

Authority: Item CC14.11, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on February 6 and 7, 2024
City Council voted in favour of this by-law on February 7, 2024
Written approval of this by-law was given by Mayoral Decision 2-2024 dated February 7, 2024

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW 103-2024

To designate the property at 509 Parliament 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 509 Parliament 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 509 Parliament 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 a notice of objection was served upon the Clerk of the municipality within the prescribed time under the Ontario Heritage Act and was considered by City Council; 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 509 Parliament 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 509 Parliament 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 February 7, 2024.

Frances Nunziata,
Speaker

John D. Elvidge,
City Clerk

(Seal of the City)

SCHEDULE A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION 509 Parliament Street

Reasons for Designation

The property at 509 Parliament Street, is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design/physical, historical/ associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 509 Parliament Street, also known as the Carlton Theatre, is located in Toronto's Cabbagetown neighbourhood, on the east side of Parliament Street, mid-block between Carlton and Winchester Streets. It contains a one-storey, Classical Revival-style building constructed as a movie theatre in 1929-30. The property has served as a performing arts venue since 1995. Immediately behind the theatre to the east is the area comprising the Cabbagetown - Metcalf Heritage Conservation District. To the west, behind and on Parliament Street, the area comprises the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Like the other theatres designed by architect Herbert Duerr in the 1920s, the 1929 Carlton Theatre is characterized and representative of restrained and understated Classical Revival-style architecture. The one-storey building features a symmetrical façade with a stepped and panelled red-brick parapet and ashlar artificial stone storefront detailing. A stylized dentil frieze atop the storefront in the artificial stone finish serves to further the classical character. While the infilling of the storefronts has affected the appearance of the façade, the configurations of the openings have been respected and the artificial stone storefront trim has been retained.

The conservative, classical aesthetic of exterior was also carried over into the interior with simple, clean finishes in the lobby and 1015-seat auditorium. The auditorium was relatively austere except for elegantly placed finishes in a combination of Art Deco and classical motifs. Such finishes include extant pilasters (piers) lining the walls, ornamented with Art Deco-style capitals and classical medallions, as well as a stylized cornice encircling the space, which also remains. The moulding which surrounded the screen is also intact.

The building's significance is further associated with its survival as the only purpose-built theatre in Cabbagetown in recognizable form. While such building types were once common - with Cabbagetown alone once having other purpose-built, neighbourhood theatres - these theatres have been irreversibly altered or demolished. Not only does the Carlton Theatre retain its façade and stylistic elements of its exterior and interior, but also the three-part structural form typical of traditional movie theatres in the early twentieth century with lobby at the front of the building, auditorium in the middle, and stage at the rear. A steel truss roof allows for a clear span of the auditorium space.

The building is significant for its association with Herbert Duerr (1891-1966), a Pittsburgh-born and trained architect who demonstrated a versatility in his range of work but became known for his theatre design. In 1924, with architect B. Kingston Hall, Duerr redesigned the Tivoli Theatre in Hamilton, which was designated as a heritage property in that city in 1990. In 1926 Duerr established his own firm in Toronto and that year designed the "Major" Theatre at Rogers Road and Rosethorn Ave. From the late 1920s through the late 1940s, Duerr designed at least a half-dozen theatres in the Toronto area as well as more than a dozen theatres elsewhere - mostly in smaller Ontario cities, but also in a couple locations in Quebec and Nova Scotia. While Duerr's earliest theatre works reflect both a conservative aesthetic mixed with more elaborate revival examples, by the mid 1930s Duerr had embraced a more modern aesthetic. Employing this aesthetic the Famous Players chain retained him as their corporate architect to design their theatres across Ontario. In addition to theatres, Duerr's work consisted of a variety of other type of building including apartment houses, stores, factories and warehouses. Surviving examples of Duerr's work in Toronto includes the 1937 Moderne style Creed Fur's Building at Davenport and Bedford Roads, which was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 1997.

The Carlton Theatre is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as an integral component of Cabbagetown's main street context and character, occupying a central location on Parliament Street. Like most community main streets in the early twentieth century, local movie theatres were integral entertainment venues, contributing to that neighbourhood and main street character, with the Carlton Theatre assuming that role on Cabbagetown's main street.

From 1931 to 1954, the Carlton Theatre was one of the entertainment venues and a social focal point of Cabbagetown at a time when attending movies was a popular form of entertainment. In addition to the Carlton, the community boasted five other theatres. Of these, only the Carlton survives in recognizable form as a purpose-built theatre. After its movie theatre use, the building remained a venue during the CBC's tenure for audiences attending concerts of the CBC orchestra, other live music programs, as well as broadcast productions such as the popular comedy show, the Royal Canadian Air Farce.

The building also contributes to defining and supporting the historic main street character of Parliament Street between Carlton and Winchester Streets, which includes several other properties listed on Toronto's Heritage Register. Across the street at 502- 508 Parliament Street is row housing comprising four properties dating from 1879 and placed on the Register in 1975. To the north, the end of the block is occupied by the 1888 Lakeview (Winchester) Hotel, placed on the Register in 1975 and designated by bylaw in 1995. The theatre, with these low-scale structures, and others in the block, had by the 1930s formed a continuous street wall providing a continuity in the rhythm of these buildings.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street being a representative example of the Classical Revival Style:

- The one-storey, long, polygonal form, scale and massing of the building behind a short façade
- The flat roof form of the lobby portion of the building and the domed roof of the auditorium
- The exterior materials of the front façade comprising artificial stone storefront surrounds laid in ashlar arrangement with dentil frieze and stepped and panelled parapet of red brick; the brick secondary facades
- The arrangement of the original façade storefront and entrance openings (now altered)
- Interior finishes including auditorium pilasters (piers) ornamented with Art Deco motifs and classical medallions; the auditorium's stylized cornice and screen-opening mouldings

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street being a representative but now rare example of a theatre type:

- The three-part arrangement of the building comprising lobby, clear-span auditorium, and stage/screen area.
- The elements of the original interior configuration including entrance vestibule, shallow interior lobby extending into corridors with stairways, and the extended ceiling height and open volume space of the auditorium.

Historical or Associative Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street for reflecting the work or ideas of architect Herbert Duerr:

- The building's theatre typology reflecting Duerr's specialization in theatre design
- The Classical Revival-style of design characterizing Duerr's early theatre design in tradition period revival styles

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 509 Parliament Street as being functionally and historically linked to its surroundings:

- The building's theatre typology and architectural character in contribution to the historic main street character of Parliament Street
- The building's setback, mid-block placement, and its low-scale architecture contributing to the continuous street wall and continuity in the rhythm of the historic main street character of the buildings in the 500 block of Parliament Street

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 509 Parliament Street as defining, supporting, and maintaining the historic character of the street:

- The building's placement relative to other listed and designated heritage buildings within the same block of Parliament Street and its adjacency to two Heritage Conservation Districts.

SCHEDULE B
LEGAL DESCRIPTION

509 Parliament Street

PIN 21083-0254 (LT)
PART OF PARKLOT 2, CONCESSION 1 FTB
GEOGRAPHIC TOWNSHIP OF YORK
DESIGNATED AS PART 1, PLAN 63R-3618
City of Toronto and Province of Ontario
Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66)