

1006 Bloor Street West: Paradise Theatre

Description

The property at 1006 Bloor Street West is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties for its cultural heritage value or interest. Located on the northwest corner of Bloor Street West and Westmoreland Avenue, the site contains a two-storey movie theatre. According to the city directories, the Bloor Palace Theatre (later known as the Kitchener Theatre) occupied the property beginning in 1910. In 1937, archival records indicate that the Paradise Theatre was built on the same site.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Paradise Theatre has cultural heritage value for its design or physical value as a representative example of a World War II era movie theatre with Art Deco styling. Introduced in the 1920s and identified by its abstracted Classical and geometric elements, the Art Deco style was especially popular for movie theatres.

The Paradise Theatre also has historical or associative value as it reflects the work of Benjamin Brown, one of the earliest practicing Jewish architects in Toronto. Brown gained prominence in the late 1920s when he prepared the plans for a number of large-scale warehouses, including the Tower Building (1928) and Balfour Building (1930) on Spadina Avenue, north of King Street West, which are recognized on the City's heritage inventory.

The property at 1006 Bloor Street has contextual value as it anchors the corner of Bloor Street West and Westmoreland Avenue, where the entrance to the movie theatre faces the main street, with commercial store fronts placed along the side street. On the opposite side of Bloor Street West and to the west, the Bloor-Gladstone Branch of the Toronto Public Library at #1101 Bloor is another local landmark that is recognized on the City's heritage inventory.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Paradise Theatre related to its physical or design value as a representative example of a World War II era movie theatre designed in the Art Deco style are found on the principal (south) façade, the roofline above the latter wall, and the portion of the east elevation facing Westmoreland Avenue that is described below. On the two-storey south façade, the lower floor is now faced with granite and contains two sets of stainless steel and glass doors and, on the east (right) side of the recess, a box office window. A projecting marquee with rounded corners has a stepped parapet. Clad with buff brick and trimmed with buff brick and cast stone, the upper storey is organized into three sections with a projecting centre bay. Single flat-headed window openings in brick frames are positioned in the outer bays, while a trio of openings is found in the

centre of the wall. A vertical emphasis is created by the bands of stone beneath the window openings in the outer bays and the brick quoins marking the centre bay. This effect is balanced by the horizontal band courses in cast stone and brick under the roof. Cast stone coping marks the roofline, including the central parapet, while a trio of stylized cast stone pilaster strips rise above the central window openings and wrap over the parapet. A two-sided vertical sign labeled "PARADISE" projects from the upper storey (the original sign has been replaced).

On the east elevation facing Westmoreland Avenue, the lower storey projects and features a rounded southeast corner with a band of buff brickwork above the door and window openings (the first-floor openings and the upper portion of the east wall are not included in the Reasons for Listing).

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