

Authority: Toronto and East York Community Council  
Item TE27.21, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on  
November 7, 8 and 9, 2017

## **CITY OF TORONTO**

### **BY-LAW 1347-2019**

**To designate the property at 170 Merton Street as being of cultural heritage value or interest.**

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 authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 170 Merton Street as being 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 lands and premises known as 170 Merton Street 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, § 162-4.1. Notice requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act; and

Whereas one notice of objection was served upon the Clerk of the municipality but has since been withdrawn; and

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

The Council of the City of Toronto enacts:

- 1.** The property at 170 Merton Street, more particularly described in Schedule B 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 170 Merton Street at 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 October 3, 2019.

Frances Nunziata,  
Speaker

Ulli S. Watkiss,  
City Clerk

(Seal of the City)

**SCHEDULE A****STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**

The property at 170 Merton Street (the former Visiting Homemakers Association) 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 170 Merton Street contains the former Visiting Homemakers Association building designed by Leslie Rebanks and constructed in 1969 as a two-and-a-half storey office building with brick cladding. An elevator was added on the east elevation in 1995.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The former Visiting Homemakers Association headquarters building has design value as a distinctive representative of the post-war style known as Late Modernism. A high degree of artistic merit and craftsmanship is evident in the castle-like massing of the building including the octagonal towers and bays, the integration of a terrace space within the complex and the use of concrete brick and mortar (originally pigmented a dark grey) with expressed corner joints combined with 'ribbon windows.'

The building has associative value as the first purpose-built headquarters for the Visiting Homemakers Association (VHA), a Toronto-based social welfare agency which was founded in 1925 by Barbara Blackstock providing care to disadvantaged families, the sick, the elderly, and people living with intellectual disability and homelessness while also undertaking research and reporting on the co-relation between low wages, poverty and health. The VHA occupied the building for 40 years until 2010. The building has associative value as a formative work in the career of the Toronto-based architect Leslie Rebanks, a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and an elected member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, known for his award winning and critically-acclaimed projects for Wittington Properties Ltd. and Loblaw's. The building also has value for its association with the W. Garfield Weston Foundation who donated the building and the property to the VHA dedicating it to the memory of Mrs. W. Garfield (Reta) Weston in 1970.

Contextually, the VHA headquarters building is important in defining and maintaining the mid- twentieth century character of Merton Street which, following the completion of the Yonge Subway line in 1954 and the local Davisville station, saw the transformation of the street from a late 19th-century road characterized by industrial buildings and Victorian semi-detached dwellings and row houses to a dense urban street of low-rise residential and commercial buildings with a variety of distinctive designs. The introduction of health and social welfare agencies, including the Girl Guides and War Amps as well as the VHA which had specially-designed headquarters, contributes to the distinctive post-war, architectural character of the street.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the former Visiting Homemakers Association are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the north side of Merton Street between Yonge Street and Pailton Crescent
- The scale, form and massing of the two-and-a-half storey office building with its octagonal towers on the south, west and north elevations
- On the principal (south) elevation, the octagonal one-and-a-half storey bay and the raised terrace and staircase on the south elevation and the projecting roof overhang
- The principal (south) elevation and two side elevations facing east and west with their concrete brick cladding
- The interlocking detail of the bricks at the corners of the towers and bays
- The arrangement of openings on the principal (south) elevation which includes, at the first floor, the recessed entrance, the ribbon windows at the second level and the corner windows at the south-west corner at the basement, first and second floor levels
- The arrangement of openings on the side elevations (west and east) with the bands of ribbon windows
- The black metal frames of the ribbon windows with their vertically proportioned openings

The following are not included as heritage attributes:

The 1995 elevator tower on the east elevation

**SCHEDULE B**

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

PIN 21124-0024 (LT)  
PART OF LOTS 30 AND 32, REGISTERED PLAN M-5  
DESIGNATED AS PART 1 , PLAN R-3922

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