

Description of Significance
142 Dundas Street,
“A. Chisholm & Co. Building”

Legal Description

142 Dundas Street is a four story buff brick commercial building on Plan , Lot . The building is located on the north side of Dundas Street between Talbot Street and Richmond Street facing Market Lane in London’s downtown commercial core.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The commercial structure located at 142 Dundas Street is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as a building of cultural heritage value.

Initially erected for A. Chisholm & Co, the c. 1862 building and the business that occupied it are reflective of London’s growing prosperity and subsequent maturity as a city both in the sophistication of its Italianate architecture and in the comprehensive line of dry goods merchandise that it sold. The building is associated with the names of two noted London dry goods merchants, Andrew Chisholm and R. J. Young, and a nationally known merchant family, the Eatons.

The most noteworthy feature of the design was a clock, which was added to the façade at the cornice level in 1868. As the building faced Market Lane, the clock could be seen from the Covent Garden Market one block to the south.

The A. Chisholm and R. J. Young period ground level store front elevations have been entirely destroyed. The rear elevation, which is of no heritage value, and the interior, which has been entirely stripped to the brick walls, is excluded in the list of heritage attributes. The clock was removed probably in the 1960s and survives today in the holdings of Museum London.

Dry goods merchants were among London’s mercantile elite. During the 1860s, the north side of Dundas Street between Talbot and Richmond Streets became lined with dry goods stores including among the earliest Kingmill’s and Smallman and Ingram which, by the early 20th century, had grown into full size department stores carrying a far wider range of goods. A. Chisholm & Co. carried a full line of dry goods. It was one of London’s earliest and best known 19th century dry goods merchants having been in business since at least the mid-1850s perhaps at another Dundas Street location or possibly at the same address (the previous building may have been demolished and replaced by the c. 1862 structure). An advertisement in *Railton’s 1856-57 Directory* described Chisholm’s as “importers of staple & fancy dry goods, ready-made clothing, &c., wholesale & retail...” ; featured goods included shawls, caps, bonnets, ribbons, hosiery for women and tweeds, shirts, collars, ties, handkerchiefs, etc. for men.

Following Chisholm's retirement in 1877, the store was taken over briefly by Timothy Eaton's Brother, James, and then, in 1884, by R. J. Young & Co., another dry goods merchant who occupied 144 Dundas Street next door to the east. Both 142 and 144 were combined with Young's expanding to include its neighbouring building. Young's remained in business until 1962. The building thereafter housed a variety of businesses, most recently a restaurant.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The A. Chisholm & Co. Building is one of several larger and more architecturally elaborate buildings in the more fanciful Italianate and Second Empire architectural styles that, beginning in the 1860s, replaced the plainer Georgian style blocks constructed subsequent to the Great Fire of 1845 and in the 1850s. The façade of 142 Dundas Street is probably the most attractive of any Italianate style commercial building in London's downtown core.

The important architectural features listed are exclusive to the second and third front elevation stories. The architectural details exhibit a high degree of craftsmanship. The specific attributes representative of the Italianate style of architecture are listed below:

- Narrow round headed Italianate style windows on the second and third stories grouped in Palladian fashion in sets of three with single narrow round headed windows flanking the second story set of three
- The stone trim of the centre two sets of three windows featuring rope moldings, stone keystones and caps, and stone lintels "supported" by stone brackets
- The stone trim of the single windows flanking the centre set of three windows on the second story comprising rounded heads, stone lintels (without bracket supports), keystones and caps
- Original wooden double hung sash windows
- Four single and six paired iron tie bars
- Buff brick construction
- Brick pilasters on the east and west corners of the façade act to frame the structure (the east side pilaster is plain while the west side pilaster takes the form of a vertical line of quoins)