

Authority: Planning and Housing Committee Item
PH26.12, as adopted by City of Toronto Council on
December 16 and 17, 2025
City Council voted in favour of this by-law on February 4,
2026
Written approval of this by-law was given by Mayoral
Decision 3-2026 dated February 4, 2026

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW 88-2026

To designate the property at 241 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 241 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 241 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 241 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 241 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 February 4, 2026.

Frances Nunziata,
Speaker

John D. Elvidge,
City Clerk

(Seal of the City)

SCHEDULE A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE REASONS FOR DESIGNATION 241 Yonge Street

Reasons for Designation

The property at 241 Yonge Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria for municipal designation.

Description

The property at 241 Yonge Street is located on the east side of Yonge Street, mid-block between Shuter Street to the south and Sankofa Square to the north. It contains a four-storey mixed-use commercial brick and stone building constructed in 1911 in the Edwardian Classicism style, following the designs of the architectural firm of Mitchell & White. It was purpose-built as the commercial property for the Art Metropole artist material supply company established in 1888.

The property was included on the Heritage Register on November 21, 1973.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 241 Yonge Street has design and physical value because it is a representative example of the Edwardian Classicism style applied to a commercial building type. Edwardian Classicism emerged in reaction against the highly decorative and eclectic designs typical of the High Victorian styles, such as Queen Anne, that were popular in Canada during the 1860s and 70s. By the late-19th century, the pendulum started to swing, and architects returned to find inspiration from the classical styles. The Art Metropole building exemplifies Edwardian Classicism through the symmetrical organization of its main façade that attends to balanced proportions and ordered form (especially its three-part division), the classical references in its design, its multipaned curtain wall glazing system, and its sculptural but self-contained ornamentation that contributes an elegantly composed presence to the streetscape.

The property has additional design value because it displays a high degree of artistic merit through the design cohesion of its main façade that is comprised of finely detailed, decorative elements executed with quality materials. These include the smooth ashlar limestone moulded into architrave surrounds, the multi-pane curtain wall and the pattern in the glazing created by the muntin bars and decorative mullions, featuring the cast iron spandrel panels with repeating "AM" crest and festoon, and the prominent fourth storey copper cornice that surmounts the full height semicircular Diocletian window and is detailed with denticulation, egg and dart moulding, and a lion head motif. Similar elements were formerly repeated, in variations, in the original cast-iron storefront that has since been altered.

The property has historical or associative value because it has direct associations with the contemporary Canadian art group General Idea. General Idea (1969–1994) remain some of the most influential artists to have emerged from Canada and together, Felix Partz (1945–1994),

Jorge Zontal (1944–1994) and AA Bronson (b. 1946) created a groundbreaking practice that spanned twenty-five years. 241 Yonge Street was the location of General Idea's second studio and office space in Toronto, it was where they published FILE Magazine, and it was the inaugural site of the artist-run centre they founded in 1974: Art Metropole. The history of 241 Yonge Street as the purpose-built storefront for the original Art Metropole artist supply company and the prominent appearance of its façade were both influential in General Idea's decision to select this location. The name of the 19th century art supply company directly inspired the naming of the contemporary artist-run centre. The original architect drawings of the building's main façade featured in the advertising and correspondence graphics for the centre for the duration of its occupation there, until 1978. General Idea and Art Metropole were both significant to the establishment of a national artist-run centre network that connected like-minded, counterculture contemporary artists across the country who were operating outside of traditional art institutions and exploring unconventional art mediums in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Art Metropole building has historical or associative value because it has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the Toronto art scene and the supply of artist materials to support Canadian artists in the late 19th to early 20th century. Art Metropole was established in 1888 as one of the earliest artist material supply companies in Toronto. The company operated out of several locations across the city over the years, yet its location at 241 Yonge Street was the first and only building purpose-built for them in 1911 and is likely the only remaining building associated with their operations. The building and its historic function fulfilled an important role in the wholesale and distribution of materials like paints, canvases, and water-colour papers that were, by necessity, imported from Europe because there were initially very few Canadian based manufacturing companies for these products. Existing research into the brands and types of products advertised and sold by Art Metropole has contributed to an understanding of the painting practices and methods of Canadian artists, including celebrated artists such as David Milne (1888-1953), Tom Thomson (1877-1917), and J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932).

Situated on the east side of Yonge Street, just north of Queen Street and south of Sankofa Square, 241 Yonge Street is important in maintaining and supporting the historic commercial character of Toronto's iconic Yonge Street. Constructed as a commercial property in 1911, the design and typology of the Art Metropole building illustrates how the development of Yonge Street's commercial character has been evolving for over one hundred years. The subject property is one of a collection of several low-rise commercial buildings dating from the late 19th to early 20th centuries distributed along the east side of the block that survived the Eaton Centre redevelopment on the west side opposite. The historic buildings maintain a sense of the long-established commercial identity of Yonge Street and share consistent setbacks and design commonalities of masonry cladding, cornice details, and decorative window surrounds.

241 Yonge Street is historically linked to its surroundings as a purpose-built and prominent commercial building type constructed within the context of Yonge Street, a dynamic commercial area developing within the narrow property parcels of its historic lot patterns. Often considered Toronto's "Main Street," Yonge Street has consistently drawn businesses to establish commercial storefronts along its streetscape since at least the 1860s. The combination of the continued commercial success of the area and new structural innovations developed in the 1880s allowed for the possibility to construct new, eye-catching commercial buildings on the street with increased height densities without needing to consolidate several properties or compromise on

interior space. The metal frame construction and curtain wall approach allowed Art Metropole to commission the design of a four-storey commercial showroom within a single, narrow property parcel. Several buildings along Yonge Street exhibited comparable tall and narrow massing, such as the Mason & Risch building formerly at 230 Yonge Street and the R.S. Williams building formerly at 145-147 Yonge Street (both since demolished), suggesting a small design trend linked to this time and context.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 241 Yonge Street as a representative example of the Edwardian Classicism architectural style applied to a commercial building type, and also for displaying a high degree of artistic merit:

- The scale, form, and massing of the four-storey building on a rectangular plan
- The flat roofline accentuated by the prominent cornice
- The symmetrical composition of the main (west) façade
- The articulation of the main façade's three part division
- The building's materials, including:
 - smooth ashlar limestone masonry (west façade)
 - buff brick cladding (north, south, and east façades)
 - original cast iron features (west façade)
 - copper copping and copper cornice (west façade)
- The existing position and proportions of all original window openings on the main (west) façade
- The moulded, lugged architrave stone surrounds of the second and third storey flat-headed window opening
- The moulded stone voussoirs and prominent keystone around the fourth storey Diocletian window opening, with plain spandrels and moulded square surround above
- The grid patterns of the muntin bars and mullions on the main (west) façade
- The cast iron spandrel panel in the glazing between the second and third storeys with its repeating festoon design featuring intertwined letters "A" and "M" encircled and hung with ribbons

- Stone cornices with copper copping above the first and third storeys
- Prominent copper cornice at the roofline with denticulation, egg and dart moulding, and repeating lion's head motif

Historical or Associative Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 241 Yonge Street for its potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of the art scene and artist materials culture in Toronto in the late-19th to early-20th century:

- The cast iron spandrel panel in the glazing between the second and third storeys with its repeating festoon design, specifically the intertwined letters "A" and "M" that stand for Art Metropole

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 241 Yonge Street as supporting and maintaining the historic commercial character of Yonge Street, between Shuter Street and Sankofa Square, and as being historically linked to its surroundings:

- The zero setback of the building, its placement, and its orientation where the main (west) façade fronts onto Yonge Street
- The scale, form, and massing of the four-storey building with its narrow frontage that corresponds with the narrow property parcel

SCHEDULE B
LEGAL DESCRIPTION

PIN 21098-0071 (LT)
PART OF LOT 7 E/S YONGE STREET, REGISTERED PLAN 22A
AS IN EP149900
City of Toronto and Province of Ontario
Land Titles Division of the Toronto Registry Office (No. 66)