

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

70 FRANCIS STREET NORTH



Summary of Significance

- ☒ Design/Physical Value
- ☒ Historical Value
- ☒ Contextual Value

- ☐ Social Value
- ☐ Economic Value
- ☐ Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 70 Francis Street North

Legal Description: Plan 374 Part Lot 125 & 126

Year Built: c. 1898

Architectural Style: Queen Anne

Original Owner: Albert Ruby

Original Use: Residential

Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

70 Francis Street North is a two-and-one-half storey late 19th century brick house built in the Queen Anne architectural style. The residence is situated on a 0.24 acre parcel of land located on the north side of Francis Street North between Duke Street West and Water Street North in the City

Commercial Core Planning Community of the City of Kitchener within the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the house.

Heritage Value

70 Francis Street North is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

Design/Physical Value

The building at 70 Francis Street North has design and physical value, being a representative example of a late-19th century residential dwelling constructed in the Queen Anne Revival architectural style. It utilizes a mix of materials in its design, including buff brick – now dark and weathered in appearance – cedar shake along the gables and turret, and black asphalt shingles.

Front South Façade

The building is asymmetrical in its massing, with projecting bay windows to the left and an octagonal turret with an eight-sided conical roof to the right. The projecting bay has a gambrel roofline, and the rest of the roof is steeply pitched. Frieze board decorated with a foliated scroll wraps around the turret, while frieze board with a simpler dentil pattern is present along the rest of the second-storey roofline. Fan brackets with ornamental pendants are also present at the corners of the projecting bays.

A porch spans the full width of the front, and its roof is supported by six square posts. The main entrance is in the centre of the front façade. The door has a large centre window and 12 raised panel detailing. There is a transom and sidelights surrounding the door. The windows on the front are mostly rectangular in shape and are a mix of casement, single-hung, and double-hung. The windows located on either the turret or the gables have soldier course heading and either concrete or stone sills. There are two windows on the first floor that have semi-circular stained and leaded glass transoms with radiating voussoirs and molded brick trim.

West Side Façade

The west side façade maintains the asymmetrical massing. There is a two-storey bay with three windows on each storey to the left, and a brick chimney flue and chimney to the right. The windows are single hung with soldier course heading and stone or concrete sills. A portion of the rock-faced stone foundation is visible on this side of the structure. Modern additions including cables and gas-metres are also visible.

East Side Façade

The east side façade possesses an asymmetrical massing. The octagonal turret which forms part of the front façade also forms the left side of the east façade. To the right, there is a two-storey protruding section with gabled roof, clad in wood siding. The windows on this section are casement. There is also a semi-circular window with a radiating voussoir and brick sill on the ground floor.

Historical Value

The property has associative value due to the original ownership of the home and historical value in relation to economic development within the City. The residential dwelling was built for Albert Ruby, a prominent citizen and life-long resident of Berlin (now Kitchener) and a major contributor to the furniture industry within the area. The property itself was obtained by Nelson Ruby, Albert Ruby's father, in 1881, with the house constructed by Albert Ruby in 1898. It remained in the Ruby family until 1966.

H. Krug Furniture Company was established in the 1880's by Albert Ruby in partnership with Hartman Krug. The Rub-Krug business relationship lasted many years, and their connection developed further when Albert Ruby and Hartman Krug later married sisters Frances Dunn and Mary Ann Dunn and became brothers-in-law. Albert Ruby acted as the First Secretary Treasurer of Krug Furniture Co. until his death in 1932 at the age of 66. The position was then superseded by his son Leonard W. Ruby, who later became the Vice-President of the company in 1954, the President in 1962, and Chairman to the company in 1971. The Ruby family still retains a prominent presence and remains actively involved with Krug Furniture, with Len Ruby being the President of the company as of 2023.

The establishment of Krug Furniture was instrumental to the growth and development of the City and its economy. In the early 1900's the company was reputed to be the largest furniture plant in the British Empire, and consequently by 1920 the Town of Berlin emerged as the furniture capital of Canada. Major furniture shows were hosted within the City and buyers would travel across the country to Berlin in order to view new trends. Krug Furniture continues to be a leader in the design and manufacturing of furniture solutions, specifically now for offices and healthcare, and it remains one of the oldest businesses still operating in Kitchener.

Contextual Value

The contextual value of 70 Francis Street North relates to the physical, historical, and visual links to the surrounding area. The building is in its original location along Francis Street North and is surrounded by other historic buildings. This includes 64 Water Street to the south (the First Church of Christ Scientist), 97 Victoria Street North to the north, and 42 Francis Street North further to the west. Though the house is now used as an office space, it continues to contribute to the continuity and character of the Francis Street North streetscape. Further, it is historically linked to the Krug Furniture factory located in proximity at 111 Ahrens Street West/135 Breithaupt Street.

Heritage Attributes

- All elements related to the construction and Queen Anne architectural style of the building, including:
 - irregular building plan;
 - buff brick laid in a common bond;
 - rock-faced stone foundation;
 - Projecting two storey bay on south elevation with gambrel roof;
 - modified gable roof;
 - octagonal tower with an eight-sided conical roof;
 - plain fascia, moulded soffit, and frieze with dentils and mouldings;
 - windows and window openings, such as the 1/1 windows with flat rusticated lintels, the large first floor windows with half-round transoms, the 1/1 round topped windows with decorative surrounds and keystone, the three part oriel window; the three section window with a two section elliptical-arch transom and brick label and, the two storey bay window with a bracketed pediment gable above;
 - main entrance door with single light, sidelights and transom with beveled glass; and,
 - verandah.

Photographs



Front Elevation (South Façade)



Side Elevation (East Façade)



Side Elevation (West Façade)



Decorative Frieze on Tower



First floor window with stained-glass half-round transom and voussoir