

Church Street, Church-Wellesley Village Neighbourhood: Heritage Property Nominations

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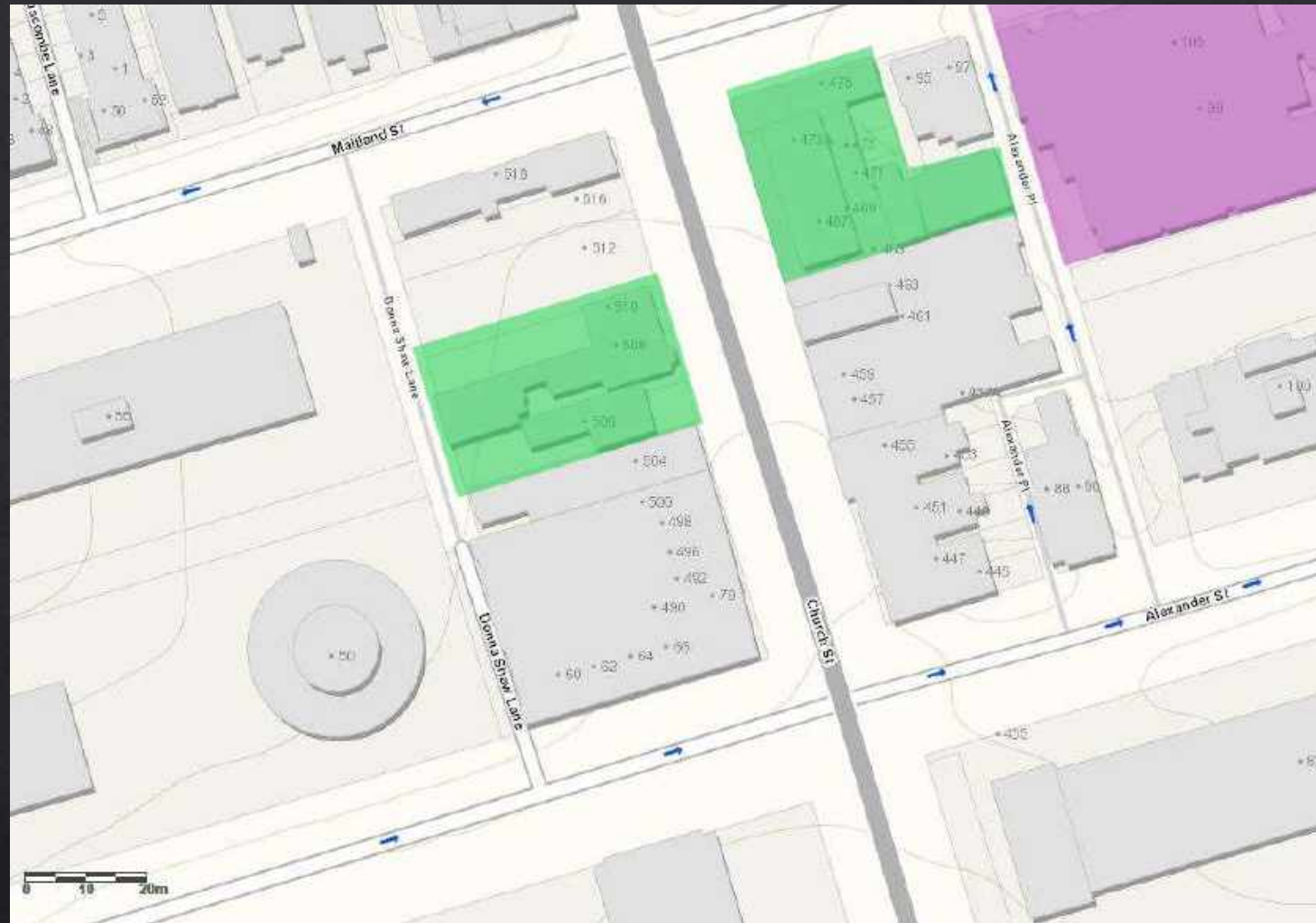
Presentation Prepared for the Board of Directors of the Church-Wellesley
Neighbourhood Association

City of Toronto Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

- ◆ *We acknowledge the land we are meeting on 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. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.*

Church Street Heritage Properties

- ◆ Church Street Heritage Property Nominations which I have submitted since May 2020:
 - ◆ 506 Church Street (c. 1872)
 - ◆ Submitted Heritage Property Nomination on 16 August 2020
 - ◆ 508-510 Church Street (c. 1857/1858)
 - ◆ Submitted Heritage Property Nomination on 15 May 2020
 - ◆ 467 – 475 Church Street (c. 1864, 1894)
 - ◆ Submitted Heritage Property Nomination on: 15 September 2020



Church Street between Maitland Street and Alexander Street.
The properties which I have nominated for Heritage Evaluations are highlighted green.
Pre-existing heritage listed/designated properties are highlighted purple.
North is to the top of the map.



506 Church Street, Toronto

506 Church Street, Toronto

- ◇ Largely associated with its contemporary usage as *Boutique Bar* and *House of Glo* beauty parlour and spa
- ◇ Dates to 1871/1872 – noticeably set back from Church Street and is a detached house - has had modifications to its external and internal structure, including removal of ground floor bay window; re-cladding of house with ashlar brick and aluminum or vinyl siding; and creation of ground floor patio linked to the internal bar space – original brick fireplace appears to be extant next to ground floor bar.
 - ◇ Connie Langille (CWNA) identified during the 19 September 2020 presentation that 1872 was the same year Church Street Public School first opened, in the vicinity of 506 Church Street
- ◇ Requires further research to determine architectural style – has a plainer appearance than some of the other 19th century properties in area
- ◇ Developers are proposing the demolition of this property in the early-to-mid 2020 proposals for the 15 storey, 173 unit condominium project by Graywood Developments at 506-516 Church Street, Toronto
- ◇ Was originally home to the How family
 - ◇ Thomas Ferguson How (1811-1876) and Katherine How (c. 1819 -1910) are first residents as of ~1872
 - ◇ Thomas Ferguson How was an accountant and bookkeeper, originally from Ireland
 - ◇ Thomas and Catherine How had 3 or 4 children
 - ◇ One of the children was Frances Esther How (aka Hester How and HESSIE How) resided here between 1875/1876 and 1910 – one of the most important and influential women in the history of Toronto and Ontario - 506 Church St. should be preserved as an important historical site due to this connection
 - ◇ Another of the How children – James Black How – became a prominent dentist in Toronto and Waterloo

Frances Esther How

- ◆ Born circa. 29 January 1848 in Ireland; emigrated to Canada as young child (alongside family)
- ◆ Died on 22 September 1915 of tuberculosis
- ◆ Described as the *Jane Addams of Toronto* - was an educationist, settlement worker, social reformer, social worker, school principal, and teacher who worked with some of Toronto's poorest children and families in the neighbourhood known as the Ward (St. John's Ward)
- ◆ Also known as Aunt Hessie, Hessie How, and Hester How – Frances Esther How never married
- ◆ Resided at 506 Church Street with her widowed mother between approximately 1875/1876 and 1910 – family owned property for several years after moving out in 1910 (after the death of Catherine How) – the How family were first occupants of 506 Church Street (c. 1871/1872)
- ◆ The How family is entirely omitted from ERA Architect's *Heritage Impact Assessment* for 506-516 Church Street issued 16 July 2020
 - ◆ ERA Architects identified property dated to early-to-mid 1870s, but only provided occupant data from 1929 onward¹³
 - ◆ Heritage Preservation Services has asked ERA to rewrite HIA to include How after receiving my Heritage Property Nomination

- ◇ Described as the *Jane Addams of Toronto* – Frances Esther How was instrumental (directly involved) in the establishment and/or management of the following initiatives and programs during her tenure at the Elizabeth Street Public School and while residing at 506 Church Street. Many of these were the first in Toronto and/or Ontario and were created by How or as a response to How’s initiatives between the 1870s and 1913.
 - ◇ Juvenile Court System
 - ◇ Special classes for students who were delinquent, homeless, truant, and/or expelled from other institutions (physical discipline from the principal and teachers was specifically prohibited in these classes, it was not used unless a severe issue arose, and it was only conducted via an external board administrator, not the principal or teachers of the school – this was significant in the 19th century).
 - ◇ Fresh Air Funds / Summer Camps / Summer Trips / School Picnics (alongside John Joseph Kelso (1864-1935))
 - ◇ The first (Supervised) Playground in Toronto (circa 1905 – created at Elizabeth Street Public School by a coalition of activists).
 - ◇ School Lunch Programs
 - ◇ After School Programming (Arts and Crafts Programs, etc.)
 - ◇ Daycares, Day Nurseries, & Crèches – parallels to development of public Kindergarten programs in 1880s.
 - ◇ Community and School-based Clothing Drives (some charities had previously explored this, though not in a school setting)
 - ◇ Business and Business Ethics Classes; Home Economic Classes; and Domestic Science Classes (notably before Adelaide Hunter Hoodless’ 1897 textbook)
 - ◇ North America’s first school-based *Little Mother’s League* to teach young girls and women who had childcare responsibilities how to care for young children.
 - ◇ Bootblack (Shoeshiner) and Newsboy Classes – special half day classes for students with employment.
 - ◇ English as a Second Language and Newcomer classes
 - ◇ Night School Classes for adult members of the Ward in a neighbourhood of largely immigrant families
 - ◇ Parent-Teacher and School Advocacy associations in a neighbourhood of largely immigrant families
 - ◇ School Dental Clinics and Health Clinics
 - ◇ Special Education Classes for students with learning disabilities and physical disabilities (including hearing and vision related disabilities)
 - ◇ Toronto’s First *Anti Tobacco League* – discouraged students and youth from using tobacco products. Over 90- students signed pledge at 1st meeting.
 - ◇ Set-up a Temperance Library
 - ◇ Other initiatives, including the *Lady Teacher’s Association of Toronto*; utilizing the school as a community center in off hours; school bath facilities (many homes in the school’s catchment area did not have indoor or private baths – this was important for children’s hygiene); etc.



MISS FRANCES ESTHER HOW,
popularly known as "Aunt Hessie"
How, called the Jane Addams of To-
ronto, who died early to-day after a
lingering illness.



~ Frances Esther How ~

Sources:

Left: *City Mourns Death of "Aunt Hessie" How* – The Toronto Daily Star, 22 September 1915, Page 11

Right: Toronto District School Board's *Radical Reform: Education and Society 1845-1945* Online Exhibit and Project

- ◇ Frances Esther How became a Governess at a Jarvis Street based Girls' School in the early 1870s; was hired by Toronto Public School Board as a replacement (substitute) teacher in 1874

- ◇ In 1879-1881, How was asked by James Laughlin Hughes and William Holmes Howland to teach a class of delinquent, homeless, and truant students in the Ward (St. John's Ward) neighbourhood. These students could not be directly integrated into the general school system – first class had 70 students – known as “Mission Union School.”

- ◇ First classes were held in a room at Grace Anglican Church – school moved several times around the Ward during 1880s as enrollment grew - Mission Union School merged with Elizabeth Street Public School around 1889/1890

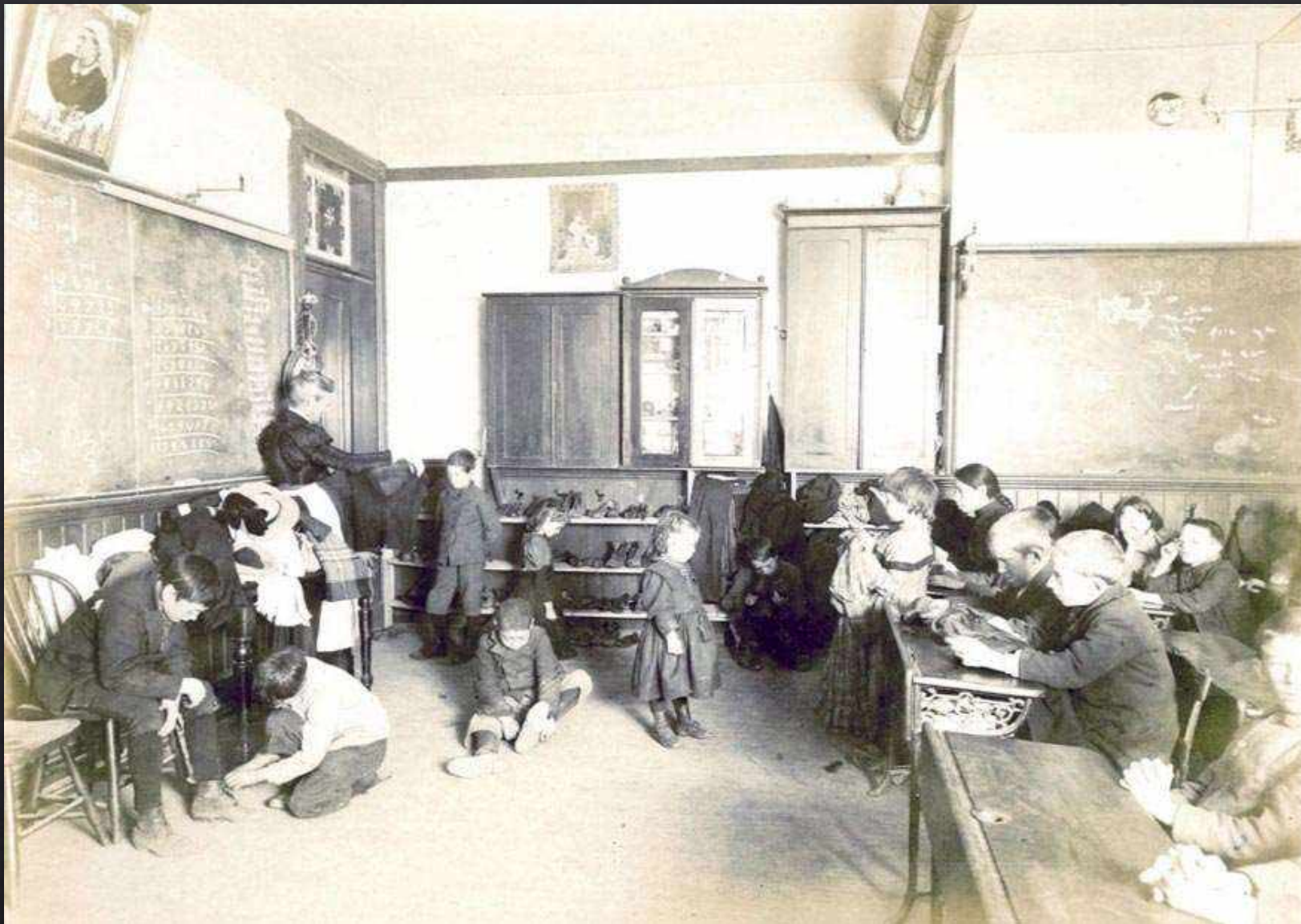
- ◇ Appointed Principal of Elizabeth Street Public School in 1889/1890 – held position until retirement in 1913.



Above: John Wycliffe Lowes Forster's 1913 portrait of¹⁶ Frances Esther How, unveiled during her 1913 retirement ceremony.

Legacy of Frances Esther How

- ◆ Described as *Jane Addams of Toronto* during her retirement ceremony and in her obituary – significant legacy of social welfare and social work programs (see Slide 14) – Elizabeth Street Public School became well known across Canada
- ◆ Her work with the *Lady Teacher's Association of Toronto* (established 1888) included diverse foci such as the right to sick pay, municipal suffrage, and representation on councils
- ◆ Elizabeth Street Public School renamed Hester How Public School when new building opened in 1912 – school was demolished during Hospital for Sick Children expansion in mid-1950s
- ◆ The daycare facility at Toronto City Hall is named the Hester How Daycare / Hester How Early Learning Centre – has been active since the early 1980s
- ◆ Some controversy around missionary activity at Elizabeth Street Public School in early 20th century – Jewish students were being targeted by Christian missionaries in schoolyard, etc. (during How's tenure as Principal) – a large Presbyterian Mission (which later evolved into the Scott Mission) was across the street from school – missionaries ended up banned from school property after a riot on Dundas Street West (then Agnes Street) in 1911
- ◆ Potential for further commemoration of How, including preservation and restoration of 506 Church Street (comparisons to Jane Addams site(s) in Chicago); potential to add a heritage marker / heritage plaque in front of 506 Church Street; potential to create a Frances Esther How postage stamp; potential to create Frances Esther How⁷ Historica Canada *Heritage Minute*; potential naming of a laneway or street; a statue; fundraising for a grave marker/stone; etc.



Above: Frances Esther How teaching in a classroom at Elizabeth Street Public School, circa. 1890s. ¹⁸
Source: Toronto District School Board's *Radical Reform: Education and Society 1845-1945* Online Exhibit and Project



Above: Frances Esther How (in the black dress with spectacles clipped on front) with a group of teachers, circa. early 20th century

Source: Toronto District School Board's *Radical Reform: Education and Society 1845-1945* Online Exhibit and Project



Above: Frances Esther How with students on a summer excursion, circa. early 1910s.
Source: Toronto District School Board's *Radical Reform: Education and Society 1845-1945* Online Exhibit and Project



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, f1257_s1057_it0220

Above: Hester How Public School (built 1912), formerly known as the Elizabeth Street Public School. The school – located near Elizabeth Street and Walton Street - was demolished in the mid- 21
1950s during an expansion of the Hospital for Sick Children.

Source: City of Toronto Archives.

506 Church Street: After the Hows

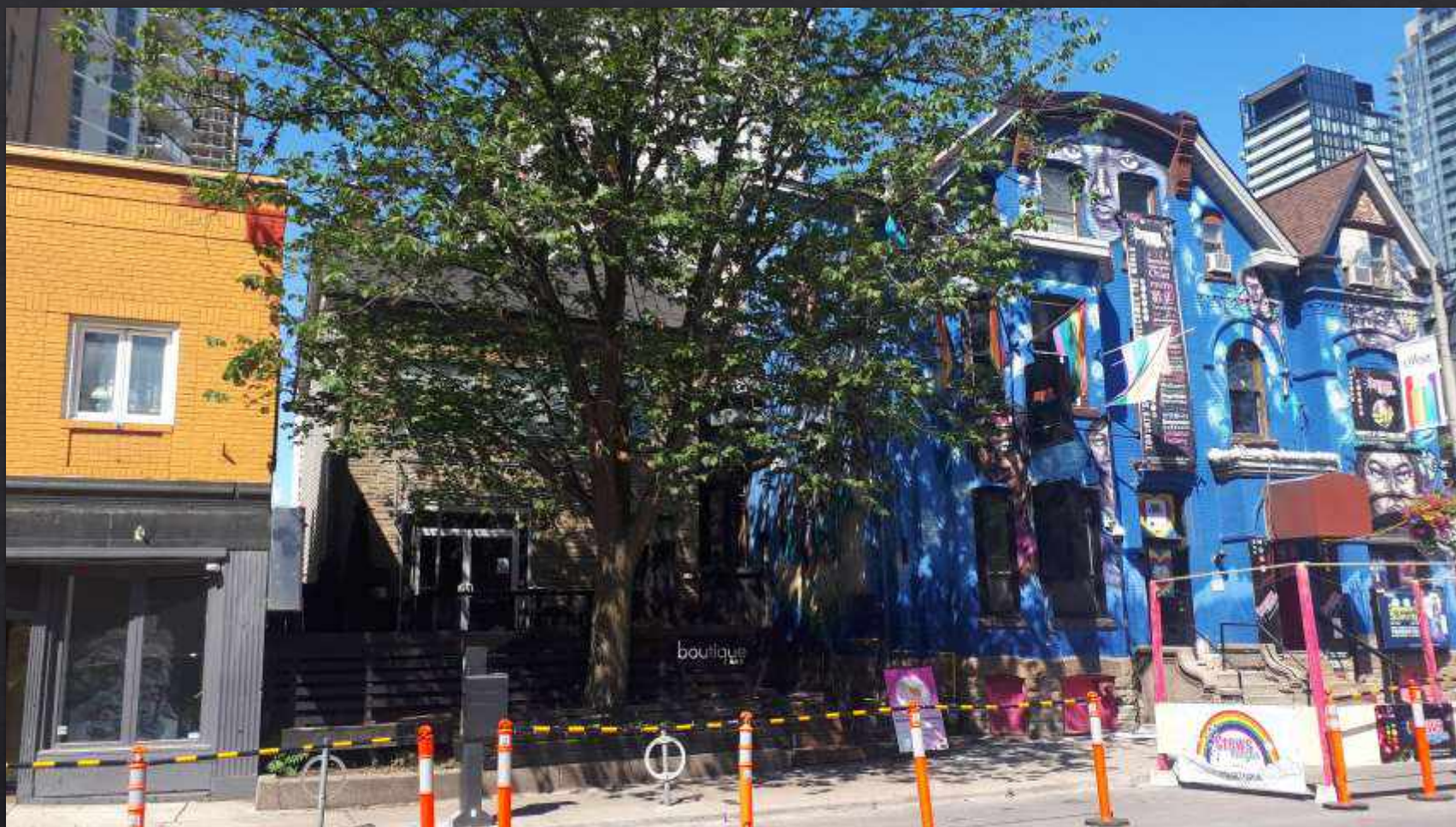
- ◇ After 1910, home to several tenants who rented from the Hows as family continued to own property – further research required to determine when they sold it
- ◇ In the late 1920s, the *General Plating Company* – an electroplating and metal plating company – opened at 506 Church Street; ran their operations here until 1950; appears to have maintained a residential component at this point in time with 1-2 staff members of company living on site in various years
- ◇ In 1950s, 506 Church Street was home to the *Morton Fields / Mills Ice Cream Freezers and Cabinets* company run by Morton Fields and *The Norit Sales Company of Canada* which sold chemicals and was run by Bernard Vriezen – neither Fields nor Vriezen lived on site; *Morton Fields* was here until the mid-to-late 1960s
- ◇ The *Boutique Bar* opened at 506 Church Street in 2010; was also recently (2000s) *Veda* restaurant
- ◇ It would be great to find old photographs of 506 Church Street before it was used as a bar or restaurant – I have not come across any of these yet – property is set-back from street and does not appear clearly in historic streetscape photography



506 Church Street, Toronto



506 Church Street, Toronto: July 2020



506 Church Street, Toronto: July 2020

Note: The large tree provides lovely greenery and shade, though obscures a direct view of the property from across the street.



The Rear (West Elevation) of 506 Church Street, Toronto: 3 May 2020.



508-510 Church Street, Toronto

Other Notes

- ◇ George Harcourt (1820-1889) – who established the robemaking and tailoring firm *Harcourt's* in 1842 resided on the west side of Church Street just south of present-day 506 Church Street in the mid-1860s. *Harcourt's* is still an active business as of 2020, specializing in the making of robes, regalia, etc. predominantly for formal academic, legal, and religious purposes. Harcourt's also makes garments for the British Royal Family and has clientele across the Commonwealth. Harcourt's is now North America's oldest robemaking business. George Harcourt's former house on Church Street has since been demolished.
- ◇ Reverend John Langtry (1834-1906) – who founded the Bishop Strachan School for Girls in Toronto in 1867 - resided on the west side of Church Street just south of present-day 506 Church Street in the 1860s. Reverend Langtry was also a prolific religious writer. Reverend Langtry's former house on Church Street has since been demolished.

Future Directives

- ◇ I am waiting to hear back from the City of Toronto's Heritage Preservation Services in further detail about these Heritage Property Nomination (beyond receipt of property nomination forms)
- ◇ Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam (Ward 13 – Toronto-Centre) and the Church-Wellesley Village BIA have been sent copies of the Heritage Property Nominations
- ◇ Would the CWNA be willing to send Letters of Support if these Heritage Property Nominations proceed further?
- ◇ Conducting a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment for Church Street (recommended by Paul Farrelly (CWNA) during this presentation)
- ◇ Does the CWNA want to be cc'd on future Heritage Property Nominations?
 - ◇ There are additional heritage assets and properties to research in further detail throughout the Church-Wellesley Village neighbourhood
- ◇ Please feel free to reach out to me at adam.g.wynne@gmail.com