



# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

---

March 6, 2006

To: Toronto Preservation Board  
Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Director, Policy & Research, City Planning Division

Subject: 55 John Street (Metro Hall Council Chambers) - Inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties and Intention to Designate under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*  
Trinity-Spadina - Ward 20

Purpose:

This report recommends that City Council include the property at 55 John Street (Metro Hall Council Chambers) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties and state its intention to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The cost of publishing the notice of intention to designate in the daily newspaper is included in the 2006 Policy and Research budget.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council include the property at 55 John Street (Metro Hall Council Chambers) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties;
- (2) City Council state its intention to designate the property at 55 John Street (Metro Hall Council Chambers) under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
- (3) if there are no objections to the designation in accordance with Section 29(6) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the solicitor be authorized to introduce the Bills in Council designating the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*;

- (4) if there are any objections in accordance with Section 29(7) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the Clerk be directed to refer the proposed designation to the Conservation Review Board; and
- (5) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting of July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, City Council adopted with amendments the Consolidated Clause in Administration Committee Report 6 for the report titled “3-1-1 Customer Service Strategy: 2005 Capital Budget Request and 2006/2007 Capital Budget Progress Report.” City Council amended the Clause by adding 2 (b): “the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer be requested to begin the process for having the Council Chambers at Metro Hall historically designated, and that Heritage Preservation Services be requested to ensure that full documentation of the original state of the Metro Hall Council Chambers is prepared.”

Staff have completed the documentation of the Council Chambers and identified the heritage attributes for inclusion in the Reasons for Designation.

Comments:

A location map (Attachment No. 1) and photographs (Attachment No. 2) are attached.

The following Statement of Reasons for Designation is intended for publication according to the provisions of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Reasons for Designation are attached (Attachment No. 3) and include a statement of cultural heritage value and description of the heritage attributes of the property. The complete Reasons for Designation will be served on the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust and included in the designating by-law.

Statement of Reasons for Designation

The property at 55 John Street is recommended for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value or interest. The Metro Hall Council Chambers (1992) have design and historical value as the first purpose-built Council Chambers for the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, the upper tier municipality that operated from 1953 until 1998.

The Reasons for Designation, including a description of the heritage attributes of the property, are available for viewing from the City Clerk’s Department or from Heritage Preservation Services, Research and Policy, City Planning Division, City of Toronto.

Conclusions:

It is recommended that City Council include the property at 55 John Street (Metro Hall Council Chambers) on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties and state its intention to designate the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Contact:

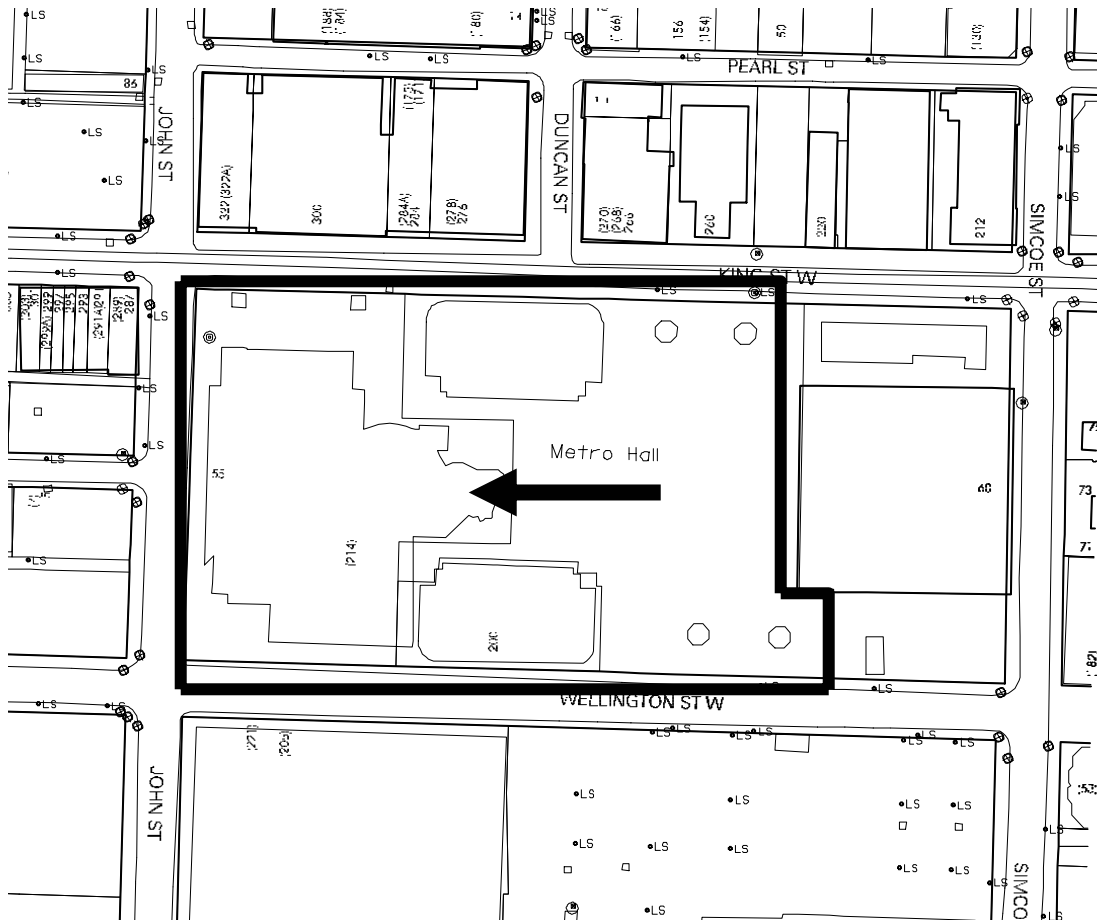
Denise Gendron  
Manager, Heritage Preservation Services  
Tel: 416-338-1075  
Fax: 416-392-1973  
E-mail: [dgendron@toronto.ca](mailto:dgendron@toronto.ca)

---

Barbara Leonhardt  
Director, Policy and Research

List of Attachments:

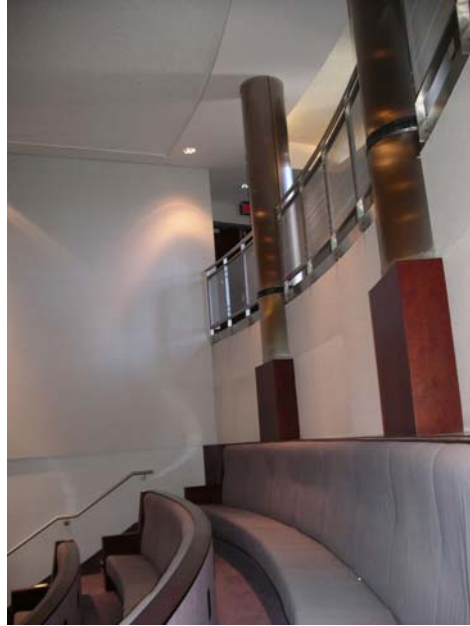
Attachment No. 1 – Location Map (55 John Street)  
Attachment No. 2 – Photographs (55 John Street)  
Attachment No. 3 – Reasons for Designation (55 John Street)



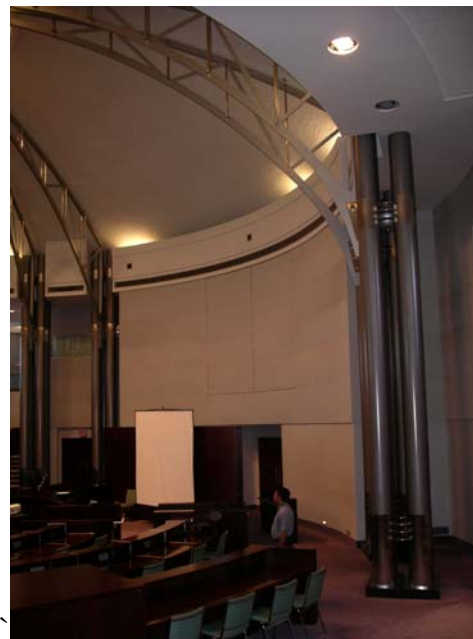
**Location map for information purposes: only the interior of the Metro Hall Council Chambers is included in the proposed designation**



**Interior showing the ceiling**



**Interior view of the mezzanine**



**Interior view, showing the columns that support the central roof structure**

**Metro Hall Council Chambers: 55 John Street**Description:

The property at 55 John Street is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value or interest, and meets the criteria for designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the categories of design or physical value and historical value. Completed in 1992, the Metro Hall Council Chambers were designed as part of the three-building office complex located on the southeast corner of King Street West and John Street. The Toronto architectural firm of Brisbin Brook Beynon designed Metro Hall, where the Council Chambers are accessed from the second and third floors of the building. The exterior of Metro Hall and the interiors apart from the Council Chambers are not included in the Reasons for Designation.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value:

The cultural heritage value of the Metro Hall Council Chambers is related to its design or physical value as a rare example of a building type. One of a select number of city halls in the City of Toronto, the Council Chambers are located on the second floor of Metro Hall and extend to a mezzanine at the third-floor level. Access to the Council Chambers is provided by an exterior staircase, designed as a ceremonial entrance and placed outside the main (east) entrance to Metro hall, as well as from stairs, elevators and escalators inside the building. The Council Chambers are positioned to overlook the public park between Metro Hall and Roy Thomson Hall to the east, and the Toronto skyline.

The cultural heritage value of the Metro Hall Council Chambers is also connected to its historical value and its direct association with an institution that is significant to the City of Toronto. The Metro Hall Council Chambers were the first purpose-built Council Chambers for the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. The upper-tier municipality was created in 1953 when 13 cities, towns, townships and villages were brought together to provide more effective delivery of government services. In 1967, amalgamations reduced the 13 municipalities to six, composed of the five Cities of Toronto, North York, Etobicoke, Scarborough and York and the Borough of East York. The municipality initially provided water treatment and supply services and sewage treatment facilities, and constructed and maintained expressways and major arterial roads. Metro assumed additional responsibilities over time, including the administration of social services. With the creation of the current City of Toronto on January 1, 1998, the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto was dissolved.

### Heritage Attributes:

The heritage attributes of the Metro Hall Council Chambers related to its cultural heritage value as a rare example of a building type (city hall) are found on the interior of the Council Chambers, consisting of:

- The application of materials, with stainless steel, wood and painted metal, brass and aluminum
- The circular plan with a central dome and the division of the interior into quadrants by full-height metal columns
- The definition of the circular centre space by a ring of four clusters of eight columns; the four pairs of decorative triangular trusses that spring from the clustered columns and converge in the smaller ring inside the dome; and, the single trusses that extend from the central ring of columns to the outer ring of single columns that define the back of the gallery seating and the mezzanine on the upper level
- The upper mezzanine level, which extends around the north, east and south sides of the chambers and admits natural light from the exterior windows on the east wall; and, the stainless steel railings with perforated stainless steel panels that enclose the mezzanines