

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: 351 LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD EAST
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

The property at 351 Lake Shore Boulevard 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 values.

Description

Located on the Parliament Street Slip on the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard East between Parliament and Cherry streets, the Victory Soya Mills Silos were constructed during World War II by Sunsoy Products Limited, a derivative of Canadian Breweries Limited as part of a manufacturing operation that processed soy products in support of the war effort. The structure, comprised of 36 circular, self-buttressing reinforced concrete silos surmounted by the concrete headhouse, was originally designed for storage and remains the last vestige of the large industrial complex that occupied this site for half a century. The property at 351 Lake Shore Boulevard East was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 2004.

Statement of Significance

The Victory Soya Mills Silos have design value as a rare surviving example in Toronto of a type of structure unique to North America. The design features the hallmarks of the type, with the solid concrete cylindrical forms, unadorned exteriors, monumental scale, and configuration to support technological advances in industrial production. The Victory Soya Mills Silos are the surviving components of the two groups of silos that once marked the site and, with the extant Canada Malting Silos (1929 and 1944) on Eireann Quay, are the sole remaining examples from the large manufacturing complexes that anchored either end of Toronto's central waterfront in the 20th century. Southeast of the Victory Soya Mills Silos in the adjoining Port Lands, the Essroc Silos and the LaFarge Silos on Cherry Street are other surviving examples of the type, but are smaller scaled and not associated with the grain trade on Toronto's waterfront.

Historically, the Victory Soya Mills Silos are valued for their association with both a person of significance and an activity important to the community. Victory Mills (later Victory Soya Mills) was founded as Sunsoy Products Limited by Edward Plunkett "E.P." Taylor (1914-85), the head of Canadian Breweries Limited and a famed industrialist, financier, philanthropist and breeder of champion race horses, with the financial support of the Government of Canada. The company was specifically created to process an under-utilized farm crop – soybeans – for products for human, animal and industrial consumption during World War II. With its name changed to reflect its support for the war effort, Victory Mills was lauded as the largest and most technologically advanced for the time in Canada, and unique in its introduction of European technology that combined two distinct extraction processes for high quality soy products. The

company is credited with reviving the soybean industry as a major national product while diversifying the grain trade in Toronto.

The cultural heritage value of the property at 351 Lake Shore Boulevard East is also through its historical association with the evolution of the city's waterfront in the 20th century. While the Town of York (Toronto) was founded in this location because of its proximity to Lake Ontario, the development of its harbour for industry and shipping remained disorganized through the 19th century and led to the formation in 1911 of the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC), forerunner to today's Toronto Port Authority. With the mandate to manage the City-owned lands across the waterfront, the THC implemented a series of plans for its expansion using dredging, lakefill, breakwaters and permanent dock walls. After creating the Port Industrial District (today's Port Lands), during the interwar period the THC completed a series of slips along the south side of present-day Queen's Quay East and Lake Shore Boulevard East that offered access to water, rail and road transportation. With its position of prominence on the Parliament Street Slip, Victory Mills emerged as a major industry on Toronto's waterfront during World War II, and its success in this location was an important step in the continuing development of the area for the St Lawrence Seaway in the second half of the 20th century.

Contextually, the Victory Soya Mills Silos are valued for their support of the historical character of Toronto's central waterfront as it developed and evolved in the 20th century. The Victory Soya Mills Silos joined the Canada Malting Silos (1929 and 1944) on present-day Eireann Quay to anchor the east and west ends of the harbour, respectively. They remain an integral part of the group of surviving heritage buildings from this period that remain identified with the waterfront, including the Toronto Terminal Warehouse (1927) on Queen's Quay West, the Redpath Sugar Refinery (1957) on Queen's Quay East, and an important collection of commercial, institutional and industrial buildings in the Port Lands adjoining Cherry Street, all of which are included on the City's Heritage Register.

The contextual value of the Victory Soya Mills Silos is also drawn from their historical, visual, functional and physical connection to their setting on the Parliament Street Slip where they were placed to access both the harbour and the railway corridor to the north. With the removal of the other buildings, structures and equipment that occupied the site prior to its closure in the 1990s, the silos are significant industrial heritage as the remaining vestiges of what was once a large-scale manufacturing complex.

The Victory Soya Mills Silos have cultural heritage value as familiar and iconic landmarks on Toronto's waterfront where they are viewed from Lake Ontario, the Toronto Islands, the Port Lands, and many vantage points along the north shoreline of the city.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Victory Soya Mills Silos on the property at 351 Lake Shore Boulevard East are:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the silos with the headhouse on the Parliament Street Slip

- The scale, form and massing of the silos and the headhouse
- The materials, with the reinforced concrete construction of the silos and the headhouse
- The lack of decoration on the silos and the headhouse that is typical of industrial architecture
- The configuration of the silos, where 36 cylindrical self-supporting bins extend above a concrete slab and basement where they are arranged in four rows of nine, with the rounded forms exposed on all of the exterior elevations
- On the east and west elevations, the openings along the base of the silos that contain metal doors
- The headhouse, which is elevated above and extends along the length of the silos, with the sloped roof, the window openings along the east and west elevations, the openings (designed for equipment that has been removed) on the north and south elevations, and the door opening on the east elevation, which is accessed by a ladder
- The view looking east along Queen's Quay East from east of Lower Sherbourne Street to the Silos, which terminate the vista