

40 Wabash Avenue - Inclusion on the Heritage Register

Date: May 21, 2024

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Parkdale – High Park – Ward 4

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council include 40 Wabash Avenue (including entrance address at 50 Wabash Avenue) on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value and interest.

The subject property is an early-twentieth century, factory/warehouse type complex with Edwardian Classical detailing. Constructed in phases between 1910 and 1947, the brick and concrete frame complex includes a two-storey former office building on the west portion of the property, and a two and three-storey factory building with an adjoined one-storey structure at the base of a tall, brick smokestack on the east of the property.

Acquired by the City in 2000, the property at 40 Wabash Avenue is proposed to be adaptively re-used for a community centre. Detailed design of the community centre, including the re-use of the former industrial buildings, is now underway.

The property recommended for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register has been researched and evaluated by staff using the criteria prescribed in Ontario Regulation 9/06 and meets one or more of the provincial criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest and is believed to be of cultural heritage value or interest.

On January 1, 2023, amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (the Act) through the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) came into effect. Under the Act, as amended, a municipal heritage register may include properties that have not been designated but Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest", and that meet one or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether they are of cultural heritage value or interest. The Act now also limits listing to a period of two years.

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, properties must be listed on the heritage register prior to Part IV designation and before the occurrence 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 listing of non-designated properties on the municipal heritage register under the Act also extends interim protection from demolition and provides an opportunity for City Council to determine whether the property warrants conservation through designation under the Act should a development or demolition application be submitted.

Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained in accordance with the Official Plan Heritage Policies. Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA) are required for development applications that affect listed properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council include 40 Wabash Avenue (including entrance address at 50 Wabash Avenue) on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in accordance with the Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion) attached as Attachment 1 to the report, May 21, 2024, from the Acting Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

City Planning confirms there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 11, 2019, City Council adopted the decision of the Bid Award Panel to award the contract for the design of the new Wabash Community Centre to Diamond and Schmitt Architects. [Agenda Item History - 2019.BA43.3 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

On November 7, 2017, City Council adopted the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan - 2019 – 2038, which included the development of the Wabash Community Centre. [Agenda Item History - 2017.EX28.2 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

BACKGROUND

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, 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 nine provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

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

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.

On January 1, 2023, the Province's proposed amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act through the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) came into effect. Bill 23 makes listing a prerequisite to designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, should a property be subject to a development application.

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 or 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

Identifying properties of cultural heritage value or interest is an essential part of a municipality's role in heritage conservation. Including non-designated properties in the municipal register is a means to identify properties that the City believes to have cultural heritage value or interest.

The subject property is an early-twentieth century, factory/warehouse type complex with Edwardian Classical detailing. Constructed in phases between 1910 and 1947, the brick and concrete frame complex includes a two-storey former office building on the west portion of the property, and a two and three-storey factory building with an adjoined one-storey structure at the base of a tall, brick smokestack on the east side of the property.

The property at 40 Wabash Avenue is the last portion of a formal industrial area that has gradually been redeveloped for community use. Following the development of Sorauren Park (1995), the subject site of the former Canada Linseed Oil Mills Limited complex at 40 Wabash Avenue was acquired by the City in 2000. In 2003, a city-commissioned study concluded that the former industrial buildings on the complex could be adaptively re-used as a community centre.

The Wabash Building Society, a non-profit corporation with a volunteer board of directors, was formed in 2006 by local residents to push the redevelopment of 40 Wabash Avenue forward. Since renamed the Friends of Sorauren Park, the group led a fundraising campaign which contributed to the conversion of the former office building of the Canada Linseed Oil Mill Company into a fieldhouse for Sorauren Park, which opened in 2008. Further community activation and fundraising led to the redevelopment of the vacant lands between the fieldhouse and the factory buildings into the Sorauren Park Town Square, which opened in July 2014. In 2016, Council approved a budget for the redevelopment of the remaining lands at 40 Wabash Avenue, including the adaptive re-use of the former industrial buildings, as a community centre. The project is now in the detailed design phase.

The subject property has been identified as having design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value. More detailed historical research conducted through a future evaluation for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act may determine additional cultural heritage values for the property.

Proceeding with the inclusion of the property on the Heritage Register now will meet requirements under Bill 23 and will facilitate the efficient adaptive re-use of the buildings into the new community centre.

Inclusion of (non-designated) properties on the City's Heritage Register

Even though this property is owned by the City, it is important to identify the standard processes that apply to any owner of property subject to the Ontario Heritage Act. As a general rule, non-designated listed properties do not have any protection under the Ontario Heritage Act, except insofar as an owner must give Council at least 60 days' notice of their intention to demolish or remove a structure on the property. Properties that are listed on the City's Heritage Register are flagged for review by Heritage Planning staff once a demolition permit has been submitted and owners must follow established Notice requirements under the Ontario Heritage Act following this action.

Although inclusion on the Heritage Register as a listed property provides interim protection from demolition, it does not preclude an owner's ability to make exterior and interior alterations in the case when demolition or a development application is not involved. Listing does not trigger maintenance requirements over and above existing property standards and it does not restrict altering, removing or adding any features on the property. It does not allow the City to withhold a building permit for non-demolition related alterations and it does not preclude a property from undergoing renovation.

Short descriptive listings are prepared using a method by which properties are identified and recommended for inclusion on the Heritage Register. This approach to listing provides sufficient information to meet the requirements of Section 27 of the Act to list a non-designated property on the Heritage Register.

Brief statements, named "Reasons for Inclusion", are prepared for all recommended properties explaining why the property is believed to have cultural heritage value and how it meets one or more of the provincial criteria under O. Reg 9/06 providing a preliminary evaluation of the cultural heritage value or interest of the property. The description may include features of the property that may warrant conservation should the property be subject to development and/or further evaluated and determined to merit designation under Part IV of the Act. Location map and photographs are included in each Reasons for Inclusion.

Through Bill 108 and Bill 23, amendments were made to the Ontario Heritage Act to establish a process whereby owners can object to a property's listing on the Heritage Register and, should they do so, a subsequent decision on the listing must be made by the municipality. Owners can object to listings at any time. Chapter 103 of the Toronto Municipal Code establishes the process for Council consideration of objections to properties included on the

Heritage Register. In this circumstance, the City is the owner, so the objection process would not be triggered for a subsequent council decision on the listing of this property.

CONCLUSION

Following research and evaluation of the property at 40 Wabash Avenue according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property meets one or more provincial criteria and merits inclusion on the City's Heritage Register. The Listing Statement (Reason for Inclusion) is presented in Attachment 1.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 40 Wabash Avenue (Including entrance address at 50 Wabash Avenue) – Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion)

(INCLUDING ENTRANCE ADDRESS AT 50 WABASH AVENUE)**Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion)**

Staff have undertaken research and evaluation for the property at 40 Wabash Avenue and believe that the property has cultural heritage value or interest and meets at least one or more of the criteria prescribed in Ontario Regulation 9/06 for including a non-designated property on a municipal register under Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The subject property may meet additional criteria, which could be informed by community engagement and determined through further research and evaluation.

Listing Statement:

Description: Located in the Roncesvalles neighbourhood on the north side of Wabash Avenue and on the eastern border of Sorauren Park, the property at 40 Wabash Avenue contains the former Canada Linseed Oil Mills Limited factory/warehouse type complex constructed between 1910 and 1947.

The property at 40 Wabash Avenue has cultural heritage value as it meets the following criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act:

The property has value as a representative example of an early-twentieth century factory/warehouse type complex with Edwardian Classical detailing. Constructed in phases between 1910 and 1947, the brick and concrete frame complex includes a two-storey former office building on the west portion of the property, and on the east portion of the property, a two and three-storey factory building with an adjoined one-storey structure at the base of a tall, brick smokestack.

The property has value for its association with Canada Linseed Oil Mills Limited and the development of the surrounding neighbourhood in the early 20th century. The property also has value for its association with Toronto architect Charles Edward Langley who designed the 1910 section of the property. From 1892-1905, Charles practiced in the firm of Langley & Langley with his father, well-known Toronto architect Henry Langley. Following his father's death in 1905, Charles and W. Ford Howland formed the firm of Langley & Howland and became known for their bank buildings and residential designs for Toronto's elite.

The property has value for supporting and maintaining the former industrial character of the area to the north and south of Sorauren Park, and is visually and historically linked to its surroundings. The larger than average width of Wabash Avenue is the direct result of the freight rail spur that once serviced the Canada Linseed Oil Mills site. Across Sorauren Park to the north, the Robert Watson Factory (363 Sorauren Avenue) is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. On the south side of Wabash Avenue west of the subject property, the former National Equipment Company Ltd. Building (41 Wabash Avenue) is also designated.



40 Wabash Avenue, east facades (Heritage Planning, 2024).



40 Wabash Avenue, south and west facades of factory building (left) and office building (right). The office building is now Sorauran Park Fieldhouse. (Heritage Planning, 2024).



40 Wabash Avenue (outlined in red). Note: This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown (City of Toronto Mapping).