

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)
339 QUEEN STREET EAST

ATTACHMENT NO. 3

The property at 339 Queen Street East 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 all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 339 Queen Street East is located at the south-west corner of Queen Street East and Parliament Street. Built in 1907, with an extension in 1925-1926, the building is a three-storey, brick-clad store and warehouse, with curtain wall cladding on the first two storeys of the principal north and east façades. The property was originally owned by the Home Furniture Carpet Co. Ltd. from 1907 until 1977 and then owned and occupied by Marty Millionaire Ltd. from 1978 until 2014.

Statement of Significance

The former Home Furniture Carpet Co., Ltd. building, at 339 Queen Street East, has design value as a fine representative of the Chicago School which was a dominant architectural style for commercial buildings between 1895 and 1910 and was a precursor to 20th century steel and glass skyscrapers. The chief characteristics included a steel, post-and-beam structural system which permitted extensively glazed, curtain-wall façades on the lower floors and typically featured more traditional windows combined with masonry cladding on the upper levels. The 1925-1926 extension was faithful in repeating the original style and architectural detail.

The property is valued for its association with John Francis Brown, founder of J. F. Brown Co. and subsequently the Home Furniture Carpet Co., Ltd., a department store business in operation in Toronto for over 90 years (1885 until 1977). The property is also valued for its association with John Franklin Brown who extended the building in 1925-6 to create the Home Bowling Club, later known as the Riverdale Bowling Alleys, which occupied the property for over 50 years. The property is also associated with Marty Millionaire Ltd., a well-known furniture sales and rental emporium which provided props to Toronto's film industry from 1968. This business was located in this building at 339 Queen Street East for over 35 years (1978-2014).

The property is valued as it demonstrates the work of Henry Simpson (1864-1926), an innovative and prolific Toronto architect, who was eulogized as "one of the best known Toronto architects in the era of building expansion." (Obituary, Henry Simpson, Toronto Star, 17 December 1926) Simpson began his career as an intern of the architect E. J. Lennox, and then practised in New York, before returning to practice in Toronto by 1889. He is credited with designing over 120 buildings including the Metallic Roofing Co. showroom, a National Historic Site. Simpson also designed J. F. Brown's first retail building, at 193 Yonge Street, which is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The property's location, the south-west corner of Queen and Parliament, is valued for its historical association with the evolution of the Corktown neighbourhood from being situated on the outer edges of the original town of York and the adjacent sites of the town's first institutions, to its transformation as an important intersection where Parliament St. connected waterfront industry with northern residential communities and Queen St. became a significant artery connecting the city with the communities of Riverdale, Leslieville and beyond.

The property at 339 Queen Street East has contextual value as it supports the historic character of this important intersection of Queen and Parliament streets. The Chicago School style building has been a distinctive local landmark within the predominantly Victorian Style Corktown neighbourhood for more than a century.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes on the exterior of the property at 339 Queen Street East are:

- The original location of the building at the south-west corner of Queen Street East and Parliament Street
- The form and massing of the three-storey rectangular volume with a flat roof
- The north and east elevations including the following:
 - the pattern of the curtain wall glazing at the first and second floors including:
 - The pairs of large panes of glass between structural supports at the first and second floors
 - The pairs of transom lights above each large pane of glass on the Parliament St. elevation (*n.b.* these are currently covered with board panels)
 - The pairs or triplets of transom lights above each large pane of glass on the Queen St. elevation, with the pair over the recessed entry (*n.b.* these are currently covered with board panels)
 - The original spandrel panels below the glazing, divided to match the pattern of the transom lights above
 - the original narrow band for signage between the first and second floors
 - the moulded brick entablature band which runs between the second and third floors
 - the bricks pilasters, with their narrow capitals, rising two floors to the brick entablature between the second and third floors
 - the third floor level including:
 - the window openings with their segmental-arched headers
 - the pattern of paired, double-hung, single-pane sash within the window openings
 - the moulding strips connecting the window heads

Please note: the rear, east façade of the 1925-6 extension, and the fire escape stairs on the south façade are not identified as heritage attributes.