did not always clearly recognize the existence and history of the commercial blocks and their building typologies which survive on main streets.

As a response, the Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy has chosen five sites where residential "intensification" could take place by rebuilding and/or filling the gap in existing commercial blocks. These sites are more-or-less evenly distributed over eight kilometres of Queen Street, from Broadview in the east to Macdonell Avenue in the west. In each case, a missing portion or "missing tooth" has resulted from fire, demolition or incompatible replacement of an original element of each commercial block. In each case, as well, these buildings

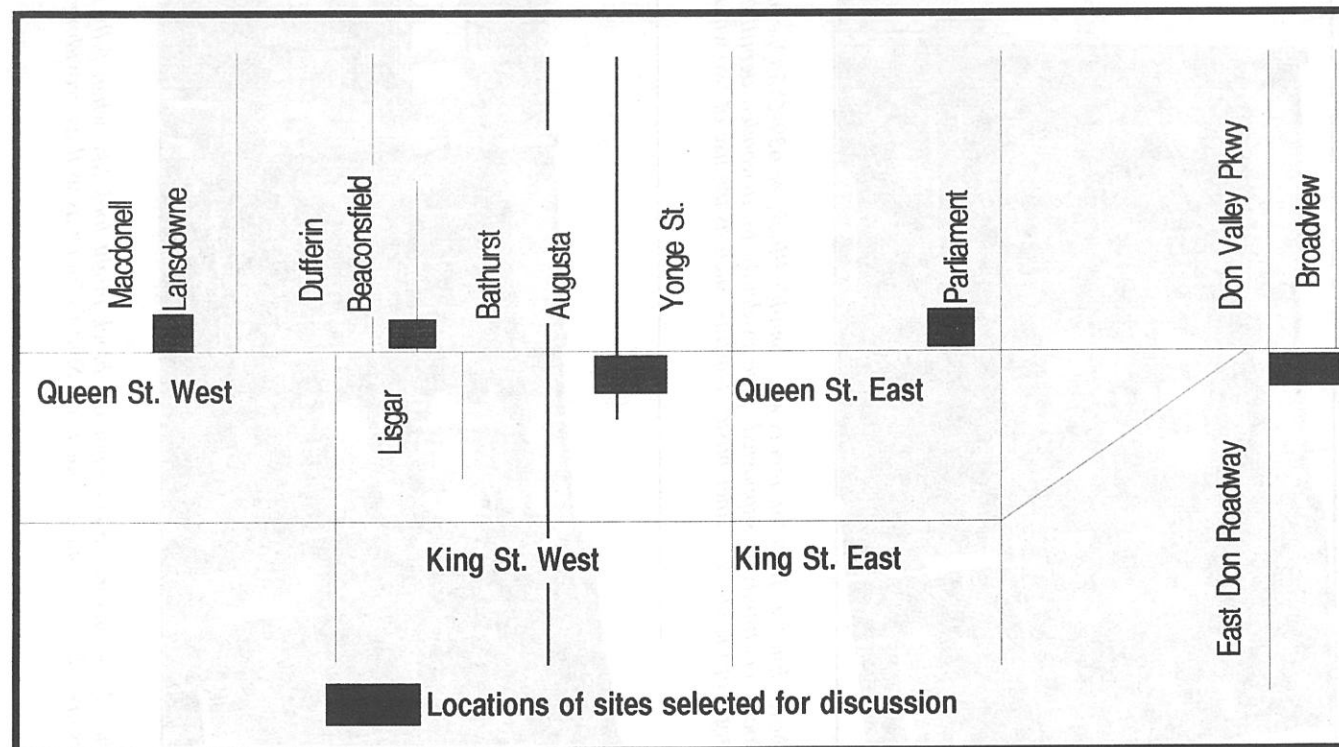
part of the city block of which they are a part.

The Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy argues that replacing the "missing teeth" by rebuilding to the designs of the surviving units in each block is the most logical solution to the challenge of residential intensification and the aforementioned criteria regarding sensitivity to the city's historic and architectural character. The outcome, if such rebuilding occurred, would not only be a return to the grace, beauty and architectural integrity of these blocks; but, a regaining of rhythm and continuity for the whole streetscape. The accompanying rejuvenation of neighbourhoods, both economically and residentially, also cannot be overlooked.

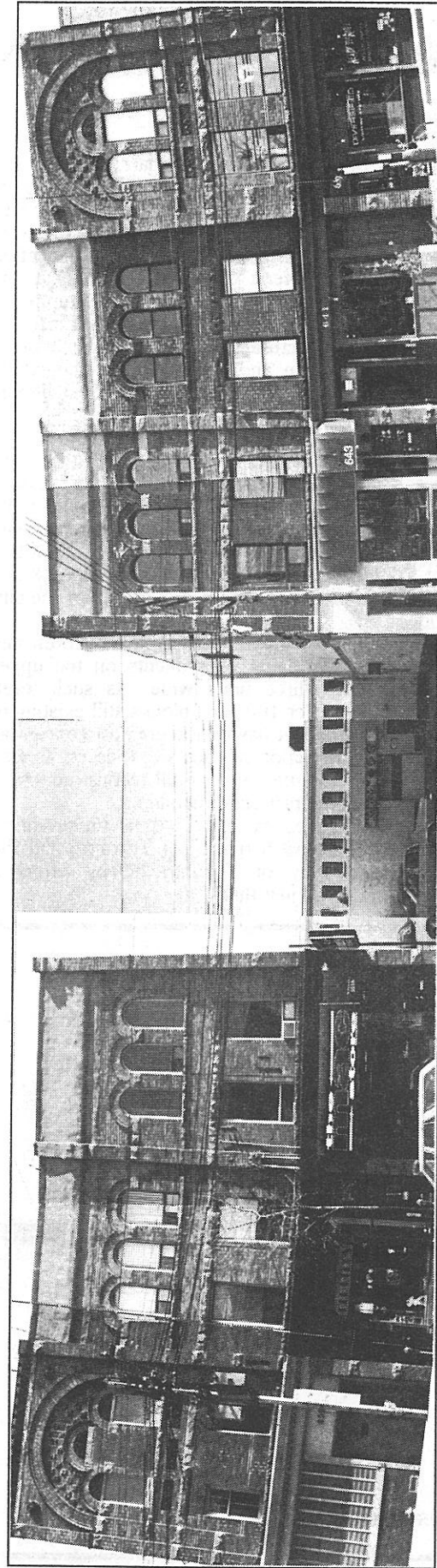
Queen Street, historically, was a gateway to the city, at both eastern and western ends. Its narrow lot subdivision encouraged speculative ventures resulting in commercial blocks. In each of the sites chosen, a form of entrepreneurial speculation was probably instrumental in the site's development. All buildings date from the 1880's and 1890's and reflect the great prosperity and rapid growth of the city in that period.

Each commercial block chosen contains storefronts at street level, with residential components on the upper floors, and is at least three units wide. As such, each example is one of well over 100 such blocks still existing in Toronto --with Queen Street having the greatest concentration. A history and description of each site follows, as well as a photo of the current site and a visual reconstruction of how it might look after appropriate rebuilding.

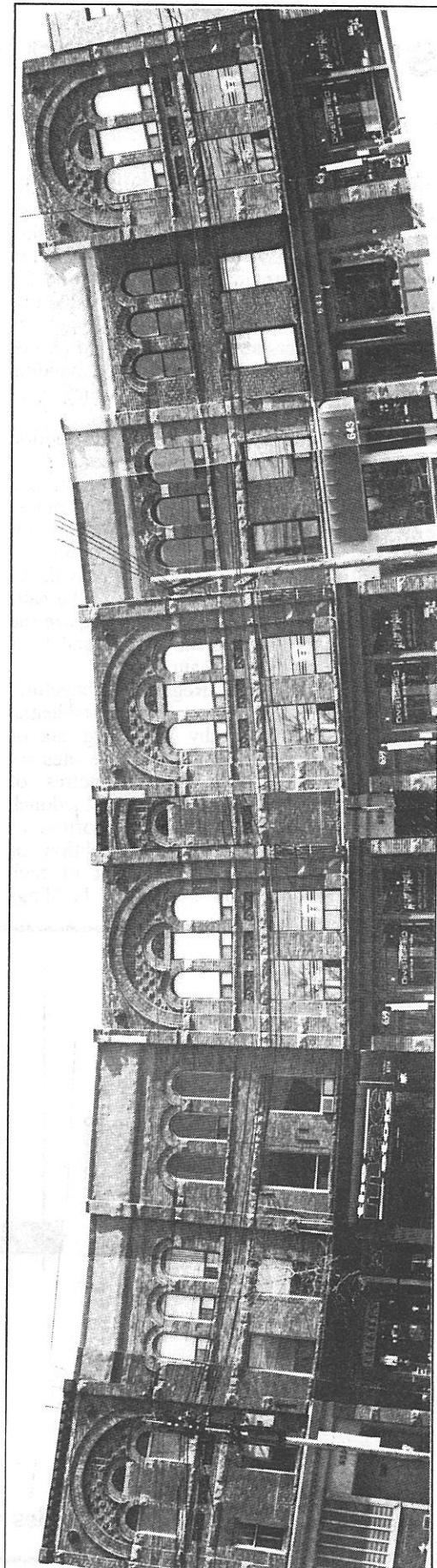
As the City's proposal states: "It is important to understand the architectural heritage" of Toronto, and the Architectural Conservancy of Toronto hereby offers a practical exercise in doing just that.



Locations of sites selected for discussion



Above: Built in 1889/90, this is what Smith's Block, or 639-655 Queen Street East, looks like today, missing the centre buildings in the block --or #'s 645 and 647. The block's continuity is supported quite evidently by a wooden dentillated cornice at storefront level and contrasting rough-cut stone string courses, both running the length of the block. Other basic elements, such as the use of two windows at the second storey level and triple round-arched windows are also repeated.



The above picture shows what the block might look like when fully restored. As is obvious from this re-creation, filling the gap caused by the two centre units, restores the unity and grandeur of Smith's Block as well as providing much need housing space in the city.

1142-1148 Queen Street West

(north side between Beaconsfield and Lisgar Streets)

Built: 1881/82

History

The history of the blocks to the west and east of Beaconsfield Avenue on the north side of Queen Street West is perhaps symbolic of the kind of speculative development that occurred in Toronto in the 1880's. In 1882, Philip Peppiatt is listed as the owner of four unfinished buildings (brick, two-and-one-half stories) at the site in question, east of Beaconsfield. Peppiatt, who was the consul general to the Netherlands, was also the owner

of several undeveloped lots of the same size on the block west of Beaconsfield. At the same time, the two corner lots west of #1148 had changed hands from J. S. McMurray to The London and Canadian Loan and Investment Co. By the next year, #1142-1148 were all owned by the London and Canadian Loan and all lots west of Beaconsfield are owned by J. S. McMurray. These now contained brick buildings, all assessed at the identical rate of their more easterly neighbours. It would seem that a consortium of some kind, juggled, flopped and traded lots and buildings, with James Sawrin McMurray, a well-known barrister in the City and vice-consul to Norway and Sweden playing a central role. The outcome was a development in which a terrace of virtually identical commercial buildings, although with different owners, appeared on the north side of Queen Street West, flanking both sides of the Beaconsfield Avenue intersection.

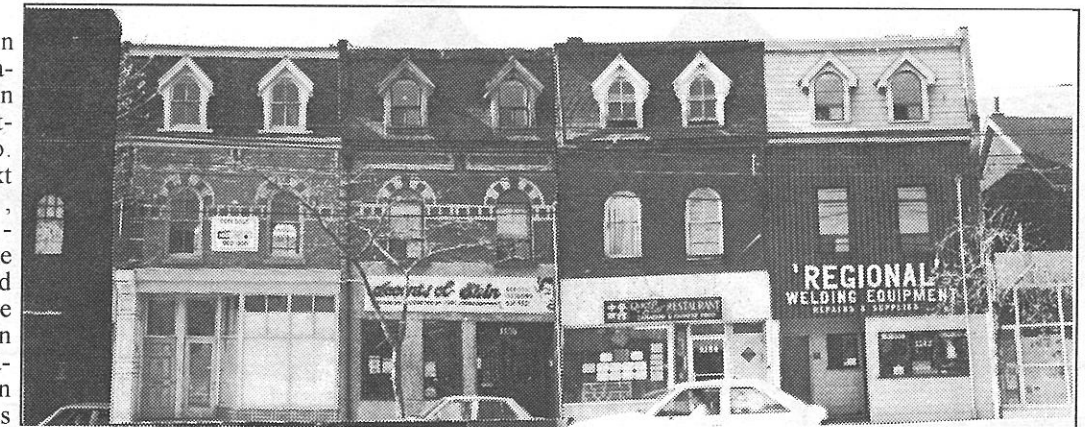
Description

Although originally a four-unit (or larger), red-brick,

two-storey-plus-mansard block, currently the two existing units, #1142-1144 sit next to a single storey structure, #1146-48 (an extension to the hotel/tavern on the corner, #1150), which at some time replaced the original occupants of the site. Each unit displays the two round-arched windows on the second floor and two ornamental dormers directly above on the mansard roof, housing smaller, round-arched windows. Despite being obscured by paint and aluminum siding, one can envisage the use of polychromatic brick for decoration, as in the alternating red and white window surrounds, which is continued in string courses linking the windows, in quoining used to demarcate



Above: A view of 1142-48 Queen Street West as it looks today. Below: after restoration.



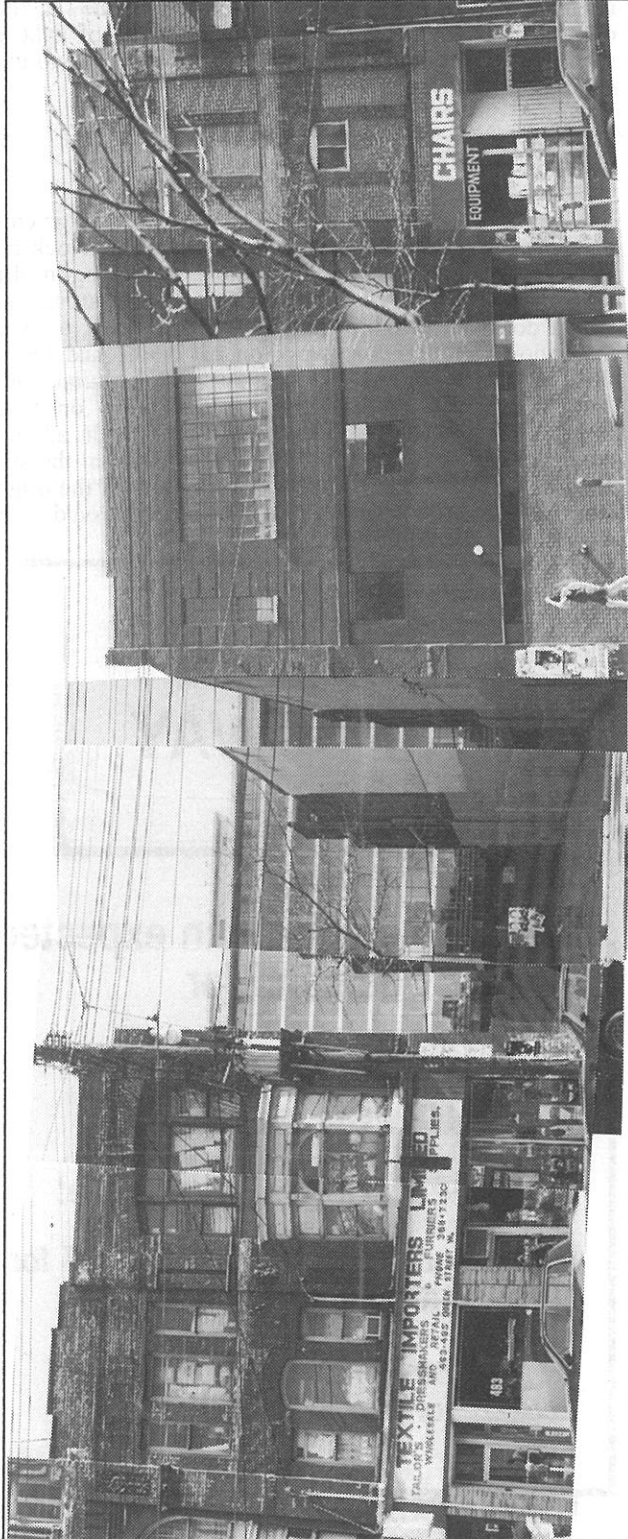
each unit and in ornamental paneling under the eaves. As can be more readily seen on the buildings in the block west of Beaconsfield, decorative brackets between the panels supported the roof, which originally displayed a band of decorative shingles running horizontally at dormer level. The success of both of these blocks depended on the continuity provided by the repetition of simple elements, which as a whole presented a modest yet dignified face to the street.

Solution

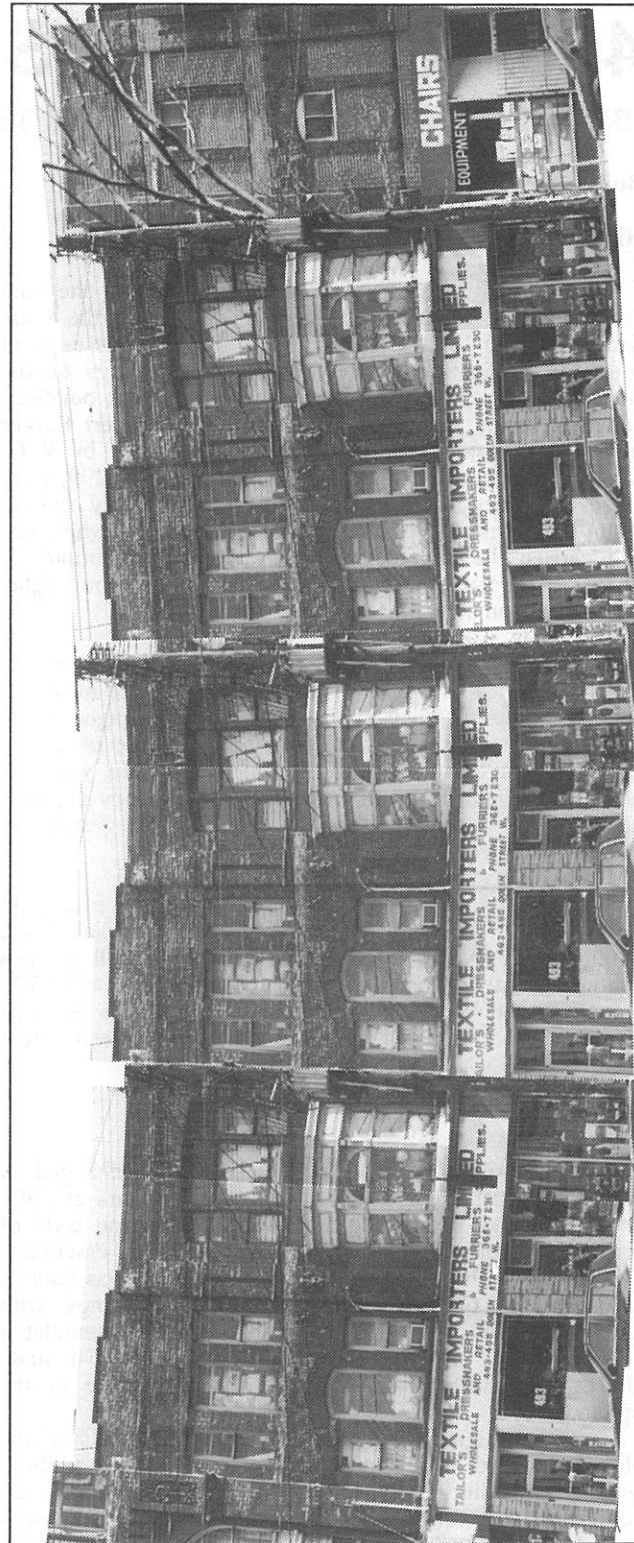
Filling in the "missing teeth" on this block, at #1146-1148, by rebuilding to the pattern established by the surviving buildings, would not only restore the original continuity of the streetscape, but triple the density of the underdeveloped half of this site.

(Note: Visitors to the site may wish to explore Beaconsfield Avenue itself. It is a feast of polychromatic brick work attributed to architects Stewart & Strickland.)

At left: This block at 495-505 Queen Street West, on the south side between McDougall Lane and Augusta Avenue was built between 1889 and 1890 with seven units. Much has changed since the original construction, which saw the block built as a long row of three-storey, red brick buildings with identical storefronts, linked by a continuous dentillated cornice running at both first and third floor levels. Today, a vacant lot exists at #497-99 and #501 and 503 have been refaced in an Art Moderne style of brick work.



At right: This picture shows the possible restoration of the block -- a difficult prospect as even the well-trained eye could be forgiven for not realizing that the surviving elements of this block once made for a unified and dignified whole. However, the fill-in of the vacant lot at #497-99 with appropriate three-storey units would do much to return the block's integrity, as would the removal of the later brickwork on #501-503. Better-preserved sister blocks along Queen Street West could serve as models for the reconstruction process.



639-655 Queen Street East

(south side between Broadview Avenue and East Don Roadway)

Built: 1889/90

History

"Smith's Block", as it was named by contemporary sources, was an eight-unit commercial block developed by owner John Smith. Smith came from a well known Toronto family, long interconnected with the history of the eastern part of the city. His grandfather, William Smith, had settled in the Town of York in 1794. It was William Smith's building and contracting business, along with a knowledge of planning and surveying, that made him an important contributor to the early development of the town. In 1819, Smith's son, William (Jr.), purchased the Governor Simcoe property, (lot 15, east of the Don) from John Scadding and shortly thereafter erected a tannery on the water's edge. He also accumulated a quantity of other real estate.

John Smith, William Jr.'s eldest son born in 1811, succeeded his father in business and in the tradition of real estate development. John Smith seems to have been part of a consortium which included the likes of William Herbert Cawthra, Hamilton physician James White, James F. Coleman and Henry S. Strathy. The consortium began subdividing lot 15 in 1889 ("131 ft. on the south side of Queen") with construction beginning shortly thereafter. It may be interesting to note that Smith donated the Scadding Cabin, which was originally located south of this site, to the York Pioneers, who moved it to its present site at the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds.

Description

The three-storey, red brick commercial block consisted of eight units, the central two of which (#645-647) have since been demolished. The continuity of the whole was supported by a wooden dentillated cornice at storefront level and contrasting rough-cut stone string courses, both running the length of the block. Other basic elements were also repeated: primarily the use of two windows at the second storey level and triple round-arched windows at the third storey level, in each unit.

The builder achieved variety by the alternating of two basic forms. The first, an "end" unit (used at both ends and repeated twice in the now-disappeared centre units) is distinguished by a large round-arched opening at the third storey level which is inset with a checkerboard pattern of smooth and rusticated brickwork above the triple window arrangement. The central arch of the three windows is raised above the others and filled in with a terra cotta ornament. Other decorative terra cotta panels occur both below and above these windows. The "end" unit design is also repeated at the building's north-eastern corner, as part of a completely articulated eastern facade facing what was formerly a street, Baseball Place. This originally served to orient the building towards the major intersection of Queen and Broadview streets. The second, plainer form, (repeated twice between the end and centre units) lacks all the surface decoration of the first and exists as a relief from it; its only distinction being its third storey triple windows which are all kept of the same dimensions, in arcade

fashion, and a slightly lower building height.

Although lost to sight at present, the buildings originally displayed ornate paneled brickwork cornices (higher at the centre and ends), running along the top of each unit, as well as squared-off, decorative turrets marking the division between the units and the firewalls. A 1910 photo also shows the centre units surmounted by a pair of triangular pediments, an identifying name stone ("Smith's Block"), and the existence of a central doorway, with upper windows above it, inserted between the large brick arches of the centre units.

Solution

With the disappearance of the two centre units, a glaring gap in the whole block exists. This gap is even more patently obvious from the north side of the street, namely the intersection of Carroll and Queen Street East. Filling in the gap with appropriate three-storey units would not only restore the unity and grandeur of the whole block by linking the currently separated units, but would also replicate the massing of the many three-storey buildings that still exist on this part of Queen Street East. If reconstruction of the missing pediments and cornices was accomplished, possibly another half-storey of space, as well as privacy for rooftop units, could be gained.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRAC Summer Walks: "Two West Side Stories"

West Toronto Junction: "At Home and Away"
Sunday, August 27 at 2 p.m.

Starting place at Jane subway station
Ending at Keele subway station by 3:30 p.m.

Kingsway Park Etobicoke: "Triumph in Design"
Saturday, August 26th at 2 p.m.

Starting place at Royal York subway station.
Ending at Old Mill subway station by 3:30 p.m.

B. Napier Simpson Jr. Memorial Lecture

Thursday, October 19, 1995 at 7:30 p.m.
Board of Education Auditorium, 155 College Street

Speaker: Tony Herbert, Lecturer in Fine Art at Wolverhampton University and at the University of Keele. Former Curator of the Jackfield Town Museum. Mr. Herbert has a long association with the Iron Bridge Gorge site.

318-324 Queen Street West

(north side between Berkeley and Parliament Streets)

Built: #318-320: 1882
#322-324: 1884/5

History

Although the block of land west of Parliament Street on Queen Street East was still primarily vacant in 1868, by the 1870's and 80's the area was a hive of commercial activity and the land was rapidly being subdivided into smaller lots to allow for the increase in activity. Research indicates that by 1882, the easterly half of this city block between Berkeley and Parliament was owned by William C. Price, who ran a gentleman's furnishings store (and who was later to become Postmaster at the East Branch Post Office on this block). Although, almost all buildings were listed as one-storey of

rough cast or frame construction; by 1885, all his properties, which included up to the present #322-324 (now a vacant lot), had become two-storey plus mansard roof, brick buildings. Various businesses, residences, and organizations, including an Eastern Star Temperance Hall, were housed in these buildings.

To the west, land formerly owned by builder and lumber merchant John Elder (who had also sold some of his land to Price) was by 1882 in the possession of Robert McKay ---for whom a mortgage was granted of \$10,000, in the same year. His lot, 30' x 120', on the north side of Queen is the present #318-320 and was assessed as a "Brick Front (and) Rough Cast" building of two stories. It probably gained its present mansard roof in the late 1880's or early 1890's --something which had already happened to all of its westerly neighbours by this period.

Description

Although two separate commercial blocks with different owners, are being examined, they use the same architectural

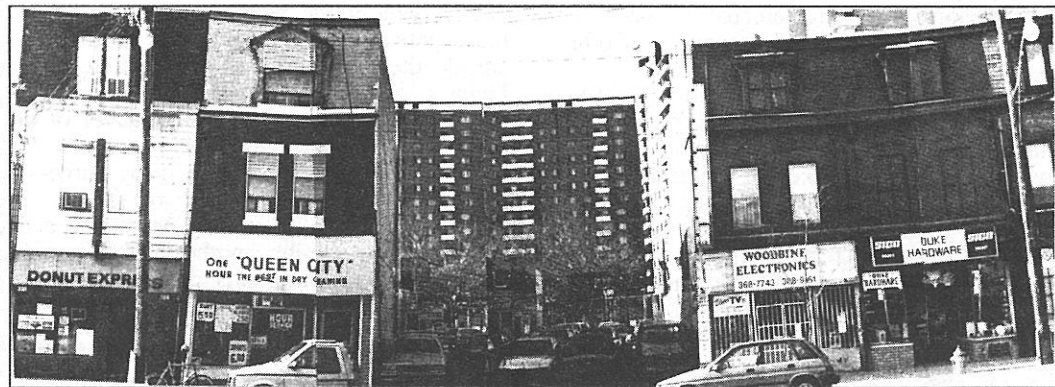
vocabulary of the period. Each unit is of red-brick construction with commercial storefronts on the lower level, a pair of square-headed windows on the second floor, and mansard roofs above. The existing building (#318-320) has echoed its easterly neighbours with a single, bi-part decorative dormer, which although not identical is virtually the same scale as its neighbour's, as is the building's overall height and roof line. Both facades have wooden sills and lintels and both display a vertical articulation of the brickwork to separate each unit from the next. #318 has been covered with aluminum siding which obscures its original surfaces and in both buildings the original fenestration has been tampered with.

Since the nine-unit commercial block to the east of the site (built by Price) terminates in a firewall at its western end, and without the benefit of any contemporary photographs, one can only guess what the 'missing tooth' on this site looked like. It would seem to pre-date, at least in its finished form, its westerly neighbour. It is safe to assume, however, that the original building here would have echoed the architectural vernacular of its neighbours.

at its western end, and without the benefit of any contemporary photographs, one can only guess what the 'missing tooth' on this site looked like. It would seem to pre-date, at least in its finished form, its westerly neighbour. It is safe to assume, however, that the original building here would have echoed the architectural vernacular of its neighbours.

Solution

With the disappearance of #322-324, a breach appeared in a moderately unified commercial streetscape. This situation has been exacerbated by the fire and demolition of the Rupert's Hotel building at the north-west corner of Queen and Parliament. The infill of these vacant sites with buildings repeating the architectural vocabulary of their two-storey-plus-mansard-roof next-door neighbours, would do much to restore the continuity of the streetscape, while meeting the goals of main street intensification. This would also serve to reconstruct the partial shield that this side of Queen Street East has become to the towering high-rises to the north. The owner of #318 might also be encouraged to remove the aluminum siding on this building and thus improve the visual harmony of the block.



Above: A view of 318-324 Queen Street East as it looks today. Below: after restoration.



495-505 Queen Street West

(south between McDougall Lane and Augusta Avenue)

Built: 1889/90

History

Originally a seven-unit commercial block, the land assembled for this venture was first owned by the Land Security Co. in 1889. By 1890, according to the assessment rolls, the original two-storey rough cast buildings on the site had been replaced by three three-storey brick buildings and four other "unfinished buildings". Mrs. Robert Barker owned #505 and #503, while #501 was owned by W.G. Murray, and the four unfinished buildings, #493- 499, were listed as owned by Samuel Harris. It is probably safe to assume the Land Security Co. had developed the whole site and chosen the architect. In *The Globe* of February 7, 1889, a report of the annual meeting of "the highly successful Company" mentions that:

One feature of the Land Security Co. has been the assistance it has afforded to persons of moderate means to acquire homes of their own, those so advantaged being now numbered among the thousands. Incidentally, the lesson is taught of the progressive and secure value of well-bought real estate in Toronto: yet, as many are in a position to know, the art of handling real estate to advantage is not possessed by everybody.

The design of this project proved to be quite successful since almost identical forms of this commercial block building type (with only slight variations) can still be seen in the "Hunter Block" (a nine-unit block at #773-789 Queen Street West), a double unit at #414-16 Spadina Avenue, and a four-unit block at #736-742 Queen Street East.

Description

Of the original seven-unit block, much has changed. A vacant lot exists at #497-499, and its neighbours at #501 and #503 have been refaced in an Art Moderne style of brick work and fenestration, converting them essentially into a single-unit building. Originally, the block was built as a long row of three-storey, red-brick buildings with identical storefronts, linked by a continuous dentillated cornice running at both first and third floor levels. The units alternated between two different designs, visible in the upper storeys.

One design, which also anchored both ends of the block, featured a grouping of triple windows at both second and third floor levels. Between string courses separating the storeys, was a display of rusticated brickwork in a checkerboard pattern. The other design, alternating between the above units, featured a slightly projecting bay window of frame construction on the second storey, above which appeared on the third storey a segmentally arched window of the same width, divided into three, and topped by a keystone which fit into the undulating cornice originally running the length of the block. Interspersed between all of the units was a terra cotta lion's head ornament and another decorative terra cotta panel depicting a stylized plant in a vase --both

supplied by M. J. Hynes and Brothers, Toronto and illustrated in their 1887 catalogue.

One has to rely on the better-preserved sister blocks, as mentioned above, to visually recreate what once existed. It is obvious, however, that the block relied on the repetition of triple and bay windows, and the interplay of light and shadow between projecting and receding elements, to make an impression.

Solution

Today, even the well-trained eye could be forgiven for not realizing that the surviving elements of this block once made for a unified and dignified whole. The filling-in of the vacant lot at #497-499 with appropriate three-storey units would do much to return integrity to this block, as would the undoing of later brickwork on #501-505, and restoration of much of the now-missing architectural detail, particularly the cornices. Also, at this point on Queen Street West, the narrow width of the street might allow for the construction of a fourth floor: set back from the street and without interfering with the appreciation of the original facades from street level, this additional floor would greatly increase the "intensification" of the site.



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