

Authority: Toronto East York Community Council Report No. 6, Clause No. 46,
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on July 24, 25 and 26, 2001
Enacted by Council: July 26, 2001

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW No. 689-2001

**To designate the property at 60 Simcoe Street (Roy Thomson Hall) as being of
architectural and historical value or interest.**

WHEREAS authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 60 Simcoe Street (Roy Thomson Hall) as being of architectural and historical value or interest; and

WHEREAS the *Ontario Heritage Act* 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 or architectural value or interest; and

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the land and premises known as 60 Simcoe Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Notice of Intention to designate the property and has caused the Notice of Intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "A" to this by-law; and

WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation was served upon the Clerk of the municipality.

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

1. The property at 60 Simcoe Street, more particularly described in Schedule "B" and shown on Schedule "C" attached to this by-law, is designated as being of architectural and historical value or interest.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against 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 owners of the property at 60 Simcoe Street 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 as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 26th day of July, A.D. 2001.

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

JEFFREY A. ABRAMS,
Acting City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

SCHEDULE “A” HERITAGE PROPERTY REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is the “Long Statement of Reasons for Designation” for the designation of the property at 60 Simcoe Street (Roy Thomson Hall) under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It contains the Heritage Property Profile, as well as sections on the Historical Occupancy, Architectural Description and Significance of the property. The introduction, below, forms the “Short Statement of Reasons for Designation”, intended for publication.

The property at 60 Simcoe Street is recommended for designation for architectural reasons. Roy Thomson Hall was completed in 1982 after a ten-year construction period. The hall was named in memory of the first Baron Thomson of Fleet (1894-1976), the Canadian-born newspaper entrepreneur, and was devised as a permanent venue for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Mendelssohn Choir. The prominent Canadian architect Arthur Erickson designed the building in association with the Toronto firm of Mathers and Haldenby.

Roy Thomson Hall is constructed of steel, concrete and glass. The plan features an oval concert hall above a four-storey square with two levels of underground parking and a partially-exposed service level with rehearsal halls. The structure is covered by a multi-paned glass roof with triangular and diamond patterns divided by glazing bars and supported by a steel-tube skeleton.

The glass cladding provides views into the building where concrete columns support a series of interlocking lobbies, connected at various levels by stairs. The mirrored foyer conceals the double walls designed to reduce the penetration of noise into the auditorium. The 30,00-square-foot auditorium rises 80 feet and features textured concrete walls, balustrades and parapets, stainless steel railings, doors and fixtures, and coordinated upholstery. The U-shaped seating continues around the rear of the stage. The balcony is divided into a series of sloped units.

Alterations to the auditorium proposed in 2001 by the architectural firm of Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg involve the addition of wood upper side walls, the replacement of the oculus with a moveable central acoustical canopy, and a seating plan with aisles and box stalls.

Roy Thomson Hall extends along the west side of Simcoe Street between King Street West and Wellington Street West. The building, set close to Simcoe Street, is separated from King Street West by the Dunnington-Grubb Court, a sunken space with a reflecting pool and terrace. The scale of Roy Thomson Hall complements the neighbouring St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church and the Royal Alexandra Theatre. With its unusual shape and cladding, Roy Thomson Hall is a city-wide landmark

1.1 HERITAGE PROPERTY PROFILE

ROY THOMSON HALL

ADDRESS:	60 Simcoe Street (west side of Simcoe Street from King Street West to Wellington Street West)
WARD:	20 (Trinity-Spadina)
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY:	New Toronto
HISTORICAL NAME:	Roy Thomson Hall
CONSTRUCTION DATE:	Completed 1982
ORIGINAL OWNER:	Board of Governors of Massey Hall
ORIGINAL USE:	Commercial (concert hall)
CURRENT USE: *	Commercial (* <i>this does not refer to permitted use(s) defined by the Zoning By-law</i>)
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN:	Arthur Erickson, architect, in association with Mathers and Haldenby, architects; Eastern Construction, contractors; Bolt, Baranek and Newman, acoustics sub-consultants
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:	Modern
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION:	Steel, concrete and glass construction with stainless steel detailing
ALTERATIONS:	2001, Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg, interior alterations (proposed) to auditorium
HERITAGE CATEGORY:	Category A (Landmark Heritage Property)
RECORDER:	Kathryn Anderson, Heritage Preservation Services:
REPORT DATE:	March 2001

2.0 HISTORICAL OCCUPANCY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

2.1 NEW TOWN

Following the establishment of the Town of York in 1793, the community quickly expanded. In 1797, government administrator Peter Russell created a “New Town” by extending the boundaries of the townsite westward from Jarvis Street to Peter Street. The area initially evolved as an exclusive residential enclave where community leaders, including Bishop John Strachan, built fine houses. John Elmsley, the first resident Chief Justice of Upper Canada, developed a substantial estate in the block bounded by King, Simcoe (formerly Graves), Wellington (formerly Market) and John Streets. In 1813, the provincial government purchased the Elmsley property for Government House, the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor (the house was rebuilt in 1872). This acquisition preceded the relocation in 1829-1832 of the Parliament Buildings from Front Street East to Simcoe Place, the square directly south of Government House. With the appearance of Upper Canada College on the northwest corner of King and Simcoe Streets in 1831, a pattern of institutional buildings was introduced within the residential confines of New Town.

The character of New Town changed in the mid-19th century with the arrival of the steam railways. The Northern Railway established a depot and workshops at Spadina Avenue and Front Street West,

while the Grand Trunk Railway built its yards east of Spadina Avenue. Following the Great Fire of 1904, industrial uses moved into the neighbourhood, attracted by the proximity of the railways and the extension of the King Street streetcar line west to Dufferin Street. Government House was razed in 1912 and replaced by the Canadian Pacific Railway's Express Building. The latter building, demolished in 1977, was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The CPR declared the property surplus in the early 1970s. As part of its plans for the redevelopment of the block, Marathon Realty, the development arm of the CPR, offered the site to the city for a new concert hall.

2.2 ROY THOMSON HALL

Musical performances were held at St. Lawrence Hall and at local theatres and churches until 1894 when Massey Hall opened as the first permanent concert hall in Toronto. Funded by industrialist and philanthropist, Hart Massey, the hall became the performance venue for the Mendelssohn Choir in 1895 and the Toronto Symphony in 1923. While Massey Hall boasted the best acoustics in the city, the building lacked an efficient lobby, rehearsal space and backstage areas.

Plans were made for a new facility, with construction initiated in 1972 and completed in 1982. The complex was named for Roy Thomson (1894-1976), the Canadian-born newspaper entrepreneur and the first Baron Thomson of Fleet. Roy Thomson Hall became the new venue of the Mendelssohn Choir and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Since its opening, the hall has welcomed internationally-recognized performers, including Leonard Bernstein, Kiri Te Kanawa, Nigel Kennedy, and Yo-Yo Ma, while accommodating business meetings and charity events. Roy Thomson Hall was recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1992. At ten years old, it was the "youngest" property listed on the Inventory.

In 1990 to 1995, the owner engaged Artec Consultants to plan and supervise the acoustical upgrade of the auditorium. The Toronto architectural firm of Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg subsequently prepared plans to implement Artec's recommendations. In designs submitted in 2001, the architects propose to alter the auditorium as described in section 3.3 below.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE:

3.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Roy Thomson Hall is a unique structure that is part of the Modern era of architecture in Canada. The design fits into a description of its architect's style: "Contributing to the rebirth of Modernism within Canada, Erickson has shown considerable skill in adapting and extending principles drawn from Le Corbusier. He has shown a unique ability to handle large-scale contemporary architecture in the urban context by creating bold architectural forms that exploit the effects of various materials and structural systems" (Placzek, 28-29).

3.2 ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN

The notable Canadian architect Arthur Erickson designed Roy Thomson Hall in association with the Toronto architectural firm of Mathers and Haldenby. Eastern Construction was the contractor, while

the New York City firm of Bolt, Baranek and Newman served as the acoustics sub-consultants.

Arthur Erickson (born 1924) established a solo practice in 1953 after completing studies at McGill University and the University of British Columbia. A decade later, Erickson and Geoffrey Massey formed Erickson/Massey Associates after winning a design competition for Simon Fraser University. With the latter project, the firm achieved international recognition. Major commissions in Canada included theme buildings at EXPO 67 in Montreal, the MacMillan Bloedel Tower (1969 with Massey and Francis Donaldson) in Vancouver, the Canadian Pavilion at Expo 70 in Osaka, Japan, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC (1973-1976), and the provincial government offices and courthouse (1973 ff.) in Vancouver. The Canadian Embassy in Washington, D. C. (completed 1989) is among Erickson's international works. He was the recipient of the Chicago Architectural Award (1984) with Philip Johnson and John Burgee, and gold medals from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1984) and the American Institute of Architects (1986). In 1972, Erickson was the principal of Arthur Erickson Architects. While financial difficulties forced him to close his office in the late 1980s, Erickson continues to practice in association with various Vancouver firms. In Toronto, in addition to Roy Thomson Hall, his commissions include Spadina and Yorkdale Stations on the Spadina Subway Line (1982), King's Landing Condominiums on Queen's Quay West (1984), and the Watergarden Condominium in North York (1992).

Erickson's local associates on the project were the well-known firm of Mathers and Haldenby. Alvan Sherlock Mathers and Eric W. Haldenby formed their partnership at the close of World War One. Their practice produced some of the most important buildings in Toronto, including the Canada Permanent Building at 320 Bay Street (completed 1930) and the Bank of Nova Scotia Building at 44 King Street West (completed in 1951 in association with Beck and Eadie and now part of Scotia Plaza). Mathers and Haldenby completed numerous projects on the University of Toronto campus, beginning in the 1920s with the Botany Building and continuing through the 1950s with the Sir Daniel Wilson Residence on St. George Street. The latter properties are included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

3.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Roy Thomson Hall is constructed of steel, concrete and glass. The plan features an irregular oval concert hall above a four-storey square with two levels of underground parking, a partially-exposed service level with rehearsal halls, and glazed walls beneath the roof. The structure is covered by a multi-paned glass roof with triangular and diamond patterns divided by glazing bars and supported by a steel-tube skeleton.

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The glass cladding provides views into the building where concrete columns support a series of interlocking lobbies, connected at various levels by stairs. The mirrored foyer conceals the double walls designed to reduce the penetration of noise into the auditorium. The 30,00-square-foot auditorium rises 80 feet and features textured concrete walls, balustrades and parapets, stainless steel railings, doors and fixtures, and coordinated upholstery. The U-shaped seating continues around the

rear of the stage. The balcony is divided into a series of sloped units. Originally, the auditorium contained globe fixtures designed to control the lighting, ventilation and sound systems, and suspended and moveable plastic disks and fabric-clad cylindrical banners to adjust the acoustics.

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS (2001)

In plans submitted in 2001, alterations are proposed to upgrade the interior to resolve acoustical problems. The architects propose to alter the orchestra level with a seating plan involving new access, aisles, side wall boxes, stall seating and stage edge. The volume of the auditorium will be reduced and reconfigured as a more rectilinear, less oval shaped room with the additional of light coloured wood on the upper side walls. Moveable central acoustic and crescent-shaped canopies will replace the existing oculus, light trusses, disks and banners. Stage lighting will be incorporated into the central acoustic canopy in a circular pattern similar to the existing oculus lighting.

3.4 ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

With its unique design executed by one of Canada's best-known architects, Roy Thomson Hall is an architectural landmark in Toronto.

4.0 CONTEXT

4.1 CONTEXT AND SETTING

The property at 60 Simcoe Street is located on the west side of Simcoe Street between King Street West and Wellington Street West. The scale of Roy Thomson Hall complements the neighbouring St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (1875) and Manse (1873) at 73 and 75 Simcoe Street and the Royal Alexander Theatre (1906) at 260 King Street West. The latter properties are designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Roy Thomson Hall is set close to Simcoe Street and separated from King Street West by the Dunnington-Grubb Court, a sunken space with a reflecting pool and terraces designed by the Garden Club of Toronto.

4.2 CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

With its location near a prominent intersection in the King Street West theatre district, Roy Thomson Hall is a city-wide landmark in Toronto.

5.0 SUMMARY

Roy Thomson Hall is architecturally significant as an important Modern building designed by the notable Canadian architect, Arthur Erickson.

6.0 SOURCES

Anderson, Peter S. "Roy Herbert Thomson, Baron Thomson of Fleet". Entry in The Canadian Encyclopedia. Millenium edition. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999.

Dendy, William. Lost Toronto. 2nd ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993.

Dendy, William, and William Kilbourn. Toronto Observed. Toronto: Oxford University, 1986.

Kalman, Harold, Ron Phillips, and Robin Ward. Exploring Vancouver. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993.

“King-Spadina Area Survey”. Toronto Historical Board, June 1991.

McHugh, Patricia. Toronto Architecture. A City Guide. 2nd ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989.

McMordie, Michael. “Arthur Erickson”. Entry in The Canadian Encyclopedia. Millennium edition. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999.

Placzek, Adolf K. Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects. Vol. 2. London: The Free Press, 1982.

Subject: By-law: Designation of premises 60 Simcoe Street (Roy Thomson Hall) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (Ward 20 –Trinity-Spadina)
File: S69-H1

SCHEDULE “B”

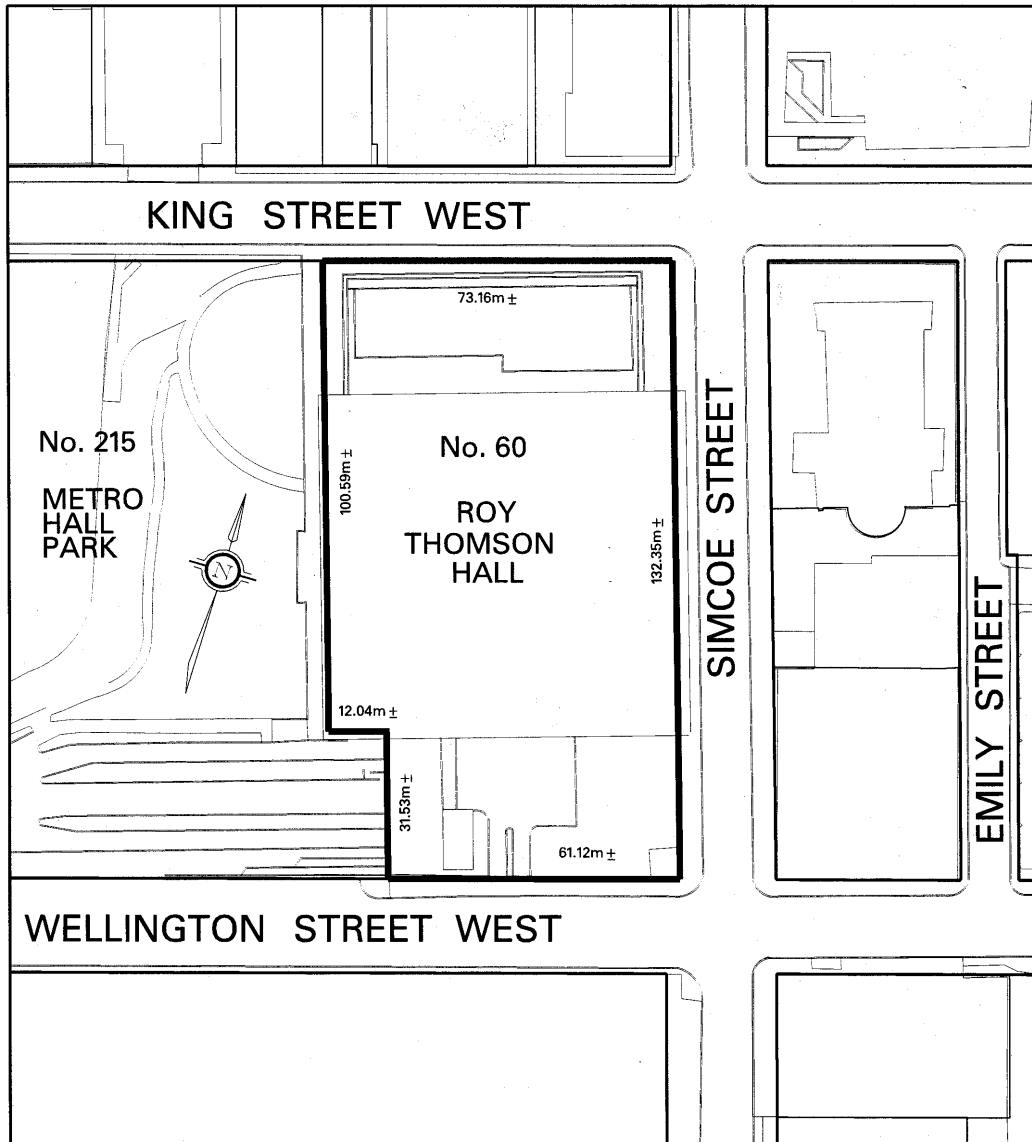
In the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of Lot 5 on the north side of Market Street, now Wellington Street West, Lots 25 and 26 on the south side of King Street, now King Street West, parts of Lots 6 and 7 on the north side of Market Street, now Wellington Street West, part of Lot 24 on the south side of King Street, now King Street West, on the Town of York Plan designated as PART 13 on Plan 63R-4544, both said Plans being in the Land Registry Office for the Metropolitan Toronto Registry Division (No. 64).

The southerly limit of King Street West, the westerly limit of Simcoe Street and the northerly limit of Wellington Street West as confirmed under the Boundaries Act by Plan BA-1148 (CT278360).

The said lands being most recently described in Instrument CA57678 (Schedule B).

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Sketch No. PS-2001-044 dated July 11, 2001, as set out in Schedule “C”.

SCHEDULE "C"



Toronto

WORKS & EMERGENCY SERVICES
TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION
SURVEY & MAPPING

NOTE:
THIS SKETCH IS NOT
A PLAN OF SURVEY
AND HAS BEEN COMPILED
FROM SURVEY NOTES AND
OFFICE RECORDS; IT SHALL
NOT BE USED EXCEPT FOR
THE PURPOSE INDICATED
IN THE TITLE BLOCK

PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET

No. 60 SIMCOE STREET
(ROY THOMSON HALL)
LAND DESIGNATED AS BEING OF
ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL
VALUE AND INTEREST

(NOT TO SCALE)

WARD 20 TRINITY-SPADINA
DATE: JULY 11, 2001

SKETCH No. PS-2001-044