

Authority: Toronto and East York Community Council Item 15.6,  
adopted as amended, by City of Toronto Council on May 26 and 27, 2008  
Enacted by Council: October 30, 2008

**CITY OF TORONTO**

**BY-LAW No. 1156-2008**

**To designate the property at 1 Front Street East (O’Keefe Centre) as being of cultural heritage value or interest.**

WHEREAS authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 1 Front Street East (O’Keefe Centre) as being of cultural heritage 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 cultural heritage 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 1 Front Street East and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, Notice of Intention to designate the property and has caused the Notice of Intention 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, Notice requirements under 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 was served upon the Clerk of the municipality;

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

1. The property at 1 Front Street East, more particularly described in Schedule “B” and shown on Schedule “C” attached to this by-law, is designated as being of cultural heritage 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 1 Front Street East 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, Notice requirements under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 30th day of October, A.D. 2008.

GLORIA LINDSAY LUBY,  
Deputy Speaker

ULLI S. WATKISS  
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

**SCHEDULE “A”****REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**Description

The property at 1 Front Street East is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and meets the criteria prescribed for municipal designation by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the southeast corner of Yonge Street and Front Street East, the O’Keefe Centre opened in 1960. The site was recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1990, and is more recently known as the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The O’Keefe Centre has design value as an innovative example of Modern design that was inspired by the International style introduced to Toronto in the 1950s. Its design, which recalls Modern concert halls including Royal Festival Hall in London, England, is particularly distinguished by the monumental cantilevered canopy that faces Front Street East.

The O’Keefe Centre is associated with Toronto’s cultural development after World War II. With funding provided by the O’Keefe Brewing Company under the leadership of entrepreneur E. P. Taylor, the land was donated by the City of Toronto. While the project was conceived as a multi-building complex recalling the Rockefeller Centre, it was scaled down to a single theatre with a seating capacity of 3250. Offering a staging area that was expansive for the time, the O’Keefe Centre opened as the largest theatre in Toronto. After showcasing the inaugural performance of the musical “Camelot,” its stage welcomed a variety of entertainers, from international dance companies and opera stars to rock concerts and award shows. It served for over forty years as the performance venue of the National Ballet of Canada and the Canadian Opera Company.

The O’Keefe Centre is associated with the practice of the leading Toronto architects, interior decorators, landscape designers and artists of the period. Toronto architect Earle C. Morgan prepared the plans in association with the architectural practice of Page and Steele and its chief designer, Peter Dickinson. Page and Steele were among Toronto’s most prolific architectural firms of the post-World War II era, and projects such as the Benvenuto Place Apartments (1955), the Queen Elizabeth Theatre (1956-1957) at Exhibition Place, and Commerce Court (completed in 1972 in association with American architect I. M. Pei) are recognized on the City’s heritage inventory. The interiors at the O’Keefe Centre were conceived by the important local interior designer Herbert Irvine, who worked with associates from the Robert Simpson Company and T. Eaton Company department stores. Also on the interior, the Toronto-born artist R. York Wilson created the lobby mural entitled “The Seven Lively Arts.” The landscape design firm of Dunnington Grubb incorporated rare plant species in its plans for the gardens and landscaped elements.

Contextually, the O’Keefe Centre is a local landmark. It occupies a prominent location on Front Street East between Yonge Street and Scott Street where the site slopes southward to The Esplanade. It introduced contemporary design and materials to a neighbourhood formerly marked by late 19th century commercial warehouses, and began the transformation of the area into a cultural destination.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the O’Keefe Centre associated with its design, associative and contextual value as an important example of Modern architecture that is linked to the cultural development of Toronto where it is a local landmark are:

### **Exterior Attributes**

- The form, scale and massing.
- The materials, with pre-cast, cast and reinforced concrete, steel, limestone, black granite, and bronze.
- The three-part plan, with the entrance block, auditorium and fly tower, which is anchored by a large base.
- The base, which is multi-storied at the south end to take advantage of the change in grade of the site as it slopes southward toward The Esplanade.
- At the north end, the single-storey entrance block with the monumental cantilevered canopy that covers the passenger drop-off area and shelters the principal entrance to the complex.
- On the north façade and portions of the east and west elevations of the entrance block, the mixture of large glazed sections with black granite detailing.
- The bronze door and window frames.
- Behind the entrance block, the auditorium under an angled roof.
- South of the auditorium, the fly tower with a flat roof and a wing containing the ‘stage door’ entry.
- Along the east and west elevations, the flat-roofed canopies that connect to terraces with stairs leading to the lower levels and side entries.
- The landscape along the east side of the property, including the composition and materials used to define the open space and planted areas.

**Interior Attributes**

- The north entrance foyer with the Carrara marble cladding.
- South of the foyer, the double-height lobby with the Carrara marble cladding, the mezzanine, the mural portraying “The Seven Lively Arts” that extends over 30 metres (100 feet) along the north wall, and the pair of bronze staircases on the south wall.
- The fan-shaped auditorium with the large structural steel thrust balcony, the suspended acoustic ceilings, and the cherry plywood acoustic panels.

**SCHEDULE "B"**

In the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario, in the Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66), being composed of:

FIRSTLY:

PIN 21400-0010 (LT)

PCL 1-4 SEC YL; PT WATER LT 1 IN FRONT OF TOWNLT 1 & PT PIECE OF LAND LYING BTN THE N LIMIT THEREOF & S LIMIT OF FRONT ST TORONTO (IF ANY LAND LIES BTN SUCH LIMITS) COMM AT A POINT ON THE S/S OF FRONT ST 70 FT IN AN ELY DIRECTION ALONG THE S/S OF FRONT ST - FROM THE INTERSECTION CF THE SLY LIMIT - WITH THE ELY LIMIT OF YONGE ST SUCH POINT BEING IN THE ELY LINE OF THE ELY WALL OF THE BUILDING FORMERLY OCCUPIED AS A STORE BY MESSRS. DUNSPAUGH AND WATSON AND ADJOINING TO THE W THE PREMISES HEREBY DESCRIBED; THENCE IN A N ELY DIRECTION ALONG THE SLY LIMIT OF FRONT ST 35 FT MORE OR LESS TO THE MIDDLE OF THE PARTITION WALL OF THE BUILDING ERECTED ON THE LAND TO THE E OF THIS LAND; THENCE IN A SLY DIRECTION ALONG THE SAID MIDDLE LINE OF THE SAID PARTITION WALL AND PARALLEL TO YONGE ST 180 FT MORE OR LESS TO A LANE; THENCE IN A S WLY DIRECTION PARALLEL TO FRONT ST 17 FT 7 INCHES MORE OR LESS TO THE OUTSIDE LINE OF THE EASTERN WALL OF THE ENGINE HOUSE BUILT BY THE SAID DUNSPAUGH AND WATSON; THENCE NLY ALONG THE SAID OUTSIDE LINE OF SAID EASTERN WALL OF SAID ENGINE HOUSE 26 FT 10 INCHES MORE OR LESS IN A DIRECTION PARALLEL TO YONGE ST TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE NORTHERN WALL OF SAID ENGINE HOUSE; THENCE ALONG SAID NORTHERN WALL AND IN A DIRECTION WLY AT RIGHT ANGLES WITH YONGE ST 4 FT 10 1/2 INCHES; THENCE IN A SLY DIRECTION PARALLEL WITH YONGE ST 1 FT 6 INCHES; THENCE STILL ALONG THE OUTSIDE OF SAID NORTHERN WALL AND IN A DIRECTION WLY AT RIGHT ANGLES WITH YONGE ST 11 FT 11 1/2 INCHES MORE OR LESS TO THE E/S OF THE FIRST MENTIONED WALL; THENCE ALONG THE FIRST MENTIONED WALL AND IN A NLY DIRECTION PARALLEL WITH YONGE ST 149 FT 9 INCHES MORE OR LESS TO THE POB; T/W THE RIGHT TO USE THE FIRST MENTIONED WALL NOW BEING UPON THE WLY ADJOINING PREMISES FOR ALL THE USUAL PURPOSES OF A PARTITION WALL

SECONDLY:

PIN 21400-0086 (LT)

PART OF THE STRIP OF LAND BETWEEN THE TOP OF BANK AND THE WATER'S EDGE, PART OF THE WALKS AND GARDENS, PART OF WATER LOTS 1 & 36, REGISTERED PLAN 5A TORONTO DESIGNATED AS PT 1 PL 66R23825

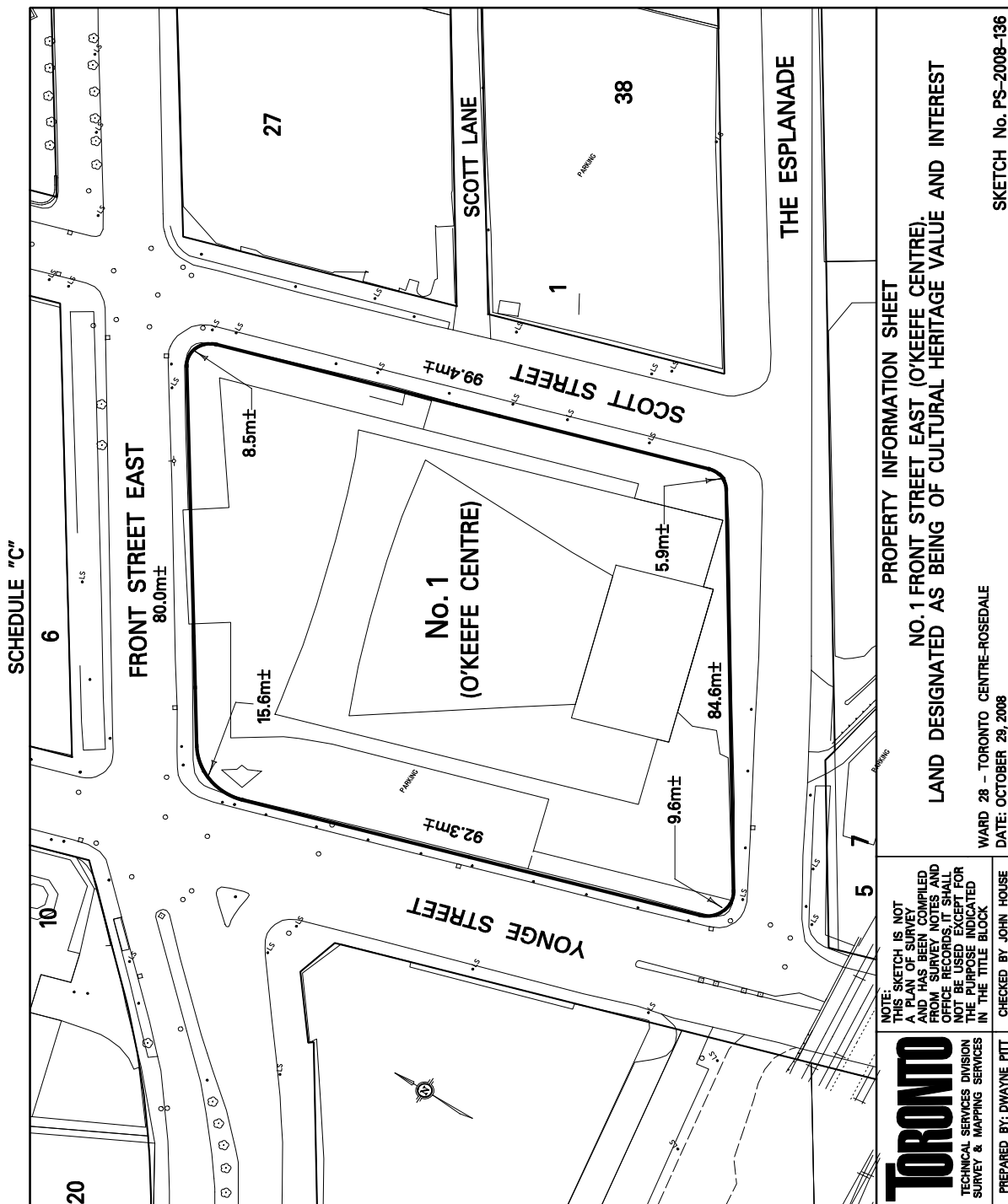
THIRDLY:

PIN 21400-0087 (LT)

PART OF WATER LOT 36, REGISTERED PLAN 5A TORONTO DESIGNATED AS PT 2  
PL 66R23825

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Sketch No. PS-2008-126 dated September 23, 2008, as set out in Schedule "C".

SCHEDULE "C"



**TORONTO**  
 TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION  
 SURVEY & MAPPING SERVICES

NOTE: SKETCH IS NOT  
 THE 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

PREPARED BY: DWAYNE PITT

PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET  
 NO. 1 FRONT STREET EAST (O'KEEFE CENTRE).  
 LAND DESIGNATED AS BEING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE AND INTEREST

WARD 28 - TORONTO CENTRE-ROSEDALE  
 DATE: OCTOBER 29, 2008

CHECKED BY: JOHN HOUSE

SKETCH No. PS-2008-136