



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority for a Heritage Easement Agreement – 281 Cherry Street

Date:	March 9, 2012
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division
Wards:	Toronto-Danforth – Ward 30
Reference Number:	P:\2012\Cluster B\PLN\HPS\TEYCC\April 17 2012\teHPS16

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 281 Cherry Street (Toronto Hydro Substation) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and give authority for a heritage easement agreement between the City and the property owner under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Located on the east side of Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street, the property was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2003.

The property at 281 Cherry Street is owned by the Toronto Hydro Corporation, an agency of the City of Toronto. The site was placed on a list of properties for potential disposal by the municipality. According to the heritage policies in the City of Toronto's Official Plan, when a City-owned heritage property is sold, leased or transferred to another owner, a heritage easement agreement will be secured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 281 Cherry Street (Toronto Hydro Substation) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

2. If there are no objections to the designation in accordance with Section 29(6) of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
3. If there are objections in accordance with Section 29(7) of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council direct the City Clerk to refer the designation to the Conservation Review Board.
4. If the designation is referred to the Conservation Review Board, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate staff to attend any hearing held by the Conservation Review Board in support of Council's decision on the designation of the property.
5. City Council grant authority for the execution of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owners of the property at 281 Cherry Street for the property at 281 Cherry Street.
6. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary bill in Council authorizing the entering into of the Heritage Easement Agreement

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council listed the property at 281 Cherry Street on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2003.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The property at 281 Cherry Street appeared on a list of properties owned by the City of Toronto that were identified for potential sale. According to the heritage policies in the Official Plan, "When a City-owned heritage property is sold, leased or transferred to another owner, a heritage easement agreement will be secured and public access maintained to areas with heritage value." The proposed designation would enable staff to monitor any development applications affecting the site to ensure the preservation of its cultural heritage values and attributes.

COMMENTS

A location map (Attachment No. 1) and Photographs (Attachment No. 2) are attached.

Staff have completed the attached Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report (Attachment No. 4) and determined that the property at 281 Cherry Street meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation.

The property at 281 Cherry Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for

municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the categories of design and contextual values. Located on the east side of Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street, the Toronto Hydro Substation (1928) has design and contextual values as a representative example of Edwardian Classical styling applied to an industrial building that is historically, visually and physically related to its surroundings on Cherry Street where it stands as part of a group of low-rise commercial and industrial edifices on the east side of the boulevard between Commissioners Street and Villiers Street.

CONTACT

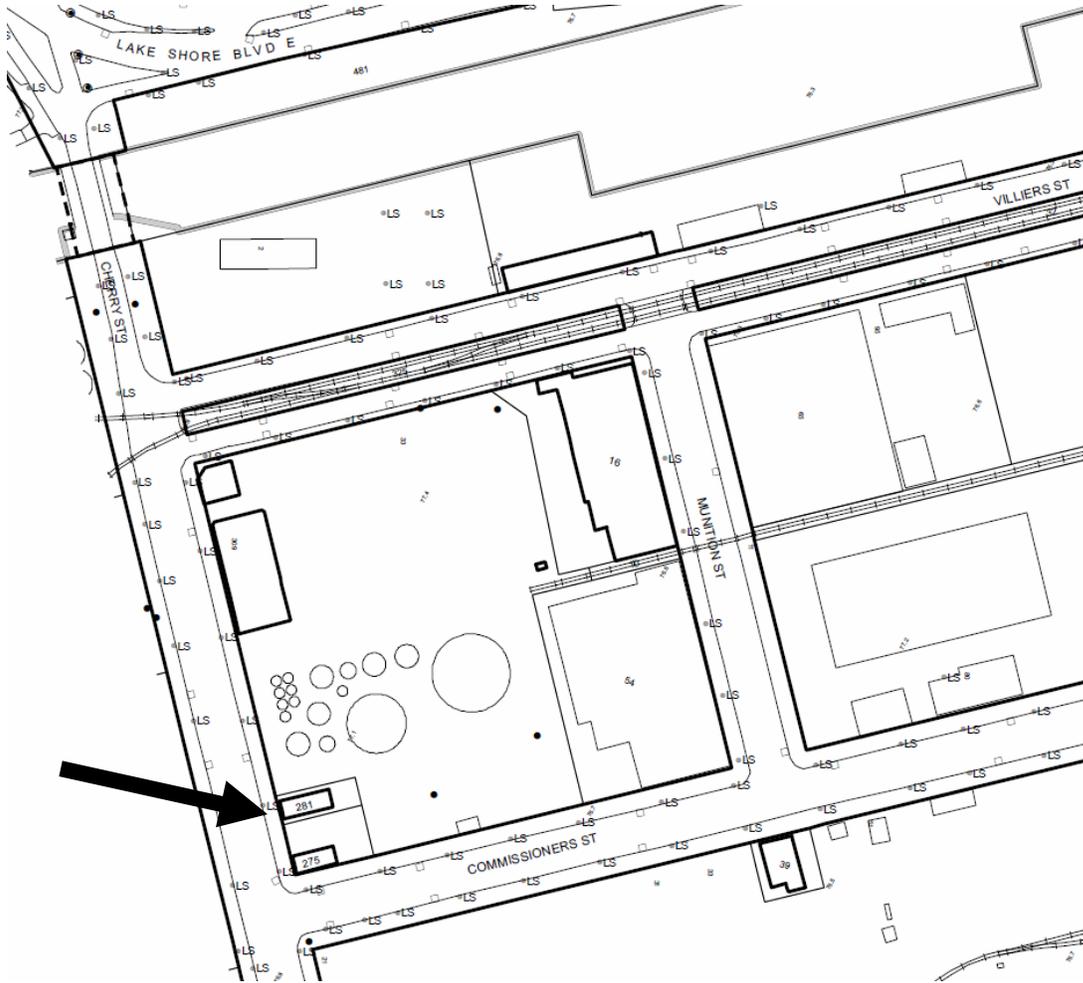
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SIGNATURE

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City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
Attachment No. 2 – Photographs
Attachment No. 3 – Reasons for Designation (Statement of Significance)
Attachment No. 4 – Heritage Property Research and Evaluation Report



The **arrow** marks the location of the Toronto Hydro Substation

This location map is for information purposes only;
the exact boundaries of the property are not shown.



Principal (west) façade on Cherry Street
(Heritage Preservation Services, February 2012)



Toronto Hydro Substation (left) at 281 Cherry Street with the former Dominion Bank at
275 Cherry Street (right) (Heritage Preservation Services, February 2012)

Toronto Hydro Substation

Description

The property at 281 Cherry Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the categories of design and contextual values. Located on the east side of Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street, the Toronto Hydro-Substation (1928) is a two-storey industrial building. The site was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2003.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Toronto Hydro Substation at 281 Cherry Street is a modest example of Edwardian Classical styling with the typical red brick cladding, symmetry and classical detailing that elevates the appearance of the utilitarian building and complements in scale and appearance the former Dominion Bank (1920) at #275 Cherry.

Contextually, the Toronto Hydro Substation is historically, visually and physically related to its surroundings on the east side of Cherry Street between Commissioners and Villiers Streets where it stands as part of a group of low-rise commercial and industrial buildings that reflect the initial development of this section of the Toronto waterfront as the Port Industrial District.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 281 Cherry Street are:

- The two-storey substation
- The scale, form and massing on a rectangular plan
- The materials, with red brick cladding, a stone base, and brick and stone detailing
- The flat roof that is sloped and marked by a parapet at the west end
- The narrow rectangular plan where the principal (west) façade is organized into three bays
- On the west façade, the flat-headed openings with a central entrance with brick piers and a stone entablature, the symmetrical fenestration with brick voussoirs and stone sills, the brick quoins, and the stone name band reading "Toronto Hydro-Electric System"
- The side elevations (north and south) that are visible from Cherry Street, with flat-headed openings on the south wall
- The placement and setback of the structure on the east side of Cherry Street

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



**TORONTO HYDRO SUBSTATION
281 CHERRY STREET, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

March 2012

1. DESCRIPTION



Cover & above: principal (west) facade of the Toronto Hydro Substation
(Heritage Preservation Services, February 2012)

281 Cherry Street: Toronto Hydro Substation	
ADDRESS	281 Cherry Street (east side, north of Commissioners Street)
WARD	Ward 30 (Toronto-Danforth)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 520E, part Blocks A & KJ (sic)
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Port Industrial District
HISTORICAL NAME	Toronto Hydro Substation
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1928
ORIGINAL OWNER	Toronto Hydro-Electric System
ORIGINAL USE	Public (hydro substation)
CURRENT USE*	vacant * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Not identified
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick cladding with brick & stone detailing
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Edwardian Classicism
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	No significant alterations identified ¹
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative & Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	March 2012

¹ The first-floor window opening in the right bay on the west façade is blind

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 281 Cherry Street, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in Section 4 (Summary).

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
1914 July	Plan 520E is registered on part of the “Marsh Lands” granted to the City of Toronto in 1880 & previously subdivided under Plan 159E in 1895
1916 Jan	The Toronto Harbour Commissioners transfer land in Blocks A & “KJ” to the “Toronto Electric Commissioners”
1928 Apr	Building Permit #40 is issued for a ‘transformer station’ on Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street ²
1928 July	An “unfinished building” owned by the Toronto Hydro-Electric System is recorded on the Cherry Street property in the tax assessment rolls
1929 July	When the tax assessment is compiled, the substation is in place & valued at \$8500
1930	The Toronto Hydro-Electric System’s substation is first recorded in the City Directory
2003	The property at 281 Cherry Street is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Port Industrial District

The property at 281 Cherry Street is located in the area later known as the Port Industrial District, which originated as marshland adjoining Ashbridge’s Bay at the east end of Toronto’s central waterfront (as shown on an early plan dated 1818 and found in Image 2). Over the next century, various strategies were introduced to reclaim the area, and the changes were documented in Goad’s Atlases (with the 1912 and 1923 updates appended as Images 3 and 5). However, “at the turn of the (20th) century, the conditions of the port were so bad that the local port authority was completely reformed and given sweeping powers to effect major improvements to the whole waterfront and specifically to the port.”³ With the appointment of the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (forerunner to today’s Toronto Port Authority) in 1911, all of the City’s waterfront holdings were transferred to this public entity. The THC introduced in 1912 the first plans to improve the Port Industrial Area, including the reclamation of part of Ashbridge’s Bay with a combination of dock walls and fill. The work was underway by 1924 with the area graded and partially serviced, as depicted on the THC’s “Progress Plan” (Image 4). The

² The permit does not survive, but it was issued between March 31 and April 3, 1928 according to an index of building permits for miscellaneous building types

³ Stinson, The Heritage of the Port Industrial District, 7

design reserved streets for industrial sites, and provided six miles of deep water docking along a new Ship Channel that transected Cherry Street as it was extended south of the mainland. Few industries had moved to the area by 1925 where “by far the largest land use was for material storage of, principally, coal and oil.”⁴ Following the economic stagnation of the Great Depression of the 1930s, World War II brought a ship building boom followed by the reinvigoration of the district as a deep-water port after the St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959. By this time, “virtually all of the District lands...were occupied,” and the construction of the City of Toronto’s new incinerator on Commissioners Street and the Province of Ontario’s Hearn Generating Station on Unwin Avenue introduced the iconic smokestacks that are local landmarks along the central waterfront.⁵

Toronto Hydro Substation

The Toronto Hydro Substation at 281 Cherry Street was built to provide power to the Port Industrial District as it slowly developed in the era following World War I. Although electricity was first delivered to the municipality by private companies during the late 19th century, in 1908 the City of Toronto entered into a formal agreement with the recently formed Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission (OHEPC) to transit power from Niagara Falls. Three years later, the City of Toronto Act created the Toronto Electric Commissioners, with representatives from City Council and the OHEPC, with the mandate of delivering reliable and low-cost electricity for commercial and residential uses.

In January 1928, the THC transferred lands on Cherry Street, described as parts of Blocks A and “KJ” under Plan 520E, to the Toronto Electric Commissioners. Dating to 1914, Plan 520E was described as a “resubdivision of part of the Marsh Lands patented to the City of Toronto (on) May 18, 1880 by the Ontario government...”, which had been previously registered as a subdivision under Plan 159E in October 1895.⁶ The City of Toronto issued a building permit for the erection of a subsidiary station for the transformation and distribution of electricity, which was under construction in July 1928 when it was described as “unfinished” in the tax assessment rolls and shown in an archival photograph attached as Image 8. The hydro substation was outlined on the Underwriters’ Insurance Bureau surveys, updated from 1931 to 1941 (Images 6 and 7).

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The property at 281 Cherry Street is illustrated in the photographs found on the cover and first page of this report and in Section 6 below.

The Toronto Hydro Substation is designed with features of Edwardian Classicism, the most popular architectural style during the early 20th century when there was a reaction to

⁴ Stinson, The Heritage of the Port Industrial District, 12

⁵ Stinson, The Heritage of the Port Industrial District, 1

⁶ Plan 520E, registered July 14, 1914

the overly decorated buildings identified with the Victorian era. Recognized by the symmetrical organization of the door and window openings, the application of somber red brick, and the restrained classical detailing, the hydro substation on Cherry Street is a modest example of Edwardian Classicism that elevates the appearance of the utilitarian building and complements the neighbouring structure at #275 Cherry, which was built as a Dominion Bank branch (1920) during the same era.

Rising two stories beneath a flat roof with a slight slope and a brick parapet at the west end, the hydro substation has a stone base with red brick cladding and brick and stone detailing. The principal (west) façade is organized into three bays with a central entrance in the first storey. The doorway is highlighted by brick piers and a stone entablature. The flat-headed window openings that flank and surmount the entry are embellished with brick voussoirs and stone sills. Brick quoins mark the corners of the west wall, while a stone name band labeled “Toronto Hydro-Electric System” extends beneath the west roofline. The fenestration on the south wall is regularly placed, while the north wall is blank. The Toronto Hydro Substation shares its setback on the east side of Cherry Street with the adjoining Dominion Bank branch to the south.⁷

iv. CONTEXT

The attached City of Toronto Property Data Map (Image 1) shows the location of the property at 281 Cherry Street and its surroundings. Placed on the east side of Cherry Street between Commissioners Street (south) and Villiers Street (north), the Toronto Hydro Substation contributes to the group of low-rise buildings in this block. Structures built for bank branches anchor either end of this section of Cherry Street, with the Dominion Bank (1920) at the corner of Commissioners Street and the Bank of Montreal (1920) further north at Villiers Street. In addition to the hydro substation, the block also contains the William McGill and Company Building (c. 1935) at #309 Cherry, which originally housed a shipping company and complements the neighbouring public and commercial buildings with its scale and brick cladding with stone embellishments.⁸

As features of the Port Industrial District, the Toronto Hydro Substation and its neighbours on Cherry Street are joined by a collection of industrial and public buildings in this area, among them the former Fire Hall #30 (1928) and the City of Toronto’s incinerator (1953) on Commissioners Street, as well as the iconic Hearn Generating Station (1951) at 470 Unwin Avenue, all of which are recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. While the

⁷ The Dominion Bank opened at #275 Cherry in 1920, but closed this branch in 1927. The building has housed restaurants since that time

⁸ All of the extant buildings in this block are recognized on the City's heritage inventory

criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto uses it when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property or X if it is applicable, with explanatory text below.

Design or Physical Value	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	X
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	N/A
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

Representative Example of a Type and Style – The Toronto Hydro Substation at 281 Cherry Street is a representative example of Edwardian Classical styling applied to an industrial building. As the most popular architectural style during the World War I era, the symmetry, red brick cladding and applied classical elements identified with Edwardian Classicism are displayed on the substation, which complements in scale and appearance the neighbouring Dominion Bank Branch (1920) at #275 Cherry.

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

Based on the research conducted for this report, no associative values are identified for the property at 281 Cherry Street.

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	N/A
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	X
iii. landmark	N/A

Surroundings – The Toronto Hydro Substation is historically, visually and physically related to its surroundings on the east side of Cherry Street between Commissioners and Villiers Streets where it stands as part of a group of low-rise commercial and industrial buildings that reflect the initial development in the early 20th century of this section of the Toronto waterfront as the Port Industrial District.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 281 Cherry Street has design and contextual values as a representative

example of Edwardian Classicism applied to a hydro substation that is historically, visually and physically linked to its surroundings on the east side of Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street where it contributes to the group of low-rise structures that represent the initial development of the Port Industrial District during the World War I era.

5. SOURCES

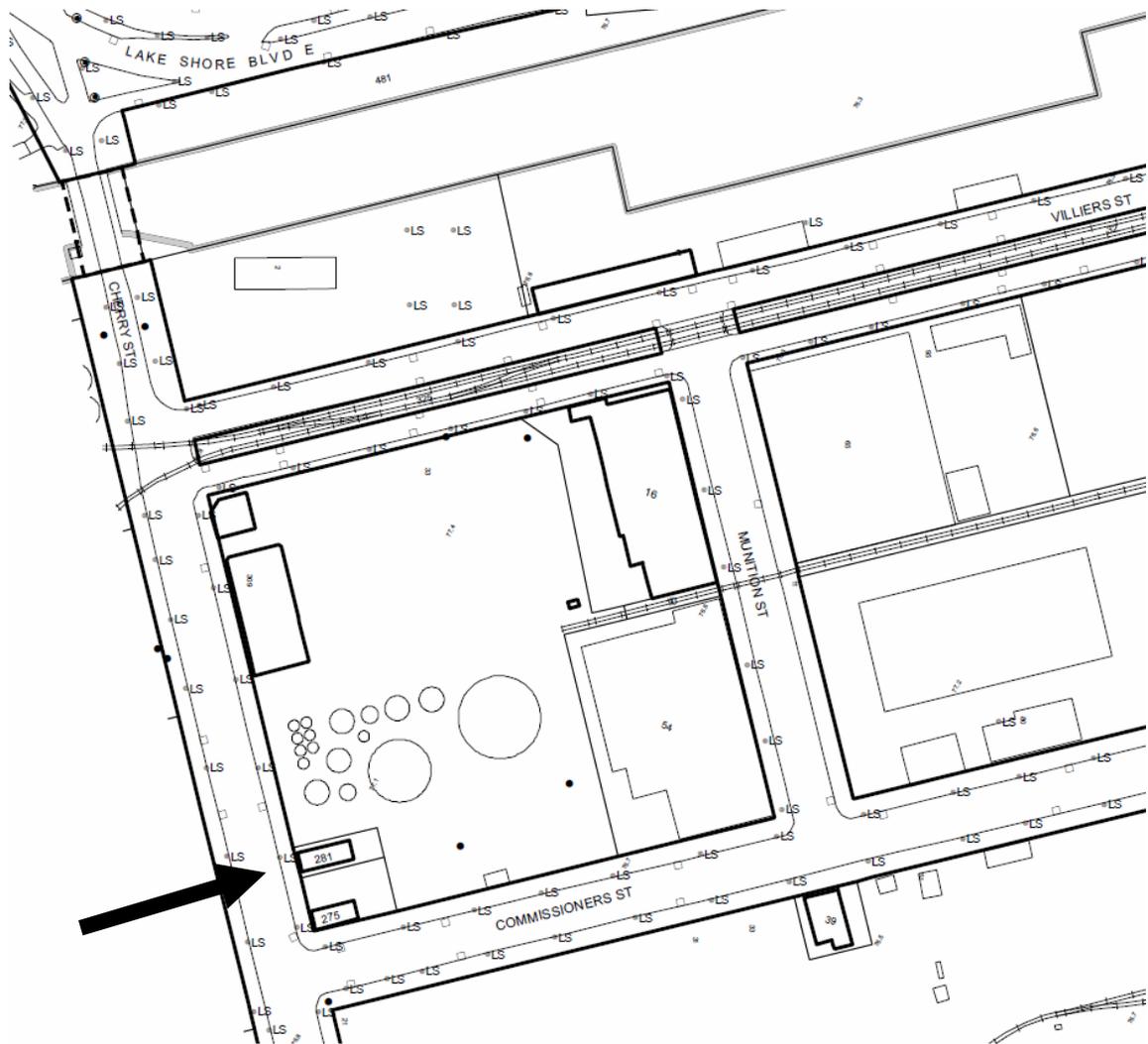
Archival Sources

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Plan 195E and Plan 520E, Blocks A and “KJ”
Aerial Map, City of Toronto, 1947
Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, Ward 1, Division 2, 1927-1929
Building Permit #40, 1928
Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York, 275-285 Cherry Street, 1933-1984
City of Toronto Directories, 1915-1930
Goad’s Atlases, 1910-1923
Phillipotts, Plan of York, 1818
Photograph, aerial view of the Portlands, 1970s, City of Toronto Archives, Series 1465, Item 33
Photograph, Cherry Street, 1931, Toronto Port Authority Archives
Progress Plan, Toronto Harbour Commissioners, 1914-1921

Secondary Sources

Bright Lights, Big City, City of Toronto Archives, 1991
Our 75th Anniversary, Toronto Hydro, 1985
Stinson, Jeffrey, and Michael Moir, Built Heritage of the East Bayfront, 1991
Stinson, Jeffrey, The Heritage of the Port Industrial District, Vol. 1, 1990
Toronto Harbour: the passing years, Toronto Harbour Commissioners, 1985
<http://www.torontohydro.com/sites/corporate/History/Pages/History.aspx>

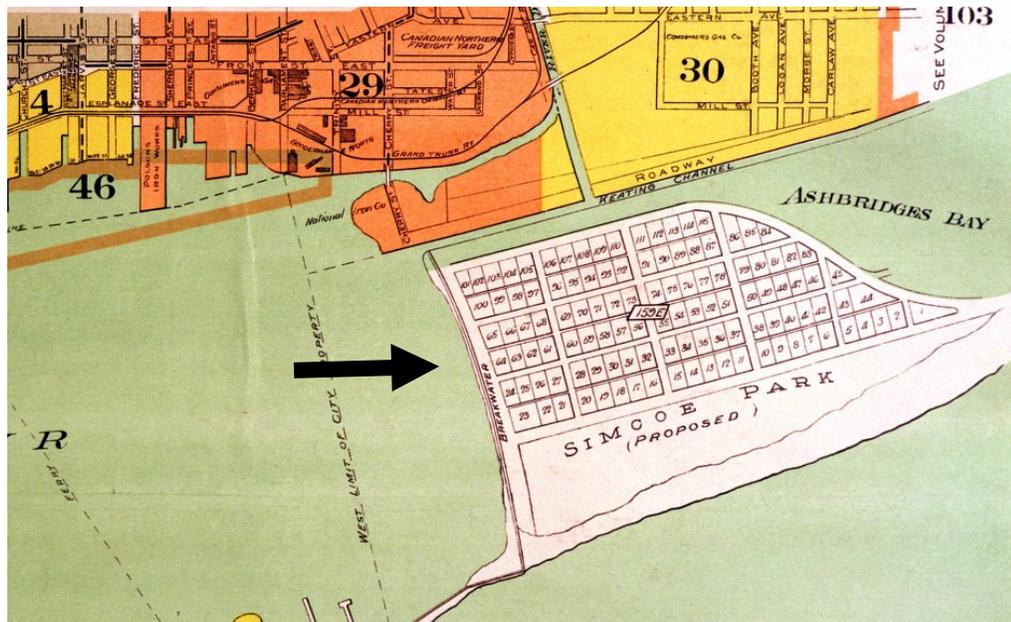
6. IMAGES: the **arrows** mark the location of the property at 281 Cherry Street



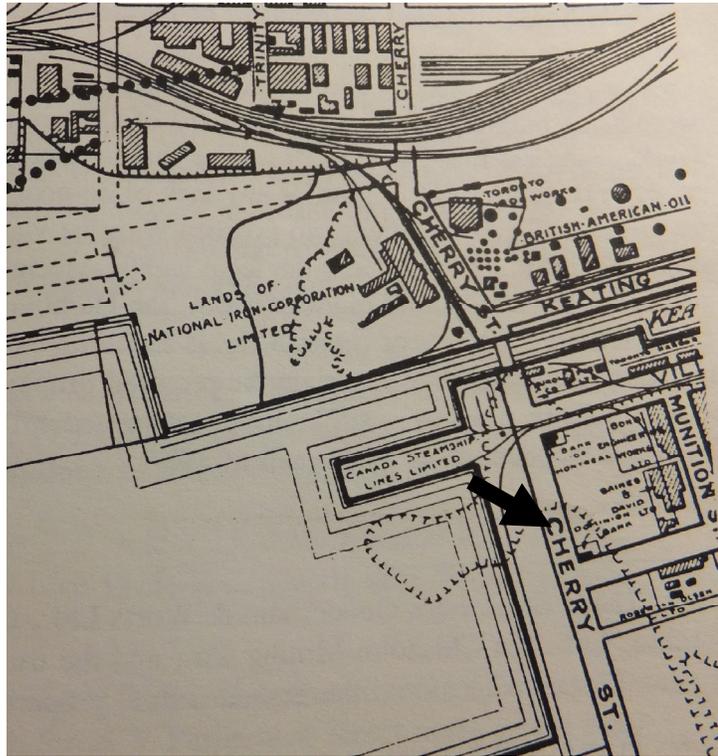
1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of the property on the east side of Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street. The buildings outlined in **bold** are included on the City's heritage inventory



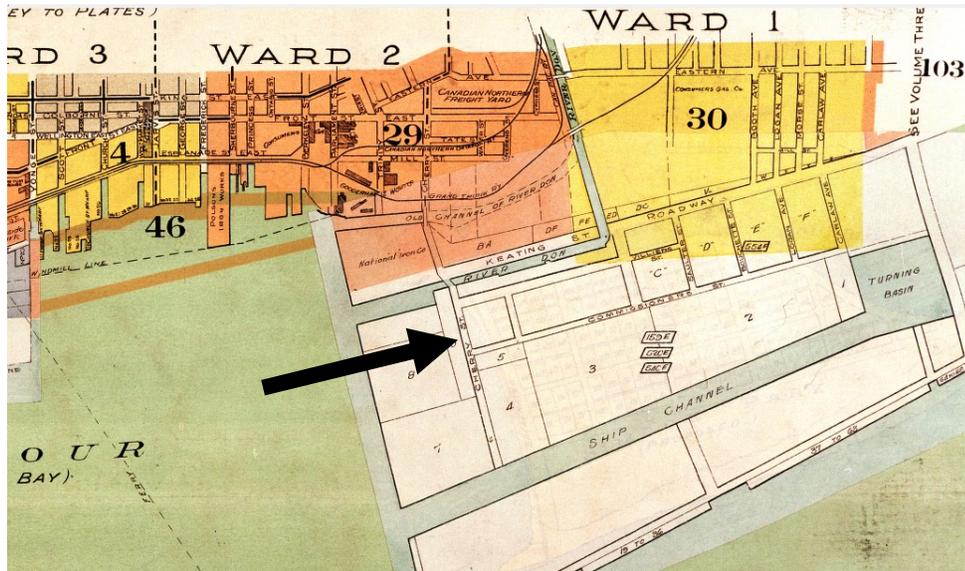
2. Phillpott's Plan of York, 1818: showing the 'marshy area' near the foot of the Don River prior to its reclamation



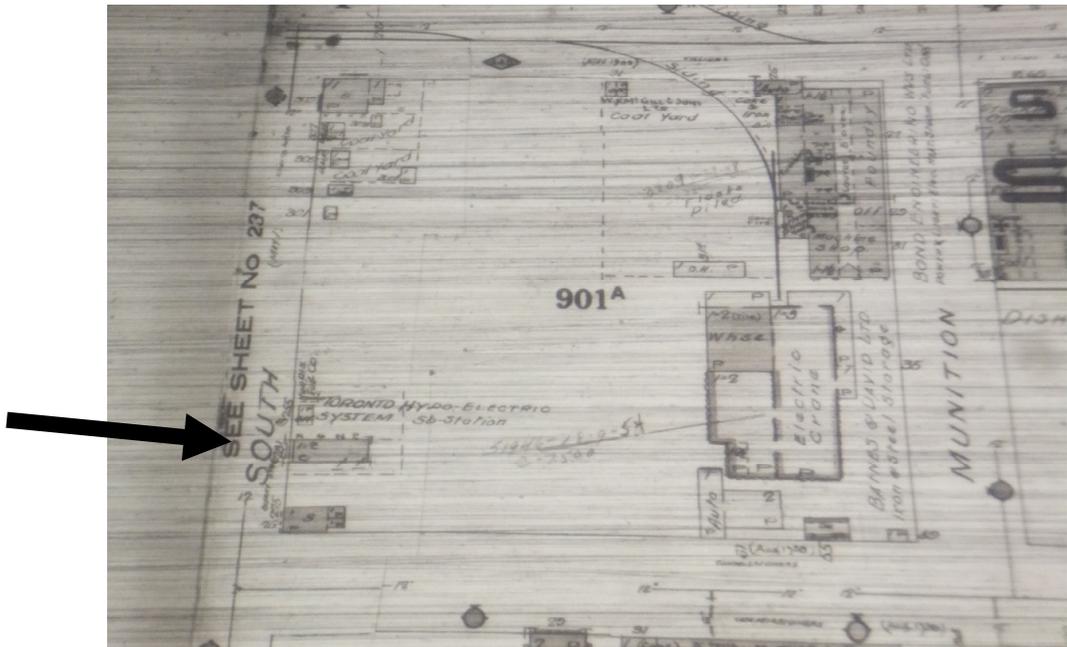
3. Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1912: a century after Image 2, the subdivided and reclaimed land near Ashbridge's Bay shows a street plan and an area proposed for parkland



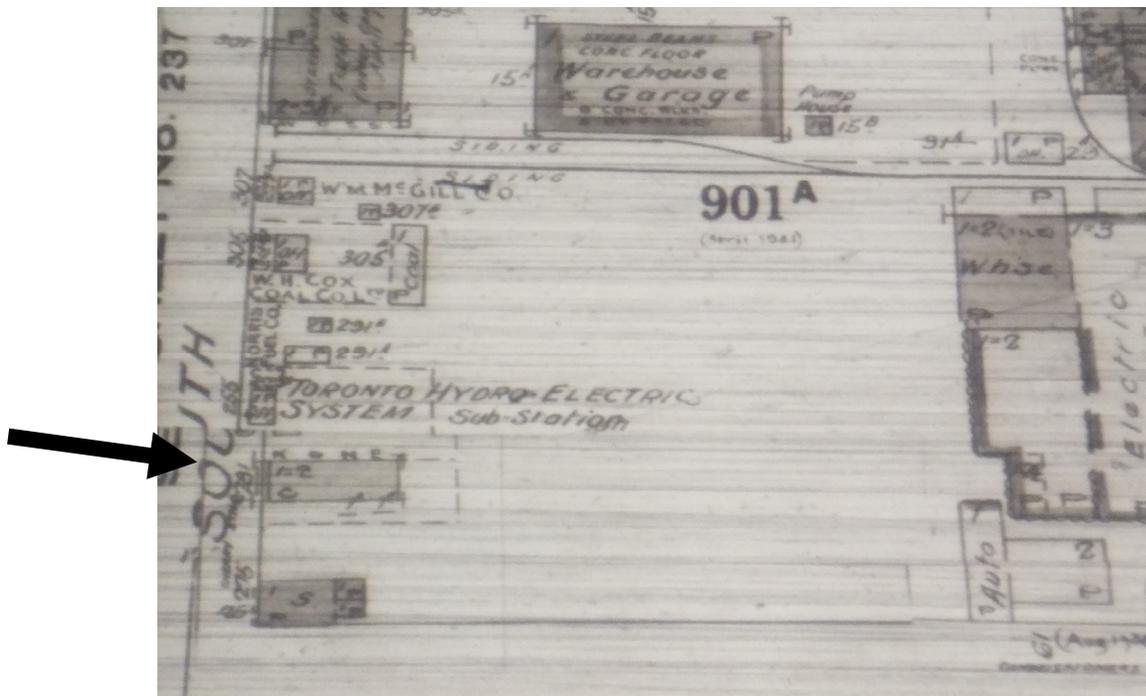
4. Toronto Harbour Commissioners “Progress Plan” 1914-21: showing the layout of the area under the THC and prior to the development of the subject property beside the Dominion Bank branch (1920) at #275 Cherry



5. Goad’s Atlas, 1910 revised to 1923: showing the overall layout of the area with the subdivision of the lands under the THC and the completion of the Ship Channel



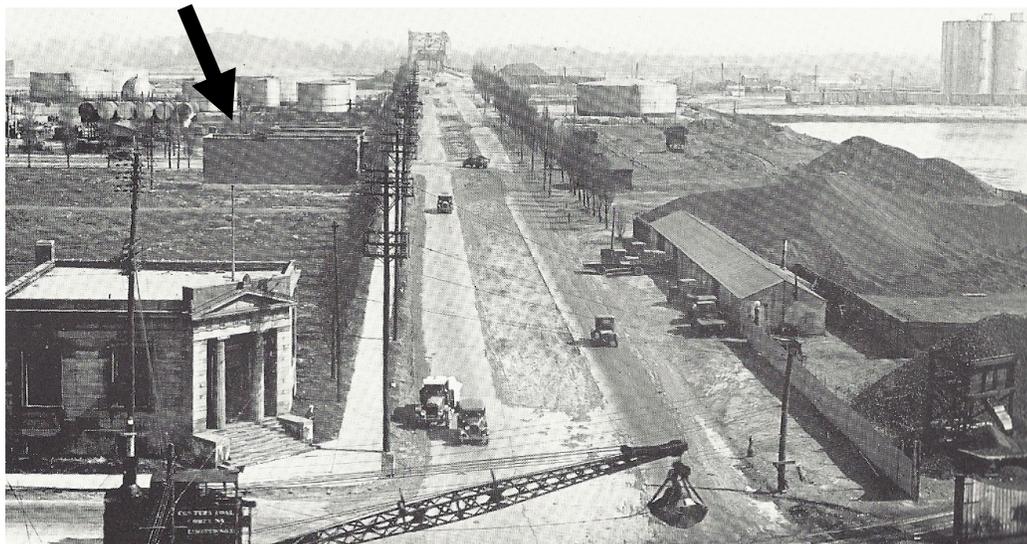
6. Underwriters' Insurance Bureau Survey, 1931: showing the Toronto Hydro Substation beside the Dominion Bank branch at #275 Cherry Street



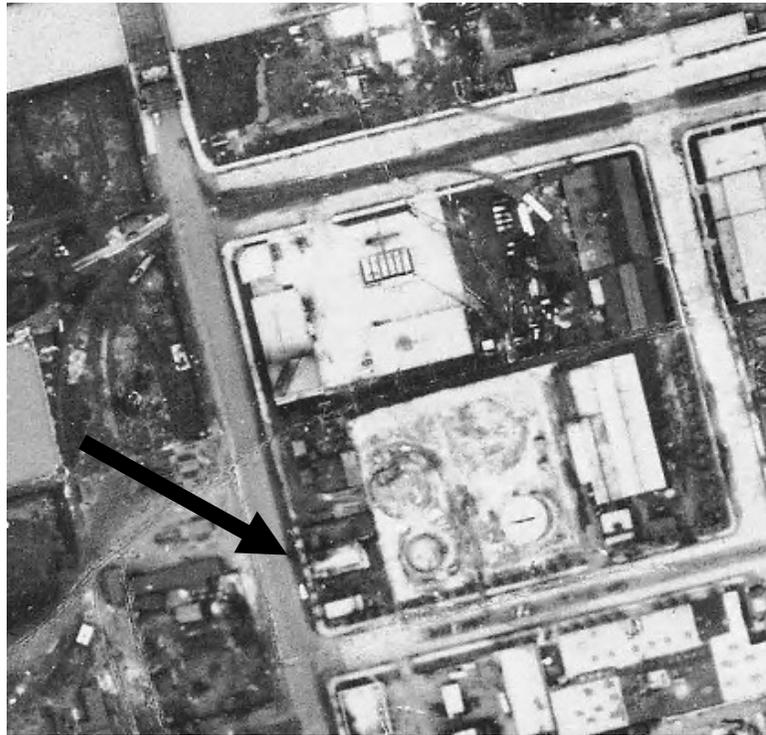
7. Underwriters' Insurance Bureau Survey, 1931 revised to 1941: showing the subject property with additional buildings in the same block



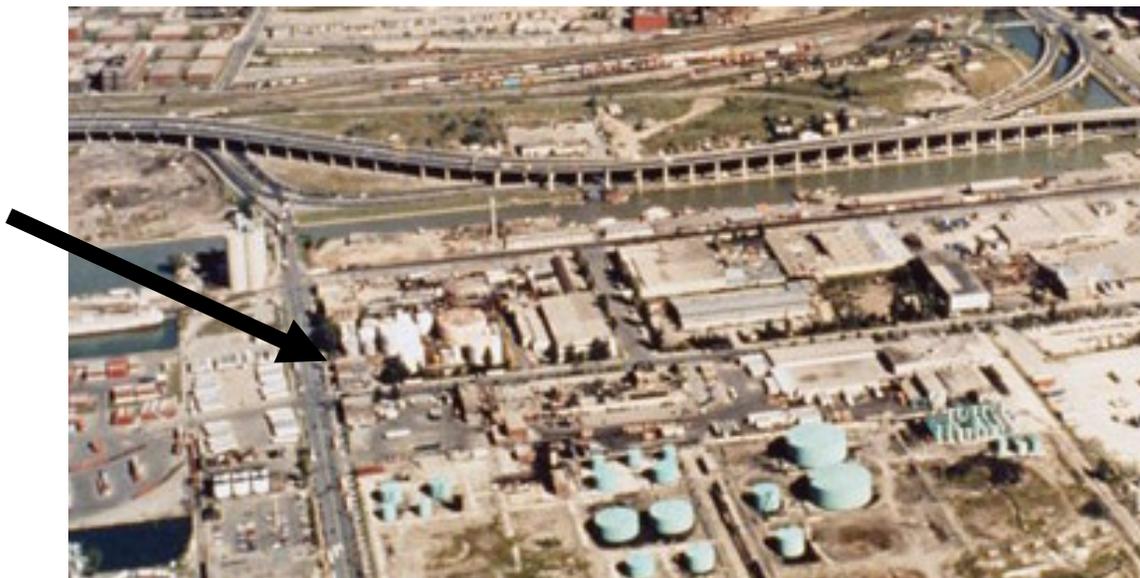
8. Archival Photograph, Toronto Hydro Substation: showing the building under construction in 1928 (reproduced in Stinson, The Heritage of the Port Industrial District, 1990)



9. Archival Photograph, Cherry Street, May 1931: view looking south along Cherry Street from Villiers Street showing the north wall of the Toronto Hydro Substation (the small classically-designed building in the lower left corner is the Bank of Montreal branch, which is also recognized on the City's heritage inventory (Port Authority of Toronto Archives)



10. Aerial Photograph, 1947: showing the east side of Cherry Street where the Toronto Hydro Substation is found north of Commissioners Street (City of Toronto Archives)



11. Aerial Photograph, 1970s: showing the development of the area where the subject property is pictured on the east side of Cherry Street, north of Commissioners Street (City of Toronto Archives, Series 1465, Item 33)



12. Photograph, Toronto Hydro Substation: showing the subject building on the left with the former Dominion Bank branch at #275 Cherry on the right (Heritage Preservation Services, February 2012)



13. Photograph, Toronto Hydro Substation: showing the principal (west) façade on the left with the south elevation on the right (Heritage Preservation Services, February 2012)