

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: 832 YONGE STREET  
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT NO. 6

The property at 832 Yonge Street 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 the three categories of design, associative and contextual values.

Description

Located on the west side of Yonge Street between Cumberland Street (south) and Yorkville Avenue (north), the William Robinson (1874) is a three-storey commercial building. It was constructed on the former Sleigh Estate in Yorkville, along with the adjoining building to the south at 830 Yonge Street, which complements it in appearance. The site was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 1974.

Statement of Significance

The William Robinson Building has cultural heritage value for its design as a representative example of a commercial building with original decorative detailing drawn from the popular architectural styles of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building was constructed as part of an intact surviving block on Yonge Street in the former Village of Yorkville where the structures share a common scale, setback and late 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural character.

The property at 832 Yonge Street is valued for its historical association with the Village of Yorkville (1853-1883), which was an incorporated municipality prior to its annexation by the City of Toronto. When the William Robinson Building was constructed, it was part of the commercial district along Yonge Street serving the brick yards, breweries and related industries that formed the basis of the community.

The associative value of the property at 832 Yonge Street is also through its connection to famed Toronto art dealer and promoter, Avrom Isaacs who, beginning in 1961 operated the Isaacs Gallery in this location for over two decades. As well as representing and showcasing contemporary Canadian artists that included Michael Show, Joyce Wieland, William Kurelek and Robert Bateman, Isaacs offered poetry readings, underground film screenings and mixed media productions that contributed to Toronto's vibrant art scene that was centered in the Yorkville neighbourhood. While operating the Isaacs Gallery at 832 Yonge Street, Avrom Isaacs created the Inuit Gallery as the first commercial gallery in the world for contemporary aboriginal art, and later merged the two venues as the Isaacs Inuit Gallery.

Contextually, the William Robinson Building contributes to the character of Yonge Street, north of Bloor Street where it reflects the late 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the area at the time it evolved from an independent village to a city neighbourhood along the important corridor known as Toronto's "main street". The William Robinson Building is also historically, visually and physically linked to its surroundings on Yonge Street where it is integral part of the intact group of contiguous late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings that extends along the entire block on the

west side of the street from Cumberland Street to Yorkville Avenue and marks the east entry into the commercial heart of the former Village of Yorkville.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 832 Yonge are the William Robinson Building with:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Cumberland Street
- The scale, form and massing of the three-storey building
- The flat roofline, with the brick bracket at the south end (marking the line between the building and the adjoining building to the south at 830 Yonge Street)
- The materials, with the brick cladding (the original brickwork is currently painted), with the brick and stone detailing, including the brick pier at the north end of the principal (east) elevation
- The principal (east) elevation that extends three bays above the first (ground) floor storefront (which has been altered over time)
- In the second and third stories of the east elevation, the trios of symmetrically-placed flat-headed window openings with the brick arches and the rusticated stone keystones