



**STAFF REPORT  
INFORMATION ONLY**

**Supplementary Report: Inclusion on the Inventory –  
5151 Yonge Street**

<b>Date:</b>	May 22, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Toronto City Council
<b>From:</b>	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division
<b>Wards:</b>	<b>Ward 23 - Willowdale</b>
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

**SUMMARY**

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At its meeting of May 14, 2009, North York Community Council reviewed the staff report that proposed the inclusion of the property at 5151 Yonge Street on the City’s inventory of heritage properties. Community Council requested this supplementary report to address the specific nature of the importance of this building as the "first purpose built office building" and the importance to the North York Centre Plan of ensuring that office/commercial uses be constructed in the immediate block bounded by Yonge Street, Empress Avenue, Kingsdale Avenue and the public lane situated east of Yonge Street.

**Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

**DECISION HISTORY**

The Toronto Preservation Board on April 23, 2009, considered the report (March 23, 2009) and recommended to the North York Community Council that City Council include the property at 5151 Yonge Street (North York Hydro Building, 1929) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

The North York Community Council voted to include 5151 Yonge Street on the City of Toronto Inventory of heritage properties pursuant to the following motion by Councillor Moscoe:

“North York Community Council requested the Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division, to report directly to City Council for its meeting on May 25 and 26, 2009 on the specific nature of the importance of

this building as the “first purpose built office building” and the importance to the North York Centre Plan of ensuring that office/commercial uses be constructed in the immediate block bounded by Yonge Street, Empress Avenue, Kingsdale Avenue and the public lane situated east of Yonge Street.”

## **COMMENTS**

### **Specific Nature of the Importance (Cultural Heritage Value) of the Property at 5151 Yonge Street**

The property at 5151 Yonge has been evaluated according to the provincially mandated criteria for the determination of cultural heritage value. Although the application of these criteria is only required for properties being designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto also completes an evaluation and a Statement of Significance under these criteria for all properties proposed for inclusion in the inventory of heritage properties (also known as listing). As such, this property has been fully evaluated and its specific importance has been articulated in the Statement of Significance attached to the original report recommending the inclusion of this property on the inventory of heritage properties.

In the Statement of Significance in the March 23, 2009 report from the Director of Policy and Research, the specific importance of the property and its role as the first purpose built office building of the North York Hydro-Electric Power Commission, erected in 1929, was examined. Staff concluded that the property is important to the area as a marker of an important history and association with the bygone utility which was a significant institution. Among other uses, the North York Hydro Building (1929) later housed the offices of the North York Historical Board and the Ontario Historical Society and is historically linked to its surroundings. The North York Hydro Building (1929) was built as part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of North York Township, where low-scale buildings appeared along Yonge Street between Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue in the commercial and institutional centre of the municipality.

The property at 5151 Yonge Street possesses cultural heritage value under provincially mandated criteria, as expressed in the Statement of Significance approved by North York Community Council and the Toronto Preservation Board. It therefore warrants inclusion on the City’s inventory of heritage properties, which will allow HPS staff to monitor it and comment on future proposals to integrate it into the North York Centre Plan area.

### **Importance to the North York Centre Plan**

The subject building is on the northeast corner of a prominent intersection in the North York Centre Secondary Plan. The site is located at the North York Centre Subway station and is planned to be part of the North York Centre commercial uses, open space and associated service road network. The lands where the building is situated are designated Mixed Use Area A (which permits no residential uses) and Parks and Open Space. In keeping with its prominent location, the lands in the rest of the block are also designated Mixed Use Area A which support high-density non-residential commercial and office

uses up to a density of 4.5 times the lot area with density incentives available to increase the density to just under 6 times the area of the lot and a height limit of 100 metres. The ESR for the North York Centre also requires a road widening along the north side of Empress Avenue to achieve the approved 29 metre road width.

With the loss of a significant amount of commercial office uses on the Gibson Square site (across the street from this site) it is important that this block remains designated for high-density, non-residential uses as it is one of the few remaining sites in North York Centre for this type, scale, and intensity of use adjacent to a subway entrance. Also as part of the redevelopment of this block the Secondary Plans policies with respect to achieving appropriate parks and open space, road widening and built form will all need to be addressed.

## **CONTACT**

Scott Barrett  
Senior Preservation Coordinator  
Heritage Preservation Services  
Policy and Research  
City Planning Division  
416-338-1083  
sbarret3@toronto.ca

Paul Byrne  
Manager Community Planning  
North York District  
City Planning Division  
  
416-395-7105  
pbyrne@toronto.ca

## **SIGNATURE**

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Gary Wright  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division