

Draft Statement of Significance for 664 Dundas Street (Clay Arts Building)

Legal Description of Property

The property at 664 Dundas Street is a two-storey brick building with wood-framed facade clad with slate on its front second-storey facade. It has a pediment with an attic behind on the original section of the building and a flat roof behind. It is located within a larger building grouping with the municipal addresses 660-674 Dundas Street on the north side of Dundas Street, between Adelaide and Elizabeth streets registered on Plan 212, Block A, Part Lots 8 & 9 on Registered Plan 33R2836 in the City of London, County of Middlesex.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The property is architecturally important for its restored commercial façade contained within a larger grouping of commercial properties which once shared similar features. (Note: Some features still remain on the other buildings.) While many of the original architectural features have been lost over the years following its construction, the restoration of the façade of 664 Dundas Street to c. 1912 is a visible reminder of the former attractiveness of the block and the commercial architecture of the period.

Murray Anderson purchased half of the city block from Adelaide to Elizabeth Streets in 1851 and built his house there in 1854. He was the first mayor of the City of London in 1855.

664 Dundas is part of the third commercial block built on the north side of Dundas Street, east of Adelaide. First the Anderson Block: six storefronts on the southeast corner of Murray Anderson's large residential property. Next, the McCormick Block, c. 1890, consisting of eight storefronts. To the east, properties built by Charles W. Anderson, a chair-maker, on his large residential property: 660 in 1891; 662, 1892; 670, 1893; 672, 1892; and 664, 666, 668 added circa 1897.

The building was occupied by a number of businesses, reflecting the commercial evolution, not only of this specific property but also of the other structures which were located along the block. Today, its use as the London Clay Art Centre is noted for the adaptive repurposing of a heritage building.

The east portion of this block today remains as a landmark for the commercial district and its proximity to the designated residential Old East Heritage Conservation District remains an important contextual element.

The façade of 664 Dundas is incorporated into a pattern with repeating elements along the range of addresses from 660-674 Dundas. The pattern combines paired storefronts with a joint stairway between them to the west of the façade at 664 and two more paired storefronts to the east of 664 with the most easterly wrapping around the corner at Elizabeth Street. The façade at 664 is unique within the pattern in that it features a pediment above its cornice. Brick pilasters delineate the stairways and party walls along the range. Originally, the upper facades were all faced with slate tiles with decorative design elements and some, including 664, feature oriel windows.

Heritage Attributes

Features worthy of note and preservation on the façade of 664 Dundas include:

- Two storey, topped by a shallow pediment with attic behind
- Ground floor storefront restored to the c. 1912 era including wood kick panels below windows and store front door, large glass panes; transom pane above the door; all topped with a row of small brackets.
- Pilasters of white brick with red brick accents, flanking the doorway to stairway, transom, and second storey double-hung style window, corbelled at the top to form brackets with decorative inset panels on the top.
- Dichromatic voussoirs above both the west entrance door and window openings.
- The original entranceway to stairwell below a central rectangular glass pane surrounded by squared and rectangular panes typical of the Queen Anne style stained glass window.
- Second storey and pediment clad with grey fish-scale slates, patterned with smaller units in light grey and terra cotta colours, with a band of terra cotta coloured slates at sill level.
- Slate-covered cornice with patterned fish-scale slates in three colours
- One flat window and one three-sided oriel window, all wood-framed and wood-trimmed; each unit double-paned, decorated with pilasters topped by small brackets and a narrow cornice.
- The oriel window is roofed with copper in fish-scale pattern, and its skirting is covered with copper.
