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THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF LONDON



DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY CLERK
K W SADLER CITY CLERK

Nanay S
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
DEC 16 1992
HERITAGE POLICY BRANCH


REGISTERED

December 8, 1992

Ontario Heritage Foundation
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 1J3

Re: Designation of 329 St. George Street
The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.18

Please find enclosed, a certified copy of By-law No. L.S.P.-3149-194, entitled "A by-law to designate the property at 329 St. George Street to be of historical and architectural value", passed by the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the City of London on July 6, 1992 and registered as Instrument No. 289312 on December 4, 1992.


R. J. Tolmie
Assistant City Clerk

/ss

Enc.

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By-law No. L.S.P.-3149-194

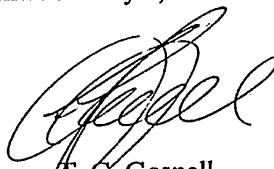
A by-law to designate the property at 329 St. George Street (Thornwood) to be of historical and architectural value.

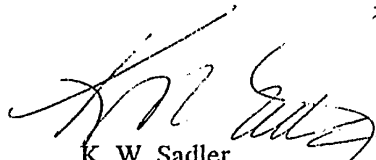
WHEREAS pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.18, the Council of a municipality may by by-law designate a property including buildings and structures thereon to be of historic or architectural value or interest;

The Municipal Council of The Corporation of the City of London enacts as follows:

1. There is designated as being of historical and architectural value or interest, the real property at 329 St. George Street, more particularly described in Schedule "A" hereto, for the reasons set out in Schedule "B" hereto.
2. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered upon the title to the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in the London Free Press, and to enter the description of the aforesaid property, the name and address of its registered owner, and short reasons for its designation in the Register of all properties designated under The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990.
4. This by-law comes into force on the day it is passed.

PASSED in Open Council on July 6, 1992.

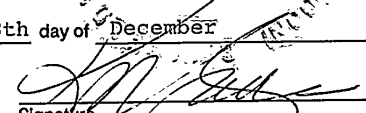

T. C. Gosnell
Mayor


K. W. Sadler
City Clerk

First reading - July 6, 1992
Second reading - July 6, 1992
Third reading - July 6, 1992



CITY OF LONDON BY-LAW CERTIFICATION RECORD

I, K. W. Sadler City Clerk
of the Corporation of the City of London, hereby certify that the By-law hereunder is a true
copy of By-law No. L.S.P.-3149-194
of the City of London, passed on July 6, 19 92.
DATED at London, Ontario this 8th day of December 19 92.

Signature

SCHEDULE "A"

To By-law No. L.S.P.-3149-194

Description for "envelope of area to be preserved around the buildings:

All of Lot 31 and Part of Lots 30 and 32 west of Saint George Street and part of Great Talbot Street (closed by by-law cited in Instrument 14845) on Crown Plan 30 in the City of London and County of Middlesex designated as Part 6 on Reference Plan 33R-10720.

Description for "vista":

Part of Lots 29 and 30 west of Saint George Street and part of Great Talbot Street (closed by by-law cited in Instrument 14845) on Crown Plan 30 in the City of London and County of Middlesex designated as Parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 on Reference Plan 33R-10720.

SCHEDULE "B"

To By-law No. L.S.P.-3149-194

329 ST. GEORGE STREET (Thornwood)

Historical Reasons

The Thornwood property has been associated with the Becher family for over 140 years and particularly the family's most prominent member - Henry Corry Rowley Becher (1817-1885). Becher was born in England and was from a well connected family. He moved to Canada in 1835 and became good friends with the Harris family. Becher received a letter of thanks from Queen Victoria for his report of the Rebellion of 1837, which was the first the British Government received. Becher was a lawyer and an active political campaigner.

Becher knew many of the major political and literary figures of his time, and Thornwood was a focal point for London's busy social life. Some of the important people who have visited Thornwood in the course of its history include Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Robert Borden, The Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), Winston Churchill, Sir Casimir Gzowski, and several Fathers of Confederation and Governors-General.

Architectural Reasons

Becher built a house on the site of Thornwood in 1845. The main portion of the present house, the southwestern block dates from 1852, after the first building had been destroyed by fire. It is a very significant building in architectural terms, not only because it is the last of the nineteenth century estate houses remaining in north London, but also because its treatment of the contemporary Gothic Revival style is unusually sophisticated and interesting. It combines such late Gothic details as Tudor labels and decorated bargeboards with the functionalism of an asymmetrical plan.

Thornwood is a two and a half story, 28 room, white brick house. The principal façade faces south and is distinguished by a full height gabled entrance bay surmounted with a drop pinnacle bracketed to the eaves. The entrance bay includes a second story window with an inset wood carving incorporated into the window surround. The front entrance includes a carved wooden door with Gothic detailing, two sidelights with carved wooden panels at the bottom, three lights above in a lancet pattern, and a rectangular transom with carved wood and glazing inset in a gothic arch with carved moulded surround.

Thornwood has several interesting architectural attributes. One of Thornwood's most attractive architectural elements is the verandah. It was constructed in 1856 and wraps around the south and west sides of the house. It is composed of chamfered porch supports connected with Tudor arches with pendant attachments. All windows of the original building have wide moulded wood labels, segmental arch upper lights and moulded sills. The original house also has ornamental brick coursing above the roof of the verandah. The house is also characterized by five chimneys, an irregular roofline and a fieldstone foundation.

Two major additions to Thornwood, to the east and north of the original block, date in part from the late nineteenth century. An effort was made to render the additions complementary by repeating certain details, such as the drop pinnacles and the decorative bargeboards of the gables. The east end of the house has two additions. The larger addition is a three sided two storey bay facing south, with gable with drop pinnacle and brick ornamented roundel. Windows in bay have wooden sills, segmental arch shape with brick voussoirs. This addition is further characterized by an asymmetrical gable end with drop pinnacle and gingerbread trim. Also there is a small one storey addition further east with a door to the right side with classical moulding and a three light transom. The north addition has a projecting rectangular two and a half storey bay with gable and second storey window with brick voussoirs and segmental arch upper lights. The west side of the house is a three sided bay which forms the corner of the building. The bay is gabled with drop pinnacle. First storey double glazed windows reach to the floor.

Coach House

The coach house also complements the original house by imitating its Gothic Revival style, and by using similar details to create a particularly picturesque architectural composition. The Coach House has a steeply pitched central gable with wooden fretwork trim projecting over a rectangular bay. Gothic arch windows are on both storeys of bay with brick voussoirs and wood sills. Right side of front façade has a large Tudor window, probably the original coach entrance, with brick voussoirs. The entrance door to the left of the bay has a Tudor arch with brick voussoirs. Both east and west façade gables have fretwork.

Contextual Reasons

The grounds surrounding Thornwood are of contextual importance. The architecture and siting of structures on the site largely provide the rationale for the property's significance.

Thornwood's architecture emerged from several ideas that were important in 19th century Gothic Revival architecture. The first is the significance of the picturesque. The second relates to the importance of functionalism. An objective of the picturesque is to place buildings into a landscape composition as in a picture. In the picturesque approach buildings are deliberately placed in a natural and organic relationship with the untamed terrain. Thornwood is almost unique in Ontario in the extent to which its site and design implement the concepts of the picturesque. The land around the building assumes, in this context, a significance as do the views and vistas to and from the building, particularly those to the west and southwest. Thornwood is carefully situated looking down towards London and close to the edge of the bank, looking over what was then the river and Becher's Island. The big bay window in the drawing room overlooked the landscape to the west and the other rooms were designed deliberately with the principal views in mind. Thornwood, in its plan and siting, demonstrates the principles of picturesqueness and functionalism and puts them into effect. The house design is site specific.

The envelope of area to be preserved around the building includes the tableland, the area beyond the tableland within at least 75 feet of the house and such land as necessary to provide a vista from the south and west of the house to the south and southwest down to the park and up to the house from the park which was the old approach from the river and Becher's Island. (See Appendix 1 - attached)

The site includes many healthy mature trees of various species as well as garden remnants. A birch tree is reputed to have been planted by Sir Winston Churchill. The trees are perhaps the most impressive feature of the site for passersby on St. George Street.