

## EVALUATION UNDER ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06

### Design or Physical Value

1. The one-and-a-half storey stone structure at 33 Bowen Street, Hamilton, was constructed circa 1834 as a hotel stable. A brick addition to the rear was added between 1899 and 1910. It has design and physical value as a representative example of a nineteenth-century vernacular commercial structure. The building consists of a coursed stone front (west) facade, a rubble stone side (south) facade and a brick rear (east) addition. The building features a gable dormer, side gable roof with firewalls that extend to the rear addition, brick pilasters and a shaped parapet on the rear, window openings with stone voussoirs and sills, and a stone foundation.
2. This property does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property does not appear to demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

### Historical or Associative Value

4. This property has historical value as it is associated with the theme of Hamilton's early growth as a commercial centre in the first half of the nineteenth century, and with its connection to the former Courthouse Hotel and its first owner, local politician, and businessman John Bradley.

By the beginning of 1830, the prospects of the small village of Hamilton were looking up. Founded in 1816 when George Hamilton (1788-1836) donated a portion of his Barton Township lands to serve as a location for a gaol and courthouse for the newly established Gore District, the village's initial growth had been slow. The creation of the Burlington Canal, which cut through the sandbar separating Burlington Bay from the rest of Lake Ontario, as well as an upswing in immigration from the British Isles in the wake of the War of 1812, would bring increasing numbers of people to the village of Hamilton. Hamilton's rapid population growth, fueled by both incoming immigrants and by transient labourers seeking work on the Desjardins Canal and on local road construction projects would create a strong demand for both permanent and temporary housing.

In 1832, in response to this demand, Irish immigrant John Bradley (1805-1864), commenced construction on a three-storey stone hotel along John Street South, directly across from the Court House Square. Hamilton's original courthouse and gaol had been combined in a modest log structure, but that had been replaced by a more elaborate stone structure in 1827. The location of this stone courthouse is now occupied by the Ontario Court of Justice at 50 Main Street East. By 1834 Bradley was able to boast of the comforts of his hotel, including an early form of

hot air heating and a commodious stable (now 33 Bowen Street). John Bradley would experience a good deal of success in the hotel trade and was soon able to branch out into land speculation and local politics.

The position of Bradley's hotel at the edge of Corktown soon gave John Bradley a prominent position in the local community. As saloons and taverns functioned as spaces for working class men to congregate, socialize, search for work, and discuss the issues of the day, Bradley was soon well-known in Corktown. This was certainly a factor in his repeated election to represent Corktown to the Town of Hamilton's Board of Police.

Bradley's success in politics and in business were soon apparent. By the late 1830s he had already purchased several town lots and constructed housing for rent. Judging by advertisements carried in the *Hamilton Spectator*, in the late 1840s and 1850s, Bradley was able to greatly expand his real estate holdings, offering at different times a variety of both town lots and farmlands for sale, along with a substantial number of wood frame and brick homes and commercial structures for sale or lease. Little wonder that by 1847 John Bradley was looking to retire from the hotel business.

In 1849 Bradley would construct "Bellevue", a fine stone house which stood on extensive grounds at the edge of the Niagara Escarpment. Bearing a close resemblance to Whitehern, home of the influential McQuesten family, Bellevue spoke to Bradley's aspirations as a wealthy Hamiltonian. Bellevue was designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1983. Despite widespread public outcry, the property was demolished in September of 2000.

As for the Hotel, it would pass through many owners and many different names until 1922, when it was sold yet again, but this time the new owner was uninterested in operating a hotel. The former Court House Hotel sat vacant until 1930, when it was announced that the old building would be 'reconstructed' into offices and apartments. The reconstructed building stands today on John Street South, but it is unclear whether any portion of John Bradley's hotel remains.

In the later years of the Court House Hotel, the stable at 33 Bowen Street had transitioned to a new role as the Hotel's garage as the horse gave way to the automobile. When the Hotel was sold, the former stable was sold as a separate property, and while the Hotel was vacant, the old stable was soon converted into a car wash. In later years, the subject property was used by a variety of businesses, including Vernor's Ginger Ale in the 1940s and the City Chevrolet dealership between 1949 and 1968.

In the late 1970s, an up-and-coming Canadian restaurant chain purchased the subject property with an eye to renovating the former stables into a new location. The property opened as another branch of the Keg & Cleaver (known now as simply *The Keg*) in 1977. After the Keg moved out, the subject property was

home to Slainte Irish Pub between 1997 and 2015 and has continued to host various restaurants and bars to the present day.

5. The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the historic Corktown Neighbourhood. A long-standing commercial structure, this property has seen a great many different uses as the City around it changed, reflecting the changes that Corktown as a whole has experienced.
6. This property does not demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to the community.

#### Contextual Value

7. The property is important in defining the character of Bowen Street. This structure, a former stable, was one of several stables that once lined Bowen Street, reflecting the street's nature as a space which supported the larger businesses along John Street. This property, facing the rear of the former Court House Hotel, recalls Bowen's dependency on other nearby businesses.
8. The property is historically, visually, and functionally linked to the surrounding area. Sited on its original location, this property faces the rear of the larger, more public facing commercial structures which line the section of John Street between Main Street East and Jackson Street East, reflecting its original role as a support building for those businesses.
9. This property is not considered to be a landmark.