

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

241-247 Duke Street West / 55 Victoria Street North



Summary of Significance

Design/Physical Value

Historical Value

Contextual Value

Social Value

Economic Value

Environmental Value

Municipal Address: 241-247 Duke Street West/55 Victoria Street North Kitchener

Legal Description: Plan 374, Lot 63 & 64

Year Built ca. 1913, addition after 1925

Architectural Style: Vernacular Industrial

Original Owner: John Sloan

Original Use: Commercial/Industrial (Wholesale Grocer)

Other Owner: Robert Bergen

Other Use: Commercial/Industrial (Electrician)

Condition: Good

Description of Cultural Heritage Resource

241-247 Duke Street West/55 Victoria Street North is an early 20th century commercial building situated on a 0.48 acre parcel of land. The property is located on the south west corner of Duke Street West and Victoria Street North in the Warehouse District Cultural Heritage Landscape of the City of Kitchener within the Region of Waterloo. The principal resource that contributes to the heritage value is the commercial building.

Heritage Value

241-247 Duke Street West (formerly 21 Edward Street) / 55 Victoria Street North is recognized for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values.

Design/Physical Value

The design/physical value relates to the building as a representative example of early 20th century Vernacular Industrial architecture in Berlin (now Kitchener). The original 1913 portion of the building features elements characteristic of early Vernacular Industrial architecture including a flat roof, buff (yellow) brick (painted c. 2019), a regular arrangement of windows and minimal ornamentation. Decorative features include a horizontal brick band under the cornice and above the foundation, dentils under the cornice band and brick pilasters that separate the door and window openings. An addition constructed after 1925 on the east side of the building replicates the mass, setback, roofline, and pilasters of the original building.

Historical/Associative Value

The historical/associative value of the building reflects the work of an architect, Charles Knechtel (1869-1951), who was significant to Berlin. Charles was the son of Jonas Knechtel whom he acquired most of his building and design knowledge from between 1886 and 1894 (Hill, 2022). He opened his own business in 1895 and operated until 1930 (Hill, 2022). Over 100 buildings were designed by him, including churches, commercial blocks, factories, homes, schools, etc. (Hill, 2022). In 1913, he built a large warehouse on Victoria Street for John Sloan and Co. (Hill, 2022). Other notable buildings he designed include: First Church of Christ Scientist, Victoria Park Pavillion, Berlin Carnegie Library, Hymmen Hardware Co. Ltd., and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church rectory (Hill, 2022).

The historical/associative value of the property relates to its connection to commercial development in the City during the early part of the 20th century. The building was first occupied in 1913 by John Sloan and Co., a wholesale grocer, and one of only two such wholesale companies in Berlin at that time (Canadian Grocer, 1913; Vernon's Directory, 1918). The location was important given its proximity to the railway spur line that ran along Victoria Street North and enabled easy transport of produce to the warehouse. John Sloan and Co. was a Toronto company that operated several wholesale grocery outlets throughout Ontario in the early 1900s. Victor Sloan, a son of John Sloan, was a resident of the City of Kitchener and served as office manager and later accountant of the wholesale business. In 1920, John Sloan and Co. purchased its sole local wholesale competitor, the Randall and Roos Wholesale Grocer and Liquor Warehouse (est. 1884). Later that same year John Sloan and Co. was purchased by National Grocers Ltd. By 1950, National Grocers had moved to a new property and was later consolidated with Loblaws Companies Ltd, the largest food retailer in Canada.

The historical/associative value of the property also relates to the connection of building to well-known local electrical and lighting company called Bergen Electric Ltd and its owner Robert William Bergen (b. 4 December 1900; d. 22 May 1993) (Bonk, 2025). Robert Bergen was an electrician who owned and operated several electrical contracting companies from 1921, including the RW Bierwagon Electric Company, the Mattell & Bierwagen Electric Company and the Bergen Electric Company (The Bergen Group, 2013). Robert Bergen purchased 241-247 Duke Street West/55 Victoria Street North from the Sloan estate in 1950. He helped form the Ontario Electrical Contractors Association and encouraged local farmers to use hydro instead of coal oil at their farms (Bergen Group, 2025).

Contextual Value

The contextual value relates to the building's role in maintaining and supporting the character of the Warehouse District Cultural Heritage Landscape (WDCHL) identified in Kitchener's Cultural Heritage Landscape Study (2015). The WDCHL, which roughly encompasses the complex of industrial buildings concentrated along the Canadian National Railway (formerly Grand Trunk Railway) and the railway line itself, was the site of the majority of the City's economic development during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Heritage attributes include a quantity of multi-storey, brick buildings in a Vernacular Industrial style with small setbacks from the street and the rail line (Landplan Collaborative, 2012). The building at 241-247 Duke Street West/55 Victoria Street North supports these heritage values and attributes through its height, mass, setback, Vernacular Industrial architectural style, and original use as a warehouse. The building is historically linked to the Canadian National Railway, which delivered produce and goods via a spur line which permitted freight cars to pull up directly alongside the Victoria Street North elevation of the building (Underwriters Survey Bureau, 1925; Fear, 2011).

Heritage Attributes

The heritage value of 241-247 Duke Street West/55 Victoria Street North resides in the following heritage attributes:

- All elements related to the construction and Industrial Vernacular architectural style of the building, including:
 - roof and roofline, including the flat roof;
 - door openings;
 - window openings, including concrete headers and sills;
 - yellow brick construction (painted c. 2019);
 - concrete foundation;
 - parapets between windows;
 - shallow horizontal brick banding under cornice and above foundation; and,
 - dental brick work under brick banding.

- All elements related to the contextual value of the building, including:
 - height, mass and set back.

References

Bergen Group. (2025). Our History. Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <http://www.bergengroup.ca/history>.

The Bergen Group. (2013). *About us*. Retrieved March 1, 2013, from <http://www.bergengroup.ca/about-us>.

Bonk, D. (2025). *Robert William Bergen: Waterloo Region Generations*. Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <https://generations.regionofwaterloo.ca/getperson.php?personID=I29249&tree=generations>

Canadian Grocer. (1913, January-March). Volume 27, Issue 1-13.

Canadian Grocer. (1920, April-June). Volume 34, Issue 14-26.

Envision Consulting Group and Scheinman, Andre. (2006). *Cultural Heritage Landscapes in Waterloo Region: A Framework for Inventory, Assessment and Policy Development*. Kitchener, Ontario.

Fear, J. (2011, November 4). Flash from the Past: Some Kitchener streets were once paved with wood. *Waterloo Region Record*. Retrieved March 1, 2013 from: <http://www.therecord.com/living/article/620193--flash-from-the-past-some-kitchener-streets-were-once-paved-with-wood>.

Hill, R. G. (2022). *Charles Knechtel: Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800-1950*. Retrieved February 3, 2025 from: <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/223>.

The Landplan Collaborative Ltd. with John MacDonald Architect Inc. (2012). *Heritage Study and Heritage Impact Assessment: Proposed Region of Waterloo Multimodal Hub 16 Victoria Street North, 50 & 60 Victoria Street North, and 520 & 510 King Street West*. Kitchener, Ontario.

Underwriters Survey Bureau Ltd. (1908 revised and reprinted March 1925). *Kitchener Fire Insurance Maps*. Toronto.

Photographs



Front Elevation (North Façade): 241-247 Duke Street West / 55 Victoria Street North (Google, 2024)



Rear Elevation (South Façade): 241-247 Duke Street West / 55 Victoria Street North
(Google, 2024)



Side Elevation (East Façade): 241-247 Duke Street West / 55 Victoria Street North
(Google, 2024)



Side Elevation (West Façade): 241-247 Duke Street West / 55 Victoria Street North (Google, 2024)



241-247 Duke Street West / 55 Victoria Street North (Canadian Grocer, April-June 1920)



CULTURAL HERITAGE EVALUATION FORM

Address: 241-247 Duke St. W. / 55 Victoria St. N. Recorder: Michelle Drake

Description: Vernacular Industrial style Date: January 31, 2025

(date of construction, architectural style, etc)

Photographs Attached:

Front Facade Left Façade Right Façade Rear Facade Details Setting

Designation Criteria	Recorder – Heritage Kitchener Committee	Heritage Planning Staff
1. This property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement. <i>* E.g. - constructed with a unique material</i>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

<p><i>combination or use, incorporates challenging geometric designs etc.</i></p>		
<p>4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.</p> <p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5. The property has historical or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.</p> <p><i>* E.g - A commercial building may provide an understanding of how the economic development of the City occurred. Additional archival work may be required.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.</p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

<p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p>		
<p>7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.</p> <p><i>* E.g. - It helps to define an entrance point to a neighbourhood or helps establish the (historic) rural character of an area.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.</p> <p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.</p> <p><i>*within the region, city or neighborhood.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Notes

Additional Criteria	Recorder	Heritage Kitchener Committee
<p>Interior: Is the interior arrangement, finish,</p>	<p>N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

craftsmanship and/or detail noteworthy?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Completeness: Does this structure have other original outbuildings, notable landscaping or external features that complete the site?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Site Integrity: Does the structure occupy its original site? <i>* If relocated, is it relocated on its original site, moved from another site, etc.</i>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alterations: Does this building retain most of its original materials and design features? Please refer to the list of heritage attributes within the Statement of Significance and indicate which elements are still existing and which ones have been removed.	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Alterations: Are there additional elements or features that should be added to the heritage attribute list?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
Condition: Is the building in good condition? <i>*E.g. - Could be a good candidate for adaptive re-use if possible and contribute towards equity-building and climate change action.</i>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Indigenous History: Could this site be of importance to Indigenous heritage and history?	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required

<p><i>*E.g. - Site within 300m of water sources, near distinct topographical land, or near cemeteries might have archaeological potential and indigenous heritage potential.</i></p> <p>Could there be any urban Indigenous history associated with the property?</p> <p><i>* Additional archival work may be required.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p>
<p>Function: What is the present function of the subject property?</p> <p><i>* Other may include vacant, social, institutional, etc. and important for the community from an equity building perspective.</i></p>	<p>Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Commercial <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Office <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> - _____</p>	<p>Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Office <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> - _____</p>
<p>Diversity and Inclusion:</p> <p>Does the subject property contribute to the cultural heritage of a community of people?</p> <p>Does the subject property have intangible value to a specific community of people?</p> <p><i>* E.g.- Waterloo Masjid (Muslim Society of Waterloo & Wellington Counties) was the first established Islamic Center and Masjid in the Region and contributes to the history of the Muslim community in the area.</i></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p> <p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Additional Research Required</p>

Notes about Additional Criteria Examined



Recommendation

Does this property meet the definition of a significant built heritage resource, and should it be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act? (Does it meet two or more of the designation criteria?)

N/A Unknown No Yes

If not, please select the appropriate action for follow-up

- Keep on the Municipal Heritage Register
- Remove from the Municipal Heritage Register
- Additional Research Required

Other: _____

General / Additional Notes

TO BE FILLED BY HERITAGE PLANNING STAFF:

Date of Property Owner Notification: _____