



Research Report

Quebec Street Apartments

304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street
Oshawa, ON

Prepared for Heritage Oshawa
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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this heritage research report is to evaluate the cultural heritage significance of the properties municipally known as 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street (the “Subject Properties”) in the City of Oshawa in accordance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest, per the Ontario Heritage Act (the Act).

This undertaking will more fully determine the cultural heritage and landscape value of the Subject Properties in accordance with the Act.

1.2 Legislative Context

Ontario Regulation 9/06 under the Ontario Heritage Act sets out the criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, which is required in order to designate a property under the provisions of Part IV of the Act.

A property may be designated under Section 29 in Part IV of the Act if it meets one or more of the following criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it:
 - i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method; or
 - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit; or
 - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

2. The property has historical value or associative value because it:
 - i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community; or
 - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture; or
 - iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

3. The property has contextual value because it:
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;
or
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;
or
 - iii. is a landmark.

After analyzing the history of and heritage attributed to the Subject Properties, it is concluded that they merit designation under Section IV of the Act in light of criteria 1(i), 2(i) and 3(i).

2. Description of Property

2.1 Location

304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street are located on the southwest corner of Simcoe Street South and Quebec Street in the City of Oshawa. They stand on a large corner lot, bounded by Simcoe Street South to the east, a commercial office building at 310 Simcoe Street South to the south, residential dwellings to the west, and Quebec Street to the north.

2.2 Legal Description

304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street are located on the northern portion of Lot 11 in Concession 1 in the City of Oshawa. The legal description of the property is LT 50, 54 PL 47 Oshawa; N1/2 PL 47 Oshawa. Except Pt. 2 40R20637; OSHAWA.

2.3 Site Description

The three apartment buildings located at 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street are located on the southwest corner of Simcoe Street South and Quebec Street. 304 Simcoe Street South, entitled “The George”, faces east towards Simcoe Street South. 9 Quebec Street, entitled “The Amylene”, and 17 Quebec Street, entitled “The Edward”, both face north towards Quebec Street. The three apartments stand prominently on a corner lot in the Central neighbourhood in Oshawa.



Figure 1- Location of 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street, Oshawa. GIS Map, City of Oshawa, April 10, 2020.

3. Historical Context

3.1 Summary

Located within walking distance to Oshawa’s downtown core in Oshawa’s Central neighbourhood, the properties located at 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street are excellent examples of early 20th century apartment houses.

Apartment houses were designed with the middle class in mind, promising both convenience and sophistication. The Subject Properties would have been steps away from Oshawa Railway Streetcar, which travelled on Simcoe Street, north up to Rossland and south to the Lake Ontario lakefront.

Located on the west side of Simcoe Street South, north of Fairbanks Street and south of Quebec Street, the group of three-storey apartment houses were constructed following the issuance of a building permit in 1928. The buildings were in place by 1929 when they begin to appear in the tax assessment rolls. Designed by Toronto architect, Mathers C. Haldenby, the apartment houses were commissioned by Llewellyn Victor Disney, and subsequently owned by L.V. Disney Investments until 1984. In 1928, L.V. Disney Investments also financed the construction of two other properties which were located in downtown Oshawa – 82-84 Simcoe Street South and the “Disney Building”, located at 27-33 King Street East.

Today, the trio of apartment houses are known collectively as the Quebec Street Apartments, each apartment features a name above each entranceway; “The George”

located at 304 Simcoe Street South, “The Amylene” at 9 Quebec Street, and “The Edward” at 17 Quebec Street.

3.2 Lot History

The Subject Properties are located on part of the North ½ of Lot 11, Concession 1 in the City of Oshawa. On January 20, 1873 Francis W. Glen registered Plan No. 47 also known as “F.W. Glen’s Plan”. Quebec Street, Fairbanks Street, a portion of Centre Street South, and the associated building lots were created by F.W. Glen’s Plan. Glen was the original land owner and subdivided the land and sold off the lots.

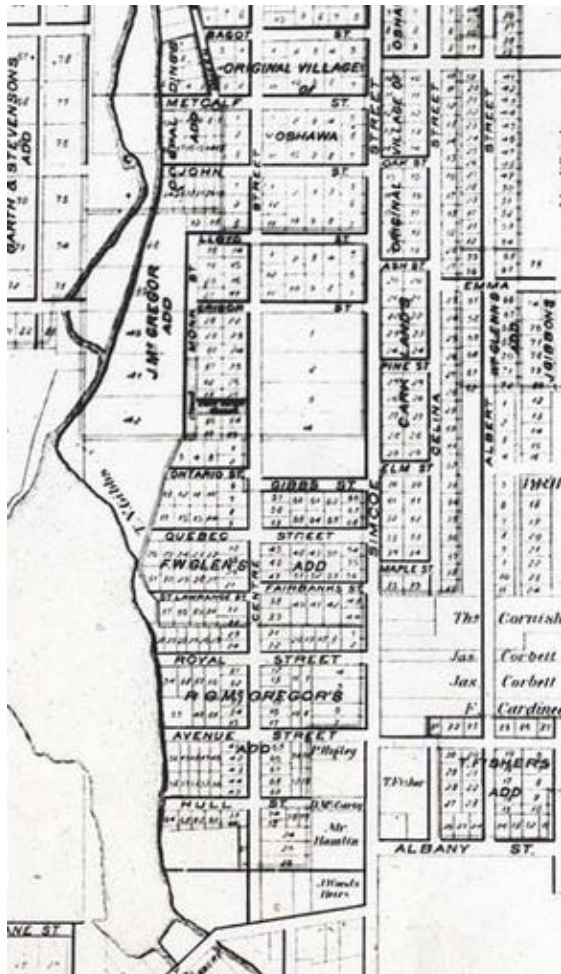


Figure 2 – F. W. Glen’s Plan No. 47, Part 11, Concession 1

In 1885, Mary A. and Joseph Gould purchased the lot. The property was then sold to their son John Gould in 1891. A home was constructed on the property in the late 1800s (post-1885) by the Gould family.

According to the 1891 census, John T. Gould (55) is residing with his wife Emily A. (54) both of Methodist faith. Also residing with them are their two children, a son and a daughter. Two other individuals are residing in the home, Kate McKenick (60) and Ida

Edwards (16). In 1901, John T. Gould is residing with only his wife, Emmely (sp?) A. Gould. According to the 1921 Vernon's Town of Oshawa Directory John Gould was residing at 302 Simcoe Street South.

In 1924, Llewellyn Victor Disney purchased the property from the estate of John Gould for \$13 050. According to the 1924 Vernon's Directories for Oshawa, Lewellyn V. Disney is residing at 302 Simcoe Street South. In the directory he is listed as part owner of *Disney and Lycett Real Estate and Insurance Brokers*, this business was located at the southeast corner of King Street East and Celina Street, where the Disney Building is today at 27-33 King Street East.

In 1926, Disney Funeral Service was located at 302 Simcoe Street South. Llewellyn Victor Disney's brother Roy Stanely Disney, an undertaker, was residing at this address.

In 1928, Llewellyn Victor Disney was no longer residing at 302 Simcoe Street South. Lew. V. Disney is a stenographer living with Helen Smith, at Oshawa-on-the-Lake (now Oshawa's Lakeview neighbourhood). During this time, L.V. Disney was President of Oshawa Buildings Limited, which owned 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street, and commissioned the construction of three apartment houses.

There is speculation that the house that was located at 302 Simcoe Street South, built by the Gould family, now forms a part of "The Amylene" apartment located at 9 Quebec Street. When all three Subject Properties were redeveloped in 2018/2019, it was noted by the developer that "The Amylene may have been part of an 1800s home as workers found handmade nails during the renovation". Upon review and comparison of City of Oshawa Fire Insurance Plans from 1921 and 1948, one can see that the footprint of 9 Quebec Street is located in the same location as that for 302 Simcoe Street South. Therefore, there is a good possibility that portions of the original home located on this lot became part of the Amelyne Apartments located at 9 Quebec Street.

L.V. Disney Investments owned the property until 1984. Since that time there have been numerous property owners.

The current owner of the property, 304 Simcoe Street Inc., purchased the three buildings for \$2.9 million in Fall 2017. When 304 Simcoe Street Inc. took ownership of the property, it was in disrepair, with broken windows and collapsed staircases. Since then, all three apartments have been completely gutted and beautifully restored, reflective of the luxury apartments that they were in 1929.

The property owner has overseen several other projects in Oshawa, including 32 studio apartments at 62 to 70 King Street West, 10 to 12B Centre Street North, the former Oshawa House Hotel, and the renovation of 88 to 92 Simcoe Street North, the old Durham Medical building, which includes 10 apartment units and seven shops. The property owner was instrumental in the designation of the Oshawa House Hotel under Part IV of the Act in July 2020.

3.3 Owners

Llewellyn Victor Disney (L.V. Disney Investments)

In 1882, John E. Disney married Sarah McKittrick, and together they had three sons. William Frederick was born in 1883, Llewellyn Victor was born in 1888, and Roy Stanley was born in 1893.

L.V. and Roy Stanley made their names known through their successful furniture and undertaking businesses. The brothers established an ambulance service, which was boasted as the “finest ambulance between Toronto and Montreal”. The undertaking business operated at various addresses around downtown and Central Oshawa, including at 302 Simcoe Street South and at a location on Bond Street.

By 1923, the Disney Funeral Service was located at 31 King Street East; in 1924, the building at 27-33 King Street East is known as the Disney Block. In 1926, Disney Funeral Service was located at 302 Simcoe Street South, listed as residing at the home was Roy Stanley Disney, an undertaker.

L.V. Disney had a variety of other interests, including real estate and local politics, and served as an Alderman.



Figure 3 - Llewellyn Victor Disney (Oshawa Daily Times, August 11, 1928)

4. Structural Design and Architecture

4.1 Architects

L.V. Disney, President of Oshawa Buildings Limited, commissioned the construction of 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street, and 17 Quebec Street. The architectural firm Mathers & Haldenby, located in Toronto, drew up the plans (see Figure 4). This firm existed between 1921 and 1991 and was founded by Alvan Sherlock Mathers and Eric Wilson Haldenby. They were both succeeded respectively by their sons Andrew S. Mathers and Douglas Charles Haldenby, in 1964. These two men maintained control of the firm until it ceased practice in December 1991. Two other buildings in Oshawa were also designed by this architectural firm in 1928, 82-84 Simcoe Street South and the Disney Block located at the corner of King Street East and Celina at 27-33 King Street East.

Major works by the firm include various buildings for the University of Toronto, Queen's University (Kingston), Dalhousie University (Halifax), Upper Canada College (Toronto), and various government buildings in Ottawa and Toronto.



Figure 4 - "Impressive Group of Apartment Houses", Oshawa Daily Times August 11, 1928. The Quebec Street apartments are shown in the middle photo, on the left is 82-84 Simcoe Street South and on the right is the Disney Building at 27-33 King Street East.

4.2 Form and Design

The trio of buildings are excellent examples of early 20th century apartment houses with Period Revival features. Drawing inspiration from medieval and classical precedents, the Period Revival style was popular for residential designs during this era. For this design, the architect combined brick quoins and decorative round arched windows on symmetrical façades featuring inviting entranceway door surrounds associated with classical architecture.

According to an article published in the August 11, 1928 Oshawa Daily Times:

“The apartment houses are typical of the latest and best that modern design and construction afford”. In their building and equipment, they represent the enterprise of L.V. Disney. The group of house apartments consists of 3 central units, the central one of which is 9 Quebec Street, with 17 Quebec Street and 304 Simcoe Street on either side. 304 Simcoe Street is the larger of the two flanking buildings. The group of apartment houses at the corner of Quebec and Simcoe Streets were constructed with a view of giving the maximum amount of light and air to all apartment units with the economical advantages of one central heating plant. The construction of the new building is semi-fireproof. The halls are built with fireproof partitions and concrete floors. The standard arrangement of rooms consists of a large living room with dining alcove, kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. Many of the apartments are equipped with a folding bed in the living room cupboard. Special consideration has been given to the fenestration, in the living rooms where large windows are used. All floors are of oak except the corridors which are Marble Terrazzo. The bathrooms have tiled floors, built in bathtubs and the most modern type of plumbing fixtures. The kitchens are equipped with special built-in fittings, electric refrigerators, and stoves.”

304 Simcoe Street South features a U-shaped plan and is oriented to the east. 9 Quebec Street features a square plan and is oriented north. 17 Quebec Street features a rectangular plan and is also oriented to the north.

A notable feature of each building are the main entranceways which are similar in design and centrally placed at the base of the principal façades. The entranceway door surrounds are ornate in design and feature classically inspired details that give the appearance of columns with an architrave and an abacus. A nameplate is located above each entranceway within the transom, indicating the address, and the name of each building is located within the frieze. The entranceways have been restored and are reflective of the original design. 9 Quebec Street is the only façade possessing a projecting frontispiece.

When the buildings were constructed in 1928, the main entrance doors were equipped with an electric lock which controlled access to the building. “A telephone at the door makes known to the occupant of the apartment the nature of the call. At the press of a button in their suite the front door is released.”¹ This would have been one of the luxury features of this apartment house when it first opened.

All three buildings feature a symmetrical façade with a central entranceway beneath a large arched window opening overlooking an interior stairway, featuring a faux Juliet balcony. The façades were originally clad in buff brick, which was painted during the recent renovations. Each façade features multi-paned window openings with brick lintels and stone sills, many of which have decorative faux Juliet balconies. Located on the corners of each building are brick quoins, also painted during the recent renovations. The roofline of the front façade of each building features a faux brick parapet with cornice moulding.

¹ Oshawa Daily Times, August 11, 1928

5. Applicability of Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*

In light of the findings of this report, it is concluded that the Subject Properties located at 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street, and 17 Quebec Street meet the criteria outlined in Regulation 9/06. The property meets the criteria for designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of 1. Design or physical value, 2. Historical/associative value and 3. Contextual value.

- 1(i) 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street, and 17 Quebec Street have design and physical value because the buildings are representative of 20th century apartment houses, with Period Revival architectural features.
- 2(i) 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street, and 17 Quebec Street has associative value as the buildings were commissioned by Llewellyn Victor Disney, a prominent Oshawa citizen and business owner.
- 3(i) 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street, and 17 Quebec Street have contextual value as they are important in defining, maintaining and supporting the area in which they stand as one of the original apartment complexes constructed on Simcoe Street South in Central Oshawa in the late 1920s.

6. Resources

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The Apartment House in Portland: The 1920s to the Great Depression

7. Current Photographs of the Property



Figure 5 - 304 Simcoe Street South, The George, East Facade



Figure 6 - Back of 9 Quebec Street and 304 Simcoe Street South



Figure 7 - North Facades of 304 Simcoe Street South, 9 Quebec Street and 17 Quebec Street



Figure 8 - 17 Quebec Street, The George

8. Historic Photographs of the Property



Figure 9 - 302 Simcoe Street South, Gould Home, Source: Thomas Bouckley Collection, The RMG



Figure 10 - Ontario Regiment Band in front of The George, 304 Simcoe Street South. Circa 1939 Source: Thomas Bouckley Collection, The RMG



Figure 11 - 304 Simcoe Street South, The George, pre-restoration (June 2009), Google Street View Image

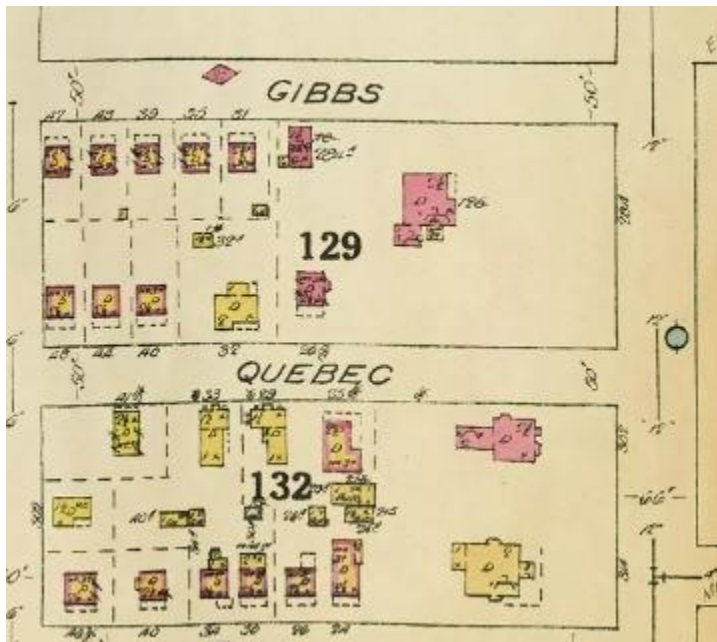


Figure 12 - 302 Simcoe Street South, City of Oshawa, Fire Insurance Map 1921

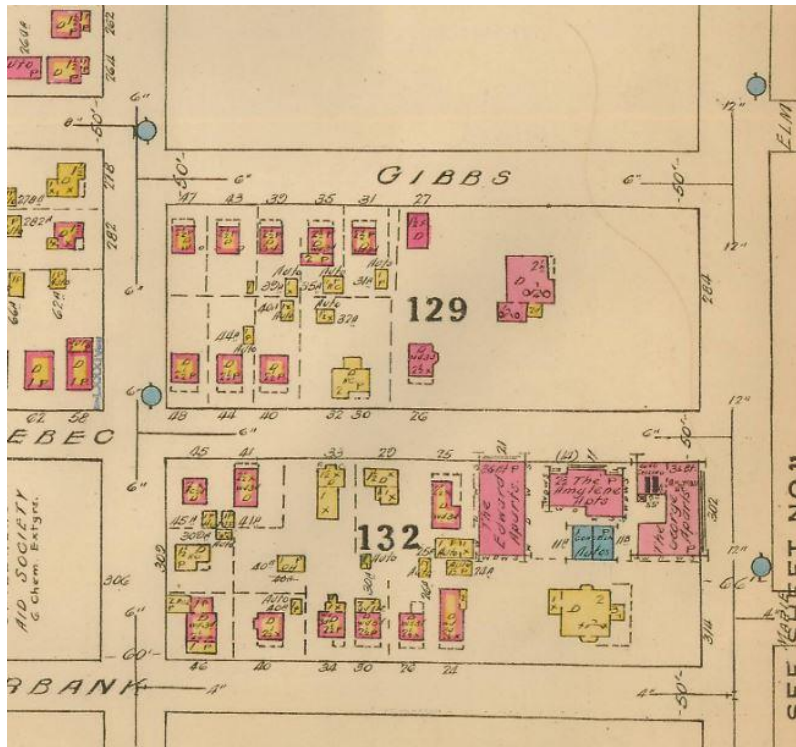


Figure 13 – City of Oshawa Fire Insurance Map showing the Quebec Street Apartments, 1948