

The Capitol Theatre Building

The property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street, (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street) are worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under three categories of design, associative and contextual values.

Description

The property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street) are located on the northwest corner of Castlefield Avenue in the Yonge-Eglinton neighbourhood. They contain a three-storey complex that includes the former York Theatre (1914), later known as Capitol Theatre, with stores at ground floor and offices on the upper floors. In 1922, the rear auditorium of the York Theatre was preserved when a new three storey building, with a new entrance to the theatre and series of commercial storefronts was built on Yonge Street frontage, named Capitol Theatre Building. Since the late 1990s, the theatre has been known as Capitol Event Theatre.

Statement of Significance

The building covers half of the block between Castlefield and St. Clements Avenues, west of Yonge Street. It has design value as a three-storey complex distinguished by its large scale which is elegantly proportioned by architectural features from Late Classical Revival style. It displays the plain walls of dark red brick, stone quoins, arched windows with fanlight detailing and double pilasters along their sides.

The associative value of the complex is linked to its role in development of main street character of Yonge Street in 1920s after the annexation of the village of North Toronto by the City of Toronto. The Capitol Theatre Building is one of the earliest building on the west side of Yonge Street contributing to the formation of a streetwall. The historical value of the subject properties is also linked to their role as a local landmark and contribution to the social history of the area as a local theatre and later an event theatre.

The complex has value for its connection to the notable Toronto architect Murray Brown, who designed the alterations to the subject properties between 1923 and 1929. Murray Brown (1885-1958) began practise in early 1920s. He designed several residential and commercial buildings but focused especially on theatre and bank design. His projects included several theatres for Capitol Theatre company in Ontario, Saskatoon and Halifax. Murray is also the architect of two theatres in the Yonge-Eglinton area including Belsize Theatre (1926) and Bedford Theatre (1927).

Contextually, the Capitol Theatre Building is valued for its contribution to the commercial main street character of Yonge Street, north of Roselawn Avenue which is typified by surviving two, and three-storey buildings with stores at grade, that began in the early 20th century. The contextual value of the three storey complex is also related to its historical, visual and physical links to the surroundings on Yonge Street, as a prominent local feature anchoring the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Castlefield Avenue with its chamfered corner, distinctive scale and decorative detailing.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Capitol Theatre Building located at the property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street) are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Castlefield Avenue
- The scale, form and massing of the three-storey complex that contains the Capitol Event Theatre
- The materials, with the red brick cladding, the historically contrasting stone detailing (currently painted)
- The flat roofline with stone banding and cornice (currently painted) running along the building
- The stone and brick quoins on the corner of Yonge Street and Castlefield Avenue
- On the east (principal) elevation, the scale and rhythm of store openings
- On the east (principal) elevation, the two-storey arched windows with stone detailing placed between fluted pilasters with capitals, and flat-headed window openings with stone sills
- On the east (principal) elevation, the placement of main entrances to the complex
- The existing marquee and box office, with glass and stainless steel entrance to the theatre and adjacent store, and glass openings

Interior:

- The historic features of the auditorium with paneled ceiling, the plasters, the classically designed proscenium arch surrounding the stage which is flanked by pedimented grills