

Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register, Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act - 625 Church Street

Date: April 21, 2021

To: Toronto Preservation Board
Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: University-Rosedale - 11

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 625 Church Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value for its design, associative and contextual values.

Located on the east side of Church Street between Charles Street and Isabella Street in the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, the property at 625 Church Street contains the Traders Building, which was constructed in 1956 for the Traders Finance Corporation and designed by the architectural firm of Marani & Morris. The six storey plus penthouse office building is a fine and representative example of the Neo-Georgian architectural style, and is part of a larger context within the Church and Bloor neighbourhood comprised of corporate office buildings, many designed by Marani & Morris, built during the pre- and post-World War II period. The Traders Building is historically linked with buildings located within the neighbourhood, including the Confederation Life, Manufacturers Life, and Crown Life Insurance Buildings, and is visually linked to the Crown Life Building, located at 120 Bloor Street East at the northwest corner of Church Street.

Following research and evaluation undertaken according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, it has been determined that the property at 625 Church Street merits designation under Part IV Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its design, associative and contextual value.

Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained in accordance with the Official Plan Heritage Policies. Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations for the property, enforce heritage property standards and maintenance, and refuse demolition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 625 Church Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, in accordance with the Statement of Significance: 625 Church Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3 to the report (April 21, 2021) from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the bills in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
3. If there are objections in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council direct the City Clerk to refer the designation to the Conservation Review Board.
4. If the designation is referred to the Conservation Review Board, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate staff to attend any hearing held by the Conservation Review Board in support of Council's decision to designate the property.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on February 14, 2012, Toronto and East York Community Council requested the Acting Director, Policy and Research to report on the possibility of inclusion on the inventory and potential designation of the building at 625 Church Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE13.96>

At its meeting on October 8, 2013, City Council amended the Official Plan to include the North Downtown Yonge Site and Area Specific Policy 382, and adopted the "North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines", which identified the property at 625 Church Street as having potential to be included on the Heritage Register:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.TE26.14>

At its meeting on March 12, 2020, Toronto and East York Community Council directed staff to schedule a community consultation meeting together with the Ward Councillor regarding the application for a mixed use development including a 59-storey tower located at 625 Church Street:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.TE14.30>

BACKGROUND

Heritage Planning Framework

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

Good planning within the provincial and municipal policy framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance, and ensures the conservation of these resources are to be balanced with other provincial interests. Heritage resources may include buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community.

The Planning Act establishes the foundation for land use planning in Ontario, describing how land can be controlled and by whom. Section 2 of the Planning Act identifies heritage conservation as a matter of provincial interest and directs that municipalities shall have regard to the conservation of features of significant architectural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest. Heritage conservation contributes to other matters of provincial interest, including the promotion of built form that is well-designed, and that encourages a sense of place.

The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters shall conform to the Growth Plan and shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, both of which position heritage as a key component in supporting key provincial principles and interests.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on land use planning in Ontario and is to be used by municipalities in the development of their official plans and to guide and inform decisions on planning matters, which shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The Provincial Policy Statement articulates how and why heritage conservation is a component of good planning, explicitly requiring the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources, alongside the pursuit of other provincial interests. The Provincial Policy Statement does so by linking heritage conservation to key policy directives, including building strong healthy communities, the wise use and management of resources, and protecting health and safety.

Section 1.1 Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development states that long-term economic prosperity is supported by, among other considerations, the promotion of well-designed built form and cultural planning, and the conservation of features that help define character. Section 2.6 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology subsequently directs that "significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved". Through the definition of conserved, built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscape and protected heritage property, the Provincial Policy Statement identifies the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage conservation will be implemented.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) builds on the Provincial Policy Statement to establish a land use planning framework that supports complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment and social equity. Section 1.2.1 Guiding Principles states that policies in the plan seek to, among other principles, "conserve and promote cultural heritage resources to support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Metis communities".

Cultural heritage resources are understood as being irreplaceable, and are significant features that provide people with a sense of place. Section 4.2.7 Cultural Heritage Resources directs that cultural heritage resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas. Strategic growth areas include the downtown urban growth centre where this property is located.

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/place-grow-growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe>

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeology, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through listing on the City's Heritage Register, designation of individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or designation of districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

The City of Toronto's Official Plan contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. Indicating the integral role that heritage conservation plays in successful city-building, Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan states that, "Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable City that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the City."

Policy 3.1.5.4 states that heritage resources on the City's Heritage Register "will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council." Policy 3.1.5.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.5.26 states that, when new construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register does occur, it will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and will mitigate visual and physical impacts on it.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

<https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) will be required for development applications that affect listed and designated properties. An HIA shall be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved.

The Ontario Heritage Toolkit also provides guidance on designating properties of municipal significance. The Tool Kit provides direction on the purpose of designating heritage properties for identifying and protecting places in our communities that have cultural heritage value and is an important part of planning for the future, and of helping to guide change while keeping the buildings, structures and landscapes that give each of our communities its unique identity.

COMMENTS

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 625 Church Street, Traders Building (1956), and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under all three categories of design, associative and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

TRADERS BUILDING, 625 CHURCH STREET

Research and Evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06



Figure 1: 625 Church Street, principal (west) façade (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 2: 625 Church Street, southeast façade (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 3: 625 Church Street, south façade (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 4: 625 Church Street, primary entrance on the principal (west) façade (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 5: 625 Church Street, secondary entrance on the principal (west) façade, (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 6: 625 Church Street, northeast façade (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 7: 625 Church Street, north façade, detail of brickwork typical on side facades (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 8: 625 Church Street, interior vestibule of the primary entrance showing the return wall of the black granite panelling (Heritage Planning, 2021)

1. DESCRIPTION

625 CHURCH STREET - TRADERS BUILDING	
ADDRESS	625 Church Street Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G1
WARD	University-Rosedale - 11
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	CON 1 FB PT PARK LOT 7 PLAN D 279 LOTS 1 TO 7 PLAN 19E PT LOT 1 & 8 FOOT LANE RP 63R2956 PARTS 1, 4 & 5
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Church-Yonge Corridor
HISTORICAL NAME	Traders Building
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1956
ORIGINAL OWNER	Traders Finance Group Limited
ORIGINAL USE	Commercial: Office
CURRENT USE*	Commercial: Office
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Marani & Morris
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick and cast stone cladding, reinforced concrete structure
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Neo-Georgian
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	N/A
CRITERIA	Design, associative and contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	N/A
RECORDER	Heritage Planning; Alex Corey
REPORT DATE	May, 2021

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 625 Church Street, and applies evaluation criteria as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06, under the headings of historical/associative, design/physical and contextual value to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The application of the criteria is found in Section 3 (Evaluation Checklist). The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in the Conclusion of the report. Maps and Photographs are located in Attachment 1. The archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Attachment 2. The Statement of Significance is contained in Attachment 3.

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
1793	Park Lot 7 is granted to Captain John McGill and his wife Catherine
1799	John and Catherine McGill sell the northern 60 acres of Park Lot 7 to Chief Justice John Elmsley

1884	The east side of Church Street, north of Charles Street East is shown as containing a row of brick houses, and situated within a primarily residential context (Figure 11)
1920	The Traders Finance Corporation Ltd. is established in Winnipeg, Manitoba, providing financing to manufacturers and dealers in automobiles and farm equipment
1955	Frid Construction submits a permit application on behalf of Traders Finance Corporation Ltd. to permit the construction of a six storey plus penthouse office building to the designs of Marani & Morris
1957	The Traders Building is officially opened at 625 Church Street (Figure 21)
1966	The company is renamed the Traders Group
2013	The property is identified as having heritage potential in the North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the property which are the basis for determining 'Historical and Associative Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Church-Yonge Corridor: Church and Bloor Neighbourhood

The property at 625 Church Street is located within Park Lot 7, which stretched north from Queen Street East to Bloor Street East, and through which Church Street later bisected. Park Lot 7 was granted to John McGill in 1793, who sold the northern 60 acres to Chief Justice John Elmsley in 1799. Development on the northern half of Park Lot 7 through the 19th century was slow to start, with much of the area remaining lightly populated through the 1860s (Figure 10), with residential development picking up by the 1880s. By the close of the 19th century, Church Street was the main north-south artery through the primarily residential neighbourhood that extended east of Yonge Street towards Parliament Street. Along with Jarvis Street and Sherbourne Street to the east, “each of these corridors evolved its own ambience,”¹ with working class housing primarily clustered at the south end closer to downtown, and the mansions of Toronto’s business and political leaders to the north near Bloor Street East. Running up Church Street and on the adjacent side streets could be found the “growing middle class of clerks, accountants, and ‘travellers’ settled into more commodious single, double and triple houses in the centre of the tracts.”² The prevailing context on Church Street was residential, consisting of a mix of row, semi-detached and detached house form buildings. Through the first half of the 20th century many of these houses were further subdivided or converted into rooming houses, with retail occupying the first floor. Some houses were demolished, notably along Church, Wellesley and Charles, and replaced by low-rise apartment buildings through the 1910s and 1920s.

Following construction of the Yonge subway line (opened in 1954), a number of financial service companies constructed offices within proximity of the Yonge-Bloor

1 McHugh 151

2 McHugh 151

junction, spreading east and west along Bloor Street between Avenue Road and Jarvis Street/Mount Pleasant Road. These buildings replaced many of the large houses along Bloor Street, as well as row and semi-detached houses on secondary streets like Church. Institutions, including the Salvation Army's Toronto Grace Hospital on Church Street south of Bloor, and Sunnybrook's Orthopaedic & Arthritic Institute on Wellesley Street, west of Church, were also constructed within the neighbourhood during this period.

This pattern of development within the Church and Bloor neighbourhood is still reflected in its present-day context: 19th century house form buildings are interspersed with mid- to late-20th century office and institutional buildings and early- to mid-20th century apartments. More recently the area has experienced an influx of residential high-rise construction, particularly along Charles Street, east of Yonge.

Traders Finance Corporation

Founded in 1920 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Traders Finance Corporation specialized in "new and used automobiles and trucks of all makes, domestic appliances, marine products, machinery, heavy equipment and mobile homes", and providing installment purchasing for manufacturers and dealers³. The company expanded both geographically and in its product offerings through the mid-20th century across Canada, consolidating and incorporating subsidiary companies including the Canada General Insurance Company and the Toronto General Insurance Company in 1939.

By 1955 Traders Finance, now headquartered in Toronto, was operating 68 branches across Canada, and growing each year. The steady expansion in companies, staff and business necessitated the construction of a new head office building in the postwar period; prior to its construction, Traders Finance was headquartered at the Bank of Montreal building, 50 King Street West. The Chairman of the Board at the time of construction was former Prime Minister Arthur Meighen, with other Directors having contributed in various capacities to the Conservative Party of Canada⁴.

Traders Finance continued to operate through the 20th century, and in 1966 was rebranded as "Traders Group Limited". After fluctuations in the early 2000s, the company was dissolved in 2011.

625 Church Street

On December 21, 1955 an application was filed by Frid Construction Company of Hamilton, on behalf of Traders Finance Corporation Limited to permit the construction of a six storey plus penthouse office building on the property. The building was to be constructed of masonry, steel and reinforced concrete, and had an estimated value of \$1.610 million. A survey in 1955 depicts the existing conditions at the time of filing (Figure 15), comprised of 15 brick and frame houses along Charles Street, Church Street and Hayden. A laneway ran parallel to Church Street behind the houses fronting the street.

3 Globe and Mail, June 14, 1957, 9.

4 Traders Finance Corporation Limited, 34th Annual Report, 1954. McGill Library Archives. Intention to Designate the Ontario Heritage Act - 625 Church Street

The drawings submitted with the application were prepared by the architectural firm Marani & Morris, which was led by the partners Ferdinand Herbert Marani (1893-1971) and Robert Schofield Morris (1898-1964). Constructed over the course of the following year, the six storey office building served as both the headquarters for Traders Finance, as well as its numerous subsidiary companies in Toronto. In 1957, at the time of the official opening announcement, occupants included Traders Finance, Traders General Insurance, Trans Canada Credit Corporation, Canadian General Securities and Insurance, Traders Realty and Traders Property, as well as office space that was leased out to other insurance, legal and automotive companies.

The Traders Building was one of a number of office buildings located within the Church and Bloor neighbourhood built in the post-war period, including other projects by Marani & Morris (later Marani, Routhwaite and Dick). Examples of their work in the area are shown in Figures 23-26.

Marani & Morris, Architects

The partnership of Marani & Morris operated between 1941 and 1959, and represents a defining period in a much longer history for this significant architectural practice in Toronto, which began as Marani & Paisley in 1924, and continues today as RDHA. Under the leadership of Ferdinand Herbert Marani (1893-1971) and Robert Schofield Morris (1898-1964), Marani & Morris was a leading mid-century practice that catered primarily to corporate and institutional clients through the skillful integration of classical architectural principles with modernism. Over the course of their practice, and with the addition of new associates and partners, Marani & Morris can be credited with bridging the perceived divide between tradition and modernity, and in doing so won both critical acclaim and significant corporate commissions. Prior to 1941 the partnership included James Irving Lawson (1886-1964), and in 1959 former associate Marvin Francis Allan (1905-1964) was promoted to partner.

The period between 1941 and 1959 in the partnership was defined by major corporate and institutional commissions, many executed in the firm's hallmark Neo-Georgian architectural style. Buildings attributed to the firm from this period include the Confederation Life Insurance Company Office (333 Bloor Street East, 1950-51), the addition to the Manufacturer's Life Insurance Company Building (200 Bloor Street East, 1950-51) and the Traders Building (625 Church Street, 1956). In addition to corporate clients, Marani & Morris were retained by major institutions to either contribute to or design suburban and rural campuses, including Schmon Infirmary and Memorial Great Hall at Ridley College in St. Catherines, Ontario (1949) and the St Joseph's Motherhouse at Morrow Park (opened 1961). Other notable works include the Canadian National Exhibition Grandstand (1947), and Peterborough City Hall (1950-51).

While the nature of their work varied typologically, spanning from downtown office buildings to civic and institutional campuses, the firm of Marani & Morris consistently delivered high quality modern designs that retained enough of a footing in classical architecture to be palatable to corporate and institutional clients, while advancing the principles of modernism and contributing significantly to Toronto's 20th century architectural landscape.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining 'Design and Physical Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Located at 625 Church Street, the Traders Building comprises a six storey plus penthouse office building located on the east side of Church Street spanning from Charles Street East to Hayden Street, with a surface parking lot at the rear (east) of the property. Built in 1956 and officially opened in 1957, the building was designed in the Neo-Georgian architectural style, which was a conservative yet forward-looking style rooted in the principles of classicism but with a keen understanding of the core tenants of the modern movement. The refined design of the building maintains the classical order that was standard for tall building design through the late-19th and first half of the 20th century – composed of a base, shaft and capital. At 625 Church Street, these three discrete elements are skillfully articulated with variations in the materiality and detailing of the façades.

The building is primarily clad with red brick laid in a Flemish bond. The ground floor of the primary (west) façade is clad in cast stone, which wraps the corners of both the north and south facades, and is picked up on the sixth floor window band on both the east and west facades. The primary façade features a prominent centre entrance bay comprised of a cast stone frame at the centre of which and above the entrance is engraved the building's name "Traders Building". Three glass double-doors with transoms are set within aluminum frames, with polished black granite panels on either side and which extend into the entrance vestibule. Centered above on the second floor extends a flagpole, which meets the building at a cast stone panel. A secondary entrance on the primary façade is located to the south and accessed by a short flight of stairs, bound by two concrete columns.

Floors 2 through 5 feature a regular rhythm of fenestration, defined by a series of 24 rectangular windows on each floor. Each aluminum framed window is set within a concrete window frame, which slightly extends beyond the brick façade creating both a subtle horizontal shadow line running the length of the building, as well as a perception of depth to the exterior wall. On floor 6, the 24 windows are separated by cast stone panels, and a continuous recessed string course below. Capped with a simple cast stone cornice, this treatment creates for an elegant and understated capital on this classical building composition.

The north and south facades of the Traders Building feature brick pilasters that extend from the sidewalk to the cornice, set on a cast stone base with inset rectangular windows and brick spandrels featuring raised brick headers between, save for the ground floor, which features cast stone spandrels. The brick pilasters, constructed using brick laid in Flemish bond, feature a raised toothed-pattern, adding to the strong vertical shadow line and visual interest on these facades.

An entrance occupies one of the centre bays on the south façade, leading to a raised concrete patio that occupies the setback from the sidewalk.

The east façade faces into a surface parking lot, and continues the pattern of fenestration from the primary (west) façade on floors 2 through 5, with slightly larger rectangular windows on the ground floor. A central brick bay is articulated by vertical recessed brick details and bound by recessed brick panels, and two single door entrances set within concrete door surrounds are located on either side of the bay at the ground floor.

The lobby of the Traders Building is accessed through a double door vestibule, with black granite panels extending into the vestibule and to a depth of the interior aluminium door frames. Inside, the lobby walls are clad in wood veneer applied in a grid pattern, with marble cladding the elevator bay wall. Stainless steel elevator doors feature a geometric bronze lacquered finish and etched meander patterns. The terrazzo floors are laid in subtle a diamond pattern.

iv. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining 'Contextual Value' according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The property data map (Key Map, Attachment 3) shows the location of the Traders Building on the east side of Church Street between Charles Street East and Hayden Street. The west side of Church Street contains a row of late 19th and early 20th century residential (house form and apartment) properties, including 628, and 634-636 Church Street which are designated under Part IV and in the process of redevelopment. To the north, 650 Church Street contains the Salvation Army Toronto Grace Health Centre, built in 1959 by Govan, Ferguson, Lindsay, Kaminker, Maw, Langley & Keenleyside. The block south of the Traders Building contains 71 Charles Street East (Paxton Place), built in 1982 by E. I. Richmond, and 620 Church Street (Town Inn Suites Hotel) built in 1972.

Outside the immediate context, the broader Church and Bloor neighbourhood contains a number of significant institutional office buildings that, along with the Traders Building, contribute to the area's character:

- 120 Bloor Street East, Crown Life Building (1953, Marani & Morris)
- 200-220 Bloor Street East, Manufacturer's Life Building (1924, Sproatt & Rolph with additions by Marani & Morris)
- 250 Bloor Street East (1968, Marani, Rounthwaite & Dick)
- 333 Bloor Street East, Confederation Life Insurance Building (1954-1956, Marani & Morris with additions in 1973 by the same)

3. EVALUATION AND APPLICATION OF O.REG 9/06 CRITERIA

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and the City of Toronto also uses these criteria when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

There are three categories for a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property is only required to meet one criterion to warrant designation. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property or ✓ if it is applicable to the property, with explanatory text below.

DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

Design or Physical Value	
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	✓
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	N/A
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

Representative example of a style

Constructed in 1956 as a purpose-built headquarters for a leading financial services institution - the Traders Finance Corporation Ltd. – the property at 625 Church Street is a representative example of a mid-20th century office building, designed in the Neo-Georgian architectural style. The scale, form, and massing of the building is emblematic of this building type, occupying the full width of a city block, and commanding a strong presence along Church Street. The building's Neo-Georgian architectural style is a conservative style steeped in the principles of classicism but with the modern movement's ideals of simplicity, truth to materials and performance.

HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

Historical or Associative Value	
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	✓

Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community

The Traders Building is reflective of the work of the architectural firm Marani & Morris, one of Toronto's leading 20th century modern architectural practices and who are credited with the design of numerous high quality institutional and office buildings within the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, and in Toronto generally. The skillful application of the Neo-Georgian style (a style that was refined by the firm through the inter-war and immediate post-war period) is a hallmark of Marani & Morris, and demonstrative of this period of their work.

The building shares design features with other commissions of the firm's from this period of the partnership; the Bank of Canada building (250 University Avenue, 1958)

displays a similar treatment on its side facades with vertical pilasters, while the nearby Confederation Life Building (333 Bloor Street East, 1951) features a cast stone ground floor below a regular rhythm of windows set in cast stone frames above. The Traders Building is one of the final buildings credited to the firm prior to the addition of Marvin Allan to the partnership – in 1959 – and shortly before Robert Morris received the Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1958. The Traders Building is emblematic of Marani's interest in classicism and Morris' modernist ideals, and an excellent reflection of the studio's work during the period between 1941 and 1959.

CONTEXTUAL VALUE

Contextual Value	
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	✓
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	✓
iii. landmark	N/A

Important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area

The property maintains and supports the character of the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, an area that is defined by inter- and post-war office buildings, many of which served the financial and insurance industries and were designed by the partnership of Marani & Morris. Through its design, placement and orientation, 625 Church Street is an important building within the area and one that contributes to the neighbourhood's character as it adds to an understanding of the area's evolution and substantial redevelopment in the mid-20th century, alongside other buildings constructed in the same period.

Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

Located within the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, 625 Church Street is visually and historically linked to its surroundings, which include a collection of significant institutional office buildings constructed between the 1920s and 1960s, many by the same architectural firm of Marani & Morris. The Traders Building is historically linked with buildings located within the neighbourhood, including the Confederation Life, Manufacturers Life, and Crown Life Insurance Buildings, and is visually linked to the Crown Life Building, located at 120 Bloor Street East at the northwest corner of Church Street.

CONCLUSION

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 625 Church Street and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under all three categories of design, associative and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

The Traders Building was constructed in 1956 for the Traders Finance Corporation and designed by the architectural firm of Marani & Morris. The six storey plus penthouse office building is a fine and representative example of the Neo-Georgian architectural style, and is part of a larger context within the Church and Bloor neighbourhood comprised of corporate office buildings, many designed by Marani & Morris, built during the pre- and post-World War II period. The Traders Building is historically linked with buildings located within the neighbourhood, including the Confederation Life, Manufacturers Life, and Crown Life Insurance Buildings, and is visually linked to the Crown Life Building, located at 120 Bloor Street East at the northwest corner of Church Street.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) 625 Church Street, comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Maps and Photographs
Attachment 2 – List of Research Sources
Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)



Key Map: Property map showing 625 Church Street in context, 2021 (City of Toronto)

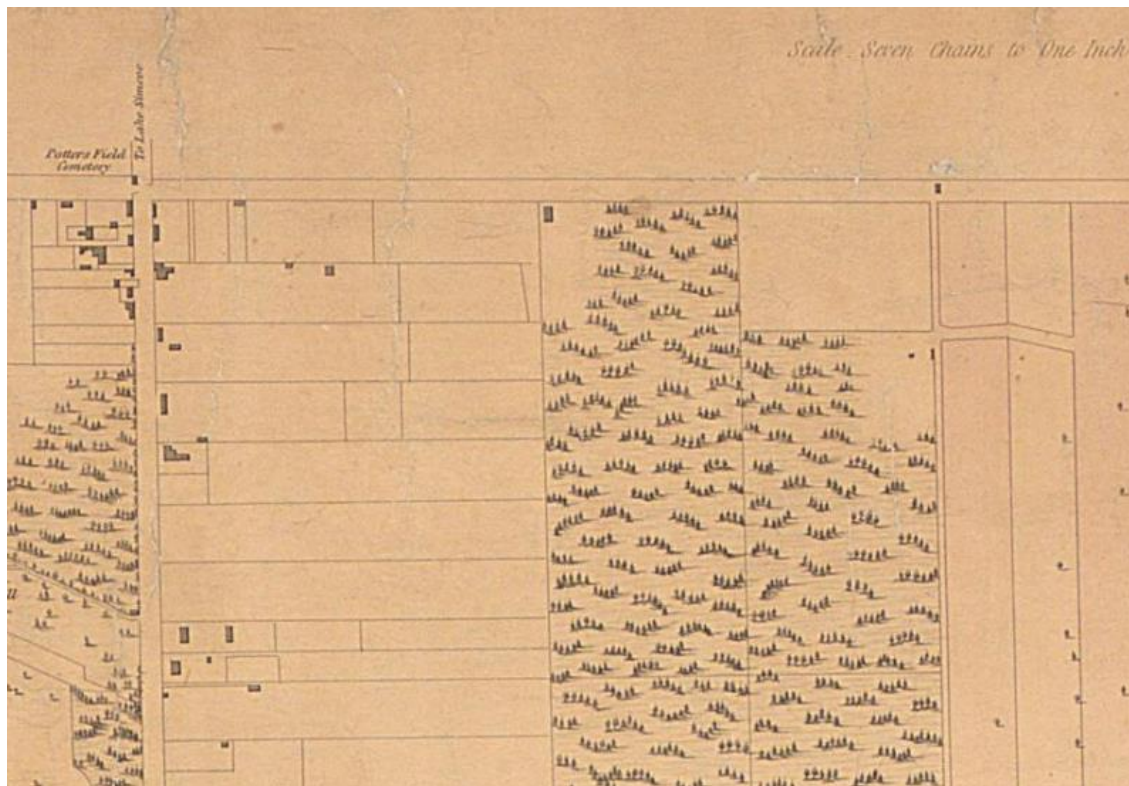


Figure 9: Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto, James Cane, 1842 showing Yonge Street (R) and Bloor Street (top), with Church Street not yet extended north (Historical Maps of Toronto)

Intention to Designate the Ontario Heritage Act - 625 Church Street

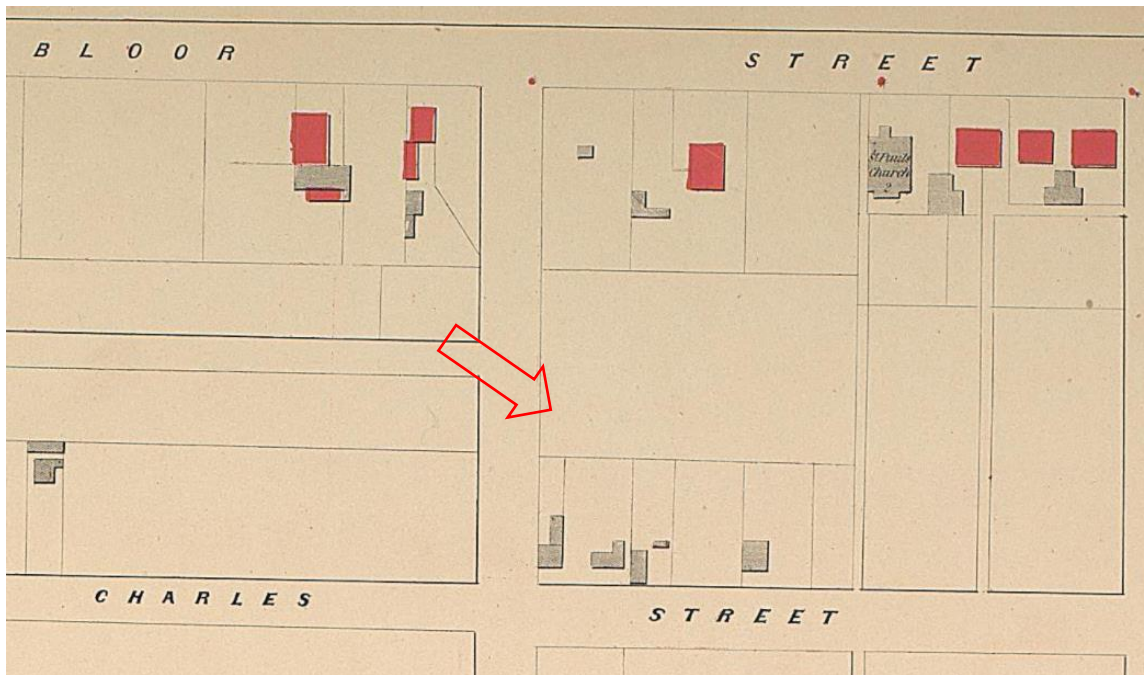


Figure 10: Atlas of Toronto, W.S. & H.C. Boulton, 1858 (Historical Maps of Toronto)

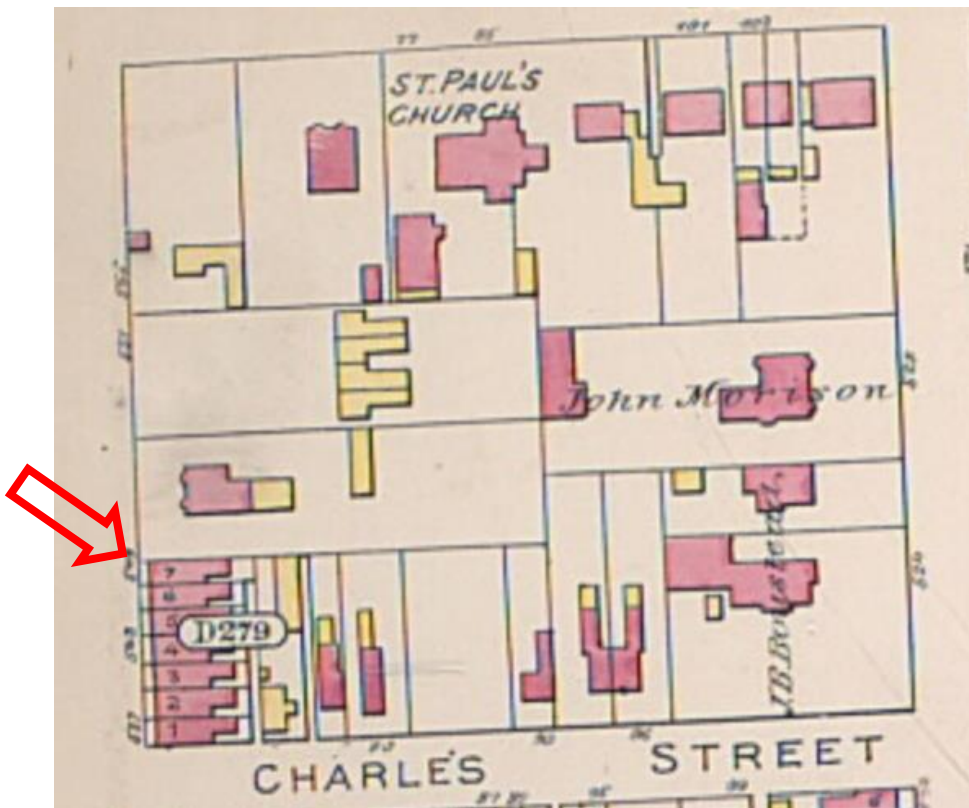


Figure 11: Atlas of the City of Toronto, Charles Goad, 1884 (City of Toronto Archives)

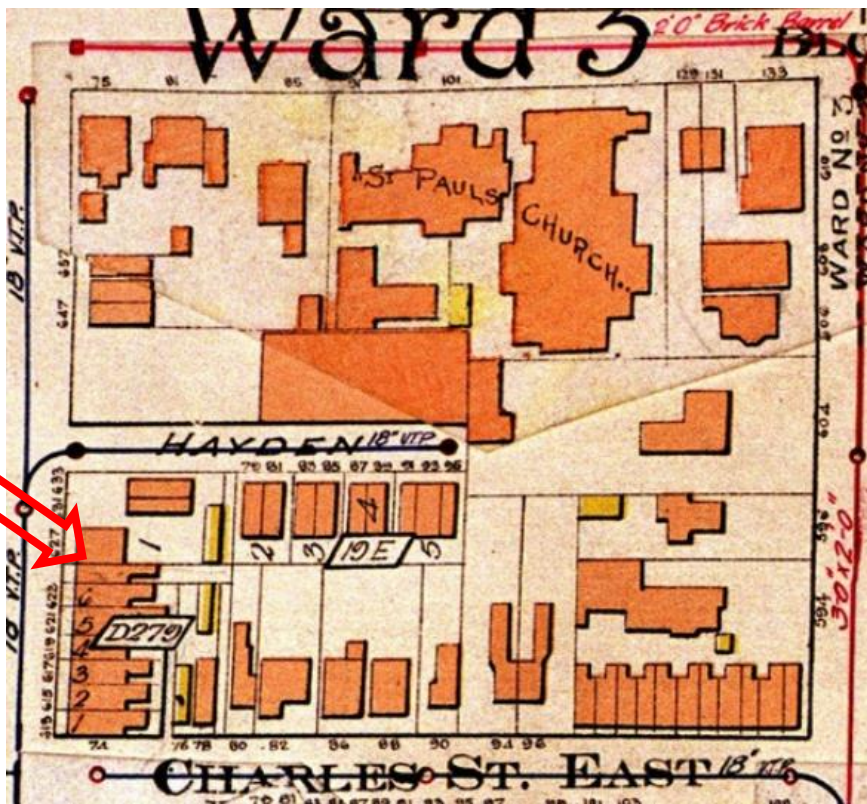


Figure 12: Atlas of the City of Toronto, Charles Goad, 1924 (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 13: Aerial Photograph, 1947 (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 14: East side of Church Street, looking north from south of Charles Street East, James V. Salmon, 1955 (Toronto Public Library)

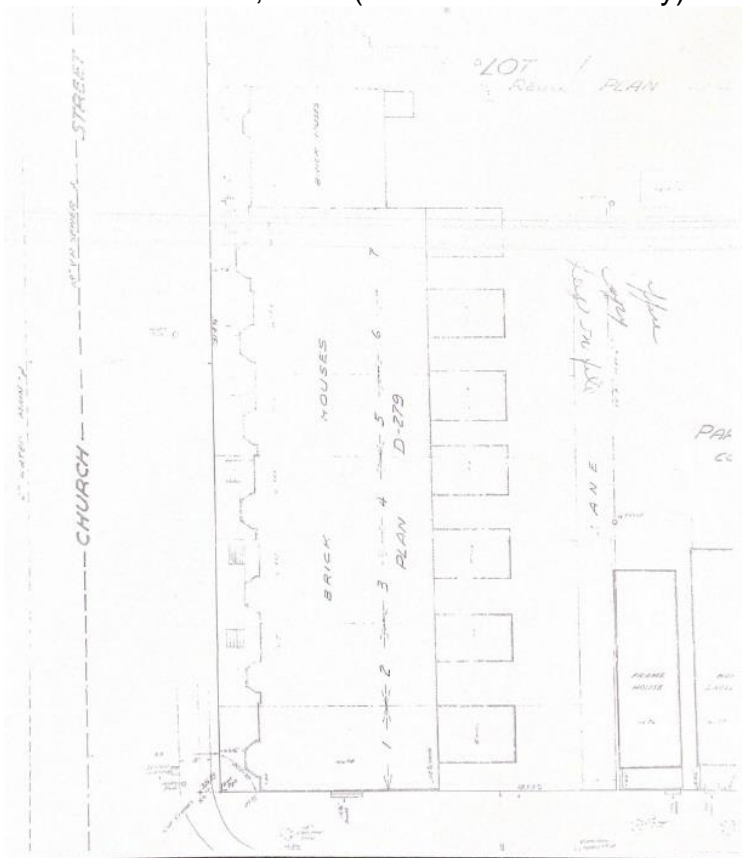


Figure 15: Survey of the property at 625 Church Street prior to development, 1955 (Building Records)

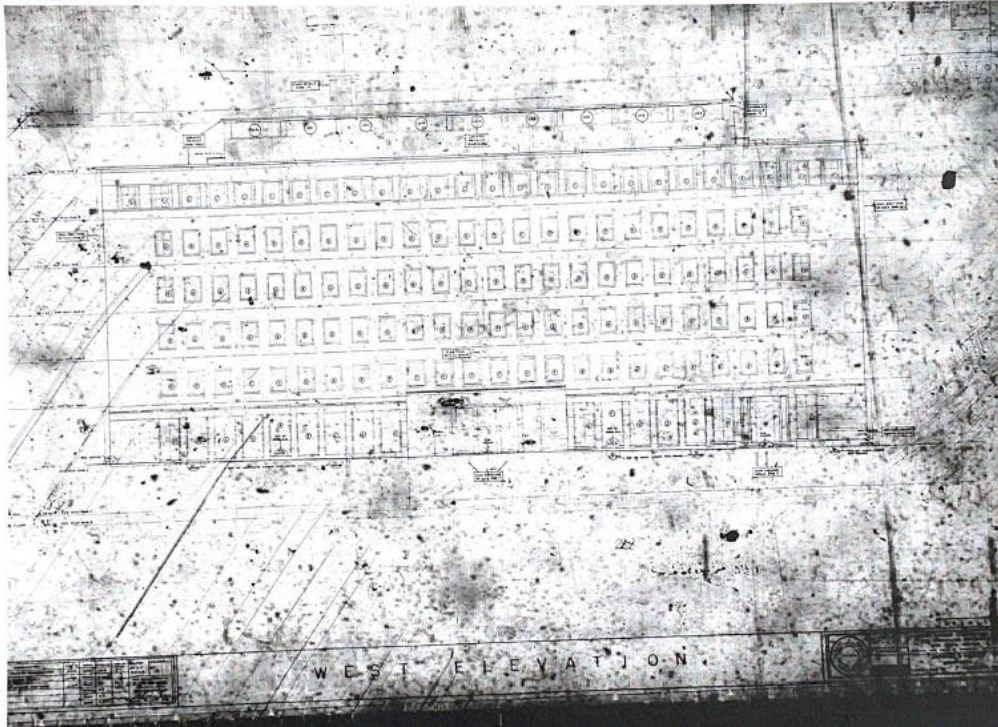


Figure 16: 625 Church Street, west façade, permit application, 1955 (Building Records)



Figure 17: 625 Church Street, west façade, 1957 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary)



Figure 18: 625 Church Street, west façade, entrance detail 1957 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary)



Figure 19: 625 Church Street, southeast façade, 1957 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary)



Figure 20: 625 Church Street, entrance lobby, 1957 (Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary)

We Proudly Announce . . .



**the official opening of the
TRADERS BUILDING.**

NEW HEAD OFFICE HOME
OF

- CANADIAN GENERAL SECURITIES LIMITED
- TRADERS FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED
- CANADIAN GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY
- TORONTO GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY
- TRADERS GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY
- TRANS CANADA CREDIT CORPORATION LIMITED
- GGI INSURANCE AGENCIES LIMITED

In 1925, Traders Finance Corporation Limited, the senior member of this outstanding group of Canadian Companies, was a one-office building in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Today the Company has offices in almost every principal city and town from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

Working in close cooperation with manufacturers and with dealers in new and used automobiles and trucks of all makes, domestic appliances, marine products, machinery, heavy equipment and mobile homes, Traders provides these facilities for "retail" purchasing as vital to individuals and business concerns alike.

In the intervening years from 1925 until today new subsidiary Companies were organized and new Company interests were acquired to broaden the services of this organization to the people of Canada. The group now maintains over 150 branch offices across Canada.

Canadian General Insurance Company and Toronto General Insurance Company joined the group in 1927 and now operate sixteen branches

strategically located across Canada. Both are multiple line Companies writing automobile, fire, miscellaneous casualty insurance and Fidelity and Surety Bonds.

Traders General Insurance Company, which commenced operations in 1932, is principally engaged in the automobile insurance field. The Company's staff of field adjusters, now almost nationwide, provide unexcelled service for the Canadian motoring public.

The 44 branches of Trans Canada Credit Corporation have made the Company well known for courtesy and efficiency in the field of Personal Loans. Car Insurance Agencies Limited, with twelve branches across Canada, operates as a general agent for many insurance companies.

As the rapidly growing volume of business dictated, all of these companies, and the other companies in the Traders family, consistently enlarged their facilities in order to maintain the service with which each is nationally identified.

It is this continued growth which has made necessary the construction of this new Head Office Building.

625 CHURCH STREET, TORONTO.

Figure 21: Traders Building opening announcement, July 14, 1957 (Globe and Mail Archives, Toronto Public Library)



Figure 22: Aerial Photograph, 1962 (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 23: 333 Bloor Street East, Confederation Life Insurance Company Building, 1956 (Heritage Planning, 2021)

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Figure 24: 120 Bloor Street East, Crown Life Insurance Building, 1953 (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 25: 200 Bloor Street East, Manufacturers Life Insurance Building, 1923 with additions in 1953, 1983 (Heritage Planning, 2021)

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Figure 26: 250 Bloor Street East, Manulife Financial, 1968 (Heritage Planning, 2021)

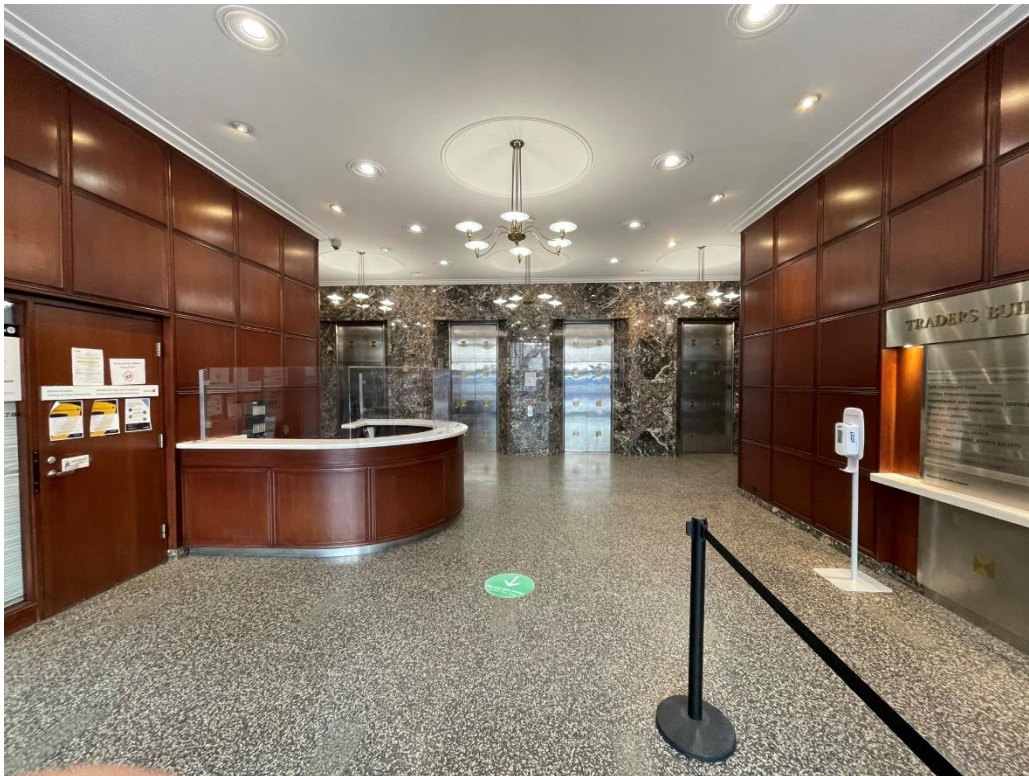


Figure 27: 625 Church Street, interior lobby showing terrazzo floor, marble and wood veneer walls, and stainless steel elevator bank (Heritage Planning, 2021)



Figure 28: 625 Church Street, interior lobby, detail of elevator door with marble wall (Heritage Planning, 2021)

Archival Sources

Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York, 1955-1956
City of Toronto Directories
Goad, Charles, Atlas of the City of Toronto and Suburbs, 1884-1924
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Canadian Architectural Archives, University of Calgary

Secondary Sources

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Hill, Robert, Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950
<http://www.dictionarofarchitectsincanada.org/>
McHugh, Patricia, Toronto Architecture: a city guide, 2nd ed., 1989

**625 CHURCH STREET "TRADERS BUILDING"
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property located at 625 Church 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 criteria of design and physical, historical and associative, and contextual values.

Description

Located on the east side of Church Street between Charles Street and Isabella Street, the property at 625 Church Street known as the Traders Building contains a six storey plus penthouse office building built in 1956 and designed in the Neo-Georgian style by the architectural firm of Marani & Morris. Constructed as the headquarters for the Traders Finance Corporation and its numerous subsidiaries, the brick clad building with cast stone detailing is part of the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, an area whose context is defined by the presence of pre- and post-World War II office buildings, many built for insurance companies and designed by Marani & Morris.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**Design and Physical Value**

Built as the headquarters for the Traders Finance Corporation and designed by the architectural firm of Marani & Morris in 1956, the Traders Building at 625 Church Street is valued as a fine example of a mid-20th century office building designed in the Neo-Georgian architectural style. This architectural style is emblematic of the firm's commissions through the 1930s to 1950s, and is a conservative classical style that responded to the emerging modern architectural movement often employed for institutional and corporate commissions. Features of the Traders Building reflective of this style include the tripartite organization of the building's facades with a distinct base, shaft and capital; the use of brick and ashlar cast stone cladding; and the regular rhythm of fenestration, including the window openings set within cast stone frames and inset from the façade.

Historic and Associative Value

The Traders Building is reflective of the work of the architectural firm Marani & Morris, one of Toronto's leading 20th century modern architectural practices. Comprised of a partnership between Ferdinand Herbert Marani and Robert Schofield Morris, the firm was a leading proponent of conservative modernism in the mid-20th century, responsible for numerous high quality projects for institutional and corporate clients. The Traders Building is emblematic of the firm's high quality - albeit non-controversial and conservative - work, with a decidedly modern massing and form that remains steeped in the principles of classicism and an honesty of materials. The Traders Building was one of the last designs produced by the firm before Robert Morris received the Gold Medal from the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1958, and the promotion of Marvin Francis Allan to partner in 1959. The firm continues to practice today as RDHA.

Contextual Value

Contextually, the Traders Building at 625 Church Street maintains and supports the character of the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, defined by a collection of mid-20th century office buildings, many built for insurance companies and designed by Marani & Morris. The Traders Building is historically linked with buildings located within the neighbourhood, including the Confederation Life, Manufacturers Life, and Crown Life Insurance Buildings, and is visually linked to the Crown Life Building, located at 120 Bloor Street East at the northwest corner of Church Street.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 625 Church Street as representative of the Neo-Georgian architectural style include:

- The scale, form and massing of the 6 storey plus penthouse office building, situated on the east side of Church Street and occupying the full block from Charles Street East to Hayden Street
- The symmetrical organization of the primary (west) façade, and the similar treatment of the two side (north and south) facades
- The setback of the primary and side facades from the sidewalk, which varies on each façade and permits plantings on both the west and south facades
- The use of brick (red brick laid in Flemish bond) and cast stone cladding
- The protruding cast stone entrance bay, including the black granite panels on either side of the aluminum door frame and that extend into the entrance vestibule
- The building name - "Traders Building" - engraved within the cast stone entrance bay on the primary façade and centered above the main entrance
- The regular rhythm of fenestration on floors 2 through 5 on the primary and side facades, comprised of rectangular window openings set within cast stone window frames
- The brick pilasters on the side facades, extending from the foundation to the cornice
- The brick spandrel panels between the pilasters on the side facades, accentuated with protruding header bricks
- The cast stone cladding between the windows on the sixth floor, with a slight reveal below creating a strong shadow line
- The cast stone cornice that wraps the primary and side facades

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of 625 Church Street as maintaining and supporting the character of the Church and Bloor neighbourhood, and as being historically and visually linked to its surroundings include:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building, with its primary entrance on Church Street