

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: 266 KING STREET WEST ATTACHMENT NO. 11  
(STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)

**Reid Building**

Description

The property at 266 King Street West (with convenience addresses of 268 and 270 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. The Reid Building is a complex of three buildings, with a five-storey warehouse (1904) at the northeast corner of King Street West and Ed Mirvish Way, a five-storey warehouse (1909) on the east side of Ed Mirvish Way, north of King Street West, and a five-storey warehouse on the north side of King Street West, east of Ed Mirvish Way (1913). The property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1984.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Reid Building is significant as one of the first industrial complexes developed on the north side of King Street, west of Simcoe Street, on the former Upper Canada College campus at Russell Square. The warehouse designed for the Featherbone Novelty Manufacturing Company in 1904 was acquired by the company's manager, Alexander T. Reid, who financed the two adjoining buildings. The 1913 warehouse was associated with the Toronto publishing house of McClelland and Stewart, which was founded in 1906 as McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart and subsequently occupied quarters at #266 King.

Historically, the property at 266 King Street West is also associated with Toronto businessman Edwin "Honest Ed" Mirvish (1914-2007), who revitalized King Street West with his restoration of the Royal Alexandra Theatre in the early 1960s. Over the following decades, Ed Mirvish Enterprises acquired many of the warehouses along the street, including the Reid Building, which was one of the first to house restaurants that attracted theatre patrons. After the revitalization of the Royal Alexandra and the conversion of the adjoining buildings, Roy Thomson Hall (1982) and the Princess of Wales Theatre (1993) opened on King Street West. Duncan Street between King Street West and Pearl Street was renamed Ed Mirvish Way to honour the entrepreneur's contributions to the cultural life of the neighbourhood.

The Reid Building is linked to the practices of leading Toronto architectural firms of its era. The 1904 warehouse was designed by Toronto architect A. Frank Wickson, who was perhaps best known for his 1906 design (in association with Alfred A. Chapman) of the original Toronto Reference Library at College Street and St. George Street (more recently the Koffler Student Services Centre at the University of Toronto). While Wickson accepted commissions for all types of buildings, he was chosen to design the original Reid Building following the completion of the Gillett Building (originally occupied by the Pure Gold Manufacturing Company, 1901) at #276 King, opposite the subject property.

The 1909 and 1913 additions to the Reid Building are associated with the architectural practice of Sproatt and Rolph. After gaining experience with many of Toronto's best-known firms, Henry Sproatt and Ernest Rolph formed a partnership in 1899 and, in the 35-year period that followed, designed numerous landmark buildings. Sproatt and Rolph were noted, in particular, for their designs on the University of Toronto campus, including Hart House and edifices for Victoria College (now Victoria University). Their extensive industrial portfolio involved projects for the T. Eaton Company, Christie, Brown and Company, and Neilson Chocolate Limited.

The Reid Buildings of 1904, 1909 and 1913 form a complex of warehouses that are united by their Edwardian Classical styling and high visibility at the northeast corner of King Street West and Ed Mirvish Way. While the adjoining warehouses on King Street West share a similar height, each structure is distinguished by its distinctive architectural detailing. The 1909 (north) addition on Ed Mirvish Way complements the original structure with its scale, brick cladding and detailing, and the pattern of the fenestration.

Contextually, the property at 266 King Street West contributes to the historical character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood as it developed after the Great Fire of 1904 as the city's new manufacturing sector. The Reid Building (1904) was among the first of the warehouses completed along King Street, west of Simcoe Street, on Upper Canada College's original campus at Russell Square, as the area evolved from an institutional enclave to an industrial precinct. With the gradual departure of manufacturing interests from King-Spadina in the decades after World War II, the Reid Building was one of the complexes converted to commercial uses as this section of King Street West became the centre of the city's Entertainment District

The Reid Building is historically, functionally, physically and visually linked to its setting on the north side of King Street West where it forms part of the collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouses between Simcoe Street and John Street. Anchoring the northeast corner of King Street West and Ed Mirvish Way, the Reid Building complements the neighbouring warehouses in historical vintage, scale and classical styling. On the east, the Reid Building (1913) overlooks the Royal Alexandra Theatre, which is a local landmark as well as a National Historic Site.

## Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 266 King Street West are:

### **1904 warehouse (northeast corner of King Street West and Ed Mirvish Way)**

- The warehouse that rise five stories above a raised base with window openings
- The scale, form and massing of the long rectangular plan with a flat roofline
- The brick cladding (now painted), and the brick, stone and wood detailing
- The division of the principal (south) facade into three bays by monumental piers that organize the door and window openings
- The pairs of flat-headed window openings in the first through the third floors, which are taller in the first storey, with corbelled detailing on the window surrounds
- In the fourth and fifth floors, the segmental-arched openings that contain three-part windows
- The raised entrance in the centre bay, which is placed in a stone surround, flanked by narrow window openings, and surmounted by an entablature
- On the west elevation facing Ed Mirvish Way, the symmetrical organization of the fenestration, where segmental-arched window openings are reduced in height in the upper stories

### **1909 warehouse (east side of Ed Mirvish Way, north of King Street West)**

- The warehouse that rise five stories above a raised base with window openings
- The scale, form and massing of the long rectangular plan with a flat roofline
- The brick cladding (now painted), and the brick, stone and wood detailing
- On the west elevation facing Ed Mirvish Way, the symmetrical organization of the fenestration

### **1913 warehouse (north side of King Street West, east of Ed Mirvish Way)**

- The warehouse, which is attached to the east wall of the 1909 Reid Building, and extends five stories over a raised base with window openings
- The scale, form and massing of the long rectangular plan beneath a flat roofline
- The brick cladding (now painted), with brick, stone and wood detailing
- The three-bay south façade, which is flanked by piers and contains an entrance and round-arched window openings with voussoirs and keystones in the first floor, and flat-headed window openings with flat arches and keystones in the upper stories
- On the east elevation, the symmetrical placement of the segmental-arched window openings