

Appendix A – Report IPGPL25-053

Heritage Designation Brief



362-366 George Street North

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

2025

Heritage Designation Status Sheet

Street Address: 362-366 George Street North

Roll Number: 040100063000000

Short Legal Description: LT O PL 100 TOWN OF
PETERBOROUGH ; PETERBOROUGH
CITY

PACAC Application Review Date: September 8, 2025

Heritage Type: Built Structure

Designation Type: Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV

Designation Brief Completed Date: July 2025

Designation Brief Completed by: Emily Hamilton

Comments:

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The subject property has been researched and evaluated to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990 (the Act). A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets **any two** of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. Staff have determined that 362-366 George Street North meets criteria and has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the Act.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it:

- a. is a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method:**

362-366 George Street North is an excellent example of commercial Italianate style architecture.

- b. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:**

The property displays a high degree of craftsmanship in the decorative elements and the use of both buff and red brick to provide accents to the building. In addition, the building is curved along the corner which adds to the craftsmanship.

- c. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:**

The property does not demonstrate a high degree technical or scientific achievement.

2. The property has historical value or associative value because it:

- a. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community:**

362-366 George Street is directly associated with George A. Cox who was a prominent businessman in Peterborough and Senator, being one of his early purchases into the real estate market. In addition, 362-366 George Street North is also associated with prominent businesspeople such as James T. Stenson, Harry G. Silver and Louis Loftus.

- b. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:**

This property has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the local business culture of Peterborough

c. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to the community:

The building does not demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community.

3. The property has contextual value because it:

a. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of the area:

This property is important in maintaining and supporting the character of the George Street North in the downtown core. Being the beginning of a row of Italianate buildings, it contributes to the historic charm of George Street North.

b. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings:

362-366 George Street North is visually and functionally and historically linked to its surroundings. As a building consisting of three store fronts from at least 1865, 362-366 George Street North is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as a commercial building. It is visually linked to its surroundings as a historic commercial building that is surrounded by similar historic commercial buildings on the east side of George Street.

c. is a landmark:

This property is a landmark in Peterborough's downtown core as it occupies a prominent location at the corner of George and Simcoe Streets. It is also the only corner historical building on the East side of George Street at the intersection of George and Simcoe Streets.

Design and Physical Value

362-366 George Street North has design and physical value as a historic commercial building in Peterborough's downtown core. It was constructed circa 1865 after a fire on August 11, 1861, destroyed the block bordered by George, Simcoe, Water and Hunter Streets. It is of the Italianate style, a popular choice for commercial buildings. It displays several characteristics of this style including, symmetrical round headed windows and decorative brickwork.

The Italianate style was one of several historicist architectural styles which emerged in the early eighteenth century in the United Kingdom that drew on sixteenth century Italian Renaissance architecture. The style was originally inspired by the design of Tuscan country villas and details like the campanili – square, hip roofed towers that often-overlooked Italian village squares or piazzas. Architect Charles Barry popularized the style in the 1830s using the Italianate design vocabulary in the design of a variety of public buildings. The Italianate style came to North America in the late 1840s where architects like Alexander Jackson Davis produced pattern books of Italianate and Gothic Revival designs for domestic architecture. The style first appeared in Ontario in the 1860s. It arrived in more remote urban centres in the 1870s and continued to be popular until the 1890s. It became widely popular for a choice of domestic architecture at the beginning of the 1860s partly because of its adaptability. The catalogue of design elements could be incorporated into buildings of all sizes and types. In addition, with no rigid historical antecedents to follow, as the Georgian and Neoclassical styles required, architects were afforded more creativity and adaptability. By the end of its popularity at the close of the nineteenth century, a "pure" Italianate design would be an unusual building in most urban centres.

A main aspect of the Italianate style is that while it is not ornate, it is highly decorated. One defining feature that became ubiquitous are paired eave brackets. Other common features include tall, narrow windows, arched windows, paired windows, quoins, overhanging eaves, and cupolas.

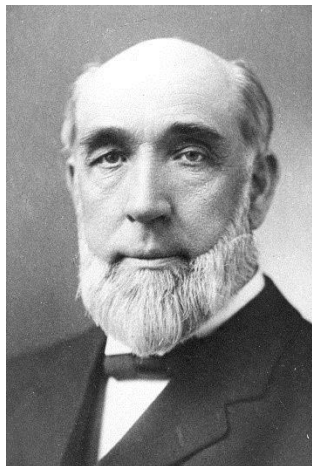
362-366 George Street North demonstrates several key features of the Italianate style including a decorative cornice, brackets, decorative brickwork and rounded windows. The pilasters provide a sense of symmetry which is also a feature of the Italianate style.

Historical and Associative Value

362-366 George Street North has strong historical value through its direct associations with notable figures and businesses in Peterborough's local history. It is representative of the development and growth of the commercial downtown core of Peterborough.

The buildings on the block bordered by George, Simcoe, Water and Hunter Streets were originally of wood construction. A devastating fire on August 11, 1861, destroyed almost all the buildings on the block, save for Nicholls and Hall's new brick store. 30 businesses were lost. Thanks to the town's thriving lumber industry, the block was rebuilt with the new buildings being taller and more impressive than the previous ones.

362-366 George Street North was built around 1865 in the aftermath of the 1861 fire. It was built by George A. Cox, a prominent member of Peterborough's business community. This building was one of Cox's earliest commercial properties in Peterborough. He would go on to own 10 per cent of the town's real estate, including landmark properties such as Cox Terrace and the Commerce Building.



Born in 1840 in Colborne, Upper Canada, George Albertus Cox would become one of the wealthiest financiers in Canada as founder, president, vice president or director of several corporations, both in Canada and abroad. In 1856, having completed grammar school he became an operator for the Montreal Telegraph Company and within two years was made the company's Peterborough agent. An ambitious entrepreneur, Cox began building a commercial presence in Peterborough serving as a travel and express agent and in 1861 becoming an agent for the Canada Life Assurance Company.

His financial ambitions made him a central figure in the architectural, industrial and financial growth of the town to the extent that Peterborough was referred to, somewhat derisively, as 'Coxtown'. He financed the construction of numerous commercial and residential buildings and championed the establishment of the Edison Electric Company (later Canadian General Electric) in Peterborough. In 1878, he rescued the Midland Railway from bankruptcy and following its reorganization leased the system to the Grand Trunk Railway, markedly improving rail access to Peterborough. In 1884, Cox founded the Central Canada Loan and Savings Company and by end of the century had developed a tightly interwoven network of companies that included the fire-insurance companies British America Assurance and Western Assurance, Imperial Life Assurance, National Trust, Dominion Securities, Manufacturers' Life and the Temperance and General Life Assurance Company. As part of a group of investors he was part owner of the Toronto Globe and purchased the Toronto Evening Star in 1899.

Cox's investment companies also supported numerous business ventures underwriting the Toronto Railway Company and street railways across Canada, the Canadian Northern Railway, the transcontinental railroad, automobile manufacturing and mining. Investment abroad included Brazil's São Paulo Tramway, Light and Power Company which would become South America's largest utility company.

Outside of his business and investment ventures, he was a dedicated benefactor, he was president of the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby, bursar of Victoria College, University of Toronto, a generous supporter of the Toronto General Hospital, and other worthy causes. Locally, he and his wife Margaret, donated Hazelbrae to be Dr. Barnardo's Peterborough home for British home children. Cox also had a political career; between 1872 and 1886 he served seven one-year terms as mayor of Peterborough. A lifelong Liberal, Cox ran unsuccessfully twice in the riding of Peterborough West. In 1896, Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier appointed Cox to the Senate. In 1990, Cox was declared a Person of National Historic Significance.

One of the early and most prominent vendors of 362 George Street North were the chemists Charles Ormond and William Walsh. Ormond and Walsh began trading in 362 George Street North. Charles Ormond was a successful chemist with a previous business partner, John Gilmour Jr., at 402 George Street North. When the partnership between Ormond and Gilmour dissolved on January 1, 1868, he joined with William Walsh who was his nephew by marriage. Ormond and Walsh opened their new drug store in January 1868 at 362 George Street North. Outside of being a chemist, Ormond was very involved with the community. He was a town councillor in 1863, 1865 and 1866. He was a founding member of the Peterborough Protestant Home, helping to secure its purchase and he was a member of the Little Lake Cemetery Company. He married Sarah Howden and together they had two children. He died on June 25, 1886.

After his business partner died, William Walsh carried on the business without changing the name. Walsh led a quiet life both before and after Ormond died. He was a member of the Dickson Lumber Company and the Electric Light Company. He married Ellen Dickson, the fourth daughter of lumber baron Samuel Dickson, in 1871. They lived at 512 Dickson Street. He died on June 12, 1897, after a long illness. They had no children.

A prominent vendor at 364 George Street North was James T. Stenson. Stenson was a shoemaker and lived at 349 Reid Street. He and his wife Jane had nine children. Two of his sons, Fredrick and Herbert, took up the shoemaking trade from their father and worked with him at 364 George Street. The business name changed from officially to J. T. Stenson & Sons by the publication of the 1909 City Directory. He died on March 28, 1910, at his Reid Street home.

After Stenson's death, his sons Fredrick and Herbert carried on the business keeping the J. T. Stenson & Sons name. Fredrick died on September 27, 1935, after a lengthy illness which left Herbert to run the store alone. Herbert decided to sell the store to Ben Chesler in January 1944 due to his failing health. At the time it was sold to Chesler, the Stenson family had been connected to the shoe making business for over one hundred years.

After Chesler, this address became the longtime location of Harry G. Silver Shoes. Harry G. Silver Shoes operated out of this address from 1955-1990. It, along with Loftus Ladies Wear at 366 George, was one of many Jewish owned businesses on this stretch of George Street.



366 George Street North has also had a number of prominent tenants. An early one being William E. Lech. William E. Lech was the son of William A. Lech, a Prussian immigrant who opened and operated William Lech & Sons furriers at 413 George Street North. William E. Lech entered into the family business in the late nineteenth century, learning from his father. Upon his father's death in 1903, Lech took up the family business with one of his

nephews Keith Lech. In 1909, Lech decided to split from William Lech & Sons and venture out on his own. The partnership was dissolved on April 14, 1909, and Lech opened his new business on September 17, 1909. The opening of his store was featured in *The Peterborough Examiner*, which detailed the interior as having a separate area for hats and furs along with a fitting department that had mirrors where one could be seen from every angle. In 1910, he installed a hat conformer that would measure the size of a person's head to ensure the correct fit.

Another prominent tenant of 366 George Street North was Louis Loftus and his wife Bessie. Louis opened Loftus Ladies Wear in 1924. He married Bessie in 1927 at a synagogue in Toronto. Together they had one son, Barney, born in 1928. Loftus became involved in Peterborough's sporting world, mainly in lawn bowling. During World War II, he contributed to the war effort by sponsoring several campaigns to get supplies to Europe. Meanwhile, Bessie was making her own contribution to the war effort through her work with the Peterborough chapter of Hadassah, a Jewish volunteer women's organization. The organization knit and quilted objects to donate to the Red Cross in aid of the war effort. Loftus Ladies Wear closed in 1954 upon Louis Loftus's retirement. After Loftus, it was the longtime home of Rogow's Ladies' Wear from 1959-1990.

All these prominent tenants of 362-366 George Street provide a glimpse into the commercial sector of Peterborough. In addition, all the prominent tenants of 362-366 George Street North were all local businesses, which reflects much of the Peterborough downtown core today. Although several types of businesses have been represented at 362-366 George Street over the years, they have all contributed to the shape of the local commercial industry and the community of Peterborough as a whole.

Contextual Value

362-366 George Street North has contextual value by maintaining the character of the downtown area. Without 362-366 George Street, the downtown core would look vastly different as it would've lost a prominent anchor building of the downtown core. It is also the only historic commercial building on the east side of George Street North at the intersection with Simcoe Street. In addition, 362-366 George Street North is visually, historically and functionally linked to its surroundings. It is visually linked as it is one of several historic commercial buildings on the east side on George Street North between Hunter and Simcoe Street. It is functionally and historically linked as a commercial building with three store fronts that has been a commercial building since at least 1868. This pattern is similar throughout the downtown area as a similar building is located on the corner of Hunter and George Streets on the east side, only a block north. Without 362-366 George Street North, the downtown would be losing a prominent building that contributes to the character of the historic downtown.

"The short statement of reasons for designation, including a description of the heritage attributes along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief constitute the "Reasons for the Designation" required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Heritage Designation Brief is available for viewing in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours."

SHORT STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

362-366 George Street North has strong cultural heritage value as a historic commercial building in Peterborough's downtown core. It was built by George A. Cox circa 1865 and has been continuously occupied since 1868. Built in the Italianate style, 362-366 George Street has physical value as a corner commercial building that displays several key characteristics of its style, including rounded windows and a symmetrical façade. 362-366 George Street North has had several long-standing and prominent tenants including: pharmacists Charles Ormond and William Walsh, shoemaker James T. Stenson, furrier William E. Lech, and clothier Louis Loftus. 362-366 George Street North is an important corner anchor building on George Street in the downtown area. It is the only Victorian anchor building left at the intersection of George and Simcoe Streets. It is also visually, historically and functionally linked as a corner commercial building with store fronts.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES TO BE DESIGNATED

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations and the roof, including all facades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim. Together with the construction materials of brick and their related building techniques.

Exterior Elements:

- Three story buff brick construction
- Flat roof
- Cornice
- Brackets
- Pilasters
- Corbels
- Decorative brickwork
- Rounded third story windows
- Fenestration, ground floor storefronts
- Continuation of commercial row