

Toronto STAFF REPORT

March 9, 2006

To: Toronto Preservation Board
Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Policy & Research, City Planning Division

Subject: 90 Harbour Street (Workmen's Compensation Board Building) - Inclusion on the
City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties
Toronto Centre-Rosedale - Ward 28

Purpose:

This report recommends that City Council include the property at 90 Harbour Street (Workmen's Compensation Board Building) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council include the property at 90 Harbour Street (Workmen's Compensation Board Building) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties; and
- (2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

The Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), owner of the property, is conducting an environmental assessment of the former Workmen's Compensation Board Building. After completing a Built Heritage Assessment of the site, the ORC has concluded that the property does not have provincial significance.

Following research and evaluation, staff have determined that the property is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. The inclusion of the property on the Inventory of Heritage Properties would enable staff to monitor any proposed changes to the site and encourage the retention of its heritage attributes. However, with the recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* (2005), properties owned by the provincial government and its agencies are no longer eligible for designation by the municipality.

Comments:

A location map (Attachment No. 1) and photographs (Attachment No. 2) are attached.

As described in the Reasons for Listing (Attachment No. 3), the property at 90 Harbour Street is recommended for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. The Workmen's Compensation Board Building (1951) is architecturally and contextually significant as a well-designed post-World War II office complex that is a visual feature in the Central Waterfront where it complements the neighbouring Toronto Harbour Commission Building, a recognized heritage property at 60 Harbour Street.

Conclusions:

It is recommended that City Council include the property at 90 Harbour Street (Workmen's Compensation Board Building) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

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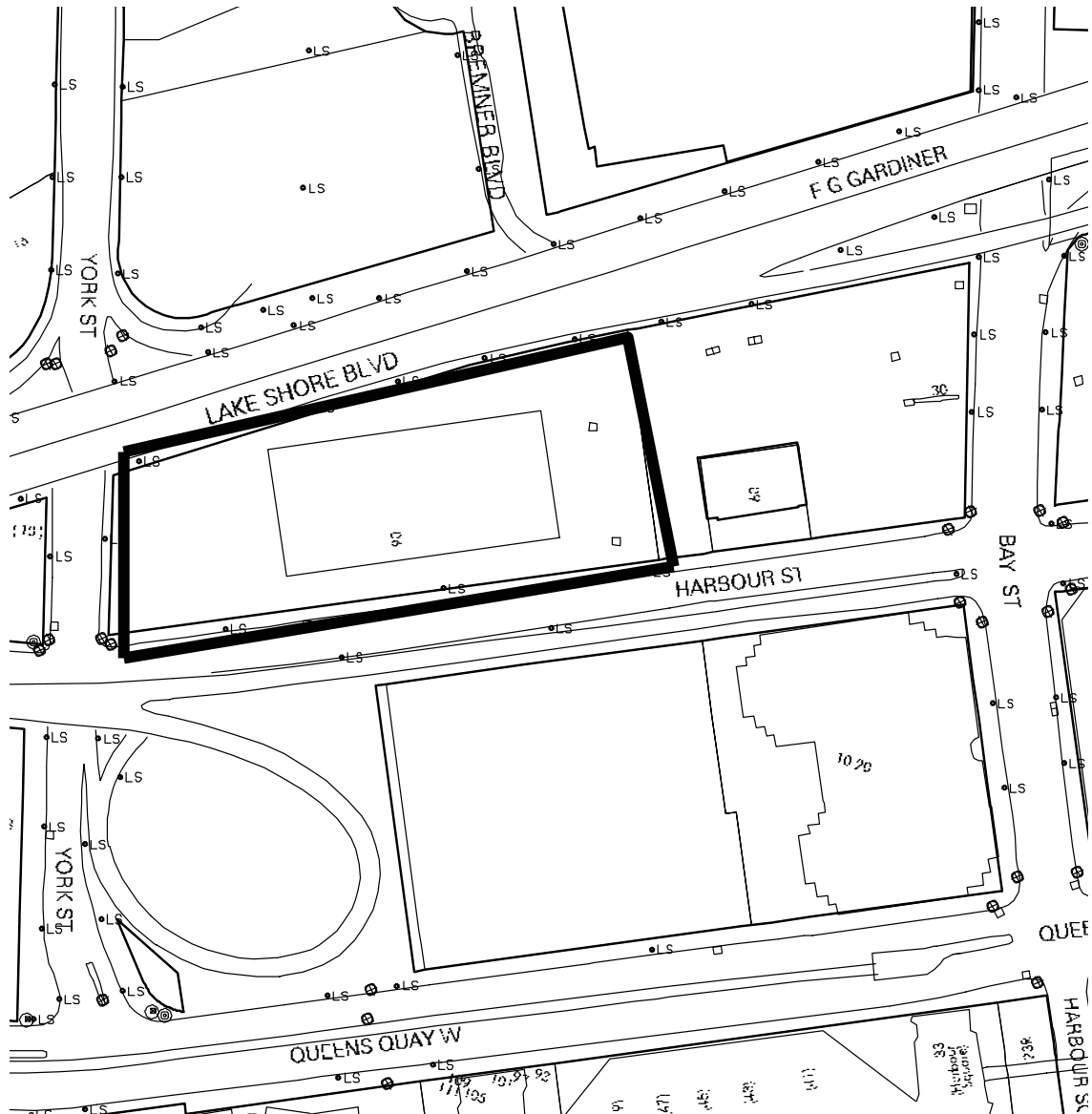
Barbara Leonhardt
Director, Policy and Research

List of Attachments:

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map (90 Harbour Street)
Attachment No. 2 – Photographs (90 Harbour Street)
Attachment No. 3 – Reasons for Listing (90 Harbour Street)

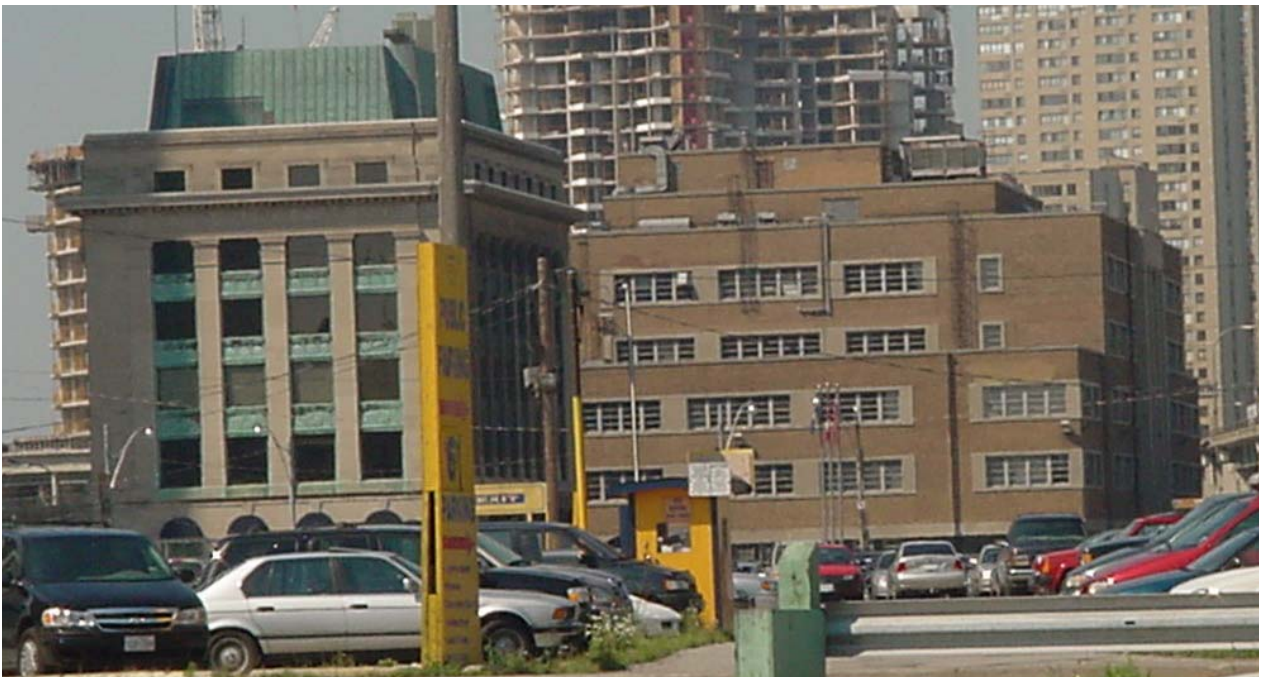
LOCATION MAP: 90 HARBOUR STREET

ATTACHMENT NO. 1





South façade of 90 Harbour Street



View looking west from Bay Street to York Street, and showing the Toronto Harbour Commission Building at 60 Harbour Street (left) and the Workmen's Compensation Board Building at 90 Harbour Street (right)

90 Harbour Street: Workmen's Compensation Board BuildingDescription:

The property at 90 Harbour Street is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. Located on the northeast corner of Harbour Street and York Street, the construction of the Workmen's Compensation Board Building began in 1950 and was completed in 1953 according to the designs of George N. Williams, chief architect and deputy minister of public works for the Province of Ontario. After the Workmen's Compensation Board (now known as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board) vacated the premises, the complex served as the headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police from 1975 until 1989.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value:

The cultural heritage value of the property at 90 Harbour Street is related to its design or physical value as a representative example of a mid-20th century office building that blends features of the three prevalent styles of the period. While the symmetry, cladding and profile reflect Modern Classical styling, the stepped plan and vertical elements recall the Art Deco and the band windows are identified with the Art Moderne. All three styles were introduced in the 1920s and remained popular until the International Style or Modern Movement gained acceptance in the 1960s.

The cultural heritage value of the Workmen's Compensation Board Building is also connected to its contextual value as it supports the evolving character of the Central Waterfront as the location of government edifices. The Toronto Harbour Commission Building (1917) at 60 Harbour Street, which adjoins the subject property, and the neighbouring LCBO Headquarters and Warehouse (c. 1947) at 55 Lake Shore Boulevard East are recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

Heritage Attributes:

The heritage attributes of the property at 90 Harbour Street, related to its cultural heritage value as a representative example of a mid-20th century office building blending aspects of the prevalent styles of the period, are found on the exterior walls and the roofs, with particular attention to the principal (south) façade of the main block, and on the interior as described below.

The building is organized in three parts where a five-storey central block is flanked on the east and west by three-storey wings. Above a base clad with polished black granite and ashlar limestone that contains window openings, the elevations are faced with buff brick and trimmed with limestone.

On the centre block, the principal (south) façade is organized into three bays by a monumental stone frontispiece that rises five stories. The frontispiece, composed of a stone surround with an outer framework of piers and a cornice, is divided into three sections by two angled piers. The main entrance is placed at the base of the frontispiece where three sets of doors with sidelights and an oversized transom are recessed beneath a canopy. Within the frontispiece, single flat-headed window openings are placed on either side of the entry and in trios above it. The vertical thrust of the frontispiece is balanced by the horizontal lines of the strip windows in the outer bays of the centre block. The strip windows are set in stone surrounds and contain metal sash windows. The pattern of the fenestration continues on the east and west elevations of the centre block. Its rear (north) wall features similar detailing, apart from the flat piers that divide the frontispiece. The east and west wings repeat the pattern and appearance of the fenestration introduced on the centre block. A cornerstone at the southeast corner of the building reads “The Workmen’s Compensation Board 1951.” Limestone coping trims the flat roofs covering the centre block and wings.

On the interior of the centre block, the first-floor entrance vestibule and elevator lobby with its patterned aluminum elevator doors, terrazzo floor, and marble-faced walls and baseboards is an important feature. The remaining interiors, including the first-floor cafeteria with its Art Moderne elements and the elevator lobbies on the upper floors, have been documented but are not included in the Reasons for Listing.