

Authority: Toronto and East York Community Council Item TE21.11, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on January 31, 2017

## CITY OF TORONTO

Bill 823

BY-LAW -2018

**To amend former City of Toronto By-law 637-76 being a by-law to designate the property at 115 Bond Street (Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church, formerly known as the Holy Blossom Synagogue) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, by revising the reasons for designation to describe the property's cultural heritage value and heritage attributes.**

Whereas the Ontario Heritage Act authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of cultural heritage value or interest; and

Whereas By-law 637-76 of the former City of Toronto designated the property at 115 Bond Street (Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church, formerly known as the Holy Blossom Synagogue) as being of architectural value and historic interest; and

Whereas authority was granted by Council of the City of Toronto to amend By-law 637-76 by revising the reasons for designation to explain the cultural heritage value or interest of the property and to describe its heritage attributes; and

Whereas the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owner of the land and premises known municipally as 115 Bond Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, a Notice of Intention to amend By-law 637-76, and has caused the Notice of Intention to amend By-law 637-76 to be posted on the City's web site for a period of 30 days in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 162, Notice, Public, Article II, § 162-4.1. Notice requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act; and

Whereas no objection was served upon the Clerk of the municipality; and

Whereas the revised reasons for designation are set out in Schedule A to this by-law;

The Council of the City of Toronto enacts:

1. The reasons for designation set out in By-law 637-76 are deleted and replaced by the revised reasons for designation, attached as Schedule A to this by-law.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against title to the property described in Schedule B to this by-law in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the property at 115 Bond Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, and to cause notice of this by-law to be posted on the City's web site for a period of 30 days in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 162, Notice, Public, Article II, § 162-4.1. Notice requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Enacted and passed on June , 2018.

Frances Nunziata,  
Speaker

Ulli S. Watkiss,  
City Clerk

(Seal of the City)

## SCHEDULE A

REVISED REASONS FOR DESIGNATION  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
REVISED REASONS FOR DESIGNATION  
115 BOND STREET

The property at 115 Bond Street (Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church formerly known as the Holy Blossom Synagogue) 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 all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

### Description

The property at 115 Bond Street contains the former Holy Blossom Synagogue (1895-7), now known as Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church, a two-and-a-half storey building designed as a synagogue by John Wilson Siddall, on the east side of Bond Street between Dundas Street East and Gould Street. The building included a raised basement with a hall, offices and classrooms and a double-storey, domed and galleried space of worship above. The property was sold by the Holy Blossom congregation to the Greek Orthodox Community in 1937, and a series of renovations were undertaken. In 1958, a one-storey addition was built at the rear of the church. From 1982-1993 renovations and alterations were completed to the designs of the architect Allan M. Young and, on the exterior, included the replacement of the domes on the two towers and the addition of a mosaic by the Italian artist Sirio Tonelli in the archway over the doors on the principle elevation. Interior renovations included the replacement of stained glass windows, stairs, (as well as washrooms, HVAC and kitchen equipment). The most significant interior alterations were the addition of Byzantine frescoes by two Pachomaioi monks from Mount Athos, Theophilos and Chrysostomos.

### Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The St. George's Greek Orthodox Church (former Holy Blossom Synagogue) has design value as a rare example of a late 19th century synagogue type which, with its central dome and pair of towers, as well as its Moorish elements, finds its origins in mid-19th century German synagogue design. The inclusion of Moorish or Islamic architectural elements is reflective of a contemporary belief that a golden age of Jewish culture existed in Islamic Spain. The design value is evident in the application of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, popular at this time for public buildings in Toronto. The combination of Islamic elements, the use of buff brick and sandstone make it a distinctive variation on the Romanesque style, which combined with Hebrew inscriptions and onion domes contributed to distinguishing the building as a synagogue displaying a high degree of artistic merit. The design value extends to those modifications undertaken by the Greek Orthodox community including the Byzantine domes on the towers and the mosaic of Saint George. The interior demonstrates further design value as it preserves the double-storey domed and galleried prayer hall of the synagogue with Moorish capitals and balustrades. The church interior is valued for the high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit evident in its stained glass and especially the Byzantine frescoes of Christian iconography which

are thought to be a unique example, outside of Greece, of a church interior painted in its entirety by Pachomaioi monks.

The building has associative value with the historic origins of the first Jewish community established in 1849 in Toronto, as the third location of a place of worship for the Holy Blossom congregation, and as the earliest surviving synagogue in the City. It is valued for its association with the Toronto architect John Wilson Siddall (1861-1941), and his first ecclesiastical commission. The building is also valued for its association with the Italian mosaicist Sirio Tonelli and the Greek Pachomaioi monks, Theophilos and Chrysostomos. It has associative value with the origins of the Greek community in the Garden District in 1909 and as the first purpose-built place of worship which has also functioned as a cultural centre for the Saint George's Greek Orthodox Community from 1937 to the present. Its program of Byzantine icons yields information which contribute to an understanding of the Christian Byzantine faith.

Contextually, St George's Greek Orthodox Church (Holy Blossom Synagogue) is valued as a prominent landmark in the Garden District and the City of Toronto for over 120 years. Situated on historic Bond Street, on an axis terminated to the north by Ryerson University's Kerr Hall, the synagogue/church building has contextual value as it is visually and historically linked to its surroundings, maintaining the character of the street which has been lined with a sequence of places of worship representing diverse religious denominations including Baptist, Congregational, German Lutheran, Roman Catholic and United for over 170 years. The building is valued as it contributes to maintaining the low-rise scale of Bond Street between Dundas and Gould streets with buildings dating from a wide range of periods built over 150 years.

#### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 115 Bond Street are:

#### EXTERIOR:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building, mid-block on the east side of Bond Street
- The scale, form and massing of the two-and-half-storey building on a high, raised basement
- The materials, comprising sandstone, brick, mosaic and copper with stucco cladding on the side elevations
- The domed roofs on the main body of the prayer hall and the two towers all resting on octagonal drums with windows and the two conical roofs on the east stair towers.
- The copper cladding on the domes and metal cladding of the drums with their rows of decorative arches and mouldings and dentillated cornices
- The arrangement of openings on the principal (west) elevation which includes the pair of flat-headed wood doors, the quintuplet of five flat-headed windows over the pair of doors and with an arcade of five openings above at the upper level. To either side in the towers are the triplets of flat headed windows at the base and the elongated triplets above.
- The principal (west) elevation which is clad in stone, brick, cast stone (repairs) and mosaic
- The rusticated stone featured in the alternating narrow and deep courses at the base of the building
- The smooth-faced ashlar also in alternating courses around the doors, as well as the ashlar used around the first row of windows, the sills and arches of windows above, in the

decorative carvings of the great central arch, including the columns and capitals, the lintel over the two entry doors with panels of blind arcades, rows of decorative bosses and other carved ornament, the row of five arches with small columns supporting Romanesque Corinthian capitals and at the parapet, the octagonal drums on top of the four piers, and the decorative panels of arches spanning between the piers

- The pattern of stonework created by the size and shape of blocks and mortar joints
- The buff brick and decorative brick details including the colonettes at each corner of the piers with their tiny capitals
- The mosaic illustrating Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon
- The panels at the parapet of cast stone repairs
- The main entrance with its wood doors, with carved bands of decorative geometric patterns, long cast-iron strap hinges, metal door frames with metal lintels with a decorative linear geometric pattern

#### INTERIOR:

- The frescoes in the entry foyer, the main prayer hall including the dome, drum, apses, walls and pendentives
- The stained glass windows in the prayer hall as well as the staircases
- The four columns and capitals supporting the main dome
- The cast metal balustrades of the galleries with their arabesque patterns
- The carved iconostasis in the arch of the sanctuary
- The pair of stairs on the west side of the church with their handrails
- The pair of metal spiral stairs on the east side of the church

No liturgical elements were identified.

**SCHEDULE B**  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

PIN 21101-0140(LT)

LT 66 E/S BOND ST PL 22A TORONTO; PT LT 65 E/S BOND ST PL 22A TORONTO AS IN  
CA18266

City of Toronto Province of Ontario  
Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66)