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IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT,
R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18, S. 29 and S. 67

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND PREMISES
IN THE CITY OF HAMILTON, KNOWN MUNICIPALLY
AS 142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 160 JAMES
STREET SOUTH

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

MAR 10 1995

TO: The Ontario Heritage Foundation,
10 Adelaide Street East,
Toronto, Ontario.
M5C 1J3

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of The Corporation of the City of Hamilton intends to designate the following property, including land and buildings, as a property of historic or architectural value or interest under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act: **142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 160 James Street South.**

THE REASONS for the proposed designation are set out in Schedule "A" annexed hereto.

A NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE is being published in 'The Spectator' once a week for each of three consecutive weeks, commencing on the date set out below.

ANY PERSON may, within thirty days of the date set out below, send by registered mail or deliver to the Clerk of The Corporation of the City of Hamilton notice of his or her objection to the proposed designation, together with a statement of the reasons for the objection and all relevant facts. When a Notice of Objection has been received, the Council of the City of Hamilton will refer the matter to the Conservation Review Board for a hearing and report.

DATED at the City of Hamilton this 7th day of March 1995.

J. J. Schatz
City Clerk
Hamilton, Ontario

Schedule "A"

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

James South Stone Terrace

142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 160 James Street South, Hamilton

Context

Built between 1854 and 1860, the ten-unit stepped stone terrace extending along the west side of James Street South between Bold and Duke is a landmark and major anchor block in the James South heritage streetscape. Today, this long stone terrace dominates a row of historic buildings just south of the railway underpass; opposite, on the east side of James, the 19th and early 20th century buildings have been largely displaced by office towers.

Since Hamilton's early development, James Street has been a principal thoroughfare providing a vital transportation link between the waterfront and escarpment to the south. With the southward urban growth beginning in the 1850s, James Street South evolved as part of the city's most desirable residential area, noteworthy for its prestigious stone mansions and terraces, and later large Victorian homes. The first dramatic changes to the streetscape took place in the 1930s with two major construction projects: the TH&B railway underpass, which disrupted the visual continuity of James Street South, and the imposing eight-storey Medical Arts Building, a precursor of the modern high-rise development now scattered along its length. Less intrusive changes have resulted from the progressive conversion of single-family and row houses to commercial use: notably, the introduction of business signage and alterations to lower street facades.

History

Built for three separate owners: merchant John Mackenzie (#142-144), contractor George Murison (#146-154), and manufacturer Alexander Gordon (#156-160), all ten units were originally rented as single-family dwellings to prominent businessmen and professionals. After 1900, an increasing number of doctors and dentists took up residence and opened home practices in the terrace, a reflection of the growing concentration of medical practitioners in the immediate area. Since the 1950s the terrace has served a mixed commercial/residential use accommodating a variety of stores, galleries, restaurants, professional offices, and upper floor apartments.

Of particular interest is George Murison's association with the stone terrace: he was a well-respected contractor appointed in 1858 as builder of the Custom House and also played an active role in local politics, serving as a city councillor from 1856 to 1871, with one year as mayor in 1870. Another prominent Hamiltonian, Samuel Mills, owned the Gordon buildings in the 1860s. A highly successful businessman, who eventually became known as "one of the three wealthiest men in Hamilton", Mills also gained political recognition when appointed a life member of the Legislative Council of the Province of Canada in 1847 and a senator in the year of Confederation.

Architecture

The stone terrace on James Street South is one of few surviving pre-Confederation rowhouses in Hamilton. While the rowhouse was a common building type in the city, relatively few were built of stone; and of these early stone terraces dating from the 1850s and 60s, a number of fine examples have been lost (notably, Palmerston Terrace on Jackson Street West). In the area south of Main Street (known today as the Durand Neighbourhood) where the concentration of stone terraces was greatest, only four are still standing - Sandyford Place on Duke Street, Herkimer Terrace, 122-126 MacNab Street South, and the James South terrace.

The James South Stone Terrace is distinguished by its unrivalled length, the forceful simplicity of its design, and its finely crafted limestone ashlar facade. Erected by skilled immigrant masons using stone quarried locally from the escarpment, this terrace displays the high quality of design and workmanship that characterized Hamilton's early stone architecture. Although built in blocks for three different owners on a sloping site, the overall row possesses a homogeneous character achieved through the consistent use of limestone, uniform set-back and standard rowhouse format. Subtle distinctions were, however, created by varying the proportions and detailing of the three blocks. The two MacKenzie units feature two-storey pilasters and a horizontal string course between the first and second storey; the Murison Block is distinguished by its taller second-storey proportions and bracketed eaves; while the three Gordon units are narrower and, unlike the other ones, their entrances are located in the north bay.

On the whole, the terrace has survived remarkably well: the addition of dormers and one mansard roof (#158) as well as alterations to entrance doorways, stairways, and windows have not seriously undermined its original appearance. The only major change has been the replacement of the first storey stone facade at #156 by a projecting brick addition with a modern glazed storefront.

Designated Features

Important to the preservation of the James South Stone Terrace are the original features of the east (front) facades and north end wall, including: the limestone masonry walls and parapets; the cut stone sills, lintels, string courses, and pilasters; the original doorways and windows; and the bracketed eaves and other original details. Excluded are: the projecting store front added to #156; the various dormer additions; and the modern entrance porches, stairways, windows and doors.