

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: 220 KING STREET WEST ATTACHMENT NO. 10  
(STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)

**Nicholls Building**

Description

The property at 220 King Street West is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the north side of King Street West between Simcoe Street and Ed Mirvish Way, the Nicholls Building (1910) is a six-storey warehouse that was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1984.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 220 King Street was developed by Frederic Nicholls, a person of national significance in Canada. As a publisher, businessman, and politician, Nicholls assumed many roles, the most visible being his position as general manager of the Canadian General Electric Company, which was founded in the 1890s to manufacture electrical equipment. At the same time, Nicholls joined railway promoter William Mackenzie and entrepreneur (Sir) Henry Pellatt to form a private syndicate to provide electrical power generated at Niagara Falls to Toronto. While the formation of the publicly-owned Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario ultimately ended the syndicate's role in power supply, Nicholls's involvement in the energy sector and other interests continued prior to his appointment to the Canadian Senate in 1917. Frederic Nicholls commissioned the self-named warehouse as the location of Factory Products Limited, a subsidiary of CGE that produced electrical supplies.

The Toronto architectural firm of Denison and Stephenson designed the Nicholls Building. The son of one of the city's founding families, Arthur R. Denison apprenticed with the Toronto architectural firm of Strickland and Symons before opening a solo practice. While Denison was well-versed in the design of all building types, he was noted for the commercial warehouses he devised beginning in the 1890s. Denison prepared the plans for the Nicholls Building during his partnership with George E. Stephenson near the end of his career.

The Nicholls Building is a well-crafted warehouse dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that is distinguished by its Edwardian Classical styling and distinctive fenestration. As the narrowest of the group of warehouses constructed on the north side of King Street West between Simcoe Street and John Street, the recessed bay windows above the main entrance and, in particular, the multi-storey oriel window that projects from the east side elevation, are unique features that set the building apart from its neighbours.

Contextually, the Nicholls Building contributes to the character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood, which developed as the city's manufacturing centre following the destruction of the former industrial core in the Great Fire of 1904. The construction of the Nicholls Building

on the south end of Russell Square, the original campus of Upper Canada College, continued the transition of the area from an institutional enclave to an industrial district. With the gradual departure of manufacturing interests from King-Spadina in the decades after World War II, the Nicholls Building was one of the warehouses converted to commercial uses as King Street, west of Simcoe Street, emerged as the heart of the city's Entertainment District.

The Nicholls Building is historically, physically, functionally and visually linked to its setting on King Street West, where it contributes to the collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouses, including the adjoining properties at #212 and #214 King that were also associated with the Canadian General Electric Company. With their complementary vintage, scale and early 20<sup>th</sup> century styling, primarily with Edwardian Classical features, the Nicholls Building and its neighbours on King Street West between Simcoe Street and John Street form an important group of heritage warehouses, and also bookend the Royal Alexandra Theatre, the National Historic Site at 260 King Street West.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 220 King Street West are:

- The six-storey warehouse
- The scale, form and massing of the long rectangular plan
- The red brick cladding, with textured and smooth stone applied to the base and for the decorative detailing
- The flat roofline, where the cornice has been altered
- The cornices extending above the first floor and fourth storey
- The classical organization of the principal (south) façade with a base, shaft and attic
- The two-storey three-bay base, where segmental-arched door and window openings are divided by stone piers and the main entry is inset in the left (west) bay
- On the three-storey shaft, the red brick piers that organize the flat-headed window openings with stone lintels in the second and third floors, including the recessed bay windows in the west bay, the segmental-arched window openings with hood moulds and keystones in the fourth storey, and the spandrels
- In the attic level, the round-arched openings with stone voussoirs that are placed between panelled pilasters with classical decoration
- On the east elevation, the four-storey oriel window with a decorated base at the south end of the wall, and the placement of the segmental-arched window openings with stone lintels and spandrels