

## **Demolition of Designated Properties at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street**

**Date:** November 14, 2022

**To:** City Council

**From:** Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

**Wards:** Ward 12 - Toronto - St Paul's

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council refuse applications under Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act to demolish heritage structure(s) on the properties at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street.

City Council has stated its intention to designate the subject properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A Notice of Intention to Designate was served on the property owners and the Ontario Heritage Trust, and was published in accordance with the Act.

The properties at 1196-1204 Yonge Street comprise a main street commercial block building constructed in 1889. The adjacent three properties at 1206-1210 Yonge Street contain 2-storey main street commercial row buildings constructed together in 1907-1908. They represent a unique architectural adaptation of existing late-19th century commercial block buildings by repositioning (lowering) the storefront level to align with the 1914-1916 regrading of this portion of Yonge Street to accommodate a new vehicular underpass/railway overpass across Yonge for the intersecting CPR rail line. These buildings are also considered to anchor the northwest quadrant of this historically significant intersection of Yonge Street and the railway crossing. Together they stand as surviving examples of the area's historic main street streetscape prior to the early-20th century introduction of transportation infrastructure and yields an understanding of the evolution of Yonge Street in Summerhill.

Applications under S.34 of the Act have been submitted to demolish these buildings in order to allow for the construction of a 15 storey mixed-use building with commercial units at grade and residential units above. Under the Act, if City Council fails to make a decision on the demolition applications within 90 days of issuing a Notice of Receipt of the application, the application is deemed to be permitted under Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act. In this case the applicant must be notified of Council's decision by December 23, 2022.

Demolition of a Designated Property - 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council refuse the issuance of a demolition permit for the heritage properties at 1196-1204 Yonge Street, in accordance with Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
2. If the owner appeals City Council's decision to refuse the issuance of a demolition permit under Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act for the heritage property at 1196-1204 Yonge Street, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and the necessary City staff to attend the Ontario Land Tribunal hearing in opposition to the appeal.
3. City Council refuse the issuance of a demolition permit for the heritage properties at 1206-1210 Yonge Street, in accordance with Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
4. If the owner appeals City Council's decision to refuse the issuance of a demolition permit under Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act for the heritage property at 1206-1210 Yonge Street, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and the necessary City staff to attend the Ontario Land Tribunal hearing in opposition to the appeal.

## 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 November 7, 2022, the Toronto Preservation Board adopted item PB39.2: Demolition of Designated Properties at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street.  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.PB39.2>

The City Clerk received a notice of objection on behalf of Woodcliffe Landmark Properties Limited within the required timeframe set out in the Act. The Act requires that City Council consider and make a decision on an objection within 90 days from the end of the objection period. On September 28, 2022, City Council considered the objection and affirmed its decision to state its intention to designate the properties at 1196-1204 Yonge Street and 1206-1210 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.CC50.2>

On July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, City Council adopted CC47.39 and stated its intention to designate the properties at 1196 (including entrance addresses at 1198 Yonge Street and 2 Birch Avenue), 1202 and 1204 Yonge Street and 1206-1210 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.CC47.39>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **Existing Properties**

Located on the west side of Yonge Street directly north of Birch Avenue within the Summerhill neighbourhood and adjacent to the Deer Park, Ramsden Park and South Rosedale neighbourhoods, the properties at 1196-1204 Yonge Street comprise a main street commercial block building constructed in 1889. The adjacent three properties at 1206-1210 Yonge Street to the north contain 2-storey main street commercial row buildings constructed together in 1907-1908 (See Attachment 3, Statements of Significance and Attributes).

The building anchoring the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Birch Avenue represents a unique architectural adaptation of an existing late-19th century commercial block building by repositioning (lowering) the storefront level to align with the 1914-1916 regrading of this portion of Yonge Street to accommodate a new vehicular underpass/railway overpass across Yonge for the intersecting CPR rail line.

As a collection, the commercial buildings located at the properties at 1196-1210 Yonge Street anchor the northwest quadrant of this historically significant intersection of Yonge Street and the railway crossing. Together they stand as surviving examples of the area's historic main street streetscape prior to the early-20th century introduction of transportation infrastructure and yields an understanding of the evolution of Yonge Street in Summerhill, culminating in the current configuration at this location.

### **Proposal**

A Zoning By-law Amendment Application and Site Plan Application has been submitted proposing to construct a 15 storey mixed-use building with commercial units at grade and 67 residential units. In conjunction the application proposes demolition of all structures on the subject site.

On August 25, 2022, the City of Toronto received applications to demolish the properties at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street under Section 34 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Council has 90 days from the date that complete notice of application was served on the applicant, to both consult with Toronto Preservation Board and to make a decision on the applications. In this case the applicant must be notified of Council's decision by December 23, 2022 or the applications will be deemed to have been approved.

### **Heritage Planning Framework**

#### **Ontario Heritage Act**

Section 34 (1) of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) states that no owner of a property designated under Section 29 shall demolish or remove a building or structure on the property or permit the demolition or removal of a building or structure on the property unless the owner applies to the council of the municipality in which the property is situated and receives consent in writing to the demolition or removal. After receiving a

Demolition of a Designated Property - 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street

complete application for demolition, City Council is required to issue a Notice of Receipt to the applicant. Within 90 days of issuing the notice of receipt, City Council must issue a decision, or else council will be deemed to have consented to the application.

Section 34.1 (1) indicates that if Council refuses the permit applied for, or gives the permit with terms and conditions attached, the owner of the property may appeal the decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

## **The Planning Act**

The Planning Act guides development in the Province of Ontario. It states that municipalities must have regard for matters of provincial interest. Section 2(d) specifically refers to “the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest” and 2(r) “to a built form that is well designed and provides for a sense of place.”

## **The Provincial Policy Statement (2020)**

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) (the “PPS”) provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as: the efficient use and management of land and infrastructure; ensuring opportunities for job creation; and conservation of cultural heritage and archaeology.

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the [Planning Act](#) and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS recognizes and acknowledges the Official Plan as an important document for implementing the policies within the PPS. Policy 4.6 of the PPS states that, “The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans.”

Policy 2.6.1 of the PPS directs that “Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.” Properties included on the City’s Heritage Register are considered to be significant in this context. “Conserved” is defined in the PPS as “the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained under the Ontario Heritage Act.”

Policy 2.6.3 states that "Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage property except where the proposed development and site alteration has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved."

### **A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)**

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) (the "Growth Plan (2020)") came into effect on May 16, 2019 and was amended through an Order in Council that came into effect on August 28, 2020. This plan replaces the previous Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. The Growth Plan (2020) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City forms an integral part.

The Growth Plan (2020) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan (2020) take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform with the Growth Plan. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform with the Growth Plan.

Policy 4.2.7.1 of the Growth Plan states that "Cultural Heritage Resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas."

### **Official Plan**

Section 3.1.5 of the Official Plan contains a series of heritage conservation policies that apply to the subject property. These include:

Policy 3.1.5.4 directs that properties on the 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 as adopted by Council.

Policy 3.1.5.5 directs that proposed alterations, development, and/or public works on or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained.

Policy 3.1.5.6 states that the adaptive re-use of properties on the Heritage Register is encouraged consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Policy 3.1.5.26 states that new construction on or adjacent to a property on the Heritage Register will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and to mitigate visual and physical impact on it.

## **Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada**

In 2008, Toronto City Council adopted the Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the "Standards & Guidelines") as the official document guiding decisions on the planning, stewardship and conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/decisions/2008-03-03-cc17-dd.pdf>

The Standards and Guidelines include a set of 9 fundamental standards for the preservation of heritage properties. The standards establish a philosophical framework and a set of general principles to guide conservation work. All nine of standards apply to the proposed demolition of 1196 - 1204 and 1206 - 1210 Yonge Street. These include:

- Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. Do not remove, replace or substantially alter its intact or repairable character-defining elements. Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.
- Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.
- Find a use for an historic place that requires minimal or no change to its character-defining elements.
- Evaluate the existing condition of character defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.

## **COMMENTS**

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The applicant's demolition application under the Ontario Heritage Act indicates removal of the entire buildings at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street. The application sets out the reason for the demolition request as, "the building on the Site is proposed to be removed to accommodate a 15-storey mixed use building."

The Condition Assessment, required as a component of the demolition application, was submitted with the application and issued by RJC Engineering on January 22, 2018. This assessment reviewed the condition of all exterior elevations, extending from grade to roof (See below).

The City reviewed the application and in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act s.34 (4), Council is required to issue a decision by December 23, 2022.

## Structural Condition Assessment

The applicant has submitted Condition Assessment/Engineering Report by RJC Engineering, dated January 22, 2018 which says:

- It is "unlikely" that the 1196-1204 Yonge Street was "significantly underpinned" when the exterior grade was lowered and as such they "suspect" that sufficient frost cover to prevent the footings being exposed to potential frost heaving during seasonal freeze-thaw cycles has not taken place.
- The replacement of the large sections of the original foundation walls with storefront glazing redistributed the building loads to the side walls. The proposed removal of these side walls would mean that "there would no longer be sufficient structural support for the façade above."
- The east side wall is "out-of-plane" and "may not be able to sustain" the loads it is now carrying.
- The "column" at 1200 and 1202 Yonge Street "appears to be out of line with the floors above and below" and "may not be structurally adequate to transfer the building loads from the floors above down to the foundation"; although further investigation of this is noted as being necessary.
- The masonry in the upper floors of 1196-1204 Yonge Street has experienced "significant weathering" and where this has taken place "there is a potential for a failure in the structural integrity of the walls to support its self-weight once the remainder of the existing building is removed, as well as potential for failure due to construction loads and vibrations due to the removal of the existing building and construction of the new building."
- It is "suspected" that "differential settlement resulted in cracking and deformation of the structure above."
- That it is recommending the "removal and reconstruction as the practical method of restoration."

The report suggests that the front façade of 1196-1204 Yonge Street may not be able to support its own weight if the rest of the building were removed but the report does not address whether a support system could be put in place to allow the conservation of the front façade. It is also noted that this report makes no mention of any structural issues related to 1206-1210 Yonge Street which is also proposed to be demolished. It only notes that the front façade of these building is in a "fair condition" and that the masonry has been painted. Moreover although the report recommends reconstructing the front facades of the affected heritage buildings the proposal is for the complete demolition with no salvaging or reconstruction.

Good conservation practise, as noted in the Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, seeks a minimal intervention approach and says that repairable character-defining elements should not be removed, replaced or substantially altered. The proposal is to demolish significant heritage resources at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street and it has not been demonstrated that the front facades of these heritage buildings cannot be conserved and integrated into new construction with the use of an appropriately designed retention and support structures.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The proposed complete demolition of the buildings at 1196-1204 and 1206-1210 Yonge Street would remove all vestiges of the site's cultural heritage value and attributes. Demolition is contrary to the intent of the PPS, the Official Plan, and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. As the properties are significant built heritage resources, they should be conserved.

Staff recommend that Council refuse the proposed demolition application for the reasons outlined in this report.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

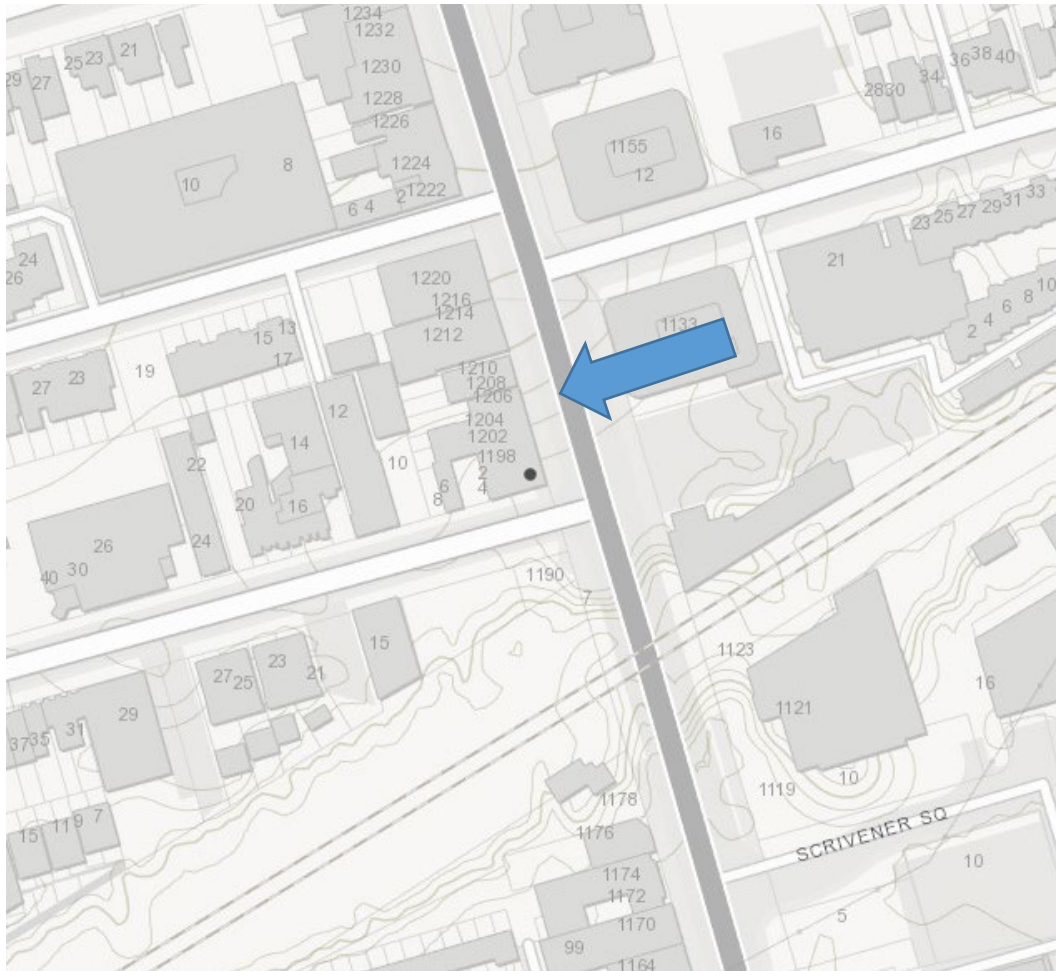
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Attachment 1: Location Map  
Attachment 2: Photographs  
Attachment 3: Statements of Significance with Attributes



**LOCATION MAP**  
**1196-1204 and 1206-1210 YONGE STREET**

**ATTACHMENT 1**



This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown. The arrow marks the location of the sites at 1196 to 1210 Yonge Street at the northwest corner of Birch Avenue and Yonge Street.

**PHOTOGRAPHS**  
**1196-1204 and 1206-1210 YONGE STREET**

**ATTACHMENT 2**



Photograph of the front/East/Yonge Street elevation of 1196 - 1204 Yonge Street.



Image of the south elevation of the corner property at 1196 Yonge (including 2 Birch Avenue)

**PHOTOGRAPHS**  
**1196-1204 and 1206-1210 YONGE STREET**



Photograph of the front/east/Yonge Street facades at 1206 - 1210 Yonge Street

**1196-1204 YONGE STREET****STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The properties at 1196 (including entrance addresses at 1198 Yonge Street and 2 Birch Avenue), 1202 and 1204 Yonge Street are worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design and physical, historical and associative, and contextual value.

**Description**

The Main Street Commercial Block building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street is located at the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Birch Avenue – a historic transit hub in the City's north end where a busy Yonge Street thoroughfare intersected at grade with the CPR rail line and its train station south of the tracks, as well as the proposed southern terminus of the Toronto and York Radial Company streetcar line whose tracks and terminals were planned and partially executed just west of Yonge Street from Farnham to Birch Avenue in 1911-1912 before the project was reversed by order of Privy Council in the following year.

The City's regrading of this portion of Yonge Street to increase pedestrian and vehicular safety through grade separation between the street and the CPR tracks in 1914-1916 transformed this unique Main Street Commercial Block building originally completed as a three-storey structure in 1889. Over a series of alterations and excavation on the east and south elevations of the subject building in response to this major infrastructural project the basement level was exposed, increasing the building height by one-storey and requiring relocation of the original storefronts to this newly defined street level. The creatively adaptive four-storey conversion resulting from this unique situation is prominently situated directly north of the CPR rail line that necessitated the vehicular underpass/rail overpass where it crosses Yonge Street at the edge of the city's Summerhill neighbourhood. The subject building, together with the abutting Main Street Commercial Row at 1206, 1208 and 1210 Yonge Street (1907-1908), anchor the northwest quadrant of this historically significant intersection of Yonge Street and the railway crossing and stands as a remnant portion of the area's streetscape condition prior to the early-20th century projects culminating in the current configuration of transportation infrastructure at this location.

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

The existing four-storey, brick, Main Street Commercial Block-type building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street is valued as a significant representative example of the commercial and residential main street row buildings constructed in Toronto during the Late-

Victorian era that, in this case, is also unique for its creative adaptation of an existing late-19th century building to the regrading of this portion of Yonge Street (1914-1916) to accommodate a new vehicular underpass/railway overpass across Yonge for the intersecting CPR rail line. The architectural response to the new topography of the site required excavation and exposure of the basement level for relocation of the original storefronts to align with and permit pedestrian access at the newly lowered and sloped street grade. This physical adaptation and evolution of the building is valued as an enhancement to the original design rather than a detractor.

The east elevation of the red brick Main Street block maintains its overall 1889 design, style and detailing including its five-bay vertical arrangement delineated by brick pilasters, a regular rhythm of largely symmetrically-arranged window openings at the upper two storeys with continuous brick string-coursing and drip-mouldings, and detailed cornice woodwork with carved scroll brackets surmounted by distinctive "birdhouse"-shaped capitals that wrapped around the corner of the building at the east end of the south elevation.

Alterations to the 1889 building are evident in the addition of an exposed basement level during the regrading of Yonge Street followed soon after by the relocation of the original storefronts down to this lower level, and the new second storey (former first storey) refitted for additional residential units in keeping with the original two upper storeys. Though a bay-by-bay approach to reconfiguration of the new second storey spaces eschewed plans for a unified design for their east elevations, the bricking in of the large original storefront openings and their replacement with smaller, punched sash windows in vertical alignment with the two upper storeys clearly indicates the intention to transform this level functionally, formally and visually from retail to residential use in keeping with the two storeys above.

### **Historical and Associative Value**

The building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street is valued for its association with the widening and regrading of this portion of Yonge Street in 1914-1916, a contentious and highly publicized infrastructural project involving the City of Toronto, the Toronto and York Radial Company and Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The resulting 2.5 degree slope of Yonge Street to produce an 18ft height clearance below a new rail overpass is physically manifested in the adapted and enhanced form of the subject property from a three- to four-storey building by excavating and exposing the original building's basement level as retail space to align with the new street grade. The 1889 wooden cornice stretching across the top of the current second storey on the east and (part of the south) elevations, survives as a reminder of the location of the 1889 storefronts and the original grade of the street, as does a floating door on the Birch Avenue (south) elevation.

All of these elements contribute to an understanding of the building's physical and design evolution while maintaining many of its original features that yield an understanding of the earlier, historic condition of this portion of Yonge Street where it crossed the railway tracks at grade. The building is also valued for the information it yields about the turbulent political situation created by the ensuing civic transportation infrastructure project involving all levels of government including the Privy Council of

Canada, as well as the City Beautiful movement during which it was undertaken – an early urban planning effort promoting civic beauty through architectural and urban design, of which the heritage-designated Beaux-Arts style North Toronto Rail Station designed by Darling & Pearson in 1916 on the southeast quadrant of this intersection stands as the crown jewel following its own adaptations to the concurrent infrastructure activity on site.

## **Contextual Value**

Contextually, the property has cultural heritage value as it maintains and supports the historic character of this portion of Yonge Street. Situated at the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Birch Avenue, it is an important contributor as it maintains the late-19th to early-20th century main street commercial built form evolution of the area. Here, a historic precinct is formed at three of four points where Yonge Street intersects with the CPR overpass, anchored by the landmark CPR North Toronto Station (1916) with the adjoining late-19th century commercial buildings at 1095-1099, 1101 and 1105 Yonge and, on the west side of Yonge south of the tracks, the collection of ten late-19th to early-20th century properties at 1148-1176 Yonge Street as well as the former Pierce Arrow Showroom (1930) at 1140 Yonge. All of the latter sites are recognized on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value.

The Main Street Commercial Block building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street is historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to its surroundings where it anchors the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Birch Avenue as a significant example of its type with its massing and stylistic details characteristic of the late-19th century and typically located along the city's main commercial thoroughfares. The early-20th century conversion of the subject building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street from three- to four storeys speaks to the inextricable historical, visual, functional and physical linkages of the property's evolved form to contemporary civic infrastructural changes required by the adjacent and pre-existing CPR rail line.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### **Design or Physical Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the Main Street Commercial Block building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street being a significant and unique representative example of the type with Late-Victorian era styling:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on its lot at the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Birch Avenue
- The existing four-storey scale, form and massing on a rectangular plan with a flat roof
- The materials, with the red brick cladding (currently painted) and the brick, wood and stone detailing
- The corbelled brick parapet along the roofline on the east elevation (currently missing on the three southern-most bays of the building corresponding to 1196-1200 Yonge Street)

- The east elevation of the building, which is organized vertically into five symmetrical bays, each with sloped commercial storefront space at street level
- The existing arrangement of the segmental-arched window openings with their stone sills at upper two storeys on the east elevation
- The continuous string-coursing and drip moulding between and above the window openings on the upper two storeys of the east elevation and third storey of the south elevation
- At the second-storey level, the existing arrangement of the bricked in elevations with punched window openings, which indicates the early-20th century affinity of this original storefront level with the upper residential levels rather than the new storefront level below
- The south elevation of this corner lot building (comprising 1196 Yonge Street plus its three-storey tail with entrance address at 2 Birch Avenue), including the return openings at the southeast corner of the first and second storeys that continue on the east elevation and the wooden cornice and window surrounds with decorative wooden scroll bracket surmounted by a "birdhouse" capital between the first and second storeys at all five bays (currently missing on the south elevation)

### **Historical or Associative Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the subject building for its association with the 1914-1916 regrading of this portion of Yonge Street:

- The current first storey of the building with its sloped grading and storefronts, as adaptively relocated
- The projecting wooden cornice line and window surrounds spanning the east elevation and wrapping around to the east end of the south elevation at the current second storey residential level that originally defined the location of the 1889 storefronts
- The "floating" door opening near the west end of the second-storey on the south elevation

### **Contextual Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the Main Street Commercial Block building at 1196-1204 Yonge Street as defining, supporting and maintain the historic character of the area and being historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to its setting:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the corner building on its lot on the west side of Yonge Street and north side of Birch Avenue



## **1206-1210 YONGE STREET**

### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The properties at 1206, 1208 and 1210 Yonge Street are worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for their cultural heritage value, and meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design and physical, historical and associative, and contextual value.

#### **Description**

Built in 1907-1908, the set of three Main Street Commercial Row buildings at 1206-1210 Yonge Street is located on the west side of Yonge Street just north of Birch Avenue – a historic transit hub in the City's north end where a busy Yonge Street thoroughfare intersected at grade with the CPR rail line and its train station south of the tracks, as well as the proposed southern terminus of the Toronto and York Radial Company streetcar line whose tracks and terminals were planned and partially executed just west of Yonge Street from Farnham to Birch Avenue in 1911-1912 before the project was reversed by order of Privy Council in the following year.

The City's regrading of this portion of Yonge Street to increase pedestrian and vehicular safety through grade separation between the street and the CPR tracks in 1914-1916 resulted in partial excavation of the basement level and the addition of raised and recessed entry stairs to the main storefront entrances at 1206 and 1208 Yonge Street to align with this newly defined street level. The subject buildings, together with the abutting Main Street Commercial Block at 1196-1204 Yonge Street (1889), anchor the northwest quadrant of this historically significant intersection of Yonge Street and the CPR rail line that necessitated the vehicular underpass/rail overpass where it crosses Yonge Street at the edge of the city's Summerhill neighbourhood, standing as a remnant portion of the area's streetscape condition prior to the early-20th century projects culminating in the current configuration of transportation infrastructure at this location.

#### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

##### **Physical and Design Value**

The collection of three, 2-storey, brick Main Street Commercial Row-type buildings at 1206-1210 Yonge Street is valued as a significant representative example of the commercial and residential main street row buildings constructed in Toronto during the Edwardian era. The principal (east) elevations fronting onto Yonge Street maintains much of its 1907-1908 design, style and detailing including the floor-to-ceiling storefront window openings with off-set entrances at street level with wooden cornice above, centred bay window with brick header at the second storey, and all surmounted by a decorative brickwork cornice at the roofline at 1206 and 1210. Archival photos indicate that the middle property at 1208 Yonge Street originally contained a semi-circular parapet wall that has since been removed.



The architectural response to the newly lowered and sloped street grade along this portion of Yonge Street required the addition of raised and recessed stairs up to the main entrances on the principal (east) elevations to permit pedestrian access. The properties at 1206-1208 include a short flight of entrance steps that lead up to a recessed ground floor entrance while the stairs at 1210 Yonge are internal to the entrance. This physical adaptation and evolution of the entry stairs is valued as an enhancement to the original design rather than a detractor.

### **Historical and Associative Value**

The row of mixed-use buildings at 1206-1210 Yonge Street, along with the adjacent corner property at 1196-1204 Yonge is valued for its association with the widening and regrading of this portion of Yonge Street in 1914-1916, a contentious and highly publicized infrastructural project involving the City of Toronto, the Toronto and York Radial Company and Canadian Pacific Railway Company. The resulting 2.5 degree slope of Yonge Street to produce an 18ft height clearance below a new rail overpass is physically manifested in the adapted entries of the subject properties by partially excavating and exposing the original basement to align with the new street grade.

All of these elements contribute to an understanding of the collection's physical and design evolution while maintaining many of the original features that yield an understanding of the earlier, historic condition of this portion of Yonge Street where it crossed the railway tracks at grade. The properties are also valued for the information they yield about the turbulent political situation created by the ensuing civic transportation infrastructure project involving all levels of government including the Privy Council of Canada, as well as the City Beautiful movement during which it was undertaken – an early urban planning effort promoting civic beauty through architectural and urban design, of which the heritage-designated Beaux-Arts style North Toronto Rail Station designed by Darling & Pearson in 1916 on the southeast quadrant of this intersection stands as the crown jewel following its own adaptations to the concurrent infrastructure activity on site.

### **Contextual Value**

Contextually, the set of three Main Street Commercial Row buildings have cultural heritage value for maintaining and supporting the historic character of this portion of Yonge Street. Situated together on the west side of Yonge Street between Birch Avenue and Alcorn Avenue, along with the adjacent Main Street Commercial Block building at 1196-1204 Yonge, the properties survive as important contributors in maintaining the late-19th to early-20th century main street commercial built form evolution of the area. Here, a broader historic precinct is formed at three of four points where Yonge Street intersects with the CPR overpass, anchored by the landmark CPR North Toronto Station (1916), with the adjoining late-19th century commercial buildings at 1095-1099, 1101 and 1105 Yonge and, on the west side of Yonge south of the tracks, the collection of ten late-19th to early-20th century properties at 1148-1176 Yonge Street as well as the former Pierce Arrow Showroom (1930) at 1140 Yonge. All of the latter sites are recognized on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value.

The Main Street Commercial Row at 1206-1210 Yonge Street is historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to its surroundings where it stands on the west side of Yonge Street north of Birch Avenue as a significant example of its type with its massing and stylistic details characteristic of the early-20th century and typically located along the city's main commercial thoroughfares. The conversion of the subject buildings following their lowering in 1914-1916 to incorporate raised and recessed entry stairs speaks to the inextricable historical, visual, functional and physical linkages of their evolved form to contemporary civic infrastructural changes required by the adjacent and pre-existing CPR rail line.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### **Design or Physical Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the Main Street Commercial Row at 1206-1210 Yonge Street being a significant representative example of the type with Edwardian era styling:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the properties on their adjacent mid-block lots on the west side of Yonge Street between Birch Avenue and Alcorn Avenue
- The 2-storey scale, form and massing of the properties on a rectangular plan with a flat roof
- The materials, with the red brick cladding (currently painted) and the brick and wood detailing
- The corbelled brick cornice along the roofline at 1206 and 1210 Yonge Street on the east elevation
- The semi-circular parapet wall along the roofline at 1208 Yonge Street (currently missing)
- The east elevation of the three properties, each with commercial storefront space at street level and residential bay window above (bay currently missing at 1206 Yonge Street)
- The continuous wooden cornice above the first storey that spans the east elevation of all three properties
- At the second-storey level, the decorative brick headers above the centred window openings

### **Historical or Associative Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the subject buildings for their association with the 1914-1916 regrading of this portion of Yonge Street:

- The raised and recessed main entrances on the east elevations, including the internal main entrance stair alteration at 1210 Yonge Street

## **Contextual Value**

Attributes that contribute to the value of the Main Street Commercial Row buildings at 1206-1210 Yonge Street as defining, supporting and maintain the historic character of the area and being historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to their setting:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the properties on their adjacent mid-block lots on the west side of Yonge Street between Birch Avenue and Alcorn Avenue