

10 St. Mary St., Suite 801  
Toronto, Canada, M4Y 1P9  
416 963.4497 T  
416 963.8761 F

**ERA**  
Architects Inc.

November 9, 2015

Toronto and East York Community Council  
Toronto City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Tower  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Attention: Ms. Ros Dyers, Secretariat

Dear Chair and Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council:

**Re: Item TE12.11, Designation of the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act**

We are writing to you on behalf of Great West Life Realty Advisors Inc. (GWLRA), owners of 33 Yonge Street, who have concerns regarding both the inclusion of their property within the boundaries of the proposed St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and the District Plan's restrictive guidelines.

GWLRA's concerns regarding the boundaries of the proposed St. Lawrence HCD were conveyed to Heritage Preservation Services on December 16, 2014. On behalf of the client, ERA submitted a letter and a supporting background report on 33 Yonge, a thirteen-storey mirrored glass office and retail structure built in 1982. Based on research and analysis of the history and evolution of 33 Yonge Street and its immediate urban context, ERA suggested the property's inclusion within the HCD boundaries was not justified given its historic and continued relationship to Yonge Street and the Financial District. The City acknowledged receipt of these materials, but the boundaries were not altered.

Following review of the St. Lawrence HCD Draft Plan (September 2015), the appropriateness of 33 Yonge Street's inclusion within the district boundaries remains. GWLRA is still concerned about how the objectives of the HCD respond to a building that is both within the district *and* on Yonge Street. In particular, GWLRA is concerned that the Plan's principles and guidelines appear to be mandatory and do not allow for potential development of this non-contributing property.

Overall, there is concern that the proposed St. Lawrence Neighbourhood HCD Plan lacks the clarity and transparency of the Standards and Guidelines and introduces a rigidity and inflexibility through its policies, which run counter to the Standards and Guidelines. The latter recognizes that there may be many potential solutions to achieving an overall objective.

While supportive of good heritage conservation and of the heritage of the St Lawrence Neighbourhood, GWLRA does not support the HCD in its current form.

Yours truly,



Michael McClelland OAA FRAIC CAHP  
Principal ERA Architects Inc.

10 St. Mary St., Suite 801  
Toronto, Canada, M4Y 1P9  
416 963.4497 T  
416 963.8761 F

**ERA**  
Architects Inc.

Tuesday December 16, 2014

Mary L. MacDonald,  
Acting Manager  
Heritage Preservation Services  
City Hall, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor, East Tower  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**RE: INCLUSION OF 33 YONGE STREET IN THE PROPOSED  
ST. LAWRENCE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Dear Mary,

This letter has been prepared by ERA Architects Inc. on behalf of GWL Realty Advisors Inc. (GWLRA) in regards to the inclusion of 33 Yonge Street within the boundaries of the proposed St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District (HCD). Built in 1982, 33 Yonge Street is a thirteen-storey commercial building, situated on a site bounded by Wellington, Scott, Front, and Yonge streets. It is owned by Great-West Life Assurance Company and London Life Insurance Company and managed by GWLRA and is occupied by such tenants as CIBC, Altus Group, Ogilvy & Mather and Cushman & Wakefield.

According to City of Toronto Staff Reports of September 11, 2009 and May 7, 2014, we understand that in 2005 the City Council adopted a heritage conservation district study area for part of the St. Lawrence area that included 33 Yonge. At that time the boundary for the potential study included Yonge Street to the west, King Street East to the north, George Street to the east, and the CN Rail corridor to the south. These boundaries were consistent with those used for the preparation of the Urban Design Guidelines for the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Focused Area, which were adopted by City Council earlier in 2005.

In 2008, City Council identified St. Lawrence East as among ninety-six other areas in the City that had potential as an HCD. A year later, in 2009, the Study area was expanded to include the St. Lawrence District East Neighbourhood. The amended study boundaries included the area located east of Yonge Street (including the buildings on the west side of the street), south of Adelaide Street (including all buildings on the north side of the street), west of Parliament Street (including all of the buildings on the east side of the street) and north of the railway corridor.

In 2012, the St. Lawrence neighbourhood was identified as a high priority area for an HCD Study, due to continuous development activity within the neighbourhood. The goal was to develop policies that would allow for growth and change, without placing the cultural heritage value of the area at risk.

The St. Lawrence HCD Study (July 2014) prepared by Fournier Gersovitz Moss Drolet et Associés Architects (FGMDa) recommended that a portion of the study area be designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act on the basis of its historical value as the original footprint of the Town of York; its physical character, which includes a great concentration of nineteenth-century buildings; and the contextual, social, and community significance of its institutions and landmarks, such as the St. Lawrence Market and Hall, St. James Cathedral, and its numerous theatres.

Among its key heritage attributes are:

- The street pattern of the original ten blocks;
- The continuous operation of the market and church;
- The urban grain that characterizes the commercial and industrial development within the neighbourhood;
- The siting and scale of contributing buildings, and the proportion of the height of buildings to the street width;
- The distinctive commercial warehouse, industrial, and mid-rise residential building typologies;
- Key characteristics of contributing buildings, including post-and-beam construction, brick and stone exterior cladding, and the quality of ornamentation and detailing of masonry and brickwork; and
- Important neighbourhood institutions and their properties, among them, the south St. Lawrence Market, St. Lawrence Hall, The Cathedral Church of St. James, Berczy Park, and the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts.

We strongly support the conclusions and recommendations of this Study, including the proposed cultural heritage value, attributes, and objectives of the St. Lawrence HCD. However, we believe that the inclusion of 33 Yonge Street within its boundaries is not justified for the following reasons:

- As a gateway property to the lower Yonge Street commercial streetscape, 33 Yonge is directly associated – physically and functionally – with the late-nineteenth-century shift of Toronto’s commercial core to Bay Street and the subsequent development of the Financial District.

- 33 Yonge Street is not directly related to the proposed HCD's cultural heritage value and attributes, which address the development of Old Town and its historic and contemporary social, cultural and political institutions.
- The boundaries of the proposed HCD were already adjusted to exclude the Yonge Street properties immediately to the north of 33 Yonge Street. According to the HCD Study, this northwestern corner of the HCD Study Area was excluded because: "[i]ts history and physical character are more closely associated with those of the financial district immediately to the west. The building heights, styles, materials and uses are distinct from the predominant character of the rest of the neighbourhood." (p. 117) The same argument can be made to support the exclusion of 33 Yonge Street.
- The Procedures, Policies, and Terms of Reference for Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto states that the boundary for an HCD "should be carefully drawn to ensure that it includes only those areas that relate to the cultural heritage values, character and/or geography of the study area." (p. 31)

On this basis, we are requesting that the City of Toronto give consideration to the adjustment of the boundary of the proposed St. Lawrence HCD, in order to exclude 33 Yonge Street.

A background report that provides supporting material regarding the history and evolution of 33 Yonge Street and its immediate urban context is appended.

Yours Sincerely,



Michael McClelland OAA FRAIC CAHP  
Principal | E.R.A. Architects Inc.

# 33 YONGE STREET

## BACKGROUND REPORT

**PREPARED FOR:**

GWL Realty Advisors Inc.  
33 Yonge Street, Suite 300  
Toronto, Ontario M5E 1G4

**PREPARED BY:**

ERA Architects Inc.  
10 St. Mary Street, Suite 801  
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1P9  
416-963-4497

Project: 14-104-01  
Prepared By: MM/VA/JT/SH/AC  
Issued: 2014-12-10

**E.R.A.**  
Architects Inc.

---

Cover Image: 33 Yonge Street, designed by the Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden Partnership (WZMH).  
(Source: Canadian Architect 27, No. 4 (April, 1982))

## CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Scope of the Report	
1.2 Present Owner Contact	
<b>2 BACKGROUND RESEARCH</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Evolution of Lower Yonge Street	
2.2 Evolution of 33 Yonge Street	
<b>3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1 Comparative Analysis between St. Lawrence Market HCD and 33 Yonge Street	
<b>4 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>43</b>
Appendix 1: FGMDa Map of Proposed Boundary for the St. Lawrence HCD	
Appendix 2: Google Maps Street View of 33 Yonge and Excluded Yonge Street Properties	





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ERA Architects Inc. was retained by GWL Realty Advisors Inc. (GWLRA), co-owner and the current manager of 33 Yonge Street, to examine the inclusion of the subject property in the St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District (HCD). Built in 1982, 33 Yonge Street, also known as the A.E. LePage Building, is a thirteen-storey, mirrored glass office and retail structure occupying the entire trapezoidal block bounded by Wellington, Scott, Front, and Yonge Streets.

This report provides background information about the history and evolution of lower Yonge Street and 33 Yonge, and serves as an appendix to our letter of December 10, 2014, to the City of Toronto. It demonstrates that lower Yonge Street and 33 Yonge's history and built form are directly associated with the development of the Financial District, centred at Bay Street, rather than with Old Town and its urban landscape.

The report concludes that 33 Yonge Street does not contribute to the cultural heritage value and attributes of the proposed St. Lawrence HCD, which primarily address Old Town and its historic and contemporary social, cultural, and political institutions.

On this basis, it is requested that 33 Yonge be excluded from the proposed St. Lawrence HCD boundaries, as was done for the neighbouring properties along lower Yonge Street.



1. West-facing view of 33 Yonge, November 2014. The building's form and materials have a clear affinity to those of the Financial District. (Source: ERA Architects).

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Scope of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a history of 33 Yonge and its relationship to the development of lower Yonge Street. It is to be read in conjunction with our letter of December 10, 2014, addressed to the City of Toronto, regarding the inclusion of 33 Yonge within the proposed boundaries of the St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District (HCD).

The first section of the report provides a brief overview of the development of lower Yonge Street, describing its evolution from a military and trade route, to a commercial street, to a centre of banking and commerce adjacent to the heart of the Financial District on Bay Street. It discusses the associated emergence of early skyscrapers along lower Yonge at the turn of the twentieth century, the first of which was constructed on the current site of 33 Yonge Street.

The report then describes the development of 33 Yonge, which illustrates the property's evolution, mirroring that of lower Yonge Street. Beginning as a residential property, it was later occupied by small-scale commercial buildings, and subsequently a hotel. In the late nineteenth century, the construction of the Board of Trade Building established its strong relationship to the Financial District, which by that time was centred on Bay Street. The style and function of the current WZMH-designed building that occupies the property, built in 1982, maintains this relationship as does the building's current tenants which include CIBC and Cushman & Wakefield.

The final section of the report provides a table to demonstrate that the inclusion of 33 Yonge Street within the proposed St. Lawrence HCD is not justified, since the building does not contribute to the HCD's cultural heritage value and does not align with its attributes. Rather, 33 Yonge is associated with adjacent properties along lower Yonge Street that have been excluded from the HCD through the adjustment of its boundaries.

## 1.2 Present Owner Contact

GWL Realty Advisors Inc.  
c/o Krystal L. Hamilton  
33 Yonge Street, Suite 300  
Toronto ON M5E 1G4  
416-359-3005

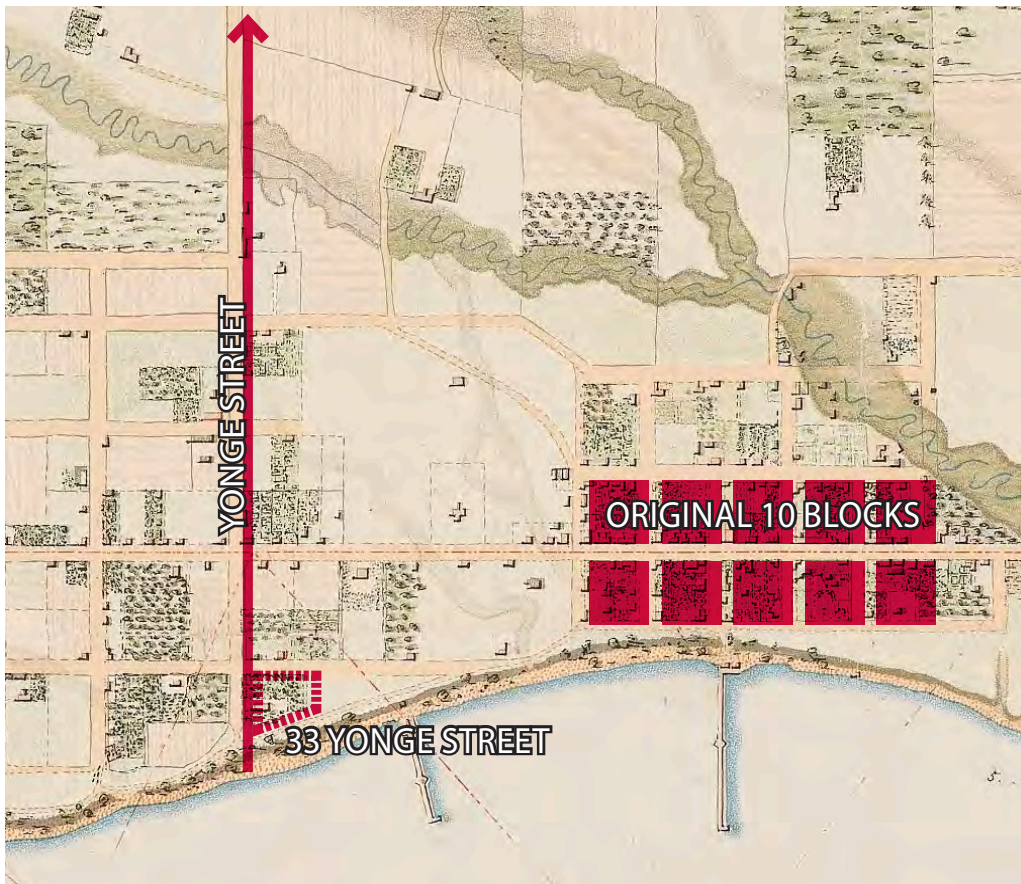


## 2 BACKGROUND RESEARCH

### 2.1 Evolution of Lower Yonge Street

#### 2.1.1 A Military and Trade Route

Yonge Street — named after Sir George Yonge, the British Secretary of War and expert on Roman roads — was first laid out by Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793. Originally intended as a strategic military conduit providing access to the northern Great Lakes, Yonge also had an early commercial function as a trade artery<sup>1</sup> connecting Toronto's emergent urban core with agricultural lands to the north and the interior of the province.



2. Site location in relation to the original 10 blocks of the Town of York and Yonge Street. Site location highlighted with red dashed line. 1818 Philpotts Map. (Source: Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects)

1 F.R. Berchem, *The Yonge Street Story: 1793-1860* (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1977), 69.

#### 2.1.2 *The Emerging Commercial Street and the Westward Migration of Commerce*

Yonge Street's development in the nineteenth century was part of the general evolution of Toronto's original urban footprint: the ten blocks of the Town of York bounded by Jarvis, Adelaide, Berkeley, and the Esplanade (also laid out by Governor Simcoe in 1793) as well as the reserve lands laid out as part of the "New Town" expansion in 1797. The reserve lands were associated with different civic institutions such as St. Lawrence Hall and Market and St. James' Cathedral and were anchors for commerce in the city. Over the course of the nineteenth century, commercial use within the original ten blocks and the reserves increased while residential uses declined. This shift in character was also accompanied by the general westward migration of the city's commercial centre.

In the early nineteenth century, King was the dominant commercial street with the intersection at Jarvis as a node of activity. By the 1840s, however, the intersection with Yonge had become the city's main commercial hub.<sup>2</sup>

As illustrated in Cane's 1842 topographical map, the commercial streetwall along Yonge Street was developing around the intersection at King.

---

2 F.R. Berchem, *Opportunity Road: Yonge Street 1860 to 1939* (Toronto: Natural Heritage, 1996), 9-10.





3. King Street looking west from Jarvis, 1868. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive). The St. Lawrence Hall, visible on the south side of the street, was once part of the city's commercial landscape. Following the mid-nineteenth-century shift of commercial activity from Jarvis towards Yonge, the St. Lawrence area no longer served as the City's economic centre.



4. Detail, Topographical Map of the City and Liberties of Toronto, James Cane, 1842. (Source: Toronto Archives)



5. Yonge St., looking south from south of King, 1872? (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)



6. Yonge St., looking north from Front Street, 1872. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)



### 2.1.3 Arrival of the Railways and Commercial Intensification

Lower Yonge Street's commercial function significantly developed in the 1860s as a result of the economic boom following Confederation in 1867, the expansion of shipping on the Great Lakes, and, most significantly, the development of the railway along the waterfront. In particular, the Toronto terminus of the Great Western Railway's extension from Hamilton was located at the base of Yonge, bringing a flurry of transport and commercial activity to the area and encouraging the development of Yonge south of King.

Built in 1866 on the current site of the Sony Centre, the Rail Terminus was used as a freight depot until 1896, and later as a fruit depot until it was destroyed by fire in 1952. The Customs House by R.C. Windeyer (1873–1876; demolished 1919) located on the southwest corner of Yonge and Front was an important part of this commercial infrastructure and symbolized Toronto's developing role as a financial centre within Canada.<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of this transport hub contributed to the transformation of lower Yonge from a street with modest commercial uses to one of the city's most well-established commercial thoroughfares. The shops, taverns, drugstores, and dry good outlets that previously characterized commerce on lower Yonge<sup>4</sup> were soon to be replaced by large financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies, and new built forms such as the skyscraper.



8. Yonge St., looking north from south of King, 1874. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive). This image shows the small-scale buildings that characterized the street before the proliferation of large banks and skyscrapers.



7. Yonge St., looking north from Front Street, 1872. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive). The Customs House, at the base of Yonge, was part of an emerging infrastructure of commerce that influenced the development of the street's commercial character.

3 Michael Filey, *A Toronto Album: Glimpses of the City That Was* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 4.

4 Berchem, *The Yonge Street Story*, 11.



9. Octavius Thompson (photographer), Great Western Railway Station, northeast corner of Yonge and Esplanade, 1867. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)

#### 2.1.4 Consolidation of Banking and Commerce Along Yonge

In the 1870s and 1880s, lower Yonge Street was home to an array of building types, some made of brick and stone, others of aging wood.<sup>5</sup> The construction of numerous banks during these decades not only began consolidating the street's commercial identity, but also started shaping its architectural character.

The 1880 Goads Fire Insurance Plan reveals the extent to which banks had populated the lower Yonge strip between Front and Adelaide. These included the Bank of Montreal on the northwest corner of Front and Yonge (1885–1886 by Darling & Curry; now the Hockey Hall of Fame), the Bank of Commerce on the southeast corner of Yonge and Colborne, and the Bank of British North America at the northeast corner of Yonge and Wellington (1871–1872 by Henry Langley).

An account from 1885 illustrates not only how Yonge gradually assumed the commercial functions associated with King, but also became increasingly characterized by banking institutions:

*"Yonge Street ranks next to King in importance as a business thoroughfare, stretching from end to end of the city ... From the Esplanade to King Street [Yonge] is lined by handsome buildings, chiefly occupied by banks, insurance offices and wholesale business houses ... Unpretentious as its buildings are, however, Yonge Street is no whit behind King Street as to the amount of business transacted — if it does not even surpass its more fashionable sister in this respect."*<sup>6</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, Yonge's identity as a major commercial spine — serving the city's retail as well as banking needs — was well established.

---

5 Berchem, *The Yonge Street Story*, 45.

6 Charles Mulvany, Graeme Adam, Christopher Robinson, *History of Toronto & County of York*, vol. 1 (Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885), 286.



10. William Notman & Son (photographers), The Bank of Montreal, northwest corner of Yonge and Front, c. 1890. (Source: McCord Museum)

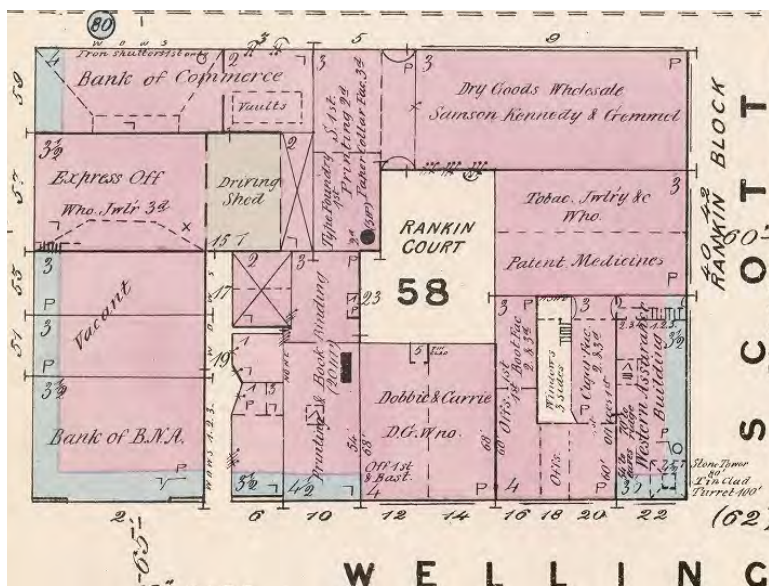


11. Goads Fire Insurance Map, 1880, showing the Bank of Montreal on the northwest corner of Yonge and Front. (Source: Toronto Archives)





12. Bank of British North America on the northeast corner of Yonge and Wellington, 1890. (Source: Toronto Archives)



13. Goads Fire Insurance Map, 1880, showing the Bank of British North America on the southeast corner of Yonge and Wellington. (Source: Toronto Archives)



14. Yonge Street looking north toward Front Street, 1908.  
(Source: Toronto Archives)



15. Bay Street looking north from Adelaide, Dec. 24, 1924.  
(Source: Toronto Archives) With the completion of City Hall in 1899 (visible in the distance) Bay emerged as the central spine of the Financial District.

### 2.1.5 Yonge Street Skyscrapers and the Development of the Financial District

In the late nineteenth century, the westward progression of the city's financial centre continued until reaching Bay Street, with Yonge serving as an eastern boundary. The completion of City Hall at Bay and Queen in 1899 drew businesses and politicians alike, who filled a growing fleet of offices along the street.<sup>7</sup>

*"Much as Wall Street is shorthand for New York's financial centre, Bay Street stands for Toronto's, spreading its aura from Yonge to University, where the streets are peopled with the power-brokers of Canadian politics and business, and lined with banks."*

- Dendy and Kilbourn, *Toronto Observed*, 214

Major department stores like Simpson's (1894–1895) and Eaton's (1883–1886), both at the intersection with Queen, also contributed to Bay Street's commercial identity.<sup>8</sup>

As Bay emerged as the Financial District's central thoroughfare, Yonge's commercial identity was evolving in other important ways, namely as Toronto's site of development for the twentieth century's most important commercial building typology: the skyscraper.

---

<sup>7</sup> William Dendy and William Kilbourn, *Toronto Observed: Its Architecture, Patrons, and History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986), 214.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

In the 1900s and 1910s, Yonge was home to most of the city's early skyscrapers, the first of which was built in 1889 on the 33 Yonge site. [Fig. 26]

The skyscraper was a building typology that developed through and alongside North American commercial activity and economic growth adding height and density to urban centres. Among those on Yonge were Carrère and Hastings' fifteen-storey Traders Bank Building (1905–1913) on the northeast corner of Yonge and Colborne, and Darling and Pearson's fifteen-storey Canadian Pacific Building (1913) on the southeast corner of Yonge and King.

During the 1920s, skyscrapers began proliferating in the downtown core: seven were constructed between 1922 and 1927 and another seven in 1928 alone.<sup>9</sup> The Canadian Bank of Commerce at King and Jordan (1929–1931; now part of Commerce Court) was an important example from the 1930s.

Bay Street's role in the Financial District was also strengthened by the 1931 University Avenue By-law encouraging the eastward shift of commercial development along University towards Bay, the Financial District, and the central waterfront area.<sup>10</sup>



18. Canadian Bank of Commerce, c. 1930. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)



16. Traders Bank Building, 1907. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)



17. Canadian Pacific Building, 1912. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)

9 Charis Cotter, *Toronto Between the Wars: Life in the City, 1919-1939* (Richmond Hill: Firefly Books, 2004), 46.

10 ERA Architects, "481 University Avenue: Heritage Impact Assessment," 6 September 2013, 21.





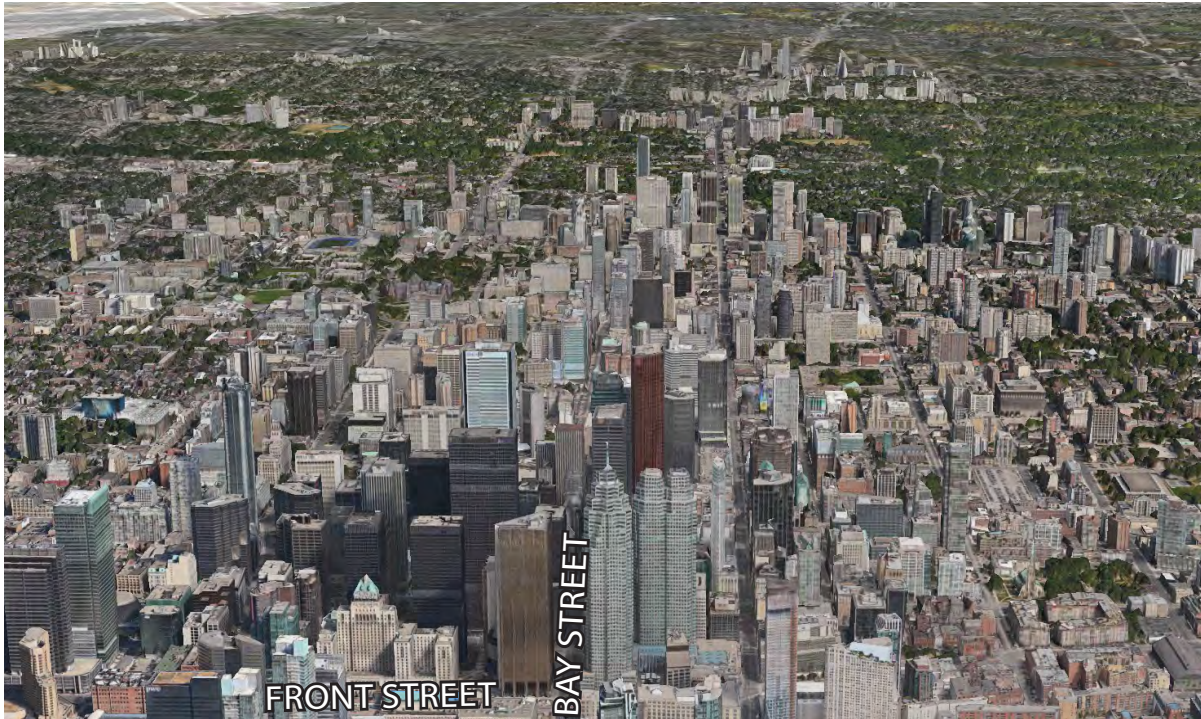
19. Yonge Street looking north from Front Street, c.1916? The concentration of early skyscrapers is already evident. (Source: Toronto Archives)



20. Yonge Street looking north from Front Street, 1919. (Source: Toronto Archives)

Through the mid-twentieth century, Yonge experienced waves of skyscraper construction resulting in the mid-rise form that characterizes the lower portion of the street to this day.





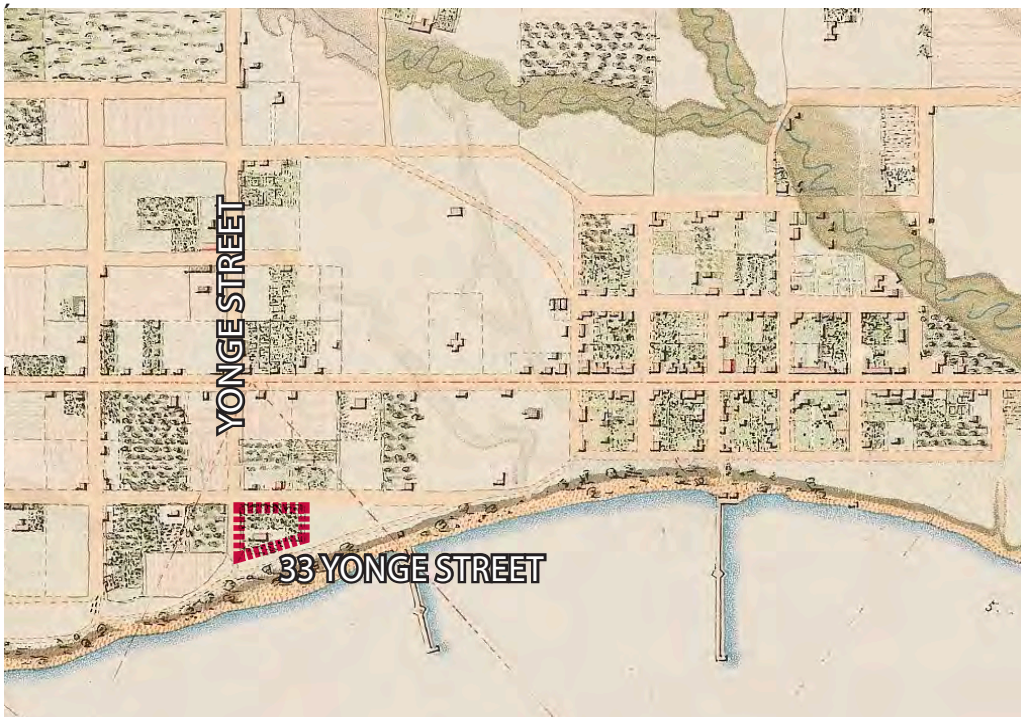
21. View of downtown showing the extent of highrise development in the Financial District. Bay remains the central corridor with the prevalence of skyscrapers tapering off to the east and west. WMZH's Royal Bank Plaza is visible at Bay and Front. (Source: Apple Maps, November 2014)



## 2.2 Evolution of 33 Yonge Street

### 2.2.1 *The Original Gateway to Yonge*

The evolution of the 33 Yonge site mirrored Yonge's development, revealing its many connections to commerce, trade, and the emergence of the City's Financial District. Yonge Street's starting point at the shore of Lake Ontario was in fact originally framed by the 33 Yonge site and that of the Bank of Montreal on the northwest corner of Yonge and Front. Before the construction of the wharves and infill that allowed for the city's southward extension, the 33 Yonge site was at the shoreline, and its trapezoidal shape was the result of the natural contours of the lake.



22. 1818 Philpotts Map. (Source: Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects)

#### 2.2.2 *The American Hotel at Front and Yonge*

By the 1830s and 1840s the site was associated with the city's commercial development. After accommodating the home of Chief Justice Scott (the neighbouring street's namesake), the site was then occupied by a group of three-storey commercial buildings owned by a Mr. Rennie.<sup>11</sup> William Dendy's history of the site reveals that part or all of these buildings were leased for a time to the Toronto furniture company — Jacques & Hay Co. — and were then remodeled for use as the American Hotel.<sup>12</sup> Although the Hotel was known to host members of the legislature and executive who congregated in Toronto during sessions of the legislature,<sup>13</sup> its most famous guests were perhaps Charles Dickens and his wife, who stayed there during an 1842 visit to Toronto.

In 1873, the American Hotel was leased by George Brown, who hired Langley, Langley & Burke to undertake the extension and renovation of the buildings (1873–1874). Located at the corner of Yonge and Front, the hotel with its new Second Empire façade became the site's first major landmark.

About a decade later, the Hotel was bought by the Toronto Board of Trade, which demolished the building to replace it with its own headquarters.

---

11 William Dendy, *Lost Toronto: Images of the City's Past* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 23.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.





23. Frank William Mickelthwaite (photographer), Yonge Street, looking north from Front, 1888. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)



24. The American Hotel, at the corner of Yonge and Front, c.1888? (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)

### 2.2.3 *The Old Board of Trade Building and the Development of the Skyscraper*

The Board of Trade Building was the first purpose-built headquarters for Toronto's Board of Trade. The organization — which serves Toronto's business community to this day — was founded in 1845 to promote the interests of the city's merchants and traders. Not only did the building's function align with the commercial character of Yonge and the Financial District, but its Neo-Romanesque design represents an important phase in the development of the skyscraper, one of the twentieth century's most important commercial building typologies and a defining architectural form of the current lower Yonge streetscape and the city's Financial District. The Board of Trade Building was therefore both architecturally and programmatically associated with the commercial core of the city.

The Board of Trade Building was constructed between 1889 and 1890 by New York-based architects James & James. Located at the northwest corner of Yonge and Front streets, the building's prominent rounded corner defined the block and served as a gateway, in conjunction with the facing Bank of Montreal, to Yonge's northward progression. The distinctive design — with its rusticated masonry, arched and gabled windows, and conical roof complete with a cupola — was modeled after the Boston Chamber of Commerce building by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge (built 1890–1892, plans published earlier).

At seven storeys, the old Board of Trade Building was briefly the tallest in the city. Despite its rusticated appearance, its structure depended on the innovative use of steel to achieve its height and form. Eric Arthur, one of the most important historians of Toronto's architecture, considered the building a turning point in the City's experimentation with the structural possibilities of steel and iron and



25. Goads Fire Insurance Map, 1899. (Source: Toronto Archives)



26. Board of Trade Building, north-east corner of Yonge and Front, after 1900. (Source: Toronto Archives)



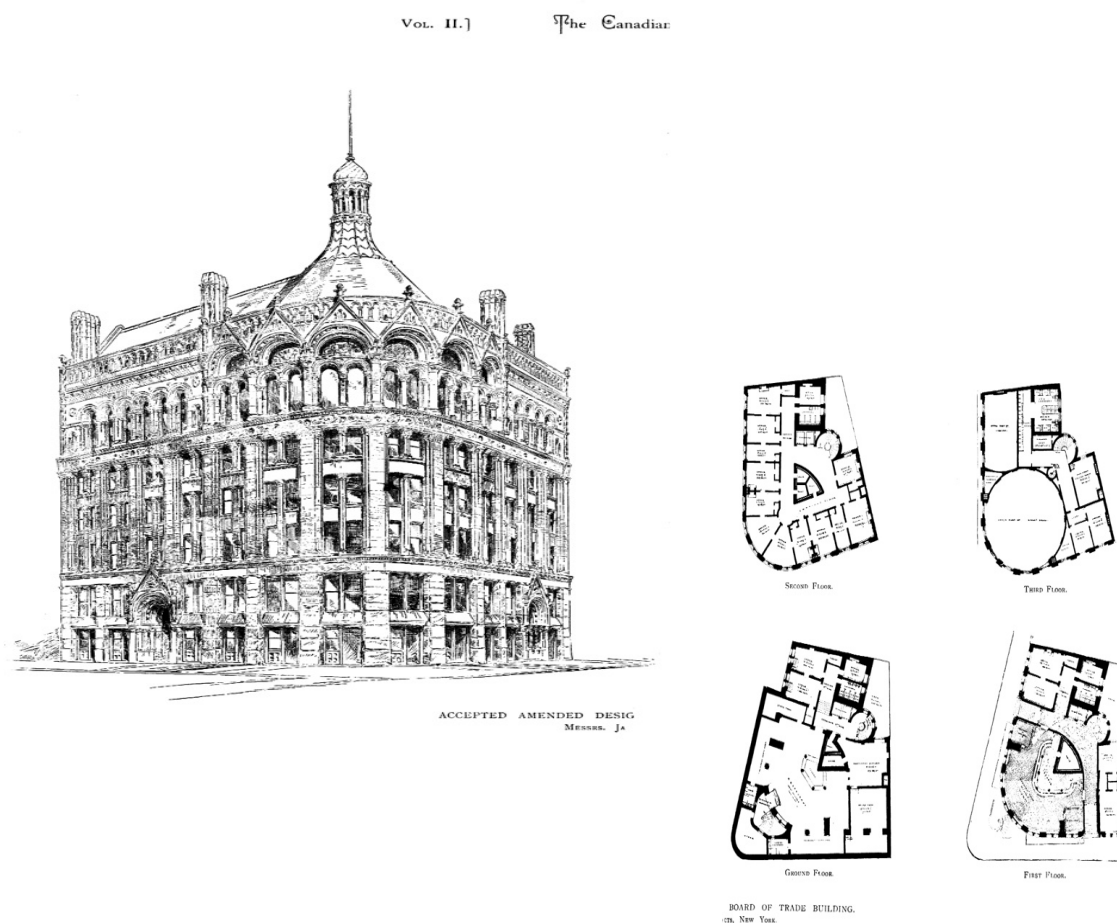
27. Boston Chamber of Commerce, India Street at Central Wharf, c. 1893–1910. (Source: Tufts Digital Library)



28. Yonge Street, Nov. 1, 1949. The Bank of Montreal, lower left, and the Board of Trade Building across the street, served as a gateway to the lower Yonge strip. (Source: Toronto Archives)



connects its Neo-Romanesque design to the influential Chicago School and the work of H.H. Richardson in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Chicago is widely regarded as the birthplace of the skyscraper, and Richardson's Neo-Romanesque Marshall Field Warehouse Store (c. 1887) is one of its earliest examples.



29. The Board of Trade Building, 1888–1891. Drawing and plans by James & James. (Source: *Canadian Architect and Builder*, Feb. 1888)

<sup>14</sup> Eric Arthur, *Toronto: No Mean City* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 215.





30. Front Street, looking east to Yonge, c. 1930. (Source: Toronto Archives)



31. James Victor Salmon (photographer), Yonge Street, looking south from Wellington, 1955. (Source: Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)

### 2.2.4. Demolition and Visions of Urban Renewal

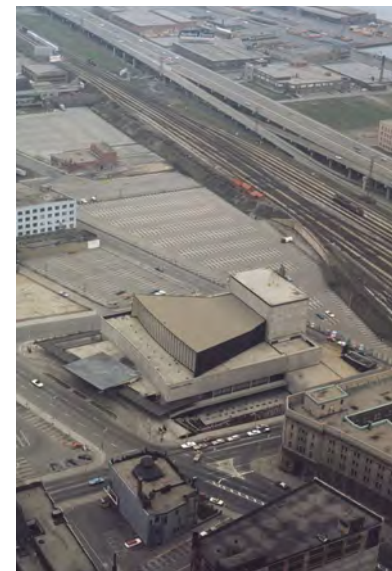
The building at Yonge and Front served as the Board of Trade's offices until 1914 when the organization moved to Carrère & Hastings' skyscraper, the Royal Bank Building, at King and Yonge. Various tenants occupied the Board's former headquarters until 1921 when the Toronto Transit Commission used it as its head office. The TTC remained there until its move to Yonge and Davisville between 1957–1958. The building was subsequently demolished, and the levelled site served as a parking lot during the 1960s and 1970s.

Before WMZH's building was constructed on the site, the period of urban renewal in the city led to various unrealized proposals for the property. As part of the original plans for the St. Lawrence Centre, the 33 Yonge site was proposed as the location for an office tower that would accommodate various tenants including arts organizations.<sup>15</sup> This proposal incorporated ideas that had been proposed by O'Keefe Breweries in the 1950s, then the owners of the 33 Yonge site. O'Keefe had planned an office tower and plaza across the street from the new performing arts centre that was never built.<sup>16</sup>

Consistent with Yonge Street's role as an eastern boundary for high-rise development, these urban proposals also regarded the current 33 Yonge site as a point of departure from the low-rise and fine urban grain that characterized the neighbouring area to the east.



32. Looking east with 33 Yonge site in the lower right, 1966-1972. (Source: Toronto Archives)



33. View of the O'Keefe Centre (now Sony Centre), 1966-1972. (Source: Toronto Archives)

---

15 Mark Osbaldeston, *Unbuilt Toronto: A History of the City That Might Have Been* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008), 213-216.

16 Ibid., 216-217.



34. Aerial photo of 33 Yonge site and surroundings, 1971.  
(Source: Toronto Archives)



35. O'Keefe Breweries plan for an office tower and plaza, 1950s. (Source: Mark Osbaldeston, *Unbuilt Toronto*)



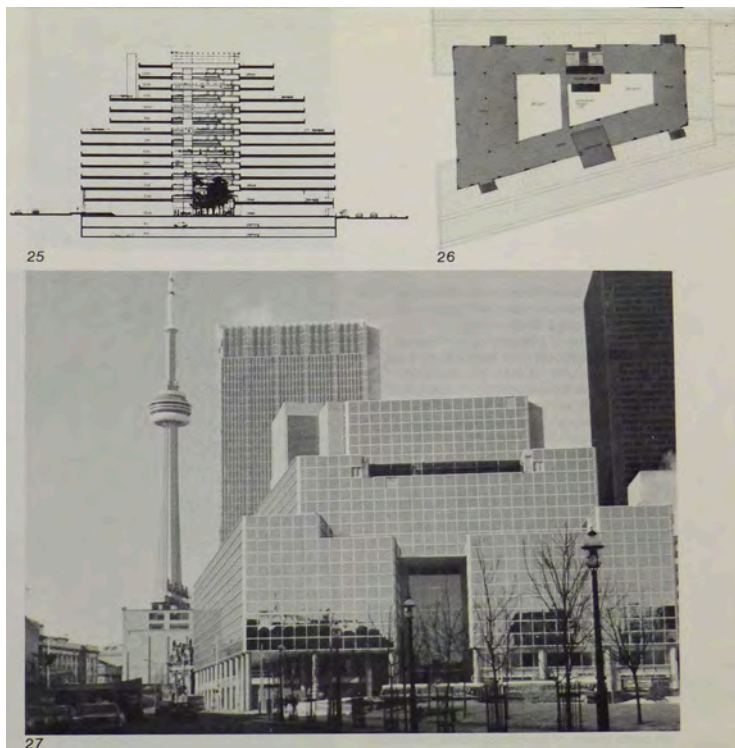
36. Toronto Planning Board, plan for St. Lawrence Centre, 1962. (Source: Mark Osbaldeston, *Unbuilt Toronto*)



### 2.2.5 Design

Built in 1982 by WZMH Architects, 33 Yonge is a thirteen-storey mirrored glass office and retail complex with thirty-foot setbacks at the eighth and eleventh floors. Two additional levels of parking are below ground. Its main entrance on Yonge leads pedestrians through an atrium providing east-west access to Scott Street.

Although WZMH has been commended for designing a building in sympathy with its surroundings, it is also recognized as a point of contrast to the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. The building's form, scale, programmatic function, and materials are directly aligned with the late-twentieth-century skyscraper and corporate architecture more generally. Materials like glass, metal, and polished stone replaced an architectural vocabulary rooted in the styles of the past. Instead of the weight of Neo-Romanesque rough-cut stone, or the authority of a Classical architectural vocabulary, sleek reflective surfaces became a means of conveying economic power and prestige.



37. WMZH, 33 Yonge, including section and plan. (Source: *Canadian Architect* 27, No. 4 (April 1982))



39. WMZH, rendering of 33 Yonge.  
(Source: *Canadian Building* 28, No. 2  
(Feb. 1978))

In contextualizing the 33 Yonge building, it is also important to note that the skyscraper plays an important role in WZMH's own practice, which has served the needs of the firm's many clients in banking and business since its founding in 1961. The Royal Bank Plaza (1976) at Bay and Front is one of their iconic designs and is a fixture of Toronto's Financial District. The Plaza's cladding in gold reflective glass provides just one example of the Financial District's material character and its direct affinity to 33 Yonge.



38. WMZH, Royal Bank Plaza. (Source: WMZH,  
*Historical Record to Illustrate Work of the Practice  
Since 1961*)



40. Looking west along Front Street to the Gooderham Building, 33 Yonge (previously known as the A.E. LePage Building), the Royal Bank Plaza and TD Centre, c. 1986. (Source: William Dendy and William Kilbourn, *Toronto Observed*)





41. 33 Yonge, east facade, November 2014. (Source: ERA Architects)



42. 33 Yonge, north east corner of Yonge and Front, November 2014. (Source: ERA Architects)

### 3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

#### 3.1 Comparative Analysis between St. Lawrence Market HCD and 33 Yonge Street

The following chart compares the analysis provided in the FGMDa Report and used to define the proposed boundaries for the HCD, with the qualities and attributes of 33 Yonge Street.

Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE (FGMDa REPORT p. 112)	
The proposed district encompasses the Original 10 Blocks of the Town of York, the first Parliament Buildings site and the land parcels originally reserved for the church, the market, the jail, and the courthouse. Its western half includes the St. Lawrence Market, St. Lawrence Hall, St. James' Cathedral and Park, the Goodderham Flatiron Building, Berczy Park, and numerous 19th century commercial warehouse buildings; its eastern half includes a number of historic industrial buildings, including a concentration of Consumers' Gas Company buildings.	33 Yonge Street does not correspond, physically, functionally, or in its location, with the Description of the Historic Place.



Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE (FGMDa REPORT pp. 112-113)	
<p><b>Historical Value:</b> The district's historical values are derived from significant events including the survey of the Original 10 Blocks; the creation of the military reserve and construction of Fort York to the west; the government reserve to the east; and Walks and Gardens reserve along the shoreline. The city's first civic functions, including the market, city hall, police station, church, jail, courthouse, school, post office and meeting halls, were all built here.</p>	<p>The history of 33 Yonge and its site are distinct from those events that define the significance of the St. Lawrence area. It is not associated with the Original 10 Blocks, nor with Toronto's early civic institutions.</p>
<p><b>Design and Physical Value:</b> The district's design and physical value stems from the high concentration of 19th and early 20th century buildings. The overall scale is marked by a predominance of low-rise buildings interspersed with mid-rise developments.</p> <p>Two historical building typologies that exemplify the district's overall physical character and historical evolution are 1. commercial warehouses, and 2. the finer grain of this typology.</p> <p>Other architectural characteristics include the predominant use of brick, often polychromed; the use of stone for more prominent buildings; the decorative detailing of the brick and stonework; the ornamentation of storefronts and cast iron work; and the proportions of the windows.</p>	<p>33 Yonge is a late-twentieth-century building with design attributes closely associated with those of the Financial District, and not the St. Lawrence area.</p> <p>33 Yonge does not represent an example of a commercial warehouse, nor is it an example of finer grained development.</p> <p>33 Yonge is clad in reflective glass and does not use brick as a building material. It corresponds more closely with the buildings of the Financial District and lower Yonge Street (already excluded from the HCD boundaries).</p>
<p><b>Contextual Value:</b> The district has contextual value as an identifiable area, which not only defines the earliest settlement in Toronto, but contains institutions that continue to serve the city as a whole.</p>	<p>33 Yonge is not among the institutions – such as the St. Lawrence Market, or the Sony Centre – that are identified by the Report as contributors to the St. Lawrence area or that are identified as landmarks.</p>

Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS (FGMDa REPORT p. 113)	
<b>Attributes Embodying Historical Value:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extant street pattern of the Original 10 blocks;</li> <li>the bend of Adelaide Street that marks west of Jarvis the northern edge of the Church and Jail reserve, and east of Jarvis the northern edge of the Original 10 Blocks;</li> <li>the continuous uses of the market (St. Lawrence) and the church (St. James) on their originally designated lands;</li> <li>the courthouse building;</li> <li>the urban grain that defines the commercial and industrial developments;</li> <li>the harbour infill south of Front Street and the change in elevation between Front Street and The Esplanade which marks the difference between the city and its former lower beach;</li> <li>the first Parliament buildings site;</li> <li>the two remaining historical post offices; and</li> <li>the archaeological potential of the whole area</li> </ul>	33 Yonge is not associated with the attributes that embody the HCD's Historical Value.

Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS (FGMDa REPORT p. 113)	
<p><b>Attributes Embodying Design and Physical Values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the building construction to the front and side lot lines;</li> <li>• the low to mid-rise predominant scale;</li> <li>• the proportion of the height of the street wall to the width of the street;</li> <li>• the distinctive typologies of the commercial warehouses, industrial buildings and mid-rise residential buildings;</li> <li>• the raised ground floor level of buildings from the sidewalk;</li> <li>• the use of post and beam construction;</li> <li>• the use of brick and stone, and the overall quality of the ornamentation and detailing of masonry, including the use of polychrome brickwork;</li> <li>• the ornamentation of storefronts;</li> <li>• the use of mansard roofs; and</li> <li>• the expressed cornices</li> </ul>	<p>33 Yonge is not associated with the attributes that embody the HCD's Design and Physical Values.</p>

Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS (FGMDa REPORT p. 113)	
<p><b>Attributes Embodying Contextual, Social, and Community Values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the south St. Lawrence Market;</li> <li>• the site of the north St. Lawrence Hall and Market Lane;</li> <li>• the Cathedral Church of St. James and St. James Park;</li> <li>• Courthouse Square and the Adelaide Courthouse building;</li> <li>• the Consumers' Gas Company Buildings, now converted into theatres and a police station;</li> <li>• Berczy Park and the Gooderham Flatiron Building;</li> <li>• the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, and the Alumnae Theatre;</li> <li>• the Sculpture Garden;</li> <li>• George Brown College St. James Campus; and</li> <li>• the King Edward Hotel</li> </ul>	<p>33 Yonge is not a character defining element that contributes to the Contextual, Social, or Community Values of the district.</p>

Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
BOUNDARY (designed to encompass key attributes of the district's cultural heritage values) (FGMDa REPORT p. 116)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Original 10 Blocks of the Town of York surveyed in 1793, as well as those immediately to the west which were defined soon after;</li> <li>the historic sites of the civic and religious institutions of the city of Toronto, including the church, the market and meeting hall, the courthouse and jail, and the locations of the first Parliament buildings and the first City Hall;</li> <li>the landmark buildings that form the neighbourhood's visual identity, including the Flatiron building and St. Lawrence Hall;</li> <li>the cultural and educational institutions that serve the area and the city at large, including the theatres at the western and eastern ends of the district, and George Brown College;</li> <li>the buildings that chart the economic development of early Toronto, including the commercial warehouses and industrial buildings; and</li> <li>the buildings that contribute to the overall visual identity</li> </ul>	33 Yonge Street does not correspond with any of the criteria used to establish the boundaries of the district.



Proposed HCD	33 Yonge and Site
ADJUSTED BOUNDARIES (FGMDa REPORT p. 117)	
The northwestern corner of the Study Area was excluded from the boundary. Its history and physical character are more closely associated with those of the financial district immediately to the west. The building heights, styles, materials and uses are distinct from the predominant character of the rest of the neighbourhood. <i>(See Appendix 1 for map of the HCD Study Area and Proposed HCD Boundaries)</i>	The history and physical character of 33 Yonge are also more closely associated with those of the financial district. Its height, style, materials, and use are distinct from the predominant character of the St. Lawrence area.

## 4 CONCLUSION

33 Yonge is a mid-rise example of late-modern corporate architecture. While the architects were sympathetic to the scale of the building's surroundings, its character relates directly to the built form and functions of Financial District, not those of the Old Town.

The site's history also demonstrates how 33 Yonge is part of the lower Yonge streetscape and the successive waves of commercial development that shaped its architecture and use. From the commercial and banking activity of the nineteenth century to the development of City's earliest skyscrapers, Yonge Street has always been one of the City's most significant sites of commercial development and its corresponding architectural forms.

Based on the research presented in this report, it is ERA Architects' opinion that 33 Yonge is, and has always been, a Yonge Street site with direct ties to the architecture and commercial activity of the Financial District.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books and Articles

- Andre, John. *William Berczy: Co-Founder of Toronto. A Sketch by John Andre*. Toronto: [A Canada Centennial Project of the Borough of York, 1968.]
- Armstrong, Christopher. *Making Toronto Modern: Architecture and Design, 1895-1975*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.
- Arthur, Eric. Toronto: *No Mean City*. 2nd edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Toronto: *No Mean City*. 3rd ed., revised by Stephen A. Otto. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.
- Berchem, F.R. *Opportunity Road: Yonge Street, 1860-1939*. Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Yonge Street Story, 1793-1860: An Account from Letters, Diaries and Newspapers*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1977.
- Carr, Angela. *Toronto Architect Edmund Burke: Redefining Canadian Architecture*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995.
- Cotter, Charis. *Toronto Between the Wars: Life in the City, 1919-1939*. Richmond Hill: Firefly Books, 2004.
- Dendy, William. *Lost Toronto: Images of The City's Past*. Rev. and updated ed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993.
- Dendy, William and William Kilbourn. *Toronto Observed: Its Architecture, Patrons, and History*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Filey, Michael. *A Toronto Album: Glimpses of the City That Was*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.
- Gillespie, Bernard. "Toronto: New Projects Reviewed." *Canadian Architect* 27, No. 4 (April, 1982): 24-37.
- Kalman, Harold. *A Concise History of Canadian Architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- McHugh, Patricia. *Toronto Architecture: A City Guide*. 2nd edition. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1989.



Mulvany, Charles Pelham, Graeme Mercer Adam and Christopher Blackett Robinson. *History of Toronto & County of York*. Vol. 1. Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885.

Osbaldeston, Mark. *Unbuilt Toronto: A History of the City That Might Have Been*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008.

Stanford, Geoffrey Hunt. *To Serve the Community: The Story of Toronto's Board of Trade*. Toronto: Published for the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto by University of Toronto Press, 1974.

WZMH. *[Historical Record to Illustrate Work of the Practice Since 1961.]* [Toronto: WZMH, 197-].

"Retail/office project for downtown Toronto wins city's approval." *Canadian Building* 28, No. 2 (February 1978): 6.

"33 Yonge: Steps taken to muzzle Old Man Winter's bite." *Canadian Building* 31, No. 3 (March 1981): 29-30.

"A.E. LePage tops 33 Yonge." *Canadian Building* 31, No. 10 (October 1981): 15.

*Canadian Architect and Builder* 2, No. 2 (February 1888): 13-14.

"Yonge Street – Governor Simcoe's Military Road." The Canadian Encyclopedia. [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca) Accessed November 18, 2014.

### Reports

City of Toronto: Staff Report: "Amendment to Previously Adopted St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study Area." September 11, 2009.

City of Toronto. Staff Report: "Proceeding from Study to Plan Phase for the Proposed St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District." May 7, 2014.

E.R.A. Architects Inc. Heritage Conservation District Plan: "Union Station District Plan." May 2006.

E.R.A. Architects Inc. Heritage Impact Assessment: "251 King Street East – Old Town Analysis." May 14, 2009.

E.R.A. Architects Inc. Heritage Impact Assessment: "481 University Avenue." September 6, 2013.

E.R.A. Architects Inc. Heritage Impact Assessment: "92 Front Street E – St Lawrence Market North Redevelopment." December 20, 2013.

Fournier Gersovitz Moss Drolet et Associés Architectes (FGMDa). "St. Lawrence Heritage Conservation District Study." July 2014.

#### Maps and Plans

City of Toronto. Financial District Business Improvement Area. November 2011.

City of Toronto. Toronto Official Plan, Map 6: Downtown and Central Waterfront boundaries. June 2006.

Goads Fire Insurance Plan 1880, 1890, 1903, 1913, 1924.

Plan of York, Lieut. Philpotts, 1818.

Plan of the City of Toronto, Canada West, Flemming Ridout & Schreiber, 1857.

Topographical map of the City and Liberties of Toronto, James Cane, 1842.

#### Toronto Archives

Fonds, 200, Series 1618, File 81. Gore Site Yonge Street, 33 Yonge-Wellington-Scott-Front Volume #1. 1975-1977. 1 folder of textual records. (Series 1618: General job files of the City of Toronto Planning Department)

Fonds 200, Series 1618, File 82. Gore Site Yonge Street, 33 Wm. Berczy Memorial Park Yonge-Wellington-Scott-Front Maps Volume #2. 1977. 1 Folder textual records. (Series 1618: General job files of the City of Toronto Planning Department)

#### Websites and General Online Sources

"Toronto's Amazing Intersection at Yonge and Front Streets": <http://tayloronhistory.com/2013/03/25/torontos-amazing-intersection-at-yonge-and-front-streets/>

The Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden Partnership: <http://www.wzmh.com/>

<http://www.tobuilt.ca>

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca>

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: FGMDa Map of Proposed Boundary for the St. Lawrence HCD

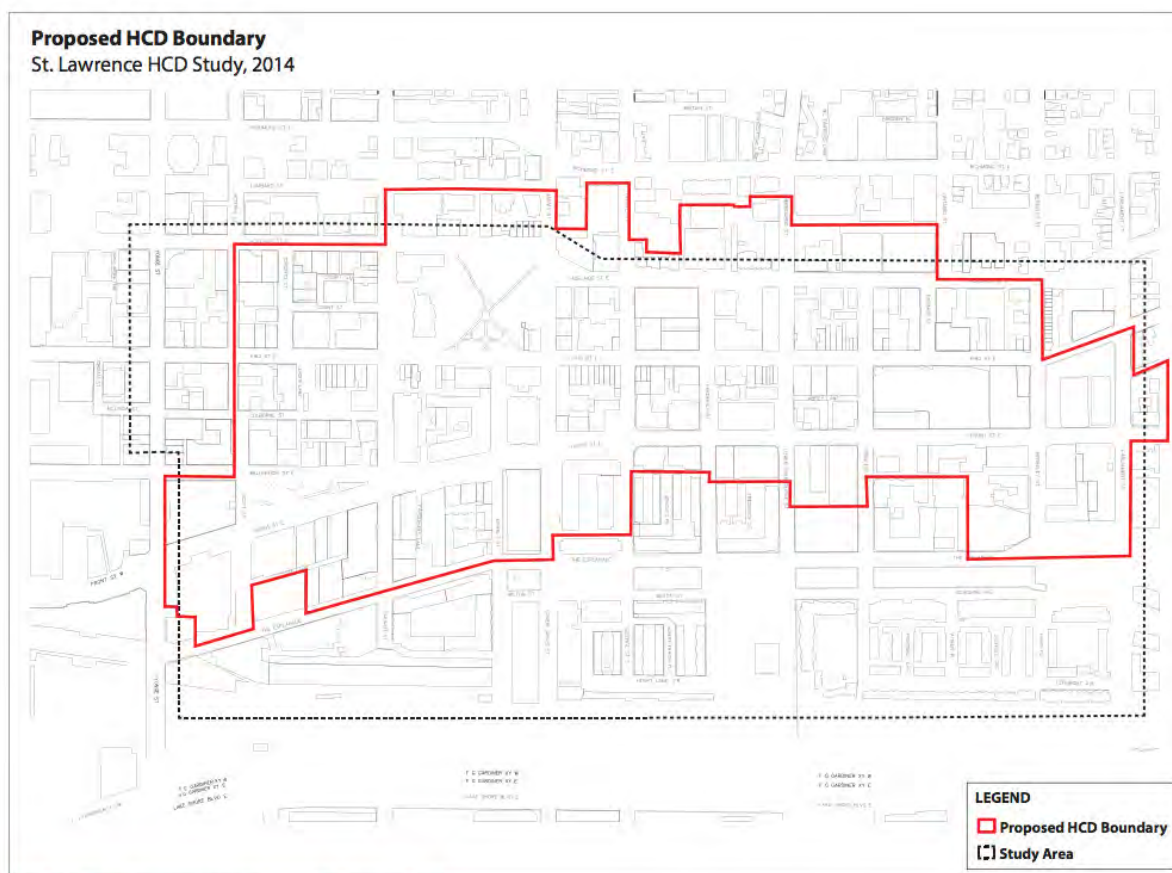


Figure 174: Map of proposed boundary for the St. Lawrence HCD.



**Appendix 2: Google Maps Street View of 33 Yonge (Lower Right) and Excluded Yonge Street Properties to the North from Wellington to Adelaide**

