

Torno Penthouse

Description

The property at 130 Bloor Street West is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value or interest, and meets the criteria for municipal designation under the three categories of design or physical value, historical or associative value, and contextual value. Located on the north side of Bloor Street West, east of Avenue Road, the two-storey penthouse was constructed on the roof of the 12-storey CIL Building, which was completed in 1960 according to the designs of the Toronto architectural firm of Bregman and Hamann. The building was financed by Cemp Investments Limited, a company owned by the Bronfman family of Distillers Corporation-Seagrams Limited. Jordan-Danforth Wines (a company created following the merger of two wine producers with the financial assistance of Distillers Corporation-Seagrams Limited) was an original tenant in the CIL Building, and its president, Noah Torno, resided in the penthouse suite. The Torno Penthouse was included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2005.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Design or Physical Value

The Torno Penthouse has design or physical value as a rare example of Modern architecture associated with the internationally-recognized architect, Philip Johnson, who purportedly inspired the interior design. Johnson was noted for advancing the International Style of modern architecture in North America through an exhibition he organized at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in the 1930s. In 1949, Johnson completed one of the icons of Modern design with his personal residence, the Glass House, in New Canaan, Connecticut. After promoting the simple lines and contemporary materials of International design for three decades, in the 1960s Johnson began adding historical references to his designs, culminating in the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (A T & T) headquarters in New York City in 1984. This venture into Post-Modern architecture introduced a new phase in his career. Practicing alone and in partnership, Johnson had an indelible impact on architecture through six decades.

Historical or Associative Value

The Torno Penthouse is historically associated with Noah Torno, a prominent Toronto businessman and philanthropist. Torno served as a director of numerous wine and spirits producers, including Distillers Corporation-Seagrams Limited, Carling O'Keefe and Hiram Walker. With his wife, Rose Laine Torno, he was a leader in the development of New Mount Sinai Hospital. Torno was active in the governance of both the O'Keefe Centre (now the Hummingbird Centre) and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. As the president of the board of directors of the Royal Ontario Museum, Torno was instrumental in organizing the "Genius of China" exhibit in 1974 following negotiations with the Peoples' Republic of China. Torno's personal contacts with architect Philip Johnson inspired the interior design of his family residence on top of the CIL Building.

Contextual Value

Contextually, the Torno penthouse is a landmark on Bloor Street West. In the immediate area, the Park Plaza Hotel (1928-1935) at 4 Avenue Road, the Colonnade (1961-63) at 131 Bloor Street West, the Lillian Massey Building at 153 Bloor Street West, and the Royal Ontario Museum (1910-1914) at 100 Queen's Park are also recognized on the City's heritage inventory.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Torno Penthouse relating to its design or physical value as a rare example of Modern design inspired by the designs of the important international architect Philip Johnson are found on the exterior walls and interior of the two-storey rooftop penthouse and the entrance off Cumberland Street, as specifically described below.

Exterior Attributes

The exterior attributes consist of,

- Accessed from Cumberland Street, the entry to the penthouse suite, which is marked by a decorative iron fence and entered through an iron grille
- Part of the entry, the single-storey covered passageway, which is clad with travertine and glazed brick and placed along the west end of the CIL Building
- The stepped two-storey plan of the penthouse that is created by two rectangles placed side-by-side
- The configuration of the penthouse, which is set back from the edges of the flat roof of the CIL Building, with a terrace with Japanese-inspired landscaping at the south end (The south and east elevations of the penthouse, which are clad with expanses of dark brickwork and large glazed areas
- On the principal (south) façade, the projecting balcony at the second storey

The floor and railing of the balcony, the west and rear (north) walls of the penthouse, the landscaping (including the trees, planters and flooring), and the north terrace are not included in the Reasons for Designation.

Interior Attributes

The interior attributes consist of,

- The two-storey foyer linking the interior areas, which is divided visually by a horizontal band
- In the foyer, the stone cladding applied for the floors and walls, the wood doors accessing the living areas adjoining the foyer, and the ceiling, which is covered by a metal decorative lattice
- The staircase in the foyer with travertine and metal detailing, which leads to the second storey

- The upper foyer, where the balconies extending along the south and west sides have stone and metal detailing
- Under the stairs, the water feature and a stone sculpture stand
- The first-floor hallway, located north of the foyer
- On the main floor, the living areas, consisting of the living room (southeast), library (west of the living room) and dining room (east), with wood floors laid in a decorative pattern and wood doors
- In the library, the wood panelling on the walls with built-in shelving
- The dining room, which has decorative sliding wood screens along the windows (east).
- The second-floor master bedroom (south), day room (west of the master bedroom), and guest room (east), which are accessed through wood doors
- On the second floor, the southeast bathroom, with its travertine cladding, bathtub and countertop
- The second-floor southwest bathroom, with the travertine cladding and countertops

The other fixtures and the ceilings in the southeast and southwest bathrooms are not included in the Reasons for Designation.