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2022/08/18
(YYYY/MM/DD)
Ontario Heritage Trust

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER O.18 AND
CITY OF TORONTO, PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
625 YONGE STREET**

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY

ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST
10 ADELAIDE STREET EAST
TORONTO, ON M5H 1J3
registrar@heritagetrust.on.ca

TAKE NOTICE that Council for the City of Toronto intends to designate the property, including the lands, buildings and structures thereon known municipally as 625 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.O.18, as amended, as a property of cultural heritage value or interest.

This notice is being served to the Owner of the Property, the Ontario Heritage Trust, and any Objectors and Interested Persons.

Reasons for Designation

The property at 625 Yonge Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under the categories of design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value.

Description

The subject property consists of two adjoining buildings that are related historically and architecturally: a northern building at 631-637 Yonge Street/1-5 Isabella Street, and a southern building at 625-629 Yonge Street. Together, they are known municipally as 625 Yonge Street. Located on the southeast corner of Yonge Street and Isabella Street, the brick buildings are three storeys with a flat roof. The west and north elevations can be viewed together from the intersection. With the delineated bays along its front elevation, the property is consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained building frontages along the surrounding historic commercial streetscape. The buildings' Edwardian Classicist style is one of several architectural styles that predominate in the area.

It was included on the City's Heritage Register in 2016. The property is identified as a contributing property in the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District, adopted by City Council in 2016 and currently under appeal.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property consists of two adjoining buildings that constitute a representative example of Edwardian Classicist-style commercial main street buildings. Although the northern building predates the southern, they share their brick construction and the datum lines of their common floor levels and banding details, and read as an integrated whole. Designed by J. Wilson Gray, the northern building (631-637 Yonge Street/1-5 Isabella Street) retains quoins and exaggerated voussoir details above round-arched window openings on the upper storey of each elevation's corner bay. Both elevations also feature segmentally arched lintels at the third storey, and stone banding above the second and third storeys, with the latter giving the appearance of a simple cornice. The southern building (625-629 Yonge Street), likely designed by Chapman & McGiffin, has a symmetrical composition divided by brick pilasters, large window openings at both the second and third storey, stone sills and banding that continue the lines of the northern building, and a brick parapet with a curving, stepped design. Despite the removal of the original windows, both buildings' original fenestration patterns remain intact.

The property is directly associated with the theme of early-twentieth-century commercial development along Yonge Street. Specifically, from construction in c.1905-1907 (631-637 Yonge Street/1-5 Isabella Street) and c.1913-1921 (625-629 Yonge Street) until the early 1950s, the property maintained its association with the automotive industry. This significant association included the property's original use for Thomas Crow's carriage business, representing the automotive industry's origins. The property continued to reflect the industry's evolution as it housed the Dominion Automobile Company's showroom, the second store location of Canadian Tire in the 1930s, and other automobile companies until the early 1950s.

Additionally, the property holds associations with a series of clubs that served the LGBTQ2S+ community, notably including the Domino Club and Komrads in the 1980s. As a longstanding venue that reflected the prevalence of LGBTQ2S+ establishments along Yonge Street and remained connected to the community after it shifted eastward to the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood, the building has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of Toronto's LGBTQ2S+ history.

The property is important in maintaining and supporting the historic commercial main street along this portion of Yonge Street, which is characterized by a low-scale continuous streetwall condition. With the delineated bays along its front elevation, the property is consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained storefronts along the streetscape. The buildings' Edwardian Classicist style is one of several architectural styles that predominate in the area. As part of Yonge Street's historic commercial streetscape since the early 20th century, with connections to concentrations of automotive companies and later LGBTQ2S+ establishments, the property is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 625 Yonge Street as a pair of Edwardian Classicist-style commercial main street buildings:

- The scale, form, and massing of the property as a three-storey pair of adjoining flat-roofed commercial buildings
- The property's material palette, consisting of brick with stone detailing
- The consistent datum lines of the two buildings' common floor levels and the stone banding details that continue across both buildings, allowing them to be read as an integrated whole
- The northern building's asymmetrical composition with elevations on both Yonge and Isabella streets, including a projecting bay on both elevations that emphasizes the building's corner siting
- The southern building's symmetrical composition with three bays defined by four brick pilasters
- On the northern building, quoins and exaggerated voussoir details above round-arched window openings on the upper storey of each elevation's corner bay
- On the southern building, the brick parapet with a curving, stepped design
- Original fenestration patterns on both buildings, including segmentally arched openings at the third level of the northern building, and large window openings at the second and third storeys of the southern building

Historic and Associative Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 625 Yonge Street as reflective of the early automotive industry along Yonge Street, and as the former location of a number of venues important to the LGBTQ2S+ community:

- The property's siting and orientation on the east side of Yonge Street and Isabella streets, facing Yonge Street with a strong secondary frontage on Isabella Street
- The property's long elevation along Isabella Street, which was the location of the entrances to the LGBTQ2S+ venues and allows the property to architecturally gesture towards the Church and Wellesley Village to the east
- The scale, form, and massing of the property as a three-storey pair of adjoining commercial buildings, providing it with relatively large floorplates that allowed its historic use as a carriage manufacturer, automobile showroom, and LGBTQ2S+ club space

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 625 Yonge Street as part of Yonge Street's historic commercial streetscape:

- The property's siting and orientation on the east side of Yonge Street and Isabella streets, facing Yonge Street with a strong secondary frontage on Isabella Street
- The scale, form, and massing of the property as a three-storey pair of adjoining commercial buildings
- The property's material palette, consisting of brick with stone detailing
- Delineated bays along the property's front elevation, consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained building frontages along the surrounding historic commercial streetscape

Notice of Objection to the Notice of Intention to Designate

Notice of an objection to the Notice of Intention to Designate the Property may be served on the City Clerk, Attention: Administrator, Secretariat, City Clerk's Office, Toronto City Hall, 2nd Floor West, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2.; Email: hertpb@toronto.ca within thirty days of August 18, 2022, which is September 19, 2022. The notice of objection to the Notice of Intention to Designate the Property must set out the reason(s) for the objection and all relevant facts.


Getting Additional Information:

Further information in respect of the Notice of Intention to Designate the Property is available from the City of Toronto at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.CC48.3>

Dated at the City of Toronto on August 18, 2022.



 John D. Elvidge
City Clerk