

Authority: Administrative Committee Report No. 14, Item 1
adopted by the former City of Scarborough Council on September 2, 1997
Intended for first presentation to Council: June 3, 1998
Adopted by Council: June 5, 1998

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW No. 303-1998

**To designate the R.C. Harris Filtration Plant
Concession A, Part Lot 35, Plan 1085, Lot 1, 6-9, 16
Part Lot 2, 10, 11, 15, Plan 1117, Lot 17, Part Road Allowance
closed now, Registered Plan 64R-12780, Part 1
under the Ontario Heritage Act as being of historical and architectural value.**

WHEREAS the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18 as amended, authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historical and architectural value or interest; and

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the lands and premises known as the R.C. Harris Filtration Plant property more particularly denoted in Schedule "A" hereto and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "B" hereto; and

WHEREAS no notice of objection to the said proposed designation has been served upon the Clerk of the municipality;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. The real property, more particularly described in Schedule "A" hereto, known as the R.C. Harris Filtration Plant, is hereby designated as being of historical and architectural value or interest.
2. The City Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper Land Registry office.
3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 5th day of June, A.D. 1998.

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

NOVINA WONG,
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

SCHEDULE “A” TO BY-LAW No. 303-1998

DESCRIPTION OF LAND

Concession A, Part Lot 35, Plan 1085, Lots 1, 6-9, 16
Part Lots 2, 10, 11, 15, Plan 1117, Lot 17, Part of closed Road Allowance, closed now, designated
as Registered Plan 64R-12780, Part 1
2701 Queen Street East, in the City of Toronto in the Province of Ontario.

TYPE

Designation under The Ontario Heritage Act.

OWNER

City of Toronto.

SCHEDULE “B” TO BY-LAW No. 303-1998

REASONS FOR THE DESIGNATION OF “R.C. HARRIS FILTRATION PLANT”.

The R.C. Harris Filtration Plant and site are recommended for designation for historic and architectural reasons. The plant is named after R.C. Harris, Commissioner of Works and City Engineer for the City of Toronto from 1912 to 1945 who began planning for it in 1913. The plant is the largest water treatment and supply facility in Metropolitan Toronto. When the plant opened in 1941, it was one of the largest water filtration plants in North America and applied leading-edge technology. Its construction is a central part of the story of Michael Ondaatje’s novel, In the Skin of a Lion. In 1992, the plant was declared a National Historic Civil Engineering Site by the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering.

From the beginning in the plant’s planning, it was intended to be architecturally attractive with the surrounding grounds to be a public space for leisure. It is now a scenic landmark on the Toronto waterfront. Engineering design was done by William Gore and William Storrie and, for pumping and electrical systems, by H.G. Acres. The architectural design was by Thomas C. Pomphrey, a member of the staff of the Gore, Nasmith & Storrie firm. The R.C. Harris Filtration Plant is an excellent example of classically inspired Art Deco design and is the largest ensemble of Art Deco buildings in Metropolitan Toronto. At the time when it was constructed, Art Deco and Modern Classicism were popular styles for large buildings. The buildings are characterized on the exterior by simplified pediments and pilasters and flattened geometrical Art Deco ornamentation in stone, brick and metal. There are also complementary Romanesque features, e.g. rounded arches over the door and window openings. The interior of the Filter/Administration building has notable Art Deco marble decor and a striking staircase leading to the upper level from the main (south) entrance.

There are three buff brick and Queenston limestone buildings of architectural interest on the site: the Filter/Administration building south of Queen Street, the west wing of which was completed in 1935, the east wing in 1956 in sympathy with Pomphrey’s original design. The Pumping Station set closest to the lake was built in 1935-1937 as was the Service Building to the north of the Pumping Station. In addition, there is an important architectural landscape feature, the Terrace and fountain completed in 1935 south of the Filter/Administration Building. North of the Filter/Administration Building to Queen Street is a large flat open lawn area and south of the buildings to Lake Ontario a sloping lawn.

As John Bentley Mays, The Globe and Mail’s architecture critic stated: the R.C. Harris Plant is Toronto’s “supreme masterwork of Art Deco Building”.