

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

**Date:** June 19, 2023

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

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

**Wards:** Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 650 (including entrance addresses at 650A and 652 Yonge Street) Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value.

The subject property is located on the west side of Yonge Street between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street and contains a 2-1/2-storey building completed c.1875. The building is part of a row of properties designed in a vernacular style with Georgian influences and supports the historic main street character of this part of Yonge Street through its low-rise scale, form and massing.

The subject property at 650 Yonge Street was listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register) on March 15, 1974 and is identified as a contributing property within the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan (currently under appeal).

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 650 Yonge 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 and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

In December 2022, the City received Site Plan Control, Official Plan Amendment, and Zoning By-law Amendment applications related to the proposed redevelopment of the properties at 646-664 Yonge Street. The redevelopment proposes a 75-storey mixed-use building with 548 dwelling units, comprising approximately 44,065 square metres of residential space and approximately 500 square metres of retail/commercial space, resulting in an overall density of 33.0 FSI (Floor Space Index).

The proposal includes the reconstruction of the facades of 646, 654, 656 and 658 Yonge Street, the restoration of the façade at 650 Yonge Street, the demolition of the listed properties at 660-662 Yonge Street, and the retention of the front portion of the building at 664 Yonge Street. 646-658 Yonge Street have been substantially altered and/or reconstructed, and are not being recommended for designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

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. An HIA completed by ERA Architects Inc. dated December 16, 2022 was submitted to support the application.

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 Planning Act applications that would trigger a Prescribed Event. 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.

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 City Clerk issued a complete application notice for the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment on February 17, 2023. The applicant provided a waiver to extend the 90-day timeline established under Bill 108 until August 3, 2023. City Council must make a decision at its July 19-21 meeting to provide sufficient time for the City Clerk to issue a notice of intention to designate before the waiver expires.

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. The property at 650 Yonge Street meets three criteria relating to design/physical and contextual values.

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 Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 650 Yonge Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance; 650 Yonge Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3, to the report, June 19, 2023, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, 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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The property at 650 Yonge Street was included on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on March 15, 1974.

On October 8, 2013, City Council adopted item TE26.14, to amend the Official Plan to include the North Downtown Yonge Site and Area Specific Policy 382 and to adopt the North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines.

[TE26.14 - Final Report - North Downtown Yonge Official Plan Amendment](#)

On March 10, 2016, City Council adopted item TE14.4: Designation of the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The property at 650 Yonge Street was identified as a contributing property within the Historic Yonge Street HCD. The HCD is currently under appeal.

[TE14.4 - Designation of the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act](#)

## **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 (PPS 2020) 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 PPS 2020. The PPS 2020 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 PPS 2020 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 PPS 2020 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://files.ontario.ca/mmah-place-to-grow-office-consolidation-en-2020-08-28.pdf>

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 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>

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, amongst other matters, amendments to the listing and designation processes.

On November 28, 2022, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) received Royal Assent. Schedule 6 of the More Homes Built Faster Act amended various sections of the Ontario Heritage Act. Most of the key changes to the Act came into effect on January 1, 2023.

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 3.1.6 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 3.1.6.4 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 3.1.6.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.6.26 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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City Council included the property located at 650 Yonge Street on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in 1974.

The property is also a contributing property within the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD). City Council designated the Historic Yonge Street HCD and adopted the Historic Yonge Street HCD Plan under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act at its meeting of March 10, 2016. The HCD Plan is currently under appeal. The property is also within the boundary of Site and Area Specific Policy 382, Official Plan Amendment 183 (OPA 183). Some of the policies in OPA 183 remain under appeal.

The subject property is adjacent to the listed properties at 615, 619, 646-662 Yonge Street and 45-59, 63 St Nicholas Street. It is also adjacent or near to several properties Designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, including 601 and 625 Yonge Street, 61 St Nicholas Street, and 6-14 Irwin Avenue.

In December 2022, the City received Site Plan Control, Official Plan Amendment, and Zoning By-law Amendment applications related to the proposed redevelopment of the site. The proposal is for a 75-storey mixed-use building, which includes the restoration of the façade at 650 Yonge Street. The proposal contains a total of 548 dwelling units.

The site for the application also includes the properties at 646, 654, 656, 659, 660, 662, and 664 Yonge Street, all of which are on the Heritage Register and are identified as contributing properties within the Historic Yonge Street HCD. The proposal includes the reconstruction of the facades of 646, 654, 656 and 658 Yonge Street, the demolition of the listed properties at 660-662 Yonge Street, and the retention of the front portion of the building at 664 Yonge Street. While the properties at 646 and 654-662 Yonge Street are consistent with Yonge Street's historic commercial streetscape, staff have concluded that the properties have insufficient design/physical value, historical/associative value, or contextual value to merit individual designation under Part IV Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A separate staff report addressing the designation of the property at 664 Yonge Street under Part IV Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act will be brought forward to the Toronto Preservation Board and subsequent City Council meeting.

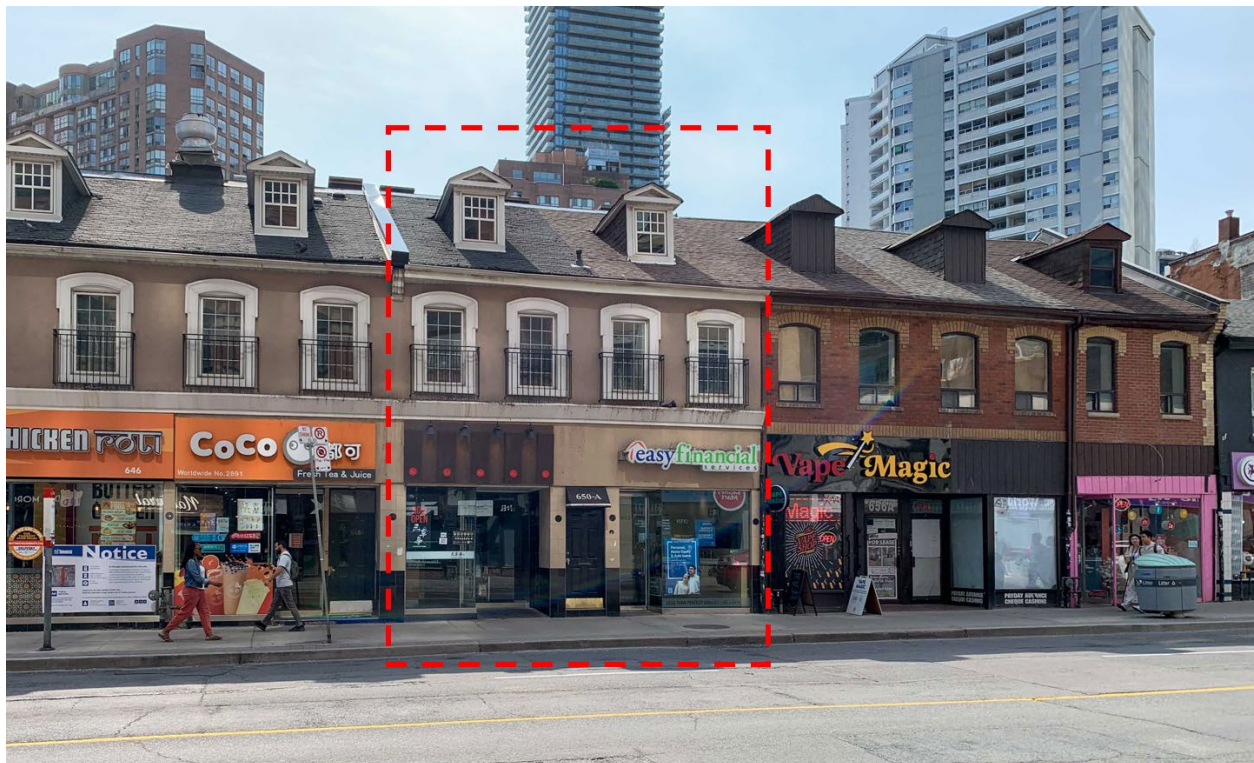
On February 7, 2023, an Order to Remedy Unsafe Building was issued by the City of Toronto Building Division with respect to the property at 658 Yonge Street. A

professional engineer retained by the property owner found that the east-facing exterior brick wall was subject to excessive movement, posing a danger to pedestrians on Yonge Street. Reconstruction of the wall was recommended as the approach to remedy the hazard, and the work was completed in early May 2023.

## 650 Yonge 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 650 Yonge Street, it should be noted that new and additional relevant information on the subject property further expanding on its cultural heritage value following community input and additional access to archival records may be incorporated in the final version of a Part IV designation by-law.



View of the subject property at 650 Yonge Street, outlined in red (Heritage Planning, 2023)

## 1. DESCRIPTION

650 YONGE STREET	
ADDRESS	650 Yonge Street (including entrance addresses at 650A and 652 Yonge Street)
WARD	Ward 13 - Toronto Centre
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	PLAN 218E LOTS 3 AND 4

NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Bay-Cloverhill <sup>1</sup>
HISTORICAL NAME	N/A
CONSTRUCTION DATE	c.1875
ORIGINAL OWNER	N/A
ORIGINAL USE	Mixed Use/Commercial
CURRENT USE*	Mixed Use/Commercial *This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Unknown
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	See Section 2
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	See Section 2
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 2
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed (1974)
RECORDER	Heritage Planning: Megan Albinger
REPORT DATE	May 2023

**2. BACKGROUND**

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 650 Yonge 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 Statement of Significance is 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	John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, establishes the Town of York as Upper Canada's capital
1796	Under the direction of Simcoe, Yonge Street is surveyed as a military road
1797	James Macaulay receives the patent for Park Lot 9, located directly west of Yonge Street

<sup>1</sup> As defined by City of Toronto Neighbourhoods map and profiles



1799	Macaulay and John Elmsley, owner of neighbouring Park Lot 10, exchange land with Elmsley receiving the north portions (from College to Bloor) of both lots and Macauley the south
1848	Elmsley personally assumes a portion of the debt of St. Michael's Cathedral and begins subdividing and selling a portion of his estate, naming the streets after his favourite saints
1862	Browne's Map records the subdivision of the land and the various streets named by Elmsley including St Albans, St Clements, St Joseph, and St Mary Street
1873-1876	A row of shops on Yonge Street north of Irwin Avenue is constructed, corresponding to the property addresses 646-662 Yonge Street
1902	The National Trust Co. of Ontario registers Plan of Subdivision 218E comprising 9 lots on the northwest corner of Irwin Avenue and Yonge Street, which are already developed
1922	A fire causes damage to the properties at 654 and 656 Yonge Street
1940	A fire originating in the basement of 650 Yonge Street causes damage to the property's roof, front wall, storefront, and the adjacent unit at 652 Yonge Street; the properties at 648, 654, 656, and 658 Yonge Street are affected by heavy smoke
1945	A large fire causes significant damage to 662 Yonge Street. The third storey is removed, and the east elevation is altered as part of the repairs. The interior of 660 Yonge Street is also affected, requiring repairs
1972	A fire causes damage to the properties at 654 and 656 Yonge Street, affecting the storefronts
1974	The rows of shops at 646-652 Yonge Street, 654-662 Yonge Street, and 664-680 Yonge Street are included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties
1984-1989	Significant structural and façade alterations are made to 654-656 Yonge Street
2009	The properties at 646 and 650 Yonge Street are altered; a rear addition is constructed, and a new stucco finish is applied to the exterior walls
2023	The east elevation of 658 Yonge Street is reconstructed, subsequent to an order from the City to remedy an unsafe building following an engineer's determination that the façade was unstable

## ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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

## **Bay-Cloverhill Neighbourhood**

The property at 650 Yonge Street is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Irwin Avenue (Figures 1-2). Following the founding of the Town of York (Toronto) in 1793, the area north of the town between present-day Queen and Bloor streets was parceled into 100-acre “park lots” and awarded to government and military officials as the location of country estates. Yonge Street was surveyed as a military road in 1796 and formed the dividing line between Park Lots 8 and 9.

Park Lot 9 was granted to James Macaulay in 1797. In 1799, Macaulay and John Elmsley, the owner of adjoining Park Lot 10 to the west, organized a land exchange resulting in Elmsley receiving the halves of the parcels north of College Street, thereby gaining frontage on Yonge Street, and Macaulay receiving the southern portions, increasing his frontage on Queen Street.<sup>2</sup> When Elmsley died in 1805, his extensive land holdings were passed to his heirs. His son, also named John, took over management of the estate in 1825 and began construction on his residence, Clover Hill, which was completed in 1829. In the early 1830s, Elmsley converted to Catholicism, which later led to his donation of part of his land for St Michael's College and St Basil's church along with personally assuming of a share of the debt of the construction of St Michael's Cathedral. In 1848, he subdivided a portion of the estate alongside Yonge Street, naming the streets after his favourite saints: St Joseph, St Mary, St Albans (now Wellesley Street), St Clements (now Irwin Avenue),<sup>3</sup> St Nicholas and St Vincent.

Development along Yonge Street rapidly accelerated between 1870 and 1900, catalysed by Toronto's growing population and a number of infrastructure and transportation improvements, including the installation of Toronto Street Railway tracks on Yonge Street in 1861. The properties on the west side of Yonge Street north of Irwin Avenue were originally constructed as part of this commercial building boom.

### **646-658 Yonge Street**

The southern portion of the block was developed between 1873 and 1876, starting with a pair of semi-detached wood frame buildings on the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue (646-648 Yonge Street). The properties at 650-658 Yonge Street, which share the same form and massing as the corner buildings, gradually appear in the City Directories between 1873 and 1876.<sup>4</sup> However, unlike the corner properties, fire insurance maps indicate they were of brick construction. North of the row, the buildings constructed at 660 and 662 Yonge Street appear in the Directory for 1876 and are illustrated as wood frame buildings with a rough cast finish (Figure 3).

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2 Elmsley also acquired portions of Park Lots 7, 8, and 11, resulting in land holdings encompassing the area between today's University Avenue on the west to Mutual Street on the east, between Queen/College and Bloor streets.

3 Prior to 1877, the street is identified as St Clement Street, whereupon it begins to be called St Charles Street. In 1885, the street is renamed to Irwin Avenue.

4 A newspaper article in The Globe from July 1875 refers to a burst pipe affecting a collection of "six or seven" stores that had been "recently erected" on Yonge Street south of Collins' Foundry (labeled on the 1880 Fire Insurance map), likely referring to the row at 650-658 Yonge Street.

The properties in the row at 646-658 Yonge Street have housed a variety of main street commercial tenants since they were originally constructed, including numerous retail stores and restaurants (Figures 4-8). The turnover rate between tenants was high, with few businesses remaining at the same location for more than ten years. However, in several cases a new proprietor with the same type of business would take over the space for a subsequent period, a historically common occurrence on a commercial main street.

Typically, the second floor of each building housed one or two dwelling units, although in some cases the floor served as an office or other commercial space. The attic level of the properties at 646-658 Yonge Street has generally been used only as storage or sealed off from use.

The corner property at 646 Yonge Street includes a separate building with the entrance address of 4 Irwin Avenue. According to City Directories and building record files, this two-storey brick building appears to have been constructed as an ancillary building to 646 Yonge Street. It does not appear to have ever functioned as a residence.

### **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.

The property at 650 Yonge Street is part of a visually unified group of properties comprising the 7 storefront bays at 646-658 Yonge Street (Figure 9). As a result of an earlier consolidation with an adjacent property (formerly 652 Yonge Street), the property at 650 Yonge Street comprises 2 of the total 7 storefront bays that make up the row (Figure 10). At 2-1/2-storeys in height, the properties share a common scale, form, and massing, and feature a gable roof with a ridgeline parallel to Yonge Street. The row's east elevation displays characteristics of the Georgian style, including the gable roof, symmetrical composition, and gabled dormers (one per bay). However, these have been combined with other features more common to later periods of construction, such as the segmentally arched windows with polychromatic brick hood moulds and brick quoining on the second storey, resulting in a vernacular architectural expression.<sup>5</sup>

The property at 650 Yonge Street has undergone several changes since it was constructed. The stucco finish is the result of shared alterations with 646 Yonge Street in 2009, which included the construction of a 3-storey rear addition fronting onto Irwin Avenue.<sup>6</sup> Investigative testing conducted by ERA Architects in 2022 confirms the masonry wall construction is still present at 650 Yonge Street, and that the original

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<sup>5</sup> The row at 646-658 Yonge Street is similar in design to the row at 634-644 Yonge Street (c.1865), which displays a more typical expression of the Georgian style.

<sup>6</sup> The 2009 rear addition replaced several earlier 2-storey brick additions to 646 Yonge, and a 1-storey stucco-clad addition at 650 Yonge Street.

masonry detailing likely remains behind the current cladding.<sup>7</sup> The 4 windows on the second floor have been replaced with rectangular casement-style units, and are surrounded by large moulded frames with segmental-arched hood moulds. They also feature metal Juliet balcony rails, which are not original to the design. In addition, the dormer windows have been replaced. The ground floor storefront has also been altered. Despite these alterations, the pair of buildings at 650 Yonge Street retains the most original material of the properties comprising the row.

Archival records indicate that the exterior walls of 646, 654 and 656 Yonge Street have been substantially reconstructed as a result of cumulative alterations and repairs between 1922 and 2009, with limited or no original material remaining. In several cases, the repairs were necessitated following substantial damage caused by multiple fires, impacting the buildings' structural integrity and interiors. In early 2023, 658 Yonge Street was subject to an order to remedy an unsafe condition due to the instability of the masonry wall fronting onto Yonge Street. As a result, its façade has also been reconstructed.

#### **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 location of the property at 650 Yonge Street is shown on the map included as Figure 1 in Attachment 1 (Maps & Photographs) below. The subject property is situated on the west side of the street, in the block between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street. A rear laneway (Cottage Lane) accessed from St Nicholas Street and Irwin Avenue bisects a portion of the block and abuts the subject property's rear (west) property line.

The subject property is a contributing property within the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District (HYHCD), which was adopted by City Council in 2016 and is currently under appeal. The HYHCD is a distinct mixed-use neighbourhood located in downtown Toronto that runs north–south around a portion of Yonge Street situated north of College Street and south of Bloor Street. It contains a cohesive grouping of mixed-use/commercial properties that were constructed on Toronto's emerging "Main Street" during a period of accelerated growth and investment during the late 1800s and early 20th century, which culminated in the opening of Canada's first subway line along Yonge Street in 1954. As a result, many surrounding mixed-use/commercial buildings on Yonge Street are recognized on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register and share a similar late-19th-century or mid-century modern architectural character. The District also includes St. Nicholas Village, a historic residential area associated with Yonge Street, and portions of a historic network of service laneways.

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<sup>7</sup> ERA, p.62. The original masonry detailing that is presumed to be beneath the stucco finish includes brick window hood moulds, quoining and stone window sills, based on archival photography of the property.

A rare collection of intact, uninterrupted groupings of commercial row properties is found along this portion of Yonge Street, including a particularly high concentration located on the west side of Yonge Street between Breadalbane Street and Charles Street West. These rows comprise groupings of 4 to 10 properties and represent a wide range of architectural styles, including Second Empire, Georgian, and Italianate (Figure 10). The majority of the rows are constructed within one of two construction periods: an earlier period from 1873-1876 and a later period 1886-1889. Construction on the row at 646-658 Yonge Street was initiated in 1873, and all 7 units that were initially constructed continue to display a unified architectural expression despite alterations over time. They also reflect the design of the row of properties at 634-644 Yonge Street (c.1865), sharing a similar scale, form, and massing, including the gable roof and gabled dormers (Figure 11). Together, these two groupings frame the intersection of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue, and express one of Yonge Street's earliest periods of development as a commercial main street.

Yonge Street's main street character is generally typified by three-storey heights, narrow building frontages, no setback from the street, flat or mansard roof profiles, brick construction with stone and wood detailing, storefronts at grade, and a variety of late-19th- and early-20th-century stylistic vocabularies, including Georgian, Italianate, Romanesque, Second Empire, Edwardian, and Mid-century Modern. The District's grouping of built heritage resources provides a distinct sense of place along a street that serves important civic and commercial functions in the city (Figure 12).

Nearby buildings designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act include the Masonic Hall, offices, and stores (1888) and adjoining Charles Levey Houses (1868) at Yonge and Gloucester streets, a row of Queen Anne Revival house form buildings at 6-14 Irwin Avenue (c.1892), and 61 St Nicholas Street, part of a row of bay-and-gable houses from 45-63 St. Nicholas Street (1883).

### 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.

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.

#### 650 YONGE STREET

##### 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	N/A

3. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A
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*Is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method*

The 2-1/2-storey property at 650 Yonge Street has design and physical value for its typology as a representative example of a Main Street Commercial Row building constructed during a significant period of development along Yonge Street. It is part of an architecturally unified group comprising the 7 storefront bays at 646-658 Yonge Street, which share a common scale, form, and massing. The east elevation of 650 Yonge Street displays characteristics of the Georgian style, including the gable roof, symmetrical composition, and gabled dormer, in combination with other features more common to later periods of construction, resulting in a vernacular architectural expression.

### **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	N/A
5. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	N/A
6. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

### **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.	N/A

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

Contextually, the property has cultural heritage value for maintaining and supporting the historic main street character of Yonge Street, south of Bloor Street. Situated on the west side of the block between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street, the subject property contributes to the low-rise streetwall condition found on this portion of Yonge Street through its scale, form and massing, and is consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained storefronts along the streetscape. The property is part of a row of buildings with the same architectural design, a typology that is found in a high concentration along this portion of Yonge Street, particularly on the west side of the street. In form and architectural style, the row also references the group of buildings on the southwest corner of Irwin Avenue; together, these two groupings frame the intersection of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue, and express one of Yonge Street's earliest periods of development as a commercial main street.

*Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings*

The property at 650 Yonge Street is functionally, visually and physically linked to Yonge Street, Toronto's "Main Street", as a mixed-use building housing the services, amenities, and employment opportunities necessary to support daily life in neighbouring residential areas. The property is also historically linked to the metamorphosis of Yonge Street into Toronto's main commercial corridor.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 650 Yonge Street and determined that it meets 3 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.

Located on the west side of Yonge Street between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street, the building at 650 Yonge Street is part of a row of properties designed in a vernacular style with Georgian influences and is valued for supporting and maintaining the historic main street character of this part of Yonge Street.

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

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
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)



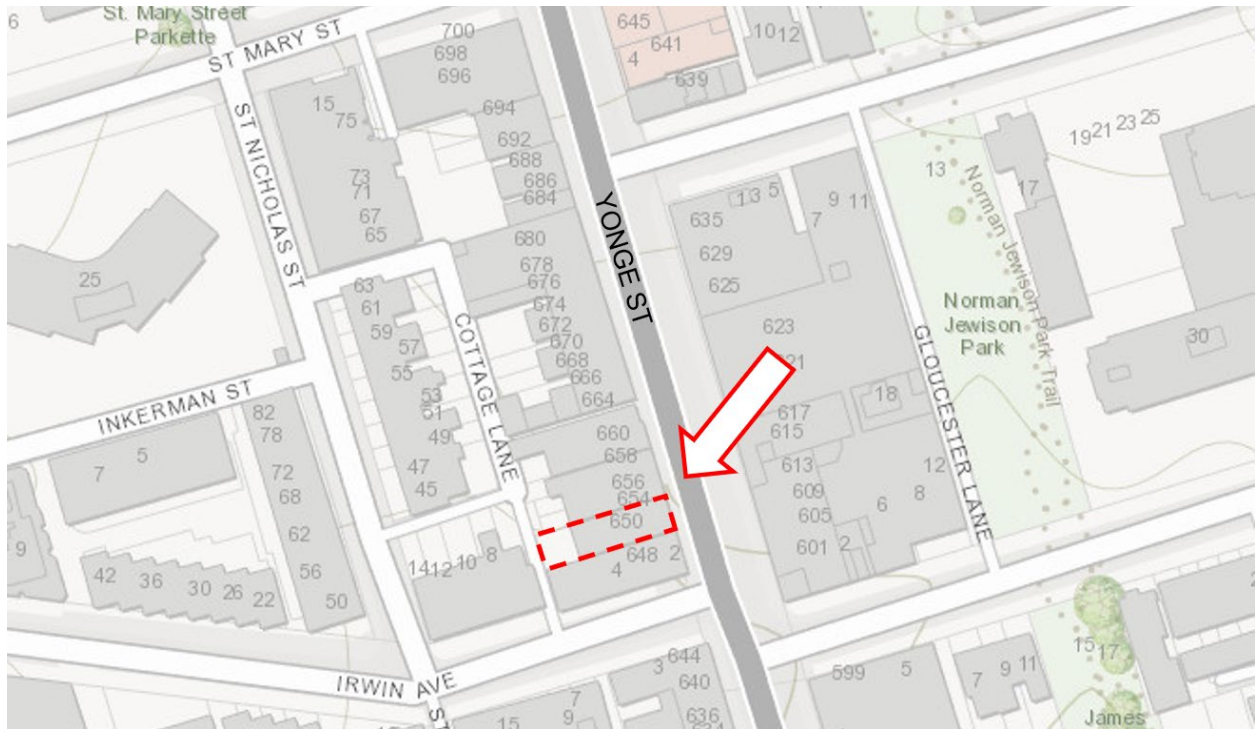


Figure 1: Map showing the location of the subject property at 650 Yonge Street outlined in red on the west side of Yonge Street between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property is not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).



Figure 2. Aerial View (base image 2018) showing the location of the property on Yonge Street midblock between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street. The approximate boundary of the property is outlined in red (City of Toronto Mapping).





Figure 5. Archival photograph from 1974, showing 646-660 Yonge Street (Toronto Historical Board). 650 Yonge Street is indicated by the arrow.



Figure 6. Archival photograph from 1990, showing 646-680 Yonge Street (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 7. Photograph from 2004, showing 646-654 Yonge Street (Heritage Planning, 2004). 650 Yonge Street is indicated by the arrow.



Figure 8. View of the row at 646-658 Yonge Street, looking southwest (Heritage Planning 2023).



Figure 9. Primary (east) elevation of 650 Yonge Street (Heritage Planning, 2023)



Figure 10. This portion of the west side of Yonge Street has a high number of intact groupings, including those at 620-632 Yonge Street (c.1878), 634-644 Yonge Street (c.1865), 646-658 Yonge Street (1873-1875), and 664-680 Yonge Street (1883).



Figure 11. The row at 646-658 Yonge Street (1873-1875) visually references the earlier row at 634-644 Yonge Street (1865). Together, these properties frame the intersection at Irwin Avenue.

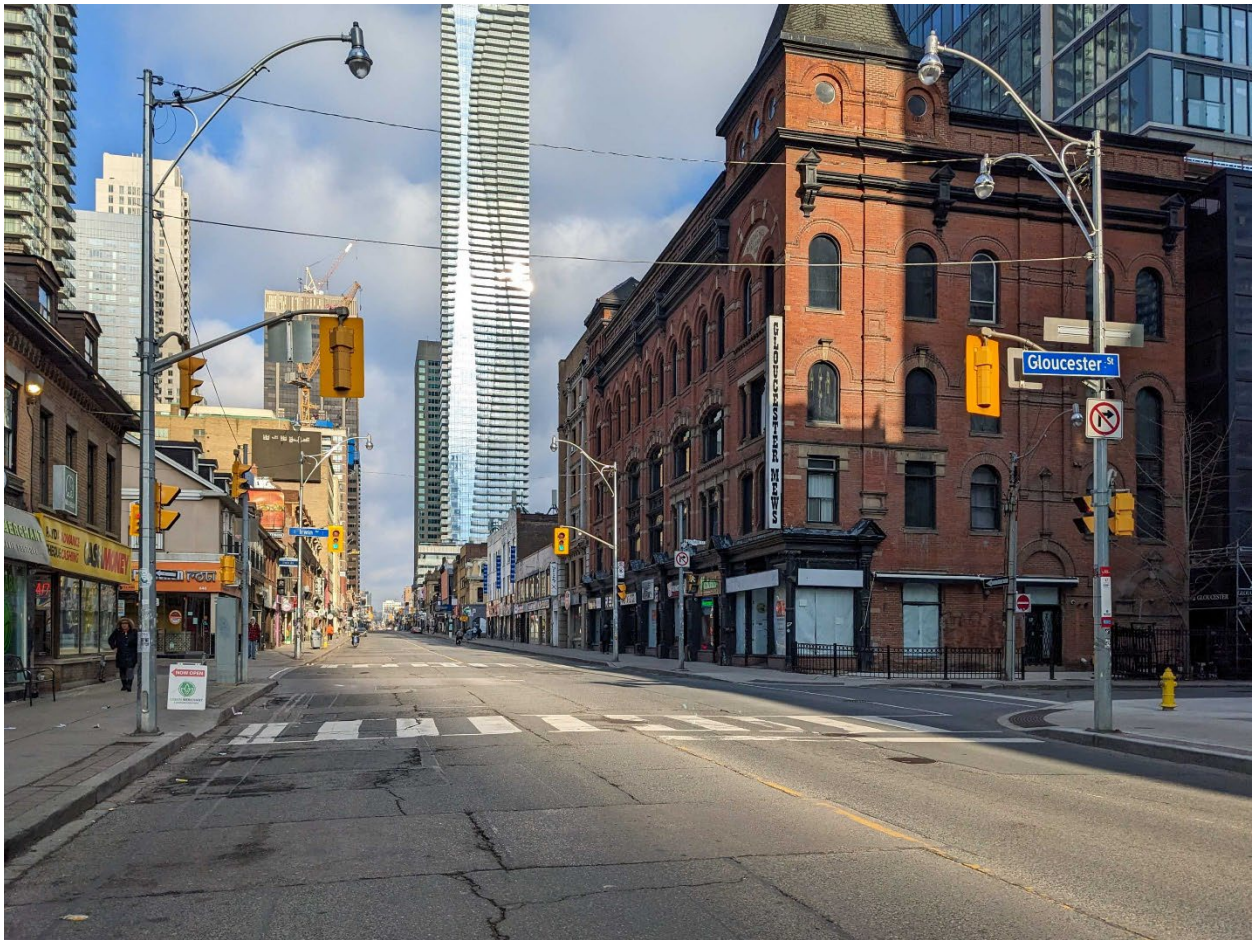


Figure 12. Many properties on this portion of Yonge Street share a similar late-19th-century or mid-century modern architectural character and are included on the Heritage Register, including the former Masonic Hall buildings at 601 Yonge Street, which are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

**Archival Sources**

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- City of Toronto Archives [CTA], Photographic Collection.
- Goad, Charles, Atlas of the City of Toronto and Suburbs, 1880 -1924. (CTA)
- Land Registry Office Records, Metro Toronto: Book 602 Plan D3, Book 707 Plan 218E
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**Secondary Sources and Articles**

- "Acrid fumes and smoke from basement blaze overcome four firemen", *The Globe*, 11 Dec 1922, p.13.
- Arthur, Eric, Toronto: No Mean City, 3rd ed., revised by Stephen A. Otto, 1986.
- "Chinese fortune saved when fire sweeps café", *The Globe and Mail*, 5 Mar 1945, p.7.
- "City News: Bursting of a Reservoir", *The Globe*, 19 Jul 1875, p.4.
- "Classified Ad - Houses to Rent", *The Globe*, 26 Aug 1873, p.1.
- ERA Architects, Heritage Impact Assessment for 646-648, 650-658, 660, 662, & 664 Yonge Street 2 & 4 Irwin Avenue, December 16, 2022.
- "Fire causes \$4,000 damage to boutique", *The Globe and Mail*, 5 Feb 1972, p.5.
- "Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District Plan," prepared by DIALOG in association with Philip Goldsmith, Carl Bray, and Archaeological Services Inc. for the City of Toronto, January 2016
- Ng, Nathan. Historical Maps of Toronto. (website)  
<http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/p/index-of-maps.html>
- "Three slide down roof to safety when fire menaces apartment", *The Globe and Mail*, 22 Jan 1940, p.4.
- "TV Store burns on Yonge Street", *The Globe and Mail*, 25 May 1977, p.3.



**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 650 Yonge Street is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, under the categories of design/physical value and contextual value.

**Description**

The property at 650 Yonge Street (including entrance addresses of 650A and 652 Yonge Street) is located on the west side of Yonge Street, in the block between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street. It is part of a contiguous row of mixed-use buildings constructed as a group between 1873 and 1875. The properties in the row retain their original scale, form, and massing as a 2-1/2-storey buildings and share the same design. They are part of a larger cohesive grouping of built heritage resources that provide a distinct sense of place and represent Toronto's 1860s-1950s architecture, a period when historic Yonge's commercial main street character was established and flourished.

The property at 650 Yonge Street was included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the Heritage Register) in 1974, and is identified as contributing property in the Historic Yonge Street Heritage Conservation District, adopted by City Council in 2016 and currently under appeal.

**Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

The 2-1/2-storey property at 650 Yonge Street has design and physical value for its typology as a representative example of a Main Street Commercial Row building constructed during a significant period of development along Yonge Street. It is part of an architecturally unified group comprising the 7 storefront bays at 646-658 Yonge Street, which share a common scale, form, and massing. The east elevation of 650 Yonge Street displays characteristics of the Georgian style, including the gable roof, symmetrical composition, and gabled dormer, in combination with other features more common to later periods of construction, resulting in a vernacular architectural expression.

Contextually, the property has cultural heritage value for maintaining and supporting the historic main street character of Yonge Street, south of Bloor Street. Situated on the west side of the block between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street, the subject property contributes to the low-rise streetwall condition found on this portion of Yonge Street through its scale, form and massing, and is consistent with the rhythm produced by fine-grained storefronts along the streetscape. The property is part of a row of buildings with the same architectural design, a typology that is found in a high concentration along this portion of Yonge Street, particularly on the west side of the street. In form and

architectural style, the row also references the group of buildings on the southwest corner of Irwin Avenue; together, these two groupings frame the intersection of Yonge Street and Irwin Avenue, and express one of Yonge Street's earliest periods of development as a commercial main street.

The property at 650 Yonge Street is functionally, visually and physically linked to Yonge Street, Toronto's "Main Street", as a mixed-use building housing the services, amenities, and employment opportunities necessary to support daily life in neighbouring residential areas. The property is also historically linked to the metamorphosis of Yonge Street into Toronto's main commercial corridor.

## **Heritage Attributes**

### **Design and Physical Value**

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 650 Yonge Street as a representative example of a Main Street Commercial Row building designed in a vernacular style with Georgian influences:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the row of buildings on the west side of Yonge Street between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street
- The rectangular plan, scale, form and massing of the 2-1/2-storey building
- The gable roof, with the ridgeline oriented parallel to Yonge Street
- On each bay of the principal (east) elevation, the symmetrical placement of the pair of window openings in the second storey and the centrally-placed dormer window with gable roof
- The brick cladding and detailing on the east elevation (currently stuccoed), which likely includes brick hood moulds and brick quoining on the south corner of the elevation
- Entrances providing at-grade access from the street to the ground floor and upper floors of the building
- Ground floor storefronts featuring an increased proportion of glazing compared to the upper stories (the storefronts have been modified)

### **Contextual Value**

The following heritage attributes contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property at 650 Yonge Street as supporting and maintaining the character of this portion of Yonge Street, and as being historically, functionally, and visually linked to its surroundings:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building within a group of buildings comprising an architecturally uniform row on the west side of Yonge Street between Irwin Avenue and St Mary Street
- The scale of the building, which is consistent with the 2-4 storey streetwall height along this portion of Yonge Street
- The recessed entrance doorways of the ground floor units, which are consistent with the storefronts along this portion of Yonge Street

- The higher percentage of glazing on the ground floor façade along Yonge Street relative to upper floors, which serves the purpose of indicating retail use at-grade that can be accessed directly from Yonge Street and residential and/or commercial uses in upper floors