

509 Parliament Street - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: August 21, 2023

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 509 Parliament Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance and description of Heritage Attributes found in Attachment 3.

The property at 509 Parliament Street, is located on the east side of Parliament Street and north of Carlton Street in Cabbagetown. The theatre has been an arts and entertainment venue in the heart of Cabbagetown for more than 90 years. Originally known as the Carlton Theatre, the building was designed in a Classical Revival style in 1929 by Architect Herbert Duerr, known for his theatre designs from the late 1920s to the late 1940s. The building was home to the Carlton Theatre from 1930-1954, followed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) 1954-1995 where the popular comedy show, "Air Farce", later known as "Royal Canadian Air Farce", was produced in the building from 1978 through the 1990s where it featured a live studio audience, and since 1995 is owned and operated by the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre, now known as the Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre.

The property was listed on the City's Heritage Register on March 29, 2023.

Staff have undertaken research and evaluation and determined that the property at 509 Parliament Street meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under the Design / Physical, Historical / Associative and Contextual criteria categories. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets two or more of the nine criteria.

In March 2023 the City received a rezoning application to permit the development on site for a 10-storey mixed use building containing 85 dwelling units and retail at grade. The development proposes the retention of the existing façade at 509 Parliament

Street. The adjacent building to the south at 505-507 Parliament Street is to be demolished.

The City Clerk issued a complete application notice on May 5, 2023. Council must make its decision at its October 11-13, 2023, meeting to provide sufficient time for the City Clerk to issue a notice of intention to designate before the waiver provided by the owner expires on October 31, 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 509 Parliament Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance; 509 Parliament Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3, to the report, August 21, 2023, 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

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

DECISION HISTORY

City Council included the subject property at the property at 509 Parliament Street on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on March 29, 2023.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.PH2.12>

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Plans and Policies

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

Further, the policies and definitions of the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented.

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

<https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-place-to-grow-office-consolidation-en-2020-08-28.pdf>

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 two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

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

Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision making within the City. It 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. The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. The Official Plan can be found here:

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

COMMENTS

Prescribed Event Status

As of July 1, 2021, Section 29(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act to within 90 days of a "Prescribed Event".

A Prescribed Event is a point of time when the application for an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and/or Draft Plan of Subdivision Application has been deemed complete and the City Clerk provides notice of that complete application to the public in accordance with the Planning Act. The Prescribed Event is not the date a development application is deemed complete or when an application is made to the City. A Prescribed Event, including any prescribed exceptions, are defined under O. Reg 385/21.

If a new or subsequent Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and/or Draft Plan of Subdivision Application is submitted on the same property, the Prescribed Event date is reset to the new date the City Clerk issues notice to the public of the new or subsequent complete application.

As of January 1, 2023, should a property be subject to an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and/or Draft Plan of Subdivision Application that would trigger a Prescribed Event, the property must be listed in the heritage register prior to the Prescribed Event occurring to designate a property under Section 29(1.2)1 of the Ontario Heritage Act. This requirement does not apply to a Prescribed Event that has occurred prior to January 1, 2023.

In March 2023 the City received a rezoning application to permit the development on the site of a 10-storey mixed use building containing 85 dwelling units and retail at grade. The development would see the retention of the existing façade at 509 Parliament Street but would demolish the rest of the building. The building at 505-507 Parliament Street, on the south side of the site would also be demolished for the proposed development.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required for all development applications that affect listed and designated properties and will be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved. Designation also enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance. A Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report for the property was prepared by E.R.A. Architecture, dated March 9, 2023.



Figure 1. Main elevation (west) of subject property, facing onto Parliament Street (Heritage Planning, 2023).

1. DESCRIPTION

509 PARLIAMENT STREET- CARLTON THEATRE	
ADDRESS	509 Parliament Street
WARD	13 - Toronto Centre
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Cabbagetown
HISTORICAL NAME	CARLTON THEATRE

CONSTRUCTION DATE	1929-30
ORIGINAL OWNER	John McCabe
ORIGINAL USE	Movie theatre
CURRENT USE*	Performing arts space
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Herbert Duerr
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Masonry
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Classical Revival
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	Infilled storefronts; interior configuration
CRITERIA	Design / physical; historical / associative; contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed (2023)
RECORDER	Clint Robertson
REPORT DATE	August 2023

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 509 Parliament Street and applies evaluation criteria as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06 to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two 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.
c. 1874-75	The site is first developed as residences
1913	Herbert Peters and John Joseph McCabe purchase the property
1914	The first Carlton Theatre is constructed and completed on the site
1929	Architect Herbert Duerr designs the current Carlton Theatre for John McCabe and a building permit is taken out
1934	The theatre becomes a centre for British films
1954	The Carlton Theatre is closed and acquired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) for use as a sound broadcasting theatre and audience venue

1954-92	CBC ownership - productions include concerts and orchestra performances, and production of programs such as Metro Morning and (Royal Canadian) Air Farce
1995 - 2023	Ownership and occupancy by Canadian Children's Dance Theatre and use by other performing arts companies

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The subject property at 509 Parliament Street was built as the Carlton Theatre in 1929-30¹ replacing the earlier and smaller 424-seat Carlton Theatre which was built in the same location in 1914.²

Prior to the original 1914 theatre, the site was occupied by two-storey houses first developed c. 1874-75 according to directories and Goads maps showing the area.

The current building at 509 Parliament Street was commissioned for John Joseph McCabe (1881-1942) a native of King, Ontario³, listed in city directories in the early 1900s, and the 1921 census, as a Church Street fruit merchant. McCabe earlier went into the theatre business as a partner with Herbert Peters in establishing the original Carlton Theatre on the site. The two had acquired the land at 509 Parliament Street for the first theatre in 1913, as well as the property to the north at 511 Parliament.⁴ By 1919 Peters had also acquired the property at 515 Parliament which became jointly owned with McCabe in 1920.⁵ These three parcels became the site of the current building which was commissioned in 1929 by McCabe alone, who engaged architect Herbert G. Duerr (1891-1966) to design plans for the theatre.⁶

Herbert Duerr⁷ (1891-1966) was a Pittsburgh-born and trained architect who demonstrated a versatility in his range of work but became known for his theatre design. In 1911 Duerr had moved to Hamilton, Ontario to work in the Canadian office of the Pittsburgh firm, Prack & Perrine before moving to Toronto in 1920, forming a partnership with B. Kingston Hall. In 1924, with Hall, Duerr redesigned the Tivoli Theatre in Hamilton, which was designated as a heritage property in 1990. In 1926 Duerr established his own firm, and that year designed the "Major" Theatre at Rogers Road

¹ City of Toronto Building Permit B10104, 1929

² The theatre doesn't show up in the 1913 Directory (published Feb. 1913), but does show up in the 1914 Directory (published Feb. 1914) in the names index as the Carlton Theatre at 509 Parliament Street, although that address shows as vacant in the street-by-street index, likely indicating that the theatre was likely well under construction by February 1914. A floor plan of the building dated Dec. 1914 by the City Architect's Department is located in the City Archives (Fonds 200, series 2315, Item 38) and notes the seating capacity

³ Ancestry.ca - Ontario Registrations of Deaths

⁴ Metro Toronto Land Registry Office, Book 576_2, pg. 28-29

⁵ Metro Toronto Land Registry Office, Book 576_2, pg. 32

⁶ City of Toronto Archives, full set of architectural drawings dated August 16, 1929, Building Permit B10104

⁷ Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada

and Rosethorn Ave. From the late 1920s through the late 1940s, Duerr designed at least a half-dozen theatres in the Toronto area as well as more than a dozen theatres elsewhere - mostly in smaller Ontario cities, but also in a couple locations in Quebec and Nova Scotia. While Duerr's earliest theatre works reflect both a conservative and Classical-style aesthetic mixed with more elaborate revival examples, by the mid 1930s Duerr had embraced a more modern aesthetic. Employing this aesthetic, the Famous Players chain retained him as their corporate architect to design their theatres across Ontario. In addition to theatres, Duerr's work consisted of a variety of other type of building including apartment houses, stores, factories and warehouses. Surviving examples of Duerr's work in Toronto includes the Moderne style Creed Fur's Building (1937) at Davenport and Bedford Roads, which was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 1997, as well as the Donlands Theatre (1948) at 397 Donlands Avenue.

In 1934, ownership of the theatre switched from McCabe to an organization created to showcase British films run by Oscar R Hanson,⁸ a significant executive in the movie business in Hollywood with RKO Pictures in the late 1920s and early 1930s⁹, and later prominent in the film business in Canada¹⁰.

The Carlton operated as a theatre until 1954 and then became one of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporations (CBC) studios until 1992. The CBC acquired the building in 1954 to use as a sound broadcasting studio and for use of producing programs involving the CBC symphony orchestra and other orchestras.¹¹ When remodelled in 1956, the CBC left about 400 of the original 1000 seats in the auditorium so that the building could also be used for audience shows.¹² During the CBC's tenure some of its most popular programs were produced in the building including "Metro Morning" which was broadcast from the building for the programs first twenty years from 1973 onwards, when it was first known as "Tomorrow is Here".¹³ Additionally, the popular comedy show, "Air Farce", later known as "Royal Canadian Air Farce", was produced in the building from 1978 through the 1990s where it featured a live studio audience.¹⁴

In 1995 the building became the home of the Canadian Children's Dance Theatre (renamed the Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre in 2011). The troupe was founded in 1980 by Deborah Lundmark and Michael deConinck Smith and dedicated towards dancers aged 8 to 18. The Company "aimed to provide young dancers with a public performance alternative to prevailing competition, examination and recital options...the predominant modes of intensive dance training", and by 1988 had been hailed by the Globe and Mail newspaper as "a national treasure".¹⁵ In its Parliament Street home, the director of the company revelled in its new space declaring that "the building is a community in itself".¹⁶ Since that time, the building has also been the home

8 The Globe, February 17, 1934, pg. 14

9 Evening Express (Los Angeles, California), October 11, 1929, pg. 8

10 The Globe and Mail, November 23, 1956, pg. 5

11 The Globe and Mail, October 30, 1954, pg. 5

12 ibid

13 Heritage Impact Assessment "509 Parliament Street"

14 The Globe and Mail, December 9, 1978, pg. C14

15 Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre website: www.ccdt.org/history

16 The Toronto Star, October 11, 1995, pg. F5

of the Danny Grossman Dance Company, Fujiwara Dance Inventions, ProArteDanza, The School of Toronto Dance Theatre, TOES for Dance, The Garage, Kenny Pearl's GMD classes, and hundreds of independent dancers.¹⁷

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining design or physical value of Criteria 1, 2 or 3 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Like the other theatres Herbert Duerr designed in the 1920s, Carlton Theatre received a restrained and understated Classical Revival-style treatment. The one-storey building features a symmetrical façade with a stepped and panelled red-brick parapet and ashlar artificial stone storefront detailing. A stylized dentil frieze atop the storefront in artificial stone finish serves to further the classical character of the design.

Originally two storefronts on each side of the central entry lined the façade, featuring recessed entries, plate-glass windows, transom lights and panelled bases. The central entrance comprised two doorways containing double doors divided by a three-sided ticket window, all spanned by leaded-glass transom lights above.¹⁸ Original drawings called for metal-lined, wooden flower boxes to be positioned atop the parapet, between the piers, but its unknown if these were ever installed. While the infilling of the storefronts has affected the appearance of the façade, the configurations of the openings have been respected and the artificial stone storefront trim has been retained, albeit painted. The canopy which marks the front entrance is modern in its aesthetic but could be the original traditional canopy in renovated form.

The conservative, classical aesthetic of exterior was also carried over into the interior with simple, clean finishes in the lobby and 1015-seat¹⁹ auditorium. The auditorium was relatively austere except for some elegantly placed finishes in a combination of Art Deco and classical motifs. Such finishes include extant pilasters (piers) lining the walls, ornamented with Art Deco-style capitals and classical medallions, as well as a stylized cornice encircling the space, which also remains. The moulding which surrounded the screen is also intact. Originally, elongated Art Deco-style hanging fixtures occupied each corner of the auditorium space while a classical Adams-style medallion marked the centre of the ceiling. Many of the plain plaster finishes and mouldings of the lobby, as well as elements of its configuration remain, although the narrow plan of the lobby was altered when the auditorium wall was moved to expand the space.

The Carlton Theatre is a surviving example of a purpose-built theatre in Cabbagetown in its recognizable form. Not only does the Carlton Theatre retain stylistic elements of its exterior and interior, but also the three-part structural form typical of traditional movie theatres in the early twentieth century with lobby at the front of the building, auditorium in the middle, and stage/screen at the rear. A steel truss roof allows for an unobstructed clear span of the auditorium space.

17 Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre website: www.ccdt.org/history

18 City of Toronto Archives, full set of architectural drawings dated August 16, 1929, Building Permit B10104

19 1944-45 License, City of Toronto Archives (Fonds 251, Series 1278, File 39)

iv. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining contextual value of Criteria 7, 8 or 9 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The Carlton Theatre occupies a central location on Parliament Street, Cabbagetown's main street. Largely residential in character in the nineteenth century, by the early decades of the twentieth century Parliament Street had become significantly commercial in use, especially around the intersection with Carlton Street. Like most community main streets in the early twentieth century, local movie theatres were integral contributors to that main street context, with the Carlton Theatre being an integral component of Parliament Street's main street character.

From 1931 to 1954, the Carlton Theatre was one of the arts and entertainment venues and a social focal point of Cabbagetown at a time when attending movies was a popular form of entertainment. In addition to the Carlton, the community boasted five other theatres.²⁰ Of these, only the Carlton survives in recognizable form as a purpose-built theatre. The Parliament Theatre survives at 427 Parliament Street, albeit in unrecognizable form, and the building which once housed the Imperial Theatre still exists at 408 Queen Street East, although was not a purpose-built theatre building. None of Cabbagetown's historic theatres remain in theatre use. After its movie theatre use, the building remained a venue during the CBC's tenure for audiences attending concerts and other live music programs as well as broadcast productions.

The building also contributes to the historic character of Parliament Street. The Carlton theatre is framed by former residences dating from the 1870s which have been converted to commercial purposes. The theatre, with these low-scale structures, and others in the block, had by the 1930s formed a continuous street wall providing a continuity in the rhythm of these buildings and which includes several properties listed on Toronto's Heritage Register. Across the street at 502-508 Parliament Street is row housing comprising four properties dating from 1879 and included on the Register in 1975. To the north, the end of the block is occupied by the 1888 Lakeview (Winchester) Hotel, included on the Register in 1975 and designated by bylaw in 1995. Immediately behind the theatre and laneway to the east is the area comprising the Cabbagetown - Metcalf Heritage Conservation District.

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

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act, and the City of Toronto is also required to use these criteria when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

²⁰ Rust-D-Eye, pg. 53

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

The property has design value or physical value because it	
1. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	NA
3. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	NA

Representative example of a style

Like the other theatres architect H.G Duerr designed in the 1920s, Carlton Theatre features a restrained and understated Classical Revival style treatment. The one-storey building features a symmetrical façade with a stepped and panelled red-brick parapet and ashlar artificial stone storefront detailing. A stylized dentil frieze atop the storefront in the artificial stone finish serves to further the Classical Revival-style character. Although the infilling of the storefronts has affected the appearance of the façade, the configurations of the openings have been respected and the artificial stone storefront trim has been retained.

The conservative, classical aesthetic of the exterior was also carried over into the interior with simple, clean finishes in the lobby and 1015-seat auditorium. The auditorium was relatively austere except for some elegantly placed finishes in a combination of Art Deco and classical motifs. Such finishes include extant pilasters (piers) lining the walls, ornamented with Art Deco-style capitals and classical medallions, as well as a stylized cornice encircling the space, which also remains. The moulding which surrounded the screen is also intact.

Representative example of a type

The building survives as the only purpose-built theatre in Cabbagetown in recognizable form. While such building types were once common, with Cabbagetown alone once having other purpose-built, neighbourhood theatres, these theatres have been irreversibly altered or demolished. Not only does the Carlton Theatre retain stylistic elements of its exterior and interior, but also the three-part structural form typical of traditional movie theatres in the early twentieth century with lobby at the front of the building, auditorium in the middle, and stage/ screen at the rear. A steel truss roof allows for an unobstructed clear span of the auditorium space.

HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

The property has historical value or associative value because it	
4. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	NA
5. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	NA

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

The building is significant for its association with Herbert Duerr (1891-1966), a Pittsburgh-born and trained architect who demonstrated a versatility in his range of work but became known for his theatre design in Canada with the growing popularity of cinema in the 1920s.

In 1924, with architect B. Kingston Hall, Duerr redesigned the Tivoli Theatre in Hamilton, a heritage property designated in 1990. In 1926 Duerr established his own firm in Toronto and that year designed the "Major" Theatre at Rogers Road and Rosethorn Avenue. From the late 1920s through the late 1940s, Duerr designed at least a half-dozen theatres in the Toronto area including the Donlands Theatre (1948) at 397 Donlands Avenue as well as more than a dozen theatres elsewhere - mostly in smaller Ontario cities, but also in a couple locations in Quebec and Nova Scotia. While Duerr's earliest theatre works reflect both a conservative aesthetic mixed with more elaborate revival examples, by the mid 1930s Duerr had embraced a more modern aesthetic. Employing this aesthetic the Famous Players chain retained him as their corporate architect to design their theatres across Ontario.

In addition to theatres, Duerr's work consisted of a variety of other type of building including apartment houses, stores, factories and warehouses. Surviving examples of Duerr's work in Toronto includes the 1937 Moderne style Creed Fur's Building at Davenport and Bedford Roads, which was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 1997.

CONTEXTUAL VALUE

The property has contextual value because it is	
7. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	✓
8. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	✓
9. a landmark.	NA

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

The building also contributes to defining and supporting the historic main street character of Parliament Street which, in the 500 block, includes several other properties listed on Toronto's Heritage Register. Across the street at 502-508 Parliament Street is row housing comprising four properties dating from 1879 and placed on the Register in 1975. To the north, the end of the block is occupied by the 1888 Lakeview (Winchester) Hotel, placed on the Register in 1975 and designated by bylaw in 1995.

Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings

The Carlton Theatre is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as an integral component of Cabbagetown's main street context and character, occupying a central location on Parliament Street. Like most community main streets in the early twentieth century, local movie theatres were integral entertainment venues, contributing to that neighbourhood and main street character, with the Carlton Theatre assuming that role on Cabbagetown's main street.

From 1931 to 1954, the Carlton Theatre was one of the entertainment venues and a social focal point of Cabbagetown at a time when attending movies was a popular form of entertainment. In addition to the Carlton, the community boasted five other theatres. Of these, only the Carlton survives in recognizable form as a purpose-built theatre.

After its movie theatre use, the building remained an arts and entertainment venue during the CBC's tenure for audiences attending concerts of the CBC orchestra, other live music programs, as well as broadcast productions such as the popular comedy show, the Royal Canadian Air Farce.

CONCLUSION

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 509 Parliament Street and determined that the property meets 4 out of 9 criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act. As such, the property should be designated.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment 3) 509 Parliament Street comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

Clint Robertson
Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning
Tel: 416-396-4946; Fax: 416-392-1973
E-mail: Clint.Robertson@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Maps and Photographs

Attachment 2 – List of Research Sources

Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)



Figure 1. This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red square marks the location of the sire (City of Toronto iView Mapping, 2023).

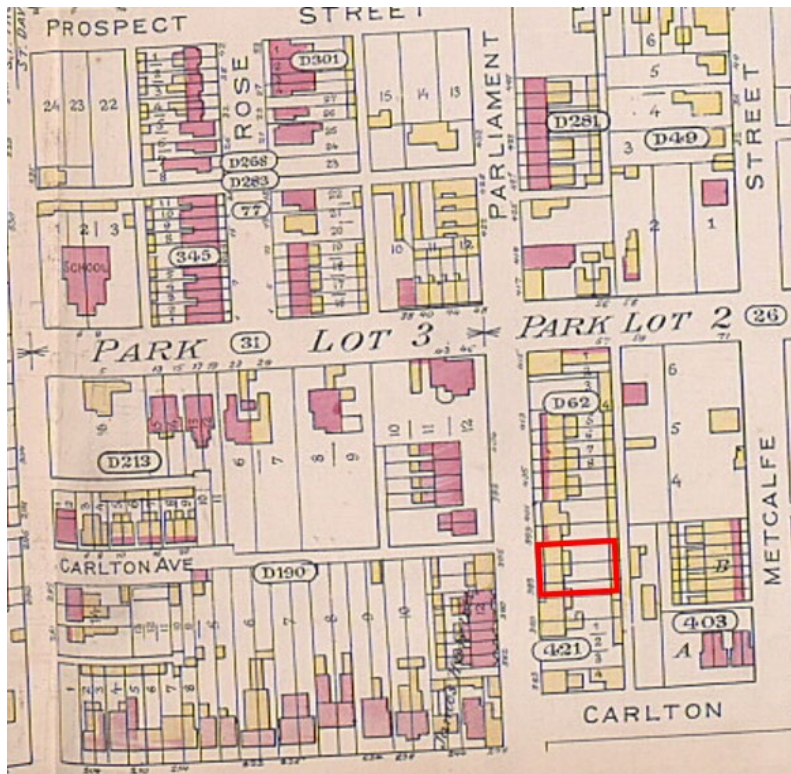


Figure 2. Atlas of the City of Toronto, 1884 (Chas. E. Goad Company). Shows residential row housing that predates construction of the subject property. Approximate location of 509 Parliament Street notated in red.

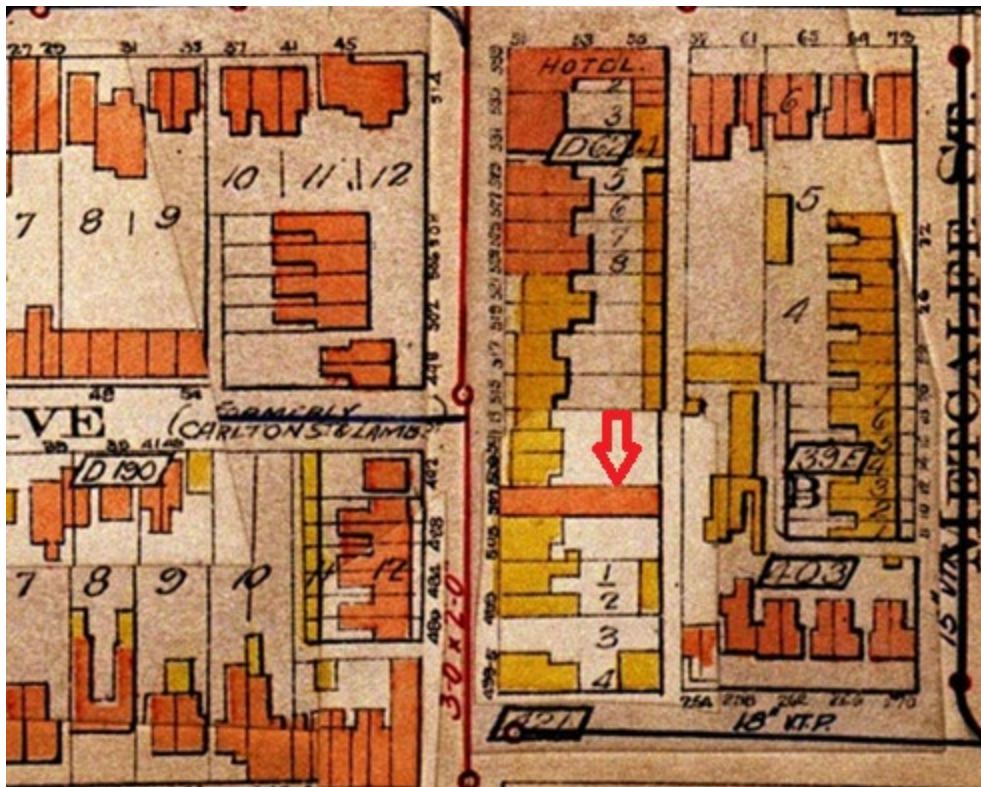


Figure 3. Atlas of the City of Toronto, 1924 (Chas. E. Goad Company). Shows the first Carlton Theatre built on site in 1914 with red arrow - however, the theatre is improperly described as 507 Parliament Street.

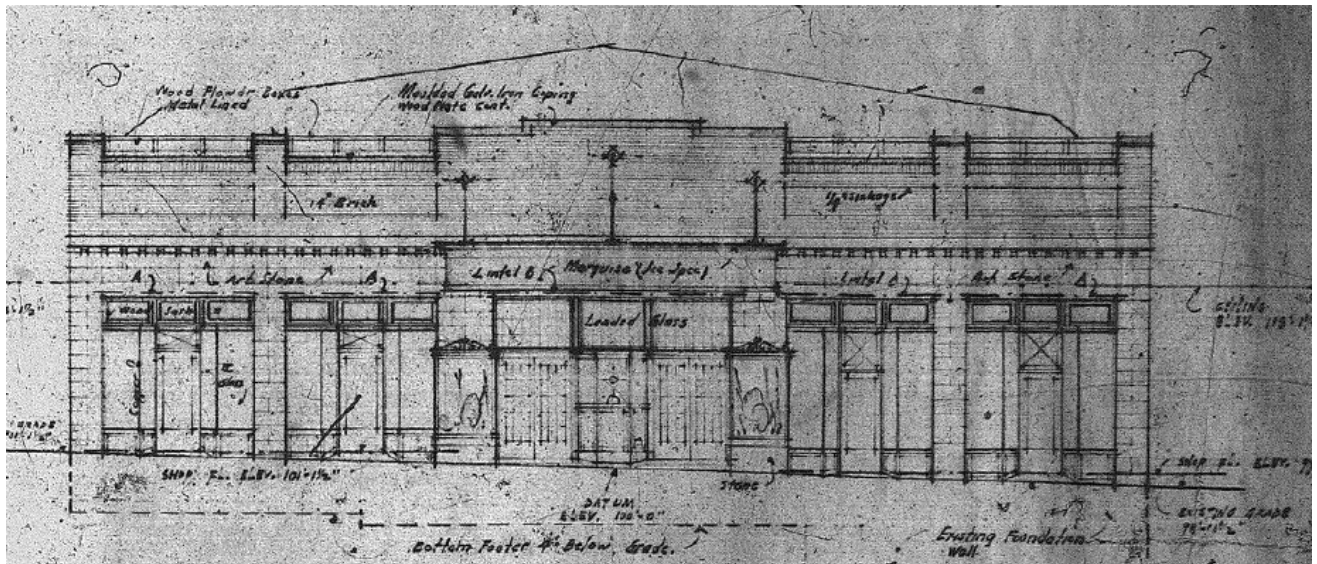


Figure 5. Architectural drawing of the west elevation of 509 Parliament, 1929 (City of Toronto Building Records, Permit No. B10104).



Figure 6. Historic image of the main façade (west) of 509 Parliament Street with its marquee and storefronts (since infilled), c.1937 (City of Toronto Archives).



Figure 7. Interior photo of the hallway space between the lobby of 509 Parliament Street and the auditorium, undated (City of Toronto Archives).



Figure 8. Interior photo of the auditorium and stage at 509 Parliament Street, undated (City of Toronto Archives).

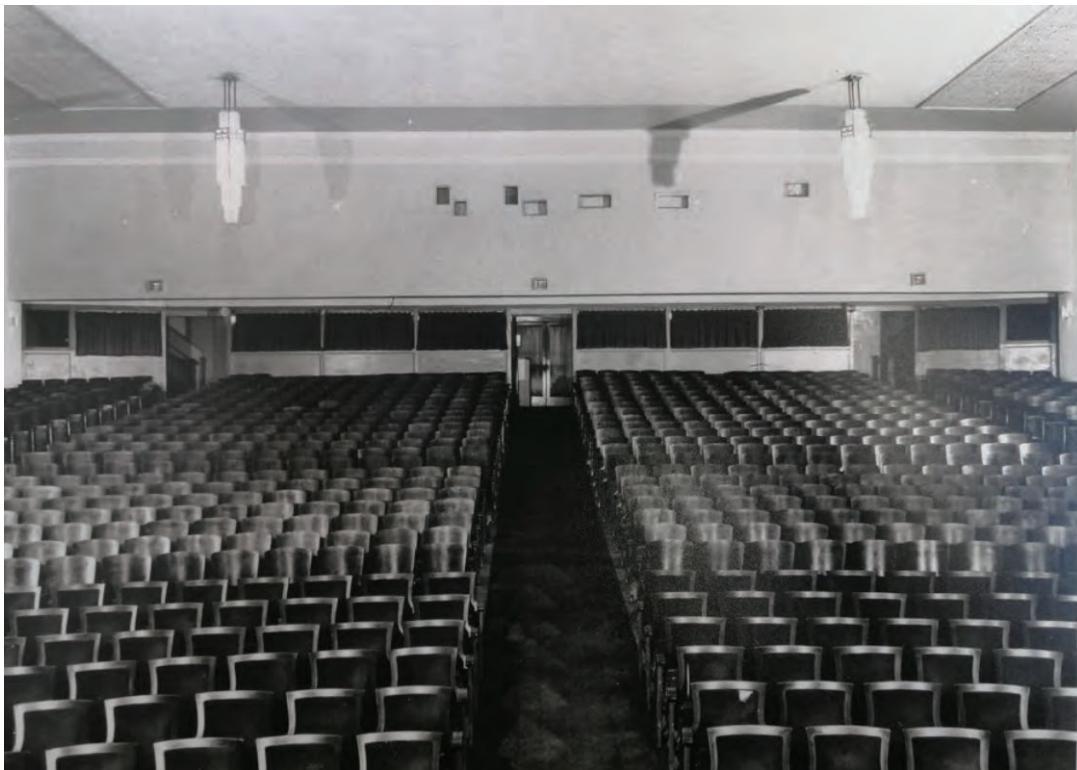


Figure 9. Interior photo of the auditorium seating at 509 Parliament Street, undated (City of Toronto Archives).



Figure 10. Exterior photo of 509 Parliament Street's main facade (west) during CBC's ownership, 1980s. Note the infill of the original shopfronts, and the alterations to the marquee signage (City of Toronto Archives).



Figure 4. 509 Parliament Street in context, showing east side of Parliament Street facing south, 2023 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 5. East side of Parliament Street facing south; 509 Parliament Street outlined in red, 2023 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 6. Detail of dentils, marquee, and marquee anchor on 509 Parliament Street, 2023 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 14. Rear view from southeast of 509 Parliament Street, 2023 (Heritage Planning).



Figure 15: an example of one of the pilasters (piers) with Art Deco motifs lining the walls of the auditorium, 2022 (Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report E.R.A. Architecture).



Figure 16: a portion of the stylized cornice surrounding the auditorium, 2022 (Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report E.R.A. Architecture)



Figure 17: A portion of the lobby, 2022 (Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report E.R.A. Architecture)

Archival Sources

- Ancestry.com and Genealogical Research Library (Brampton, Ontario, Canada). *Ontario, Canada, Deaths* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.
- Ancestry.com. *1921 Census of Canada* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2013.
- Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada [Introduction | Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada](#)
- Boulton, W.S., & H.C., *Atlas of Toronto, 1858*
- Canadian Contemporary Dance Theatre website: www.ccdt.org/history (accessed June 21, 2023)
- City of Toronto Archives Photographic Collection
- City of Toronto Building Records
- City of Toronto Public Library, *City Directories 1854-1969*
- "Dance Centre A Priority for Homeless Companies", *The Toronto Star*, October 11, 1995, pg. F5
- E.R.A. Architecture, *Cultural heritage Evaluation Report for 509 Parliament Street*, March 9, 2023
- "Film Experts Honour Pioneer", *The Globe and Mail*, November 23, 1956, pg. 5
- "First Bill is Acclaimed in al British Theatre", *The Globe*, February 17, 1934, pg. 14
- "Five Years Later Air Farce Flying High", *The Globe and Mail*, December 9, 1978, pg. C14
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509 PARLIAMENT STREET
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT 3

The property at 509 Parliament Street, is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design/physical, historical/ associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 509 Parliament Street, also known as the Carlton Theatre, is located in Toronto's Cabbagetown neighbourhood, on the east side of Parliament Street, mid-block between Carlton and Winchester Streets. It contains a one-storey, Classical Revival-style building constructed as a movie theatre in 1929-30. The property has served as a performing arts venue since 1995. Immediately behind the theatre to the east is the area comprising the Cabbagetown - Metcalf Heritage Conservation District. To the west, behind and on Parliament Street, the area comprises the Cabbagetown Northwest Heritage Conservation District

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Like the other theatres designed by architect Herbert Duerr in the 1920s, the 1929 Carlton Theatre is characterized and representative of restrained and understated Classical Revival-style architecture. The one-storey building features a symmetrical façade with a stepped and panelled red-brick parapet and ashlar artificial stone storefront detailing. A stylized dentil frieze atop the storefront in the artificial stone finish serves to further the classical character. While the infilling of the storefronts has affected the appearance of the façade, the configurations of the openings have been respected and the artificial stone storefront trim has been retained.

The conservative, classical aesthetic of exterior was also carried over into the interior with simple, clean finishes in the lobby and 1015-seat auditorium. The auditorium was relatively austere except for elegantly placed finishes in a combination of Art Deco and classical motifs. Such finishes include extant pilasters (piers) lining the walls, ornamented with Art Deco-style capitals and classical medallions, as well as a stylized cornice encircling the space, which also remains. The moulding which surrounded the screen is also intact.

The building's significance is further associated with its survival as the only purpose-built theatre in Cabbagetown in recognizable form. While such building types were once common - with Cabbagetown alone once having other purpose-built, neighbourhood theatres - these theatres have been irreversibly altered or demolished. Not only does the Carlton Theatre retain its façade and stylistic elements of its exterior and interior, but also the three-part structural form typical of traditional movie theatres in the early twentieth century with lobby at the front of the building, auditorium in the middle, and stage at the rear. A steel truss roof allows for a clear span of the auditorium space.

The building is significant for its association with Herbert Duerr (1891-1966), a Pittsburgh-born and trained architect who demonstrated a versatility in his range of work but became known for his theatre design. In 1924, with architect B. Kingston Hall, Duerr redesigned the Tivoli Theatre in Hamilton, which was designated as a heritage property in that city in 1990. In 1926 Duerr established his own firm in Toronto and that year designed the "Major" Theatre at Rogers Road and Rosethorn Ave. From the late 1920s through the late 1940s, Duerr designed at least a half-dozen theatres in the Toronto area as well as more than a dozen theatres elsewhere - mostly in smaller Ontario cities, but also in a couple locations in Quebec and Nova Scotia. While Duerr's earliest theatre works reflect both a conservative aesthetic mixed with more elaborate revival examples, by the mid 1930s Duerr had embraced a more modern aesthetic. Employing this aesthetic the Famous Players chain retained him as their corporate architect to design their theatres across Ontario. In addition to theatres, Duerr's work consisted of a variety of other type of building including apartment houses, stores, factories and warehouses. Surviving examples of Duerr's work in Toronto includes the 1937 Moderne style Creed Fur's Building at Davenport and Bedford Roads, which was listed on the City's Heritage Register in 1997.

The Carlton Theatre is functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as an integral component of Cabbagetown's main street context and character, occupying a central location on Parliament Street. Like most community main streets in the early twentieth century, local movie theatres were integral entertainment venues, contributing to that neighbourhood and main street character, with the Carlton Theatre assuming that role on Cabbagetown's main street.

From 1931 to 1954, the Carlton Theatre was one of the entertainment venues and a social focal point of Cabbagetown at a time when attending movies was a popular form of entertainment. In addition to the Carlton, the community boasted five other theatres. Of these, only the Carlton survives in recognizable form as a purpose-built theatre. After its movie theatre use, the building remained a venue during the CBC's tenure for audiences attending concerts of the CBC orchestra, other live music programs, as well as broadcast productions such as the popular comedy show, the Royal Canadian Air Farce.

The building also contributes to defining and supporting the historic main street character of Parliament Street between Carlton and Winchester Streets, which includes several other properties listed on Toronto's Heritage Register. Across the street at 502-508 Parliament Street is row housing comprising four properties dating from 1879 and placed on the Register in 1975. To the north, the end of the block is occupied by the 1888 Lakeview (Winchester) Hotel, placed on the Register in 1975 and designated by bylaw in 1995. The theatre, with these low-scale structures, and others in the block, had by the 1930s formed a continuous street wall providing a continuity in the rhythm of these buildings.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street being a representative example of the Classical Revival Style:

- The one-storey, long, polygonal form, scale and massing of the building behind a short façade
- The flat roof form of the lobby portion of the building and the domed roof of the auditorium
- The exterior materials of the front façade comprising artificial stone storefront surrounds laid in ashlar arrangement with dentil frieze and stepped and panelled parapet of red brick; the brick secondary facades
- The arrangement of the original façade storefront and entrance openings (now altered)
- Interior finishes including auditorium pilasters (piers) ornamented with Art Deco motifs and classical medallions; the auditorium's stylized cornice and screen-opening mouldings

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street being a representative but now rare example of a theatre type:

- The three-part arrangement of the building comprising lobby, clear-span auditorium, and stage/screen area.
- The elements of the original interior configuration including entrance vestibule, shallow interior lobby extending into corridors with stairways, and the extended ceiling height and open volume space of the auditorium

Historic and Associative Value

Attributes that contribute to the value of the property at 509 Parliament Street for reflecting the work or ideas of architect Herbert Duerr:

- The building's theatre typology reflecting Duerr's specialization in theatre design
- The Classical Revival-style of design characterizing Duerr's early theatre design in tradition period revival styles

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 509 Parliament Street as being functionally and historically linked to its surroundings:

- The building's theatre typology and architectural character in contribution to the historic main street character of Parliament Street
- The building's setback, mid-block placement, and its low-scale architecture contributing to the continuous street wall and continuity in the rhythm of the historic main street character of the buildings in the 500 block of Parliament Street

Attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property at 509 Parliament Street as defining, supporting and maintaining the historic character of the street:

- The building's placement relative to other listed and designated heritage buildings within the same block of Parliament Street and its adjacency to two Heritage Conservation Districts.