

Authority: Planning and Housing Committee Item PH5.13,
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on July 19 and 20,
2023

City Council voted in favour of this by-law on
September 6, 2023

Written approval of this by-law was given by Mayoral
Decision 12-2023 dated September 6, 2023

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW 811-2023

To designate the property at 639 Yonge Street (entrance addresses at 2, 4, Isabella Street) as being of cultural heritage value or interest.

Whereas the Ontario Heritage Act authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact By-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of cultural heritage value or interest; and

Whereas authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 639 Yonge Street (entrance addresses at 2, 4, Isabella Street) as being of cultural heritage value or interest; and

Whereas the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the lands and premises known as 639 Yonge Street (entrance addresses at 2, 4, Isabella Street) and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, Notice of Intention to designate the property, and has caused the Notice of Intention to be posted on the City's website for a period of 30 days in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 162, Notice, Public, Article II, § 162-4.1. Notice requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act; and

Whereas no notice of objection was served upon the Clerk of the municipality within the prescribed time under the Ontario Heritage Act; and

Whereas the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule A to this By-law;

The Council of the City of Toronto enacts:

1. The property at 639 Yonge Street (entrance addresses at 2, 4, Isabella Street), more particularly described in Schedule B attached to this By-law, is designated as being of cultural heritage value or interest.
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 639 Yonge Street (entrance addresses at 2, 4, Isabella Street) at and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust and to cause notice of this By-law to be posted on the City's website for a period of 30 days in accordance with Municipal Code Chapter 162, Notice, Public, Article II, § 162-4.1. Notice requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Enacted and passed on September 6, 2023.

Frances Nunziata,
Speaker

John D. Elvidge,
City Clerk

(Seal of the City)

SCHEDULE A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION 639 YONGE STREET (ENTRANCE ADDRESSES AT 2, 4, ISABELLA STREET)

Reasons for Designation

The property at 639 Yonge Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under the categories of design/physical value, historical/associative value and contextual value.

Description

The property at 639 Yonge Street (including entrance addresses at 2 and 4 Isabella Street) is located on the northeast corner of Yonge Street and Isabella Street and contains a mixed-use brick building constructed in 1879. It retains its original scale, form, and massing as a two-and-a-half storey building designed in the Second Empire style. The property is part of a cohesive grouping of built heritage resources that provide a distinct sense of place and represent Toronto's 1860s-1950s architecture, a period when Yonge Street's commercial main street character was established and flourished.

The property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) on March 15, 1974 and is identified as a contributing property in the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District, adopted by City Council in 2016, and currently under appeal.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Dating to c.1879, the property at 639 Yonge Street has design and physical value as a representative example of the Second Empire architectural style that was popular in many prominent commercial, public, and residential buildings in Toronto from 1860 to 1900. Although the ground floor is altered, the corner property features several details that are typical of the Second Empire style, including a slate mansard roof, segmental-arched windows, and bell-shaped dormers accented by wood trim details on both its street-facing elevations. The 2-1/2-storey property also has design and physical value for its typology as a representative example of a Main Street Commercial Row building constructed during a significant period of development along Yonge Street.

The property at 639 Yonge Street is significant for the retail activity which occurred here from 1924-31, being the first retail location and office for the Canadian Tire Corporation. Established in 1922 by brothers J.W. and A.J. Billes and incorporated in 1927 while occupying the premises at 639 Yonge Street, the business repaired tires, sold a variety of automotive supplies, and pumped gasoline from under a canopy on the south side of the building. Presently, the company is one of Canada's most recognizable retail chains and operates a network of over 1700 stores and gas bars across the country. The property is also associated with the theme of Yonge Street's role as a focal point for Toronto's counterculture, pop culture, and music scene during the latter

half of the 20th century as the premises of the House of Lords hair salon from the early 1970's through 2017. The House of Lords gained notoriety for catering to celebrities and rock stars such as David Bowie, Axl Rose, Rod Stewart and others. During this time, the House of Lords contributed to music, arts, and fashion culture not only through their hair styling services, but also by hosting record release parties, album launches, and live radio broadcasts at the salon.

Contextually, the property has cultural heritage value for maintaining and supporting the historic main street character of Yonge Street, south of Bloor Street. Situated on the east side of the block between Isabella Street and Charles Street East, the subject property's scale, form and massing contribute to the low-rise streetwall condition found on this portion of Yonge Street and are consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained storefronts along the streetscape.

The building's Second Empire style is one of several predominant architectural styles in the area. The property at 639 Yonge Street (including 2 and 4 Isabella Street) is functionally, visually and physically linked to Yonge Street, Toronto's "Main Street", as a commercial building housing the services, amenities, and employment opportunities necessary to support daily life in neighbouring residential areas. The property is also historically linked to the metamorphosis of Yonge Street into Toronto's main commercial corridor.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 639 Yonge Street as a representative example of a Main Street Commercial Row building designed in the Second Empire style:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building on the northeast corner of Yonge and Isabella streets
- The scale, form and massing of the property as a 2-1/2-storey building with a rectangular-shaped plan
- The property's material palette, consisting of brick with wood detailing (the brick has been painted)
- The 3-sided mansard roof with patterned slate tile supported by a decorated soffit, eaves, and cornice featuring ornamental brackets on the west, south, and east elevations (some slates on the east slope of the roof have been replaced with asphalt shingles)
- The brick chimney that projects from the exterior wall and roof slope of the south elevation
- The architectural details on the west and south elevations that are representative of the Second Empire style, including:
 - The bell-shaped dormers with carved wood trim on the mansard roof

- The segmental-arched windows on the second floor
- The increased proportion of glazing of the ground floor storefront compared to the upper stories
- Entrances providing at-grade access from the street to the ground floor and upper floors of the building

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 639 Yonge Street as supporting and maintaining the character of this portion of Yonge Street, and as being historically, functionally, and visually linked to its surroundings:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building on the northeast corner of Yonge and Isabella streets
- The scale of the building, which is consistent with the 2-4 storey streetwall height and rhythm of narrow storefronts along this portion of Yonge Street
- The recessed entrance doorways, which are consistent with the storefronts along this portion of Yonge Street
- The materials of the building's façade, which are consistent with the brick, stone, and wood detailing found along this portion of Yonge Street
- The higher percentage of glazing on the ground floor façade along Yonge Street relative to upper floors, which serves the purpose of indicating retail use at-grade that can be accessed directly from Yonge Street and residential and/or commercial uses in upper floors.

SCHEDULE B
LEGAL DESCRIPTION

PIN 21108-0187 (LT)
PART OF PARK LOT 8, CONCESSION 1 FTB
GEOGRAPHIC TOWNSHIP OF YORK, AS IN EP152648
EXCEPT THE EASEMENT THEREIN
City of Toronto and Province of Ontario
Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66)