

Authority: Toronto East York Community Council Report No. 1, Clause No. 33,
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on February 4, 5 and 6, 2003
Enacted by Council: April 16, 2003

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW No. 261-2003

**To designate the property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West (Tip Top Tailors Building) as
being of architectural and historical value and interest.**

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West (Tip Top Tailors Building) and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to designate the property and has caused the notice to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality, as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and

WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation was served upon the Clerk of the municipality; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "A" to this by-law;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. The property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West, more particularly described in Schedule "B" and shown on Schedule "C" attached to this by-law, is designated as being of cultural heritage value or interest under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "B" to this by-law in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owners of the property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 16th day of April, A.D. 2003.

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

ULLI S. WATKISS
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

SCHEDULE “A”

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is the “Long Statement of Reasons for Designation” for the designation of the property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West (Tip Top Tailors Building) under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It contains the Heritage Property Profile, as well as sections on the Historical Occupancy, Architectural Description and Significance of the property. The introduction, below, forms the “Short Statement of Reasons for Designation”, intended for publication.

The property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West is recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons. The Tip Top Tailors Building was completed in 1929 according to the designs of the Toronto architect and engineer, Roy H. Bishop. David Dunkelman, the founder in 1909 of Tip Top Tailors, commissioned the building as the firm’s head office and warehouse. A well-known manufacturer of men’s suits, the company produced the uniforms for Canadian servicemen during World War II. The Tip Top Tailors Building was constructed on reclaimed land created according to the Toronto Harbour Commission’s waterfront development plan.

The Tip Top Tailors Building displays the decorative motifs, stylized elements and use of colour epitomising Art Deco design. The building is constructed of concrete with exposed and painted concrete walls and cast concrete detailing. Four corner towers anchor the U-shaped plan. Above a raised basement with window openings, the building originally extended five stories prior to the addition of the sixth floor in 1951. The flat roof has a concrete parapet and, along the east, north and west edges, three signs with large illuminated letters reading “TIP TOP TAILORS”. Facing north onto Lake Shore Boulevard West, the principal façade extends seven bays. In the centre, the main entrance is elevated and accessed by a set of stairs flanked by concrete pillars with decorated panels. The entry is placed in a two-storey frontispiece with period light fixtures, multiple piers with finials in sunrise motifs, and two pairs of stylized figure sculptures. A set of doors with sidelights and a multi-paned transom are executed in bronze and glass. Above the entry, a round-arched window opening with three lights has a decorated spandrel. On the remainder of the south wall, narrow piers with finials rise five stories to organize rows of large flat-headed window openings (the original metal sash windows have been replaced). The finials, featuring the same motifs introduced on the frontispiece, are linked by a decorated band course. The fenestration is repeated on the side (east and west) walls. On the east elevation, entrances are found at the north and south ends. The four corner towers display sculpted cornices and panels beneath copper-clad hipped roofs. The outer faces of the towers feature pairs of narrow flat-headed window openings in the first five stories. Spandrels are composed of glazed coloured tiles applied in two patterns. The towers at the southeast and southwest corners reveal blank rear (south) elevations with inset panels, and flat-headed window openings on the inside faces. The south wall is indented according to the U-shaped plan. A mixture of large rectangular and smaller flat-headed window openings overlook a courtyard that is enclosed in the first storey and lighted by skylights.

On the interior, the entrance lobby retains its travertine-clad walls beneath an arched ceiling.

The Tip Top Tailors Building is located on the southwest corner of Lake Shore Boulevard West and Stadium Road. The landscaped setting incorporates a circular driveway off Lake Shore Boulevard

West with a fountain and lamp standards. To the east, a residential community occupies the site of Maple Leaf Stadium (1926-1968) and Little Norway (the World War II camp for Norwegian airmen). The Tip Top Tailors Building overlooks Coronation Park to the west. An excellent example of Art Deco design occupied by an important Canadian retailer, the Tip Top Tailors Building is a landmark along Toronto's waterfront.

1.1 HERITAGE PROPERTY PROFILE

TIP TOP TAILORS BUILDING

ADDRESS:	637 Lake Shore Boulevard West (southwest corner of Stadium Road)
WARD:	20 (Trinity-Spadina)
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY:	Waterfront
HISTORICAL NAME:	Tip Top Tailors Building
CONSTRUCTION DATE:	1929
ORIGINAL OWNER:	Tip Top Tailors (David Dunkelman)
ORIGINAL USE:	Industrial (factory)
CURRENT USE: *	Not applicable (* <i>this does not refer to permitted use(s) defined by the Zoning By-law</i>)
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN:	Roy H. Bishop, architect
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:	Art Deco
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION:	Concrete construction and cladding with concrete and coloured tile trim
ALTERATIONS:	1942, single-storey south addition; 1951, 6th floor added; 1967, interior alterations, Jerome Markson, architect
HERITAGE CATEGORY:	Category B (Notable Heritage Property)
RECORDER:	Kathryn Anderson, Heritage Preservation Services
REPORT DATE:	May 2002

2.0 HISTORICAL OCCUPANCY AND SIGNIFICANCE:

2.1 WATERFRONT

The future City of Toronto was founded on the north shore of Lake Ontario where the sheltered harbour was ideal for military purposes. With the growth of the community, the waterfront was crucial to Toronto's commercial viability. Despite the appointment of harbour commissioners as early as 1833, the use of the lake shore was hampered by competition between shipping and railways, the mishandling of sewage, and indecision over future development. Due to the efforts of the Board of Trade, in 1911 the federal government established the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (now the Toronto Port Authority) to manage the commercial and transportation facilities along the waterfront while introducing new uses. In 1912, the THC unveiled an ambitious Waterfront Plan for the revitalization of the lake shore, including the use of land fill to reclaim nearly 2000 acres of usable ground. Implemented in 1914, the plan organized the waterfront into industrial (east), commercial

(central) and recreational (west) sectors. The area near the foot of Bathurst Street was reserved for leisure uses and light manufacturing. Maple Leaf Stadium opened at the southeast corner of present-day Lake Shore Boulevard West and Stadium Road in 1928. Most components of the Waterfront Plan were in place by World War II.

2.2 TIP TOP TAILORS BUILDING

Prior to the onset of the Great Depression, Toronto businessman David Dunkelman acquired a building site along the waterfront west of Bathurst Street, purportedly with the understanding that the land to the west would be reserved as a city park (Globe, A2). Dunkelman financed the construction of a factory and headquarters for Tip Top Tailors, the men's clothing company that he had founded in 1909. A native of Poland, Dunkelman arrived in Toronto as a teenager where he worked in a buttonhole factory established by his father. Dunkelman discovered a market for inexpensive made-to-wear men's suits, initially offering the apparel at \$14, beneath the standard price of \$18 to \$25 dollars. Establishing his first factory on Adelaide Street West, Dunkelman opened a store on Yonge Street to display his wares.

The construction of the Tip Top Tailors Building was described in the June 1930 issue of Construction magazine. Its location on reclaimed land meant that the concrete walls and column footings were supported on wood piles driven to bedrock. Another concern, waterproofing, was addressed by setting the basement above "the highest recorded level of the water in Lake Ontario". The interior columns were spaced at extended intervals to accommodate large window openings (allowing maximum light) and the placement of machinery. Provision was made for a future sixth floor through the engineering of the roof supports and the inclusion of a tall parapet (removed for the extra storey). Construction commented that the design "has given the architect opportunity for architectonic embellishment within a just limit which has made the building a noteworthy, and in Canada at least, unique example of its kind".

The Tip Top Tailors Building incorporated a bowling alley, auditorium with a stage, and basement hospital. The innovations extended to the manufacturing process, where Dunkelman devised an assembly line approach that "perfected a technique of dividing into groups the cutting and sewing of separate parts of a garment which cut costs and sped production" (Globe, 21 September 1978, A2). At the height of its business, Tip Top Tailors purportedly produced 10,000 suits each week. With the outbreak of World War II, the federal government awarded Tip Top Tailors the contract to manufacture uniforms for Canada's armed forces. The company devoted its operations exclusively to military production for the duration of the conflict. The line was expanded to include uniforms for prison guards, police officers and hospital workers. Dunkelman retired from business in 1966. The following year, Dylex Limited (later Dylex Diversified), the operator of 16 specialty clothing companies, acquired the company and the building.

2.3 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West is historically significant as the factory and headquarters for Tip Top Tailors, one of Canada's leading retailers in the 20th century. The property was included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties by Toronto City Council on June 20, 1973.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE:

3.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The Tip Top Tailors Building displays features identified with Art Deco styling. Named for the “Exposition universale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes” hosted by Paris in 1925, motifs were drawn from a variety of sources, ranging from ancient cultures, historical architecture, nature and industrial progress. Art Deco design was identified by “the stylized treatment of these decorative devices” where “everything is flattened and streamlined and has an air of stylishness” (Maitland, 139).

3.2 ARCHITECT, BUILDER OR CRAFTSMAN

Architect and engineer Roy H. Bishop (1888-1949) designed the Tip Top Tailors Building. Following training at the University of Toronto, Bishop worked with the city’s leading architectural firms, including Darling and Pearson, Chapman and McGiffin, and Sproatt and Rolph. Bishop was a veteran of World Wars I and II. During the first conflict, he employed his skills as an engineer with a rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Canadian Engineers. Bishop was mentioned in dispatches for his construction of tunnels at Vimy and bridges at Cambrai. In 1919, Bishop formed a partnership with architect Alfred H. Chapman and engineer J. Morrow Oxley that lasted until 1924. Among the commissions accepted by Chapman, Oxley and Bishop were the master plan for the Sunnyside Park Development, along with designs for the Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion at 1755 Lake Shore Boulevard West. Bishop practiced alone until the Second World War, focusing on projects outside Toronto. In 1945, he became the architect for Dominion Stores Limited, designing grocery stores across Canada.

3.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

The Tip Top Tailors Building is constructed of concrete with exposed and painted concrete walls and cast concrete detailing. Four corner towers anchor the U-shaped plan. Above a raised basement with window openings, the building originally extended five stories prior to the addition of the sixth floor in 1951. The flat roof has a concrete parapet and, along the east, north and west edges, three signs with large illuminated letters reading “TIP TOP TAILORS”. Facing north onto Lake Shore Boulevard West, the principal façade extends seven bays. In the centre, the main entrance is elevated and accessed by a set of stairs flanked by concrete pillars with decorated panels. The entry is contained in a two-storey frontispiece with period light fixtures, multiple piers with finials in sunrise motifs, and two pairs of stylized figure sculptures. A set of doors with sidelights and a multi-paned transom are executed in bronze and glass. Above the entry, a round-arched window opening with three lights has a decorated spandrel. On the remainder of the south wall, narrow piers with finials rise five stories to organize rows of large flat-headed window openings (the original metal sash windows have been replaced). The finials, featuring the same motifs introduced on the frontispiece, are linked by a decorated band course. The fenestration is repeated on the side (east and west) walls. On the east elevation, entrances are found at the north and south ends. The four corner towers display sculpted cornices and panels beneath copper-clad hipped roofs. The outer faces of the towers feature pairs of narrow flat-headed window openings in the first five stories. Spandrels are

composed of glazed coloured tiles applied in two patterns. The towers at the southeast and southwest corners reveal blank rear (south) elevations with inset panels, and flat-headed window openings on the inside faces. The south wall is indented according to the U-shaped plan. A mixture of large rectangular and smaller flat-headed window openings overlook a courtyard that is enclosed in the first storey and lighted by skylights.

On the interior, the entrance lobby retains its travertine-clad walls beneath an arched ceiling.

3.4 ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Tip Top Tailors Building is an excellent example of Art Deco design. The building is purported to be one of the earliest concrete buildings in Canada (CI, November 1969, 39).

4.0 CONTEXT

4.1 CONTEXT AND SETTING

The Tip Top Tailors Building is located on the southwest corner of Lake Shore Boulevard West and Stadium Road. The landscaped setting incorporates a circular driveway off Lake Shore Boulevard West with a fountain and lamp standards. To the east, a residential community occupies the site of Maple Leaf Stadium (1926-1968) and Little Norway (the World War II camp for Norwegian airmen). The Tip Top Tailors Building overlooks Coronation Park to the west. In the vicinity, the Loblaw's Groceteria Building (1927) at 500 Lake Shore Boulevard West, the Cross and Blackwell Building (1928) at 545 Lake Shore Boulevard West, and the Canada Malting Silos (1928) at 5 Bathurst Street, are contemporary structures recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition, situated west of Strachan Avenue on the north side of Lake Shore Boulevard West, contain more than a dozen 20th century buildings and structures that are identified on the Inventory of Heritage Properties.

4.2 CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West is contextually important. With its setback from Lake Shore Boulevard West in landscaped grounds overlooking the parkland to the west, the Tip Top Tailors Building is an integral feature along the waterfront.

5.0 SUMMARY

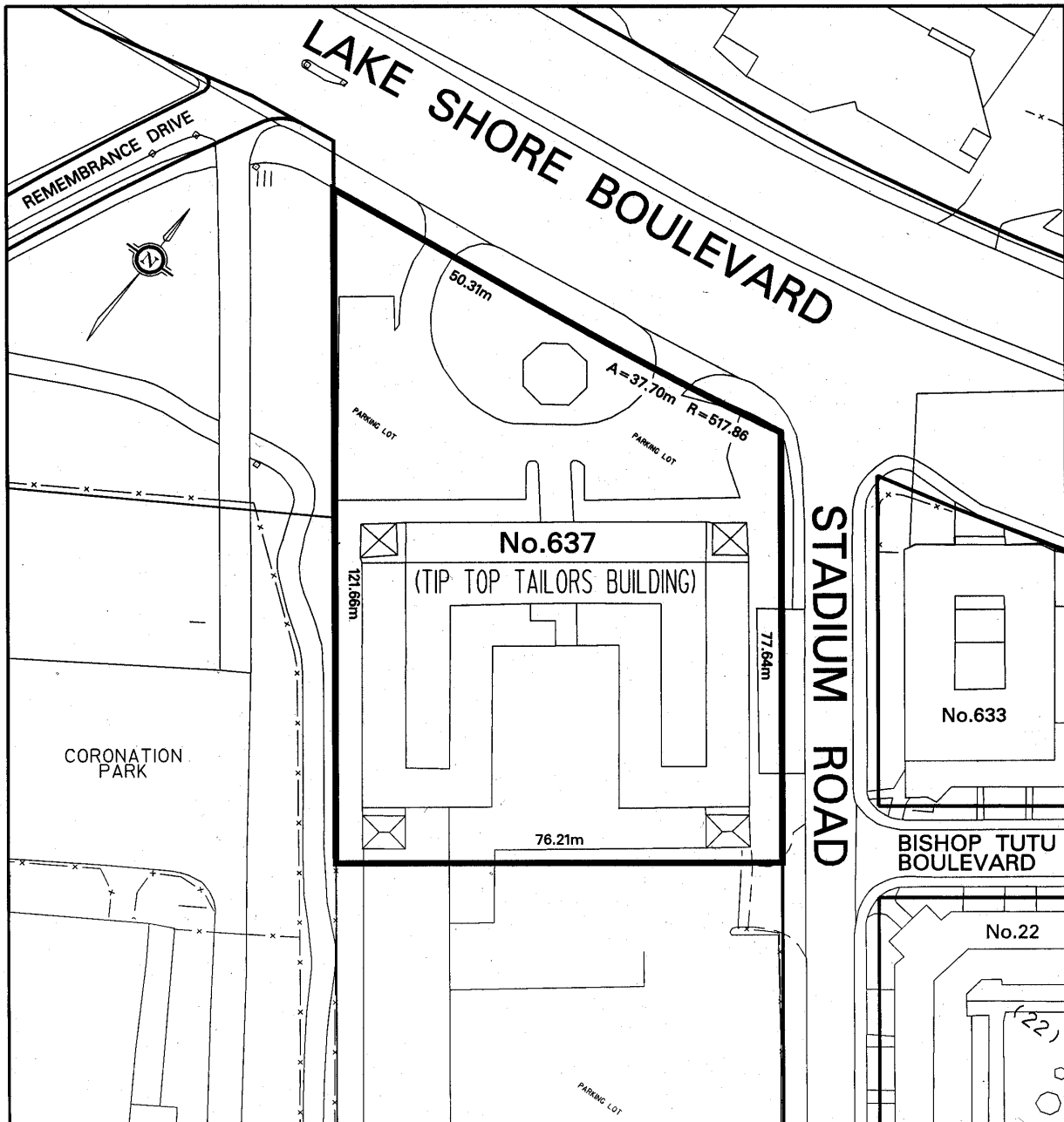
The property at 637 Lake Shore Boulevard West is historically significant as the location of Tip Top Tailors, one of the best-known clothing manufacturers in Canada during the 20th century. Architecturally, the Tip Top Tailors Building is an excellent example of Art Deco styling, highlighted by its corner towers, coloured detailing and signage. The building is a landmark on Toronto's waterfront.

SCHEDULE “B”

Part of Block B on Plan D-1397 and part of the Water Lot Fronting the Ordnance Reserve designated as PARTS 1, 2 and 3 on Plan 66R-20101 in the Registry Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66) in the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario.

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Sketch No. PS-2003-016 dated February 17, 2003, as set out in Schedule “C”.

SCHEDULE "C"

**Toronto**WORKS & EMERGENCY SERVICES
TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION
SURVEY & MAPPING

NOTE:
THIS SKETCH IS NOT
A PLAN OF SURVEY
AND HAS BEEN COMPILED
FROM SURVEY NOTES AND
OFFICE RECORDS, IT SHALL
NOT BE USED EXCEPT FOR
THE PURPOSE INDICATED
IN THE TITLE BLOCK

PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET

No. 637 LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD WEST
(TIP TOP TAILORS BUILDING)
LAND DESIGNATED AS BEING OF
ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL
VALUE AND INTEREST

(NOT TO SCALE)

WARD 20 - TRINITY-SPADINA
DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2003

SKETCH No. PS-2003-016