

Talbot Street History

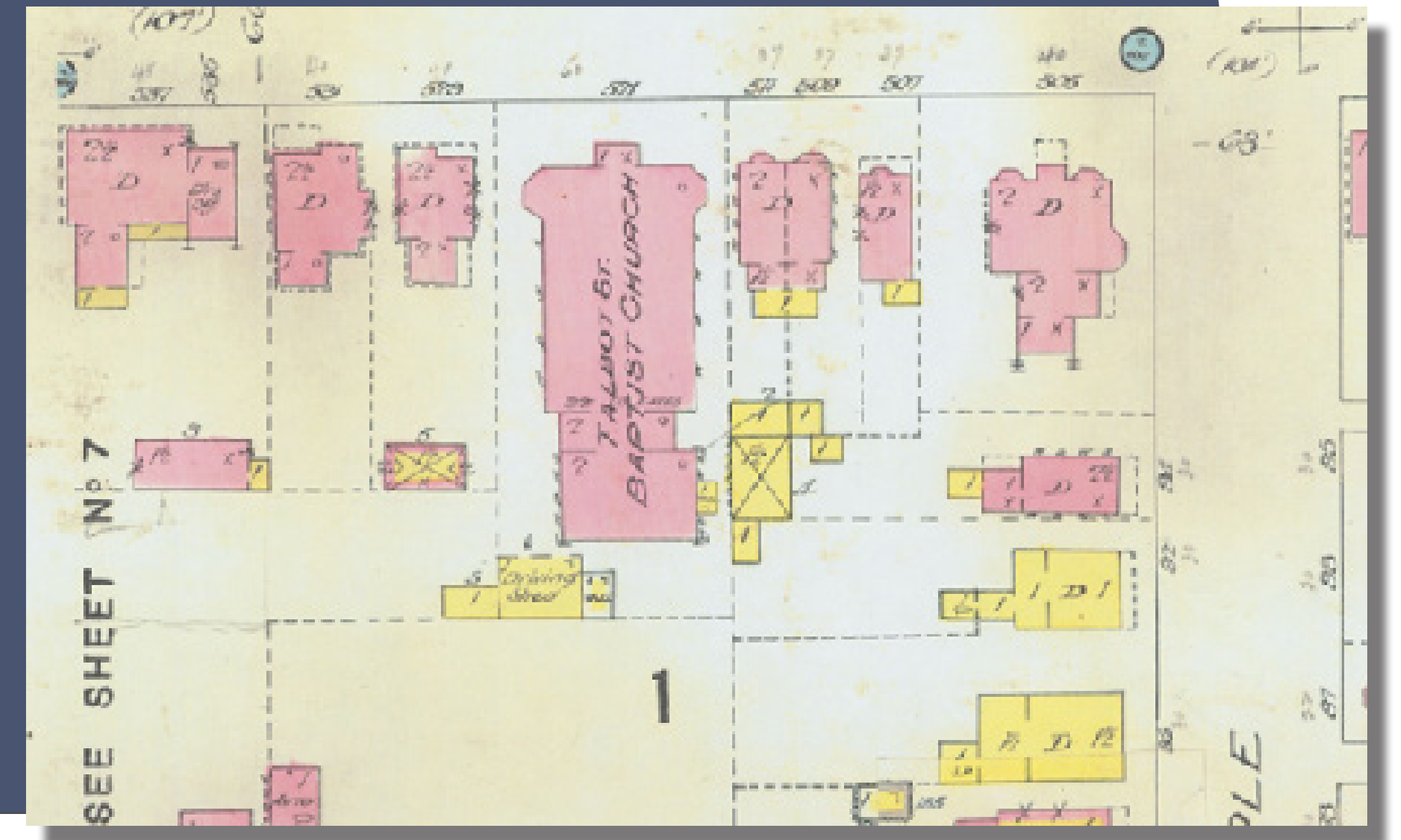
London, Ontario

Early History

The properties of 505, 507, and 511 Talbot Street, known now as the Talbot area, were originally situated on Talbot Street on the corner of Maple Street (now Dufferin Avenue) (to the south) and Ridout Street (to the west). As shown in the writing of the land surveyor Mahlon Burwell in 1826, this area was initially located outside of the original town plot of London.

The Talbot area remained largely vacant throughout the 1840s and early 1850s until in 1852 a group of wealthy London investors showed interest in the area and began to create the framework for development in the Talbot area.

In the latter half of the 19th century, the Talbot area had developed into a diverse residential and industrial area. Known now as London's first suburb, it was a centre of activity in London, and it was within the residential area that the properties of 505, 507, and 511 Talbot were built in 1880, 1886, and 1900 respectively.



Source: Goad, Charles E. 1915. Key Plan of the City of London, Ontario, Sheet 3. Toronto: Charles E. Goad Co.

505 Talbot Street



The grandest and most recognized of these three properties was 505 Talbot street. Built in 1880 for a wealthy local Justice of the Peace named James Owrey. Owrey was a well-respected member of the London upper class, and also served as a Director and then Vice President of the Agricultural savings and Loan Company. Later in his life, he acted as Vice President of the London Loan and Savings Company of Canada. Owrey was heavily involved in the emerging financial importance of London during the 1870s and 1880s, and was reportedly well respected for his service as a Justice of the Peace. After James Owrey left 505 Talbot street the house served as a home and business location for a variety of other Londoners.

In its time, and into the modern age, 505 Talbot street was a grand structure and an excellent representation of the Italianate style of architecture. 505 Talbot street's notable features were the low hipped roof, ornate decorative details, projecting bay, segmental arch windows, brackets, elongated windows and balanced bays which would have given the interior plenty of light and life. 505 Talbot street's unique architecture style was acknowledged on a historic list of good residences from the late 19th century.

This residence was celebrated by modern Londoners as well and was highlighted in various historic newsletters, blog posts and one of the annual Geranium Walks hosted by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario London Region.



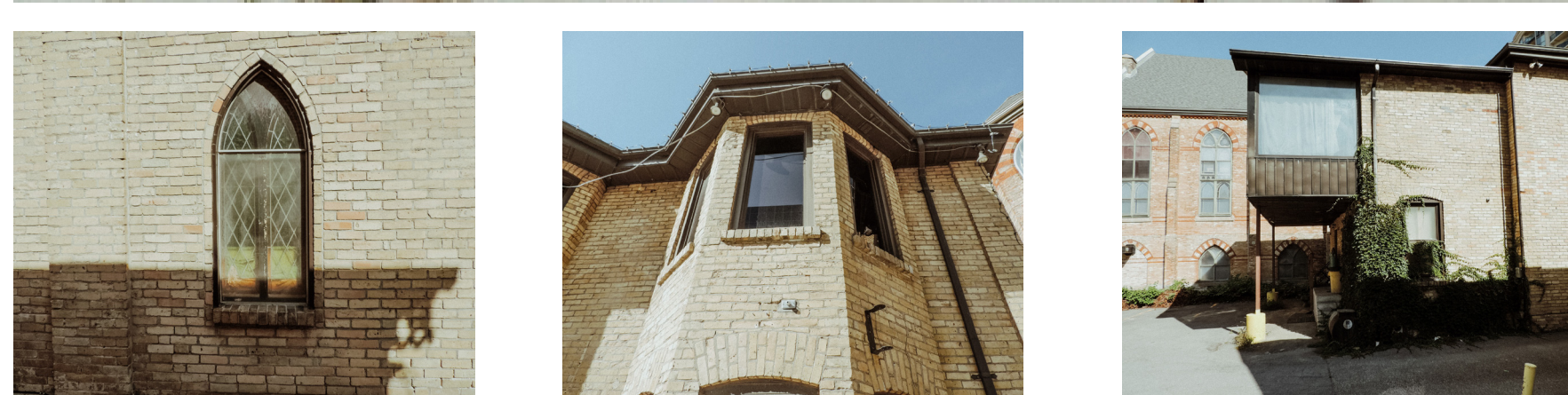
511 Talbot Street



Originally this residence was a duplex and can be seen in fire insurance plans as having the address 509 and 511 Talbot street. This was later changed to just 511 Talbot street when the duplex was converted into a single residence. This late Italianate house, which replaced an earlier single-storey frame house, featured two front bay windows and octagonal hipped rooflines that are highly individual.

The two first residents of 511 Talbot street were Lizzie Lynam, a dressmaker who appears to have run a small shop out of the space, and Jane Wellsted. Wellsted was originally from Nova Scotia, and moved to London with her late husband John Wellsted who was a bookkeeper. Later residents of 511 Talbot street include a teacher, an accountant, and several secretaries for London Life Insurance Co.

In its final years, 511 Talbot street served as the location of the Black Shire Pub.



507 Talbot Street



The most modest of the three buildings was 507 Talbot street. Built in 1886, this smaller buff brick residence was first occupied by William Brown, a carriage-maker, and later by John Farrell (a barber) and David Harris (a real estate agent).

This building had vernacular structure with Italianate and Gothic Revival elements, which were two popular mid to late 19th century architectural styles. 507 Talbot Street had characteristic segmental arches above the windows and door (indicating Italianate influence), fretwork bargeboard (Gothic Revival style) as well as stained glass designs that seem to be later 20th century additions.

