

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 815-2023

To designate the property at 651 Yonge Street (entrance address at 653 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 651 Yonge Street (entrance address at 653 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 651 Yonge Street (entrance address at 653 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 651 Yonge Street (entrance address at 653 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 651 Yonge Street (entrance address at 653 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 651 YONGE STREET (ENTRANCE ADDRESS AT 653 YONGE STREET)

Reasons for Designation

The property at 651 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 651 Yonge Street (including entrance address at 653 Yonge Street) is located on the east side of Yonge Street, in the block between Isabella Street and Charles Street East. The mixed-use building was converted into a theatre in 1912-1914 and has been over-clad with a metal lattice that obscures the building's features.

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 historic Yonge'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 over-clad property in the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District, adopted by City Council in 2016 and currently under appeal.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 651 Yonge Street has design and physical value as a unique example of a mixed-use commercial building designed in the Second Empire style that has been converted into a theatre. The use of the Second Empire style is evident in its slate mansard roof with convex slope, large gabled dormer, and arched dormer windows (the building is presently over-clad), which date to 1887. The building was converted into a theatre in the early 20th century and its massing, which comprises a 2-1/2-storey elevation on Yonge Street with increased height and volume towards the rear, reflects this typology.

The subject property is valued for its association with and contribution to the establishment of Yonge Street as a prominent arts, culture, and entertainment district in Toronto. The property has been the site of continuous theatre use for over one hundred years (1914 to present) and has accommodated a full range of productions, including vaudeville performances, silent films, live theatre, and modern cinematic screenings. In the 1970s, as the New Yorker Theatre, the subject property was also a designated location venue for the "Festival of Festivals" cinema event, which was the early iteration of the present-day Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Situated on the east side of Yonge Street in the block between Isabella Street and Charles Street East, the subject property maintains and supports the historic commercial main street character along this portion of Yonge Street, which is characterized by a low-scale continuous streetwall

condition. While presently over-clad, the building's west elevation retains architectural features in the Second Empire style, one of several predominant architectural styles in the area.

Contextually, the property at 651 Yonge Street (including 653 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. Through its long-term use as a theatre, the property was one of a collection of entertainment, arts, and culture venues that were established along Yonge Street and is therefore functionally and 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 651 Yonge Street as a unique example of a Commercial Main Street Row building designed in the Second Empire style that has been converted into a theatre:

- 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 2-1/2-storey building
- The slate mansard roof with convex slope that is visible behind the current metal mesh over-cladding
- On the principal (west) elevation, the two arched dormer windows and the large dormer with the gabled roof, which are visible behind the current metal mesh over-cladding

Historical or Associative Value

The following heritage attribute contributes to the cultural heritage value of the property at 651 Yonge Street as associated with the establishment of Yonge Street as a prominent arts, culture, and entertainment district in Toronto:

- The presence of a marquee projecting over the sidewalk, which is an indication of the property's use as a theatre use for over one hundred years

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 651 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 along this portion of Yonge Street
- The recessed entrance, which is consistent with the storefronts along this portion of Yonge Street

SCHEDULE B
LEGAL DESCRIPTION

PIN 21108-0184 (LT)
PART OF PARK LOT 8, CONCESSION 1 FTB
GEOGRAPHIC TOWNSHIP OF YORK, AS IN CA136823
EXCEPT THE EASEMENT THEREIN
City of Toronto and Province of Ontario
Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66)