

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 812-2023**

**To designate the property at 641 Yonge Street (entrance address at 641-643 Yonge 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 641 Yonge Street (entrance address at 641-643 Yonge 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 641 Yonge Street (entrance address at 641-643 Yonge 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 641 Yonge Street (entrance address at 641-643 Yonge 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 641 Yonge Street (entrance address at 641-643 Yonge 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 641 YONGE STREET (ENTRANCE ADDRESS AT 641-643 YONGE STREET)**

#### **Reasons for Designation**

The property at 641 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 641 Yonge Street (including structure address of 641-643 Yonge Street) is located on the east side of Yonge Street, in the block between Isabella Street and Charles Street East. It contains a mixed-use brick building constructed in 1951, which retains its original scale, form, and massing as a 4-storey building designed in a Mid-century Modern architectural style. This 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 Heritage Register on March 10, 2016 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**

Constructed in 1951, the property at 641 Yonge Street has design and physical value as a representative example of the Mid-century Modern style, which is typified by the clean lines and emphasis on horizontality exhibited by the composition of the west elevation. The property retains its original scale, form, and massing as a 4-storey brick building organized into three vertical bays of equal width. The Mid-century Modern style is one of several styles associated with the period of development that established Yonge Street's commercial main street character.

The subject property is valued for being the location of the Roberts Gallery for over a half century (1961-2019), a notable institution for the Fine Arts in Canada. The Roberts Gallery, whose origins can be traced back to 1842, began to exclusively feature Canadian artists in the late 1940s, and while located at the subject property they played a major role in introducing modern styles of art and its practitioners to the Canadian public. As a venue for local arts and culture, the Roberts Gallery is also associated with the broader theme of Yonge Street's role in helping to foster and promote an independent Canadian music, arts, and literary scene during the latter half of the 20th century.

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. The design of the property is consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained storefronts along the streetscape, and the building's Mid-century Modern style is one of several architectural styles that characterize the area.

The property at 641 Yonge Street (including 643 Yonge 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. As both a commercial building and former art gallery providing cultural pursuits for the entire city, the property is also historically linked to the metamorphosis of Yonge Street into Toronto's main commercial corridor.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 641 Yonge Street as a representative example of the Mid-century Modern style as applied to a commercial main street building:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building on the east side of Yonge Street between Isabella Street and Charles Street East
- The scale, form and massing of the 4-storey brick building
- The flat roofline
- The materials, including the buff brick cladding framed by the red brick party walls and the stone lintels, sills and parapet coping on the west elevation
- The principal (west) elevation of the building, which is organized into three bays
- The flat-headed window openings in the second, third and fourth stories with the continuous lintels and sills on the principal (west) elevation
- 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 641 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 east side of Yonge Street between Isabella Street and Charles Street East

- 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 21108-0186 (LT)  
PART OF PARK LOT 8, CONCESSION 1, FROM THE BAY, GEOGRAPHIC TOWNSHIP  
OF YORK, AS IN EP133170  
EXCEPT THE EASEMENT THEREIN  
City of Toronto and Province of Ontario  
Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66)