

## **18 Portland Street - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act**

**Date:** September 14, 2022

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

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

**Wards:** 10 - Spadina-Fort York

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 18 Portland Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value.

Located on the southwest corner of Niagara Street and Portland Street in the King-Spadina neighbourhood, the former Portland Street Toronto Hydro-Electric System Substation, or Portland Substation, was once owned and operated by Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. - a precursor to Toronto Hydro.

The Portland Substation, completed in 1925 as a two-storey, factory/warehouse type structure, was designed by the public utility's in-house architect Albert E. Salisbury (1887-1955) and is part of a collection of more than twenty such substations by the architect built across the city between 1921 and 1950. The Portland Substation, like others by Salisbury, was designed in the Beaux-Arts tradition with Edwardian Classical influences. Identified by a prominent metal entablature and sign band upon its principal (east) elevation which reads, "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM," the former substation is further defined by its symmetrical façade, red-brick exterior, factory type windows, and a flat roof with parapets capped with terracotta coping. In close proximity to other early twentieth-century factory/warehouse type buildings, including several listed and Part IV designated properties, the Portland Substation is an important part of the industrial history of the King-Spadina neighbourhood.

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 18 Portland 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 the following criteria: design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. The Bill 108 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act came into force on July 1, 2021, which included a shift in Part IV designations related to certain Planning Act applications. Section 29(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act now restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act to within 90 days after the City Clerk gives notice of a complete application for development submitted under the Planning Act.

The property municipally known as 18 Portland Street and 1-9 Niagara Street is currently subject to a Zoning By-law Amendment application (21 232793 STE 10 OZ) and an application to amend the City's Official Plan (22 151499 STE 10) under the Planning Act to allow for the construction of a new 23-storey mixed-use building. The proposal includes the retention and integration of the principal (east) façade and portions of the north and south facades of the former Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street into the development. The rezoning application is currently under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. The City Clerk issued a complete application notice for the official plan amendment application on July 29, 2022. Should Council decide to designate the properties under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act the Clerk must give notice of its intention in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act by October 27, 2022, 90 days from the issuance of the complete application notice.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for 18 Portland Street was submitted to the City as a component of the development application. It has been reviewed as part of the Staff evaluation of this property, and will be further considered when determining how the heritage property is to be conserved. Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 18 Portland Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance; 18 Portland Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3, to the report, September 14, 2022, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On February 16, 2022, Toronto and East York Community Council adopted a preliminary report on the subject application with an amendment approving an expanded notification area for the notice of the community consultation meeting. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2022/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-198849.pdf>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **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 the 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.

<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."

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

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. A property may be designated under section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

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

The Ontario Heritage Toolkit provides guidance on designating properties of municipal significance, including direction on the purpose of designating heritage properties and information about how the Provincial Policy Statement and the Ontario Heritage Act provide a framework for the conservation of heritage properties within the land use planning system. In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). The Bill 108 Amendments to the OHA came into force on July 1, 2021, which included, amongst other matters, amendments to the listing and designation processes. Guidance from the Province related to the implementation of Bill 108 Amendments is forthcoming.

[Ontario Heritage Tool Kit \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca/ont/heritage/toolkit/)

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>

## COMMENTS

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### 18 Portland Street

#### Research and Evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06

While the research and evaluation of the property referenced above is, in staff's determination, sufficient to support the designation of the property at 18 Portland Street, it should be noted that public access to the City of Toronto Archives remained limited during the preparation of this report due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic e.g. Research Hall is open on an appointment basis only, at a limited capacity, and that new and additional relevant information on the subject property further expanding on its heritage value may be forthcoming following increased access to these archival records and may provide further information to be incorporated in the final version of a Part IV designation by-law.



18 Portland Street. Principal (east) elevation. Heritage Planning, 2022.

## 1. DESCRIPTION

| 18 PORTLAND STREET (TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM) |                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| ADDRESS                                            | 18 Portland Street                                     |
| WARD                                               | 10 - Spadina-Fort York                                 |
| LEGAL DESCRIPTION                                  | MILITARY RES BLK A PT LOT 18 RP 66R28257 PARTS 1 AND 2 |
| NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY                            | King-Spadina Neighbourhood.                            |
| HISTORICAL NAME                                    | Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems                         |
| CONSTRUCTION DATE                                  | 1925                                                   |
| ORIGINAL OWNER                                     | Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd.                    |
| ORIGINAL USE                                       | Portland Substation                                    |
| CURRENT USE*                                       | Vacant                                                 |
| ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER                         | Architect: Albert E. Salisbury (1887-1955)             |
| DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS                      | Brick with stone detailing                             |
| ARCHITECTURAL STYLE                                | See report                                             |
| ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS                              | See report                                             |
| CRITERIA                                           | Design/Physical, Historical/Associative, Contextual    |
| HERITAGE STATUS                                    | NOL                                                    |
| RECORDER                                           | Adrian Gamble                                          |
| REPORT DATE                                        | September 14, 2022                                     |

## 2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 18 Portland 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. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest. 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 Statements of Significance are contained in Attachment 3.

### i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

| Key Date | Historical Event                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | The area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. |

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1793      | Following the founding of York (Toronto), the area west of the town site is set aside as the Military Reserve where (Old) Fort York is located                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1794      | The Military Burying Ground is established in the Military Reserve                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1797      | A "New Town" is established west of the Old Town of York, with the west boundary adjoining the Military Reserve at Peter Street                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1831      | Prior to the sale of land, a survey of part of the Military Reserve includes the layout of a residential street named "Wellington Place"                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1837      | After the incorporation of the City of Toronto (1834) when the municipality's west boundary is moved to Bathurst Street, a further survey of the former Military Reserve shows the layout of lots along Wellington Place, including Block A on the south side of the street                            |
| 1842      | James Cane's Topographical Plan of Toronto shows three small wooden buildings on the NE corner of Niagara and Portland Streets.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1884      | Fire Insurance Plan shows an increasing concentration of wooden commercial and residential structures along Niagara Street and Portland Street (including a house at 18 Portland Street)                                                                                                               |
| 1911      | Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. founded                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1917      | City of Toronto Archives photos of 18 Portland Street indicate the house on the property is unoccupied and in a state of significant disrepair                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1924      | 1924 Fire Insurance Plan shows a vacant lot at 18 Portland Street                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1925      | Ontario Land Registry records indicate that a parcel of land at the SE corner of Niagara Street and Portland Street (including 18 Portland Street) was purchased by Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd from W.A. Patterson for \$3,300.                                                                |
| 1926      | City Directory lists B&M Shoe & Slipper Co. Ltd. at 1 Niagara Street (22-24 Portland Street) on the SE corner of Niagara Street and Portland Street (four-storey factory/warehouse type building), followed by a single house at 20 Portland Street, and the Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street |
| 1978      | Eastern half of the block bounded by Niagara, Front, Bathurst, and Portland Streets is razed with the exception of the cluster of three structures at the SE Corner of Niagara Street and Portland Street (1-9 Niagara Street and 18 Portland Street)                                                  |
| 1984-1992 | Former factory/warehouse type building at 1 Niagara Street expanded from three to four storeys and heavily modified inside and out following acquisition by Nygard International                                                                                                                       |
| 1998      | Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. becomes a subsidiary of the newly-Founded Toronto Hydro following amalgamation in 1998                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2016      | 18 Portland Street decommissioned and sold by Toronto Hydro                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## **ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

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

### **King-Spadina Neighbourhood:**

The property at 18 Portland Street is in the King-Spadina neighbourhood. Following the founding of the Town of York (Toronto) in the late 18th century, the area west of the townsite was set aside for the Military Reserve and (Old) Fort York was established near the entrance to the harbour. A Military Burying Ground was established in 1794 in what is now Victoria Memorial Square, just a short walk from Fort York.

With the rapid growth of the community, by 1797 the boundary of the Town of York moved to the edge of the Reserve as "New Town", where major institutional buildings were adjoined by residential estates and, on the side streets, tracts of housing. The incorporation of the City of Toronto in 1834 coincided with the subdivision and sale of part of the Military Reserve for residential development demanded by the growing municipality. The Military Burying Ground was closed in 1863 after at least 400 internments, and subsequently turned into a public park.

Historical maps and atlases trace the development of King-Spadina from the mid-19th century when the arrival of the inaugural steam railways marked the beginning of its transformation from an institutional and residential enclave to one of the City's core industrial areas. The Grand Trunk Railway and the Northern Railway, respectively, constructed facilities on the east and west sides of Spadina Avenue, south of Front Street. The extension of railway rights-of-way across the neighbourhood resulted in the demolition of housing stock, particularly on Wellington Street West, and the replacement of other residential buildings with largescale factories and warehouses. This process was accelerated after the Great Fire of 1904 destroyed part of the city's original manufacturing district, leading to its relocation to the area adjoining the intersection of King Street West and Spadina Avenue.<sup>1</sup>

King-Spadina experienced a decline after World War II when many companies relocated to Toronto's suburbs. Beginning in the 1990s when the restrictive industrial zoning was removed, the area has been revitalized as a popular mixed-use neighbourhood. With its collection of surviving late-19th century residential buildings and early-20th century industrial edifices, part of the King-Spadina neighbourhood was designated as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

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1 During this era, Spadina Avenue was extended south of Queen Street West. The street originated as Brock Avenue, the route to Dr. William Warren Baldwin's "Spadina" estate on the escarpment north of the Reserve

2 Designated by By-law 1111-2017, as amended by By-law 1241-2017, the King-Spadina HCD is under appeal at the time of the writing of this report

## **18 Portland Street**

The subject property at 18 Portland Street is located on land that was originally part of the Military Reserve before its subdivision and sale in the 1830s. The area was then laid out as an upscale residential district according to British town planning principles, and was particularly distinguished by the inclusion of two expansive public squares (present-day Victoria Memorial Square at Wellington and Portland Streets, and Clarence Square on present-day Spadina Avenue) that were linked by a wide boulevard named "Wellington Place". The street was illustrated on Boulton's Atlas of 1858 when "Lyndhurst," the estate of the province's attorney general, Robert Jamieson, occupied a large parcel on the south side of the thoroughfare. However, directly north, the office of the Commissariat (the military department tasked with supplying food and equipment) was an early non-residential use forecasting the later transformation of the area.

On Portland Street, south of Victoria Memorial Square on the west side, the subject property originated as part of Lot 18 in Block A of the Military Reserve. The first building to occupy the lot was a small, wood-framed, house-form structure which appears on the 1842 James Cane Topographical Plan of the City of Toronto. In 1917, a brick-clad house at 18 Portland Street was photographed by the City, exterior views of the front and rear of the property revealing what appears to be an abandoned structure in a state of significant disrepair. Contemporary images of the immediate vicinity show other properties in a similar state.

The property at 18 Portland Street was sold to the Toronto Hydro-Electric System in 1925, and was then redeveloped with the demolition of the house and the construction of the present structure: a two-storey, brick, factory-warehouse type building which was operated for nearly a century as a substation for Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. The building was designed in the Edwardian Classical style by the public utility company's in-house architect, Albert E. Salisbury (1887-1955). The Portland Substation is one of more than twenty substations built across Toronto between 1921 and 1950, and is architecturally similar to several others - including its near-twin at 281 Cherry Street (Built 1930; Part IV designated in 2013). The Portland Substation is identified by a large metal name band reading: "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM."

The Portland Substation distributed electricity into the local neighbourhood for the remainder of the twentieth-century, and into the twenty-first. Following its post-amalgamation restructuring as Toronto Hydro in 1998, the utility company began to slowly phase out its aging infrastructure, leading to the sale of 18 Portland Street in 2016.

### **Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. and Architect A.E. Salisbury (1887-1955)**

Electricity arrived in Toronto in the 1880s, its advantages demonstrated to great effect by the electrification of the Toronto Railway Company's streetcar network in 1891. Initially sourced and distributed by a small collection of private utility companies, electricity was originally available to the select few, lighting up Toronto's millionaire's row and drawing nighttime crowds to the fanciful window displays along King Street. In 1908, the citizens of Toronto voted overwhelmingly in favour of the creation of a public electricity company, which eventually led to the formation of Toronto Hydro-Electric

Systems Ltd. On May 2, 1911, a large crowd gathered outside of Old City Hall for the public utility's grand opening, marked by a spectacular "turning on" ceremony.

Following its debut, Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. began the process of building out its network of neighbourhood substations. The collection of Toronto's early Beaux-Arts styled substations were designed as the face of the public utility, often emblazoned with prominent "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM" sign bands.

During Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd.'s early period, dozens of substations were erected across the Old City of Toronto, ranging from large, prominent structures to significantly smaller buildings designed to blend into their surroundings. This period was significantly shaped by the work of Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd.'s Supervisor of Architecture, Albert Edward Salisbury. The Toronto-born Salisbury attended Jarvis Collegiate and Harbord Collegiate before becoming an apprentice for architect George M. Miller from 1908-1912. Miller encouraged Salisbury to enroll within the University of Toronto's School of Architecture, from which he graduated in 1914. While a student at the University of Toronto, Salisbury became a member of the Ontario Association of Architects and was employed in 1912 as a draftsman (promoted to Staff Architect in 1922) for Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1921 and his retirement in 1950, Salisbury designed over twenty substations, with those constructed in the 1920s and early 1930s recognizable for their distinctive Beaux-Arts style with Edwardian Classical and/or Collegiate Gothic influences. Many of Salisbury's original drawings are preserved within Toronto Hydro's private archives, and are identifiable by the architect's "A.E.S." signature.<sup>4</sup> Spread across the city, either as prominent structures or, in some cases, subtly integrated into the local streetscape, Salisbury's work has been a significant, if little-known piece of Toronto's urban fabric and civic infrastructure for over a century.<sup>5</sup> To date, six substations designed by Salisbury, in addition to another featuring alterations by the architect, have been included on the City's Heritage Register. Of the six fully designed by Salisbury, five were styled in the Edwardian Classical tradition - Carlaw (1921), North Toronto Railway (1921), Danforth (1925), Parkdale (1927), and Cherry (1930). The Glengrove Substation (1930) was completed by Salisbury in the Collegiate Gothic style. The Portland Substation, as contained within the subject property at 18 Portland Street, belongs to this period, and stands as a fine example of one of Salisbury's early Beaux-Arts inspired buildings.

### **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.

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<sup>3</sup> "Salisbury, Albert Edward." Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950.

<http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/2571>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hume, Christopher. "Hidden in plain sight: Toronto Hydro substations nestled in neighbourhoods across the city." Toronto Star. April 30, 2011. M4-M5.

The Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street is representative of architect Albert Edward Salisbury's distinctive use of the Beaux Arts tradition with Edwardian Classical influences, a style he applied to several of his early substation designs. The Portland Substation is configured as a two-storey, common bond brick structure, clearly identified with a "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM" name band in the metal entablature upon its upper-storey. The principal (east) elevation is largely symmetrical in its two-over-two configuration, with its pairing of principal entryway (since altered) and first-storey window and two second-storey windows, all of which are framed by two successive, geometric, courses of rectilinear brick stretchers and headers. The metal entablature containing the name band is supported by shallow brick pilasters at each end. Capping the structure's parapet and flat roofline is a contiguous band of terracotta coping.

The sides and rear of the building are clad in the same common bond, red-brick masonry, largely without ornamentation. The south elevation, which for decades fronted onto a parking lot but today abuts onto a row of townhouses, has two second-floor window openings on its eastern end, with the remaining wall largely covered with three large external steel rolling doors.

The metal entablature on the principal (east) façade features a name band with upper-case, stamped, metal lettering and a distinctive typeset used on other Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substations from this era. The metal entablature was originally painted to mimic stone, further tying the Portland Substation to others built at this time, many of which featured stone or precast entablatures with affixed metal type.

A significant alteration to the principal elevation was the replacement of the original principal entryway and door, which included the removal of any decorative masonry work which may have once framed the principal entrance.

#### **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.

18 Portland Street is located on part of Lot 18 in Block A of the Military Reserve, on the west side of Portland Street just south of Niagara Street near the southeast corner of Victoria Memorial Square, in Toronto's King-Spadina neighbourhood. The area between Fort York and Peter Street transitioned from Military Reserve to a residential neighbourhood in the 1830s. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the area transitioned again as many residential properties were replaced by industrial development given the proximity of the area to railway facilities. The many industrial buildings in the area continue to define much of its distinctive architectural character. The Portland Substation, in its scale, massing, materiality, and shared design language, was well integrated into its historic context.

18 Portland Street is adjacent to the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District, and is nearby to several heritage-listed and heritage-designated properties, including the Part IV designated Copp Clark Publishing Co complex at 517 Wellington Street West and

related 31 Portland Street and 510 Front Street West, which sit on the east side of Portland Street opposite Victoria Memorial Square. Built between 1907 and 1928, the Copp Clark Publishing Co. complex at the southeast corner of Wellington Street West and Portland Street stands as a strong testament to the area's early twentieth-century industrial heritage. The close proximity of the Portland Substation and Copp Clark Publishing Co. complex serves as a reminder of the role played by Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. as a crucial component of the district's industrial development and day-to-day operations.

### 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's Heritage Register. There are three categories for a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

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 |

18 Portland Street holds significant design value as a representative example of a 1920s-era Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substation in the Beaux-Arts style with Edwardian Classical influences. Distinctive features include the two-storey scale, form and massing of the property, its common bond brick exterior with decorative stone detailing, fenestration openings with stone sills and multi-paned, metal factory type windows, terracotta coping along the parapet of the flat roof, and the metal entablature containing the name band sign reading: "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM." The sign band held within the metal entablature is composed of projecting, stamped, metal lettering with distinctive font common to other contemporary Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substations.

The principal (east) elevation, true to the principles of the Beaux-Arts tradition, features a largely symmetrical façade, its two-over-two configuration composed by the pairings of the first-storey window and principal entryway and the two second-storey windows above.

## 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     | ✓   |
| 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 | ✓   |

The Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street holds significant historical value for its century-long association with Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. The Portland Substation forms part of the public utility's collection of early twentieth-century substations which were built across the city following its formation in 1911. This historical association is clearly expressed by the metal entablature and name band sign, with its distinctive typecast, identifying Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. and referencing its former use.

The Portland Substation also holds significant associative value as a reflection of the work of architect Albert E. Salisbury (1887-1955), who designed more than twenty substations between 1921 and 1950 as Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd.'s Supervisor of Architecture. Salisbury is considered an architect of significance to Toronto's early twentieth-century history. The Portland Substation is architecturally similar to others designed by Salisbury in the 1920s and 1930s, including its near-twin at 281 Cherry Street. It is representative of Salisbury's expressive use of the Beaux-Arts tradition, adapted with Edwardian Classical influences.

## 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 |

18 Portland Street has significant contextual value related to its importance in maintaining and supporting the early twentieth-century industrial character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood. Built within an industrial setting as the face of the public utility, the substation's Edwardian Classical details bring further contextual value to the property both for its association with the larger network of substations across the city and for its connection to its immediate surroundings. Featuring red-brick masonry, fenestration openings with stone sills and multi-light, metal, factory type windows, terracotta coping, metal entablature with name band, and symmetrical façade, the two-storey Portland Substation is visually linked to nearby former-industrial buildings, including the Copp Clark Publishing Co complex at 517 Wellington Street West.

Additionally, the Portland Substation is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as a structure that was built in 1925 to support the increasing electric power requirements of the King-Spadina neighbourhood.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the subject property at 18 Portland Street and determined that it meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

18 Portland Street has cultural heritage value as a Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems substation designed in 1924-25 by architect Albert E. Salisbury in the Beaux-Arts style with Edwardian Classical influences. Part of a collection of other substations designed by Salisbury in a similar style, the Portland Substation supplied the critical resource of electricity to the surrounding area for the remainder of the twentieth-century and into the next. In close proximity to several listed and Part IV designated factory/warehouse type buildings dating to the same period, the property's clear expression as an early twentieth-century industrial building continues to support the former industrial character of the King-Spadina Neighbourhood.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) 18 Portland 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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Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP  
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning  
Urban Design, City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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

**MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:**  
**18 PORTLAND STREET**

**ATTACHMENT 1**



Image 1. 18 Portland Street. iView Context Map. Property indicated in red.

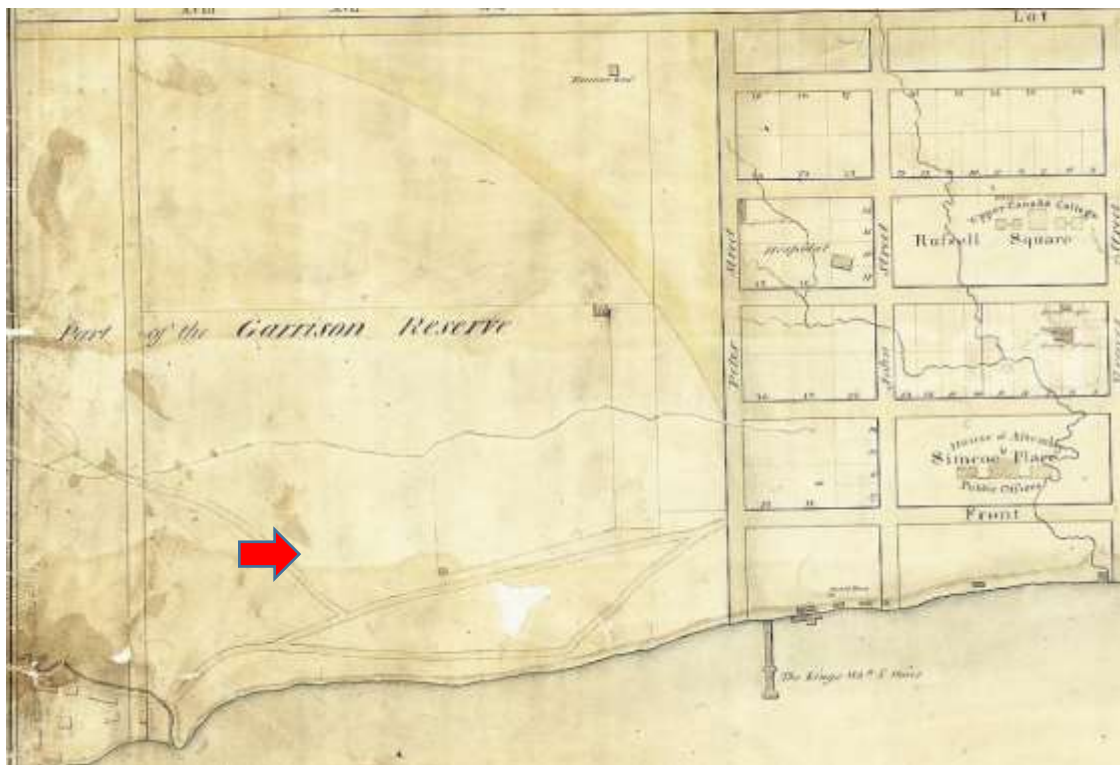


Image 2. This 1827 map shows the Garrison (Military Reserve) originally reaching to Peter Street. Red arrow shows approximate location of 18 Portland Street today. Chewett, Plan of the Town of York, 1827.



Image 3. This map from 1837 shows the numbered lots of the newly surveyed area of the former military reserve, including today's Victoria Memorial Square and Clarence Square as book ends of Wellington Place. Lot 18 appears on the south east corner of Niagara and Portland Streets. Red arrow shows approximate location of 18 Portland Street. William Hawkins, Toronto Military Reserve as laid out by Captain Bonnycastle, 1837.

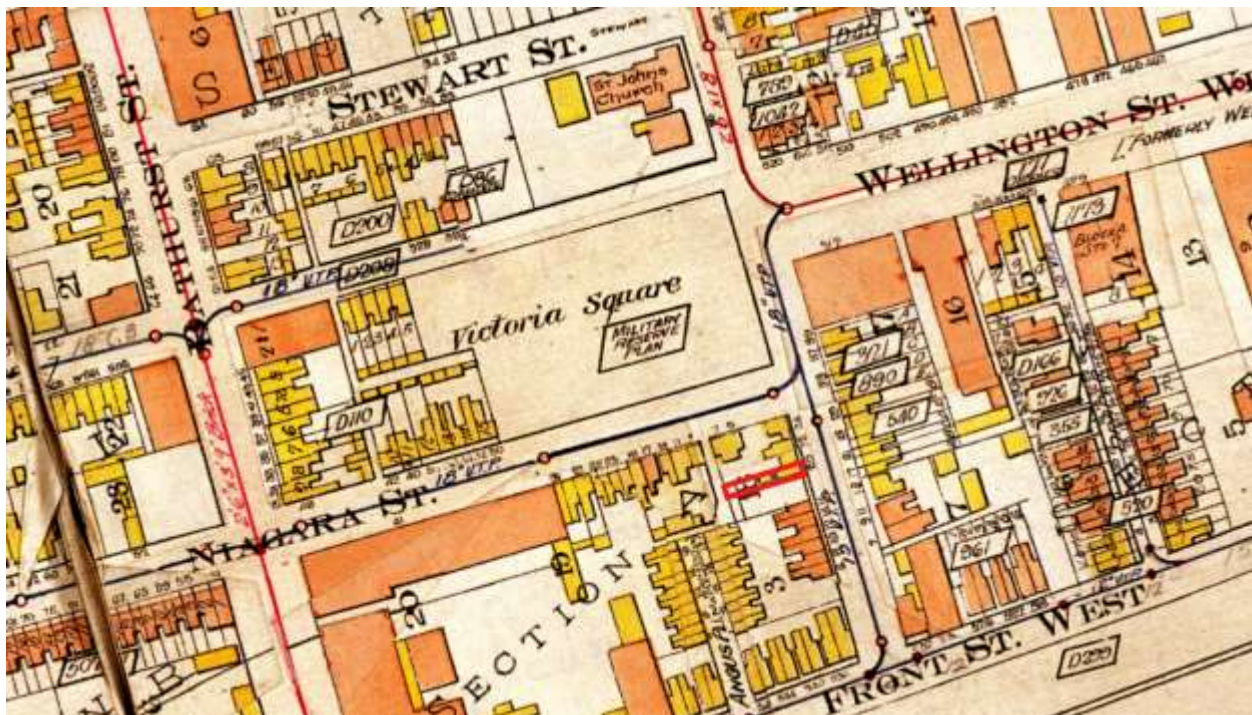


Image 4. 18 Portland Street. 1924 Goad's Map. Future site of property indicated in red.



Image 5. 18 Portland Street. 1954 Aerial Map. Property indicated in red. Note the presence of the adjacent factory/warehouse type buildings at 1-9 Niagara Street to the north and rear of the subject property.



Image 6. 18 Portland Street. 1978 Aerial Map. Property indicated in red. Note the clearance of the adjacent residential properties.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, f1257\_s1057\_it0198

Image 7. Victoria Square. Looking northwest. City of Toronto Archives, 1905-6.



PRUNTERS 279 Oct 22 1917 No 18 PORTLAND STREET  
City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, s0372\_ss0001\_it0273

Image 8. Former residential property (front) at 18 Portland Street. City of Toronto Archives, 1917.



City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, s0372\_ss0001\_jt0280

Image 9. Former residential property (rear) at 18 Portland Street. City of Toronto Archives, 1917.



City of Toronto Archives, Series 1465, File 37, Item 6

Image 10. Looking north on Portland Street from Front Street (18 Portland Street visible on west side of the street). City of Toronto Archives, c. 1980s.



Image 11. 18 Portland Street. Principal (east) elevation. Heritage Planning, 2022.



Image 12. Close-up view of 18 Portland Street. Note the metal entablature with sign band, factory type windows, brick masonry details, and terracotta coping. Heritage Planning, 2022.



Image 13. 18 Portland Street. Side (south) and rear (east) elevations. Note the three large, metal, garage doors. Heritage Planning, 2022.



Image 14. 18 Portland Street. Side (north) and rear (east) elevations. Note the metal replacement door. Heritage Planning, 2022.



Image 15. Looking northwest on Portland Street towards Victoria Memorial Square. 18 Portland Street indicated in red. Heritage Planning, 2022.



Image 16. Looking southwest on Portland Street. 18 Portland Street indicated in red. Heritage Planning, 2022.



Image 17. Toronto Hydro-Electric System substation at 281 Cherry Street (built 1930). Note the architectural similarities to the Portland Substation. ACO/Bob Krawczyk.



Image 18. Toronto Hydro-Electric System substation at 50 Eglinton Avenue West. City of Toronto Archives, 1925.

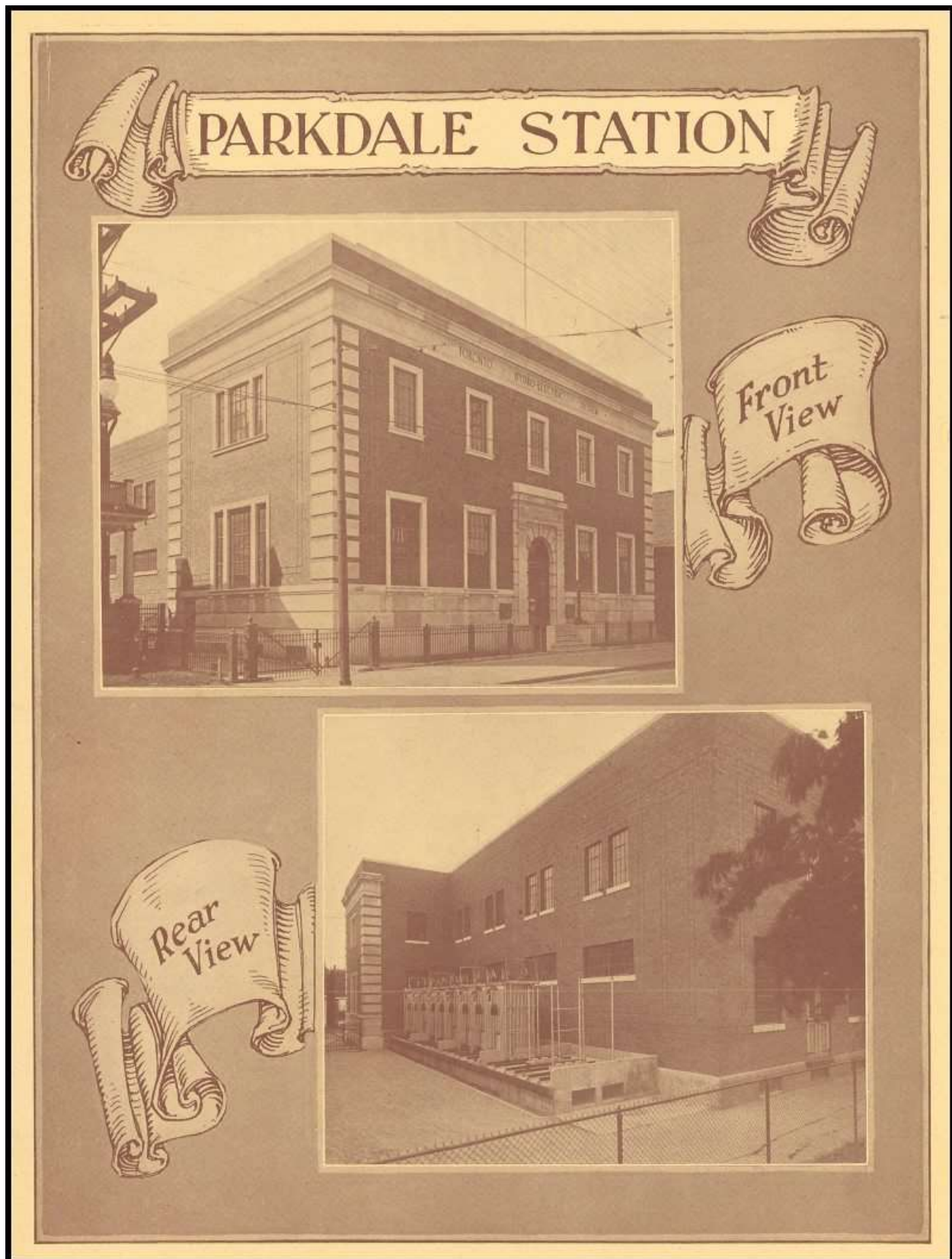


Image 19. Archival image of the Parkdale Substation at 1457 Queen Street West (built 1928). Another of Salisbury's Edwardian Classical designs. Courtesy of Toronto Hydro.

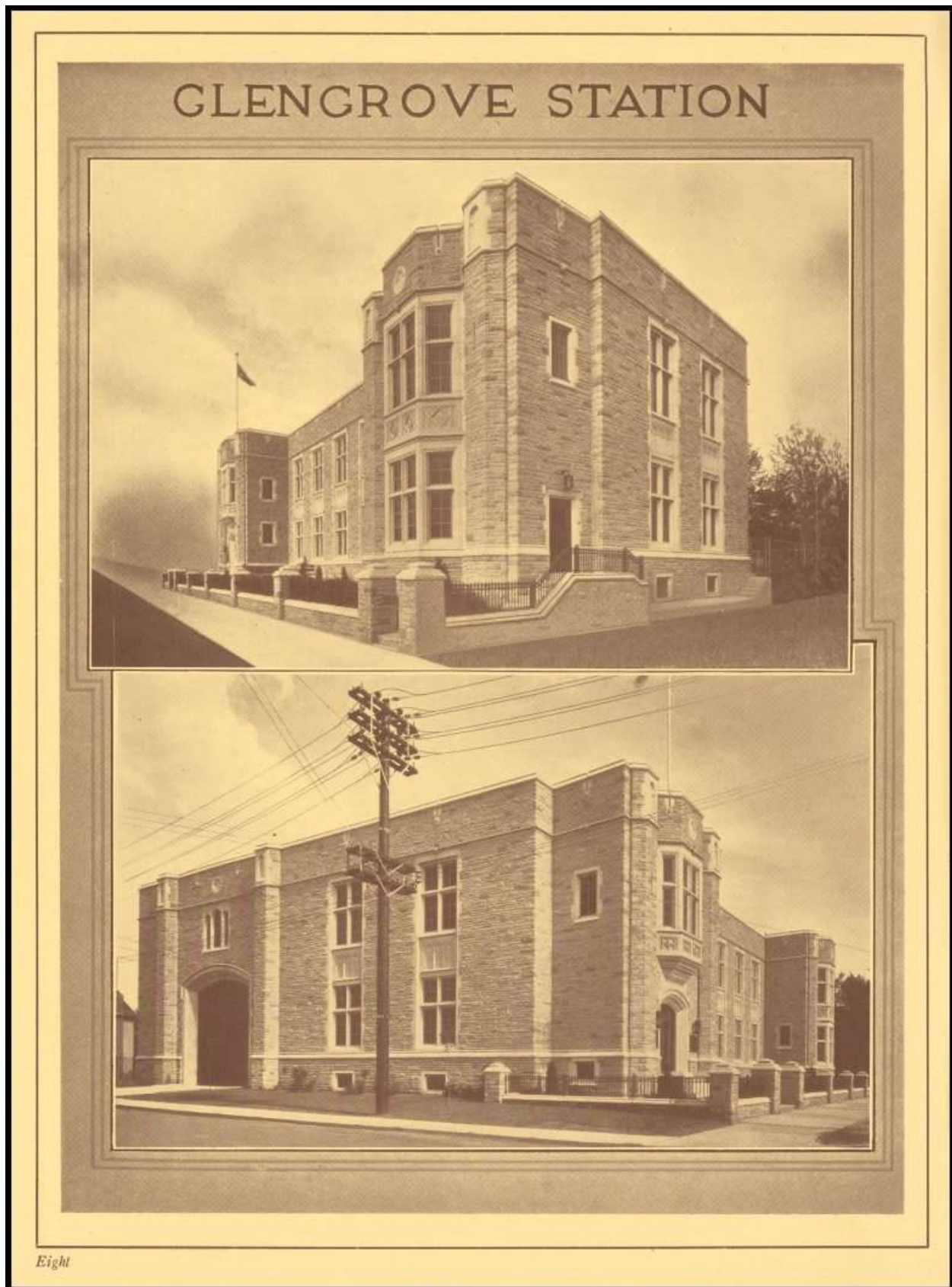


Image 20. Archival image of the Glengrove Substation at 2829 Yonge Street (built 1930). An example of Salisbury's Collegiate Gothic style. Courtesy Toronto Hydro.

**RESEARCH SOURCES:**  
**18 PORTLAND STREET**

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**Archival Sources**

- City of Toronto Archives
- City of Toronto Directories
- Archival Maps, 1797-1842, <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html> •
- City of Toronto Assessment Rolls
- Ontario Land Registry
- Toronto Public Library Photo Archive

**Secondary Sources**

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- "History of Toronto Hydro." Toronto Hydro. <https://www.torontohydro.com/about-us/our-history>
- Hume, Christopher. "Hidden in plain sight: Toronto Hydro substations nestled in neighbourhoods across the city." Toronto Star. April 30, 2011. M4-M5.
- "Salisbury, Albert Edward." Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/2571>
- "Toronto Hydro at 100." Toronto Star. April 30, 2011. M1-M12.
- "Toronto Hydro Substation: 281 Cherry Street." ACO. <https://acotoronto.ca/building.php?ID=2144>
- "Turning on Toronto: A History of Toronto Hydro." City of Toronto. <https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/online-exhibits/web-exhibits/web-exhibits-local-government/turning-on-toronto-a-history-of-toronto-hydro/>
- Wencer, David. "Historicist: A Thoughtful Old Soldier." TORontoist. June 23, 2012. <https://torontoist.com/2012/06/historicist-a-thoughtful-old-soldier/>

**18 PORTLAND STREET****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 18 Portland 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 categories of design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values.

**Description**

The subject property at 18 Portland Street is located near the southeast corner of Niagara Street and Portland Street just south of Victoria Memorial Square within the King-Spadina neighbourhood. The former Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substation at 18 Portland Street, or Portland Substation, was designed in 1924-25 by the public utility's in-house architect Albert E. Salisbury (1887-1955) and completed in 1925. Similar to others in a collection of more than twenty substations designed by Salisbury between 1921 and 1950, the Portland Substation was designed in the Beaux-Arts tradition and features Edwardian Classical influences. Within that collection, it is recognizable as a two-storey, brick, factory/warehouse type building as well as for its metal entablature and sign band.

**Design and Physical Value**

18 Portland Street holds significant design value as a representative example of a 1920s-era Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substation in the Beaux-Arts style with Edwardian Classical influences. Distinctive features include the two-storey scale, form and massing of the property, its common bond brick exterior with decorative stone detailing, fenestration openings with stone sills and multi-paned, metal factory type windows, terracotta coping along the parapet of the flat roof, and the metal entablature containing the name band sign reading: "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM." The sign band held within the metal entablature is composed of projecting, stamped, metal lettering with distinctive font common to other contemporary Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substations.

The principal (east) elevation, true to the principles of the Beaux-Arts tradition, features a largely symmetrical façade, its two-over-two configuration composed by the pairings of the first-storey window and principal entryway and the two second-storey windows above.

**Historical and Associative Value**

The Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street holds significant historical value for its century-long association with Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. The Portland Substation forms part of the public utility's collection of early twentieth-century substations which were built across the city following its formation in 1911. This historical association is clearly expressed by the metal entablature and name band sign, with its distinctive typecast, identifying Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. and referencing its former use.

The Portland Substation also holds significant associative value as a reflection of the work of architect Albert E. Salisbury (1887-1955), who designed more than twenty substations between 1921 and 1950 as Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd.'s Supervisor of Architecture. Salisbury is considered an architect of significance to Toronto's early twentieth-century history. The Portland Substation is architecturally similar to others designed by Salisbury in the 1920s and 1930s, including its near-twin at 281 Cherry Street. It is representative of Salisbury's expressive use of the Beaux-Arts tradition, adapted with Edwardian Classical influences.

## **Contextual Value**

18 Portland Street has significant contextual value related to its importance in maintaining and supporting the early twentieth-century industrial character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood. Built within an industrial setting as the face of the public utility, the substation's Edwardian Classical details bring further contextual value to the property both for its association with the larger network of substations across the city and for its connection to its immediate surroundings. Featuring red-brick masonry, fenestration openings with stone sills and multi-light, metal, factory type windows, terracotta coping, metal entablature with name band, and symmetrical façade, the two-storey Portland Substation is visually linked to nearby former-industrial buildings, including the Copp Clark Publishing Co complex at 517 Wellington Street West.

Additionally, the Portland Substation is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as a structure that was built in 1925 to support the increasing electric power requirements of the King-Spadina neighbourhood.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### **Design and Physical Value**

Attributes that contribute to the design and physical cultural heritage value of the Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street:

- The scale, form, and massing, of the two-storey, early twentieth-century, factory/warehouse type building expressive of the Beaux-Arts tradition with Edwardian Classical influences
- The property's material palette, consisting of a common bond brick exterior with stone detailing
- The symmetrical façade of the principal (east) elevation with its two-over-two configuration created by the pairing of the window and principal entryway (since altered) at street level and the two second-storey windows above
- The factory type, metal windows on the first and second floors of the principal (east) elevation and side (south) elevation with stone sills and brick headers
- The terracotta tile coping on the parapet of the flat roof.
- The metal entablature on the principal (east) elevation with sign band reading: "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM," supported by slightly projecting brick pilasters at the north and south edges of the facade

- The sign band's projecting, stamped, metal lettering with distinctive font common to other contemporary Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems Ltd. substations
- The decorative, rectilinear courses of brick stretchers and headers which frame the façade of the principal (east) elevation

### **Associative and Historical Value**

The following attributes contribute to the associative and historical cultural heritage value of the Portland Substation at 18 Portland Street as a representative work of architect Albert E. Salisbury's (1887-1955) portfolio, spanning from 1921 to 1950, as an important element of the Toronto Hydro-Electric Systems early city-wide infrastructure:

- The former Portland Substation's defining Beaux-Arts styling with Edwardian Classical influences, including the symmetrical principal (east) façade with its red-brick exterior with stone detailing, fenestration openings, and flat roof with terracotta coping
- The metal entablature with sign band reading: "TORONTO HYDRO-ELECTRIC SYSTEM"

### **Contextual Value**

The following attributes contribute to the contextual cultural heritage value of the Portland Toronto Hydro-Electric Substation at 18 Portland Street:

- The property's Beaux-Arts styling with Edwardian Classical influences, including its material palette of brick with stone detailing, that supports and maintains an understanding of the historic industrial character of the King-Spadina neighbourhood.
- The metal entablature with sign band identifying the building as an electrical substation that distributed a vital source of energy to the surrounding industrial area