

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

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

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

**Wards:** Ward 11 - University-Rosedale

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance which includes a description of heritage attributes found in Attachment 1.

The subject property is located on the west side of Bay Street between Dundas Street West and Edward Street, in the Yonge-Bay Corridor. A location map and current photograph of the heritage property are found in Attachment 2.

The property contains the former Gray Coach Terminal, completed in 1931 to the designs of architect Charles Brammall Dolphin in an Art Deco style. His two most celebrated designs during this period include the Consumers' Gas Showroom (1930) at 2532 Yonge Street (Figure 6), and the Postal Delivery Building (1939-40) at 40 Bay Street, both of which feature Canadian-inspired motifs incorporated into the buildings' decorative elements. The property is an early example of a modern motor coach terminal, among the first of its type to be designed and constructed for this purpose in Canada. The property is associated with the Toronto Transportation Commission (forerunner to today's Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)) and the development of Toronto's transportation services and networks.

The property was listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on May 19, 1987.

Staff have determined that the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street) has cultural heritage value and meets six of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. 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 subject property and the adjacent parcel at 130 Elizabeth Street, collectively known as the Toronto Coach Terminal, were selected for redevelopment through the ModernTO program adopted by Toronto City Council in October 2019, and the property was decommissioned by the City in 2021.

On November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council adopted EX18.4 - ModernTO: Selection of Proponent for 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street, approving the selection of a development proponent. The proposed redevelopment on the site would include affordable rental housing and a new Toronto Paramedic Services hub, while retaining the terminal building fronting Bay Street. The City has designated the project as a priority project for review through the Priority Development Review (PDR) stream.

The Official Plan requires that when a City-owned property on the Heritage Register is no longer required for its current use, the City will demonstrate excellence in the conservation, maintenance, and compatible adaptive reuse of the property.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 604 Bay Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1, to the report, March 12, 2025, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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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**

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City Council included the subject property at the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address 610 Bay Street) on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on May 19, 1987.

On October 29 and 30, 2019, City Council adopted EX9.2 - ModernTO - City-Wide Real Estate Strategy and Office Portfolio Optimization, identifying 610 Bay Street as one of eight underutilized properties with the potential to address City needs and City building objectives, such as affordable housing, employment uses and community infrastructure. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.EX9.2>

On April 6 and 7, 2022, City Council adopted EX31.10 - ModernTO: Unlocking Eight City-Owned Properties, including a development strategy/vision for 610 Bay Street prioritizing the delivery of affordable housing, a Paramedics Multi-Hub, and adaptive heritage reuse, while adhering to the City's strategic investment policy. At the same meeting, City Council authorized the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, to issue a Request for Expression of Interest for the redevelopment of 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street and to report back to the CreateTO Board and City Council with the recommended strategy and proposed business case. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX31.10>

At its meeting on June 14 and 15, 2023, City Council adopted GG4.26 - ModernTO: 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street - Results of Request for Expression of Interest, approving the shortlist of preferred proponents for the redevelopment of 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street and authorizing CreateTO to issue a Request for Proposal to the shortlisted proponents as part of a staged market offering process. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2023.GG4.26>

On November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council adopted EX18.4 - ModernTO: Selection of Proponent for 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street, approving the selection of a development proponent for the properties at 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street and authorizing the appropriate City Divisions to negotiate and execute the necessary transactions (including leases and agreements) to proceed with the project. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX18.4>

## **POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS**

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### **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 Planning Statement (2024) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented. [Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

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**

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The subject property and the adjacent parcel at 130 Elizabeth Street are one of eight high-value, City-owned sites selected for priority redevelopment through the ModernTO program adopted by Toronto City Council in October 2019. Led by CreateTO, the proposed redevelopment on the site would include affordable rental housing, a new Toronto Paramedic Services hub, and public realm improvements, while retaining the terminal building fronting Bay Street.

The Official Plan requires that when a City-owned property on the Heritage Register is no longer required for its current use, the City will demonstrate excellence in the conservation, maintenance, and compatible adaptive reuse of the property. To make an application for the alteration of a heritage property under Section 33 of the OHA, the property must already be designated under Part IV, or Council must have stated its Intention to Designate under the OHA. Furthermore, Planning Act applications are to be informed by a property's designation by-law and cultural heritage value or interest determined under the Act such that a determination can be made whether the level of intervention and conservation proposed for a designated property is appropriate. The proposed redevelopment of the site will require an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment. An Official Plan Amendment will be required to permit the development to be partially visible behind the silhouette view of City Hall, which is a protected view in the City's Official Plan, and a Zoning By-law Amendment will be required to vary performance standards and regulate the built form on the site, including gross floor area, building height, setbacks, amenity space and parking.

Given that the development proposal for the subject property is a city partnership, featuring a significant amount of affordable housing and a new paramedic hub, the City has designated it as a priority project for review through the Priority Development Review (PDR) stream. The proponent has already engaged city staff in pre-application consultations regarding their imminent Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment applications, with the aim of delivering the project in a timely manner. As zoning is a critical milestone for unlocking project financing and maintaining overall



momentum, it is essential that a determination be made regarding the subject property's cultural heritage value as soon as possible.

## **Evaluation Analysis**

The following evaluation analysis is based on the comprehensive research conducted on the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address 610 Bay Street) (see Attachment 3) and provides the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

The property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address 610 Bay Street) meets the following 6 out of 9 criteria:

### **The property has design or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method**

The property at 604 Bay Street has design and physical value as an early example of a modern motor coach terminal, among the first of its type to be designed and constructed for this purpose in Canada. Completed in 1931, the terminal building and bus bays are clad in Queenston limestone and feature the use of the Stripped Classical variant of Art Deco, an architectural and artistic movement that was influenced by the technological innovations of the early-twentieth century, including developments in transportation.

### **The property has design or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit**

The property displays artistic merit through the spatial arrangement of the terminal building and bus yard, which provided for safe and efficient movement of both passenger and vehicular traffic within the site. Although there have been alterations to the terminal building and the bus yard since the original date of construction, the main components of the spatial arrangement, including the central entrance hall and the relationship between the terminal building and the bus platforms remain legible.

### **The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community**

Historically, the property is associated with the Toronto Transportation Commission (forerunner to today's Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)) and the development of Toronto's transportation services and networks. The property was developed by the TTC for their subsidiary Gray Coach Lines to provide interurban bus service between Toronto and other urban centres in Canada and the northern United States. In the early 1930s at the time of the construction of the new terminal, the TTC (with Gray Coach Lines) was one of Canada's largest operators of motor coaches. The property recalls the era when motor coaches were introduced as a new means of mass transportation on the highways that were being built across North America.

**The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community**

The property reflects the architectural career of Charles Brammall Dolphin, who is recognized by the Ontario Association of Architects for his significant contribution to the province's architectural heritage, and particularly celebrated for his original interpretations of the Art Deco style, including the Consumers' Gas Showroom (1930) at 2532 Yonge Street, and the Postal Delivery Building (1939-40) at 40 Bay Street. Both buildings feature Canadian-inspired motifs incorporated into their decorative elements. The Gray Coach Terminal features cast aluminum panels on the east and north facades of the main terminal building, which are also characteristic of his work.

**The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings**

Contextually, the Gray Coach Terminal is functionally and historically linked to the McKnight Building on the adjacent property to the south, where the Gray Coach Lines waiting room and offices were located prior to the construction of the new terminal building and bus yard. The property is also functionally and historically linked to the institutions, retail, and entertainment venues in the surrounding area of downtown Toronto, to which the coach terminal acted as a gateway for interurban travel.

**The property has contextual value because it is a landmark**

Situated on the west side of Bay Street, north of Dundas Street West, the subject property served as the arrival and departure point of many residents and visitors of Toronto for ninety years, functioning as a point of reference and landmark within the downtown core.

See Attachments 1, 2 and 3 of this report for the Statement of Significance; Location Map and Current Photograph; and Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources pertaining to the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street), as all of these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this staff report.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Staff have determined that the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street) meets 6 out of 9 criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. As such, the property merits designation and staff recommend that Council support the designation of this property to conserve its cultural heritage value.

The Statement of Significance: 604 Bay Street (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1 to this report comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Statement of Significance: 604 Bay Street (Reasons for Designation)  
Attachment 2 – Location Map and Current Photograph  
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

# **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: 604 BAY STREET (REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

# **ATTACHMENT 1**

## **Description**

The property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street), formerly the Gray Coach Terminal, is located on the southwest corner of Bay Street and Edward Street in downtown Toronto. Constructed in 1931, the property comprises a two-storey structure that served as the main terminal building with a one-and-a-half-storey covered bus yard extending from its west elevation. The bus yard, which originally had only four bus bays, was extended in 1949 and again in 1959 to span the full length of the property's frontage along Edward Street. The terminal building was expanded into the area behind the two easternmost bus bays in 1989. Both portions of the property are clad in limestone with building features that reflect Art Deco detailing.

## **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

### **Design and Physical Value**

The property at 604 Bay Street has design and physical value as an early example of a modern motor coach terminal, among the first of its type to be designed and constructed for this purpose in Canada. Completed in 1931, the terminal building and bus bays are clad in Queenston limestone and feature the use of the Stripped Classical variant of Art Deco, an architectural and artistic movement that was influenced by the technological innovations of the early-twentieth century, including developments in transportation.

The property displays artistic merit through the spatial arrangement of the terminal building and bus yard, which provided for safe and efficient movement of both passenger and vehicular traffic within the site. Although there have been alterations to the terminal building and the bus yard since the original date of construction, the main components of the spatial arrangement, including the central entrance hall and the relationship between the terminal building and the bus platforms remain legible.

### **Historical and Associative Value**

Historically, the property is associated with the Toronto Transportation Commission (forerunner to today's Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)) and the development of Toronto's transportation services and networks. The property was developed by the TTC for their subsidiary Gray Coach Lines to provide interurban bus service between Toronto and other urban centres in Canada and the northern United States. In the early 1930s at the time of the construction of the new terminal, the TTC (with Gray Coach Lines) was one of Canada's largest operators of motor coaches. The property recalls the era when motor coaches were introduced as a new means of mass transportation on the highways that were being built across North America.

The property reflects the architectural career of Charles Brammall Dolphin, who is recognized by the Ontario Association of Architects for his significant contribution to the province's architectural heritage, and particularly celebrated for his original interpretations of the Art Deco style, including the Consumers' Gas Showroom (1930) at

2532 Yonge Street, and the Postal Delivery Building (1939-40) at 40 Bay Street. Both buildings feature Canadian-inspired motifs incorporated into their decorative elements. The Gray Coach Terminal features cast aluminum panels on the east and north facades of the main terminal building, which are also characteristic of his work.

### **Contextual Value**

Contextually, the Gray Coach Terminal is functionally and historically linked to the McKnight Building on the adjacent property to the south, where the Gray Coach Lines waiting room and offices were located prior to the construction of the new terminal building and bus yard. The property is also functionally and historically linked to the institutions, retail, and entertainment venues in the surrounding area of downtown Toronto, to which the coach terminal acted as a gateway for interurban travel.

Situated on the west side of Bay Street, north of Dundas Street West, the subject property served as the arrival and departure point of many residents and visitors of Toronto for ninety years, functioning as a point of reference and landmark within the downtown core.

### **Heritage Attributes**

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

Attributes that contribute to 604 Bay Street being an early example of a modern motor coach terminal that displays artistic merit through its spatial arrangement:

- The placement, setback, and orientation of the structure on the southwest corner of Bay Street and Edward Street
- The scale, form, and massing of the main terminal building with its rectangular plan, two-storey height, and flat roof
- The hipped roof with skylight and steel framing on the roof of the main terminal building
- The use of the Stripped Classical variant of Art Deco, including:
  - Symmetrical arrangement of the east and north façade of the main terminal building
  - The double-height archway, centrally placed on the east elevation and accentuated by an arched roofline above, and the recessed plane of the main entrance doors and window within
  - The pilasters on the Bay Street and Edward Street elevations of the main terminal building and bus yard that extend above the roofline
  - Stylized classical motifs, including the keystone above the main entrance and low-relief dentil course below the parapet
  - Cast aluminum spandrels between the first and second storey windows with restrained ornamentation
  - The flat headed window openings on the north and east elevations that span the full width of each bay, and the half-width windows on the outside bays of the north elevation
  - The five-over-three mullion pattern of the windows on the on the north and east elevations, which align with the design on the aluminum spandrel panels
  - Queenston limestone exterior cladding on the exposed faces of the main terminal building and bus yard

- The four original, one-and-a-half storey tall bus bays on the north elevation (Edward Street)
- The main terminal building's interior layout, including:
  - The centrally located, 3-bay wide, double-height entrance hall delimited by columns
  - The coved ceiling and integrated laylight framing above the entrance hall
  - The bifurcated staircase leading up to the mezzanine level on the west end of the entrance hall
  - The mezzanine level that encircles and visually overlooks the entrance hall

### **Historical and Associative Value**

Attributes that contribute to 604 Bay Street being directly associated with the TTC and the theme of Toronto's transportation services and networks, and reflecting the work of Charles Dolphin:

- The regular rhythm of the additional bus bays to the west of the original four bays, which maintain the same design expression and height of the roofline across the extent of the bus yard
- The aluminum sign on the east elevation above the main entrance and the sign at the base of the pilaster to the north of the entrance, identifying "Grey Coach Lines"
- The leaded glass window with the Gray Coach Lines crest at the top of the mezzanine landing
- The use of the Art Deco style, and in particular the use of cast aluminum panels at the second floor and aluminum detailing

### **Contextual Value**

Attributes that contribute to 604 Bay being a landmark:

- The placement, setback, and orientation of the structure on the southwest corner of Bay Street and Edward Street
- The grand, double-height archway and arched parapet indicating the building's main entrance
- The main terminal building's 3-bay wide, double-height entrance hall with coved ceiling, which served as a gateway for departing and arriving passengers

**LOCATION MAP AND CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH  
604 BAY STREET (GRAY COACH TERMINAL)**

**ATTACHMENT 2**



This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red outline marks the location of the subject site (City of Toronto iView Mapping, annotated by Heritage Planning, 2025).



604 Bay Street (Heritage Planning, 2025).



**RESEARCH, EVALUATION &  
VISUAL RESOURCES**

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**604 BAY STREET (GRAY COACH TERMINAL)**

In undertaking this research and evaluation, we recognize that 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.



East (principal) elevation, former Gray Coach Terminal at 604 Bay Street, (Heritage Planning, 2025).

**1. DESCRIPTION**

<b>604 Bay Street (Gray Coach Terminal)</b>	
ADDRESS	604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street)
WARD	Ward 11 - University-Rosedale
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Yonge-Bay Corridor
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1931
ORIGINAL USE	Motor Coach Terminal Building
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law)	N/A
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Charles Brammall Dolphin
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 3
LISTING DATE	May 1987



## 2. ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06 CHECKLIST:

### CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The following checklist identifies the prescribed criteria met by the subject property at 604 Bay Street for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if the property 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.

#### 604 BAY STREET (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street)

1.	The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2.	The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	✓
3.	The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N/A
4.	The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	✓
5.	The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	N/A
6.	The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	✓
7.	The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	N/A
8.	The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	✓
9.	The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	✓

## 3. RESEARCH

This section of the report describes the history, architecture, and context of the property. Visual resources related to the research are located in Section 4. Archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Section 5 (List of Sources).

### i. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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 Ward

The subject property, located on the west side of Bay Street, north of Dundas Street West, was once part of the area of Toronto known as "The Ward",<sup>1</sup> a densely populated, working-class neighbourhood during the nineteenth century. Immigration was a large driver of population growth within The Ward, which at varying times was home to significant proportions of Toronto's Jewish, Irish, Italian, Black, and Chinese communities. The high population density and poor sanitary conditions became a growing concern for government officials.

Starting in the late 1880s, several large sites in the southern portion of The Ward were cleared for commercial and civic redevelopment, including the construction of a new department store for the Timothy Eaton Company and the E.J. Lennox-designed city hall along Queen Street West. The residential fabric of The Ward was further eroded in the early 1910s with the construction of a new hospital on the south side of College Street, and other smaller redevelopment sites began to proliferate throughout the neighbourhood.

The block bound by Edward Street, Elizabeth Street, Agnes Street (Dundas Street West), and Terauley Street (Bay Street), which contains the subject property at 604 Bay Street, follows the same pattern of redevelopment. At the turn of the twentieth century, the block contained a collection of small, wood-frame houses (Figure 1). The south half of the block fronting Dundas Street West was the first to be redeveloped. Starting with the properties at Elizabeth Street in the early 1900s and moving east towards Bay Street, all the house-form buildings on this block were demolished and replaced with larger, brick buildings with commercial tenants (Figure 2). The three last remaining lots were demolished in 1925 and replaced with a five-storey commercial building, known as the McKnight Building; it still stands on the northwest corner of Bay Street and Dundas Street West.

Until this point, the north half of the block fronting Edward Street was generally unchanged. However, within two years of the construction of the McKnight Building, the landowner of the properties on the north portion of the block fronting Edward Street (Trinity College), cleared the remaining houses leaving a large vacant parcel of land. In August 1927, Trinity College entered into a Lease Agreement with Gray Coach Lines for their exclusive use of the vacant lot for their motor transportation business. Responding to the growing demand for interurban bus transportation, the Toronto Transportation Commission then purchased the property between 1930-1931 for the purpose of constructing a new terminal for Gray Coach Lines.

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<sup>1</sup> The name of "The Ward" for the area is taken from the formal name St. John's Ward, which had boundaries at present-day Bloor Street, Yonge Street, Queen Street, and University Avenue. A detailed history of the area can be found in the book authored by John Lorinc et.al. titled *The Ward: The Life and Loss of Toronto's First Immigrant Neighbourhood*, published by Coach House Books.

## Gray Coach Lines

Gray Coach Lines Limited was incorporated as a subsidiary of the Toronto Transportation Commission<sup>2</sup> (TTC) on June 28, 1927. In addition to operating public transportation routes within the city of Toronto, TTC motor coach operations in the early 1920s included renting out buses for chartered trips and operating sightseeing routes to local attractions and other destinations in southern Ontario, including Niagara Falls (starting in 1926).<sup>3</sup> As demand for interurban travel for both business and leisure activities began to grow, the TTC became concerned about competition from other private companies providing bus transportation to Toronto from outside the city. In 1926, legislation was passed to allow the TTC to acquire the assets of several private bus lines, and Gray Coach Lines was incorporated as a result. Through Gray Coach Lines, the TTC extended their monopoly on interurban bus travel by making additional purchases of their competitors' vehicles and operating permits over the next several years. Although owned by the TTC, Gray Coach lines was managed separately with its own Board of Directors.

Early offices of Gray Coach Lines were located in the McKnight Building at the corner of Bay Street and Dundas Street West, using the vacant lot to the north as an open air terminal for the arrival and departure of coaches (Figures 3-5). However, the popularity of the bus service and the rapid expansion of operations made it clear that the situation was untenable for much longer, and the TTC began making plans for a purpose-built terminal building to handle the volumes of passengers of its coach services. The sale of the site, comprising Lots 13 to 19 on the south side of Edward Street between Bay Street and Elizabeth Street from Trinity College to the TTC, was registered between 1930 and 1931.

Local architect Charles Brammall Dolphin was hired to design the new motor coach terminal. Dolphin's contemporary Art Deco design aligned with the TTC's desire to promote itself as a modern and progressive company,<sup>4</sup> which by this time was one of the largest operators of motor coaches in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

At its height, Gray Coach Lines operated a 2,500-kilometre network of routes that extended from North Bay and Sudbury in the north, to London in the west, and to Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and New York in the south.<sup>6</sup> The network provided an important service for many suburban and rural community members, who relied on Gray Coach Lines and other bus line companies to provide an affordable option for transportation and parcel shipping to other urban centres. In the 1970s, Gray Coach Lines was also contracted to operate some of GO Transit's bus services but following a provincial ruling to eliminate the company's exclusive rights to certain key routes, profit margins began to fall. Continued competition and falling revenues through the 1980s ultimately led the TTC to sell Gray Coach Lines in 1990 to a private company.

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2 The Toronto Transportation Commission was first incorporated in 1921 and later became known as the Toronto Transit Commission (starting in 1953).

3 Toronto Transportation Commission, 1929, p.3.

4 City of Toronto Archives online exhibit: The TTC - 100 years of moving Toronto.

5 Toronto Transportation Commission, 1932, p.1. & Berney, p.6.

6 City of Toronto Archives, subject description: Gray Coach Lines Limited.

## **Charles Brammall Dolphin**

Born in England and educated at McGill University, Charles Brammall Dolphin (1888-1969) apprenticed with several Montreal architectural firms, including Ross and Macdonald,<sup>7</sup> before completing a year of study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris just prior to the outbreak of World War I. During the war, Dolphin served in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces based in France, before returning to Canada in 1920 and later establishing his own practice in Toronto in 1925.

Dolphin was open to new ideas and embraced innovations within the architectural profession; quoted in a news article in 1928, he praised the progress exemplified by modern architectural styles, for their more efficient arrangement of space and ability to incorporate new building technologies.<sup>8</sup> He appears to have held to this philosophy throughout the span of his career, which featured a variety of architectural styles.

A high proportion of Dolphin's work dates to the first decade of his architectural practice, and he is particularly known for his "flamboyant" and "highly original" interpretations of the Art Deco style during the 1930s.<sup>9</sup> His two most celebrated designs during this period include the Consumers' Gas Showroom (1930) at 2532 Yonge Street (Figure 6), and the Postal Delivery Building (1939-40) at 40 Bay Street, both of which feature Canadian-inspired motifs incorporated into the buildings' decorative elements. His work is also known to feature the use of cast aluminum panels, which appear on the Gray Coach Terminal (1931) as well as the Consumers' Gas Showroom, and Postal Station Q (1951-54) on St. Clair Avenue East, which was reclad in 2019.

Later in his career, Dolphin designed several hospital buildings throughout Ontario, before retiring in the 1950s. Dolphin is recognized by the Ontario Association of Architects by being listed on their Honour Roll, which is only bestowed upon those who have made a significant contribution to the province's architectural heritage, either through their body of work or their influence in the wider community of design, education, and/or publication.

## **ii. 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.

### **Art Deco - Stripped Classical Style**

The Art Deco movement encompassed a wide range of visual and decorative arts, including product design and architecture. It began in Paris in the 1910s but did not receive widespread international attention until 1925, when a trade show held in Paris (the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes) introduced the style to a broader audience. In architectural terms, Art Deco architecture in Canada

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<sup>7</sup> While working for Ross and McDonald, Dolphin contributed to the design Central Technical School (1915), designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. (*The Globe*, May 28, 1915, p.7).

<sup>8</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, Dec 28, 1928, p.8.

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Association of Architects, n.d.

is generally understood to fall within three categories: Zigzag (or 1920s Art Deco), Streamline Moderne, and Stripped Classical.<sup>10</sup> Of the three variants, Stripped Classical is most often associated with public architecture.

The Art Deco movement's aesthetic inspirations were wide-ranging, both geographically and historically, drawing on motifs and elements from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as Asia, Africa, and Central America. Other contemporary European art movements were also referenced. Unlike Classical and Beaux-Arts architecture, which were characterized by the three-dimensional quality of architectural elements such as free-standing columns, architraves and deeply projecting cornices, Stripped Classicism sought to accentuate the bold, simple volumes of a structure, "[evoking] classical architecture rather than strictly copying it".<sup>11</sup> This was achieved through the simplification of decorative elements; cornices were referenced by contrasting bands of stonework while free standing columns were substituted with flattened pilasters, creating a two-dimensional quality that complemented the overall form of a structure.

In Canada, Art Deco architecture reflects the interest in a nationalist expression that began in the early 1920s. As the style evolved through the 1920s, Art Deco architecture was also increasingly influenced by the technological innovations of the early-twentieth century, including new structural systems, building materials and advances in transportation.

### **Coach Terminals in North America**

Constructed in 1931, Toronto's Gray Coach Terminal is an early example of the typology. In the early days of the coach transportation industry, it was common for each different operator to have their own pick-up and drop-off locations, which may or may not have had seating and/or shelter for waiting passengers. In cities where a centralized location was used, early terminals were often repurposed buildings adapted from another transportation use (such as Hamilton Terminal Station, constructed 1907 to serve interurban rail travel and transitioned to use as a bus terminal between 1927-1931), or other commercial uses (such as Calgary's 1913 Southam Building, which housed a Greyhound bus terminal starting in 1933). An advertisement in *The Globe* claimed the Gray Coach Terminal was the "first terminal station in Canada designed and built solely for the service of motor coach passengers"<sup>12</sup> while an article in *Construction* published in 1932 identified the property as the "first modern motor coach terminal" to be designed in Canada.<sup>13</sup> However, one building with a similar purpose that predates the Gray Coach Terminal is Vancouver's Motor Transport Building (completed 1926, demolished 1946), which incorporated offices, ticket sales, and a single covered bus bay at the rear of the building (Figure 7).

Not only was the Gray Coach Terminal considered early for its typology within Canada, it can also be considered early within a North American context, as many of the early

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<sup>10</sup> Stripped Classicism is sometimes considered to be its own architectural style, influenced in part by Art Deco.

<sup>11</sup> Bryant, 2011, p.38.

<sup>12</sup> *The Globe*, Dec 21, 1931, p.14.

<sup>13</sup> *Construction*, 1932, p.93.

coach terminals in the United States date to the late 1930s. A high proportion of these were designed for Greyhound Lines in the Streamline Moderne style by architect William Strudwick Arrasmith between 1937 and the early 1950s, including several that are on the American National Register of Historic Places.<sup>14</sup> Vancouver's second bus terminal (1947) and Montreal's West Terminal building (1952) were also designed in a Streamline Moderne style.

## **Gray Coach Terminal**

The Gray Coach Terminal at 604 Bay Street was constructed in 1931. The TTC's annual statement for that year described the new terminal as "moderate in size, yet capable of handling economically a large volume of traffic" and boasted that the terminal building "ranks as one of the best and most attractive on the continent."<sup>15</sup>

The building is designed in the Stripped Classical variant of the Art Deco style, which was commonly applied to public works projects and civic buildings of this time. The features of this style are evident in the symmetrical design, the rounded archway distinguishing the main entrance, the pilasters that separate the vertical bays and project upwards from the roofline, and the material palette of stone and cast aluminum spandrel panels (Figure 8). The spandrel panels have a simple low-relief design featuring vertical lines that align with the mullion pattern of the windows (Figure 9).

The main terminal building is two-storeys in height with a rectangular footprint. The roofline is flat, with an arched parapet above the rounded archway signifying the main entrance bay. The plane of the entrance, which is slightly recessed compared to the rest of the bays on the façade and accented with a protruding keystone, gives the impression of a double-height portal, which was another common feature of the Art Deco style. Aluminum signage identifying Gray Coach Lines is located above the main entrance and on the base of the pilaster on the north side of the entrance (Figures 10-11).<sup>16</sup> Centred on the roof is a pyramidal steel structure supporting a glass skylight, situated to align with a laylight over the central entrance hall on the interior.

The double-height entrance hall is the main focal point of the interior and functioned as the waiting room in the original floor plan (Figure 12). Occupying the three centre bays and stretching the full length of the original footprint, the space receives natural light from a laylight centred within the coved ceiling (Figures 13-15). Prior to alterations to the interior, windows on the east and west sides of the building also allowed a large amount of natural light to reach the entrance hall. At the west end of the space, a bifurcated staircase connects to a mezzanine gallery overlooking the entrance hall, which was originally open to the public and contained additional seating, as well as smaller offices available for rent. A large stained glass window featuring the Gray Coach Lines crest creates a focal point at the landing of the staircase, opposite the main entrance.

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14 Greyhound mirrored the Moderne aesthetic of their buildings with the design of their vehicle fleet, which also adopted the streamlined look and sleek curves associated with this later variant of Art Deco.  
15 Harvey, 1932, p.32.

16 The same signage was originally located on the pilaster to the south of the entrance but is no longer there.

Extensive interior alterations have altered the ground floor layout beyond the columns delimiting the entrance hall, and all of the interior finishes have been replaced over time. In 1989-90, a major renovation expanded the interior of the terminal building, adding additional seating by taking over two of the original four bus bays on the west side of the terminal building, and included the construction of a tunnel underneath Bay Street to create a pedestrian connection to Dundas subway station. The renovation project won a Toronto Historical Board Award of Merit in 1992 "for the retention of the terminal building, the removal of undesirable alterations, and the restoration of original features."<sup>17</sup>

The alterations have not significantly altered the circulation patterns of the original design, which were thoughtfully considered for safety and efficiency (Figure 10). Passengers would enter the spacious entrance hall, purchase their tickets, and exit to the four departure platforms along the north side of the building. Arriving passengers would alight from their coach on the west end of the bus yard near Elizabeth Street and walk under a covered canopy running along the south edge of the property to enter the central hall through a different door, near which the lavatories, a newsstand, and drug store were located. Once passengers had been offloaded, vehicles could easily turn from the arrival platform into any of the four departure platforms and exit via Edward Street, eliminating the necessity to reverse on site. Servicing was conducted on the northwest corner of the lot, with an accompanying inspection building that was demolished in 1959 (Figure 16).

The original bus yard was only partially covered, providing a roof over the departure bays at a height approximately midway between the first and second storey of the main terminal building. The exterior facing of the bus bays was designed to match the terminal building, featuring a regular rhythm of limestone-clad piers extending above the roofline. Over time, extensions to the roof canopy and additional platforms were added (in 1949 and 1959) to accommodate increased passenger volumes. While the proportions of the new bays were wider than the original four bus bays, the same cladding treatment and detailing was used, creating a unified appearance for the full length of the elevation along Edward Street (Figure 17). A canopy was added above the bus bays in 1989-90 as part of the major renovation that also included the expansion of the terminal.

### **iii. 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 City of Toronto Property Data Map attached (Attachment 2) shows the site of the property at 604 Bay Street (including entrance address at 610 Bay Street).

The area surrounding the subject property is a mixed-use neighbourhood consisting of a variety of buildings dating from the second half of the 19th century and later infill development constructed through the early 21st century (Figures 18-19). Historically

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<sup>17</sup> Toronto Historical Board, 1992.

located within The Ward, one of Toronto's most important neighbourhoods in the 1840s-1950s, the area has undergone substantial evolution and redevelopment.

During the post-war period, The Ward became part of Toronto's first designated urban renewal study area, with the southern portion of the lands already expropriated for the construction of new City Hall in the late 1940s. By 1958, two-thirds of Old Chinatown immediately south of the subject property was expropriated and demolished, dispersing the Chinese community to new areas east, west, and north. The process of land assembly and demolition in the neighbourhood continued into the 1990s. Toronto's then mayor Barbara Hall reformed zoning in the 1990s to allow for mixed-use developments, which brought significant residential investment to the area. Since 2010, institutional development has contributed to the growth of the area, with the expansion of the Toronto Metropolitan University's campus to the east and investments in the University Health Network and SickKids Hospital facilities west and north of the subject property.

Despite these changes in the surrounding built form, the subject property maintains a historical connection to the adjacent property to the south, which contains the extant McKnight Building. Constructed in 1926, the building was home to Gray Coach Lines' original offices when the subject property was an open air terminal. The downtown location of the terminal was important to the profitability of the company's business model, which capitalized on the growing industry of leisure travel, through its proximity to other local destinations, including the retail, institutional, and entertainment venues in the surrounding area.

For many passengers, the Gray Coach Terminal would have been their first impression of the city. Over the course of its 90 year history, the terminal's entrance hall and waiting areas formed a backdrop for people's memories, playing host to innumerable goodbyes and reunions between families and friends. Situated in a central location on the west side of Bay Street, just north of Dundas Street West, the property at 604 Bay Street serves as a local landmark, functioning as a gateway to those arriving in Toronto and those departing the city for other destinations.



#### 4. VISUAL RESOURCES

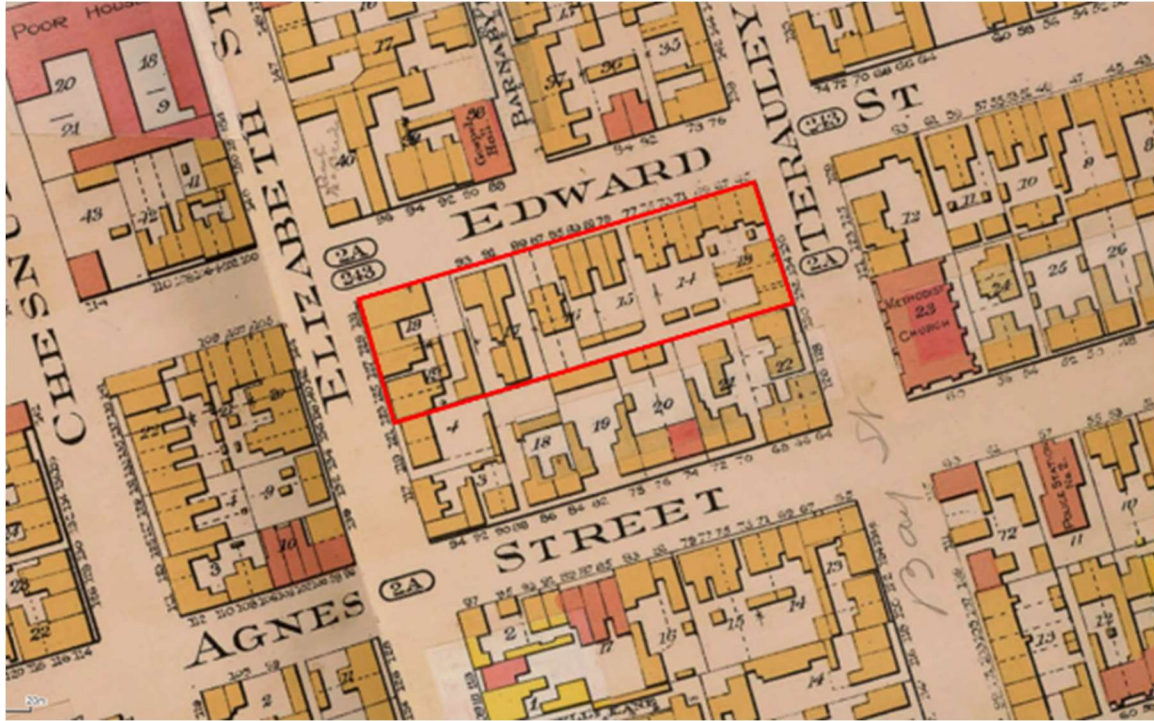


Figure 1: Goad's Historical Atlas map from 1903, illustrating the dense built form typical of The Ward in the early twentieth century. The location of the subject property is outlined in red. (Ng, annotated by Heritage Planning)



Figure 2: Goad's Historical Atlas map from 1924, illustrating the progression of redevelopment on the block bounded by Edward Street, Elizabeth Street, Dundas Street West, and Bay Street. The approximate location of the subject property is outlined in red. (Ng, annotated by Heritage Planning)





Figure 3: Archival photograph taken in September 1930, showing the Gray Coach Lines ticket office and waiting room on the ground floor of the McKnight Building. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 4: Archival photograph from December 1930, showing a detail of the Gray Coach Lines office window (located in the McKnight Building). The window signage advertises the destinations available. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 5: Archival photograph from June 1931, looking southwest at Bay Street and Edward Street, showing the vacant lot north of the McKnight Building that was used as the open air bus terminal. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 6: Archival photograph from 1931, showing the Consumers' Gas North Toronto sales building at 2532 Yonge Street, designed by architect Charles Dolphin in an Art Deco style. (City of Toronto Archives)





Figure 7: Archival photograph from 1938, showing the Motor Transport Building at Dunsmuir and Seymour Streets. Constructed in 1925-26, the building's design incorporated one integrated bus platform, visible on the right side of the image. (Vancouver Public Library, via Vancouver Sun)



Figure 8: Archival photograph from December 19, 1931, the official opening day of the Gray Coach Terminal. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 9: Archival photograph from July 1932, showing a detail of the cast aluminum spandrels and window mullion pattern. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 10 (left): Detail of main entrance, Bay Street elevation (Heritage Planning, 2025)  
 Figure 11 (right): Detail of Gray Coach Lines signage, Bay Street elevation (Heritage Planning, 2025).





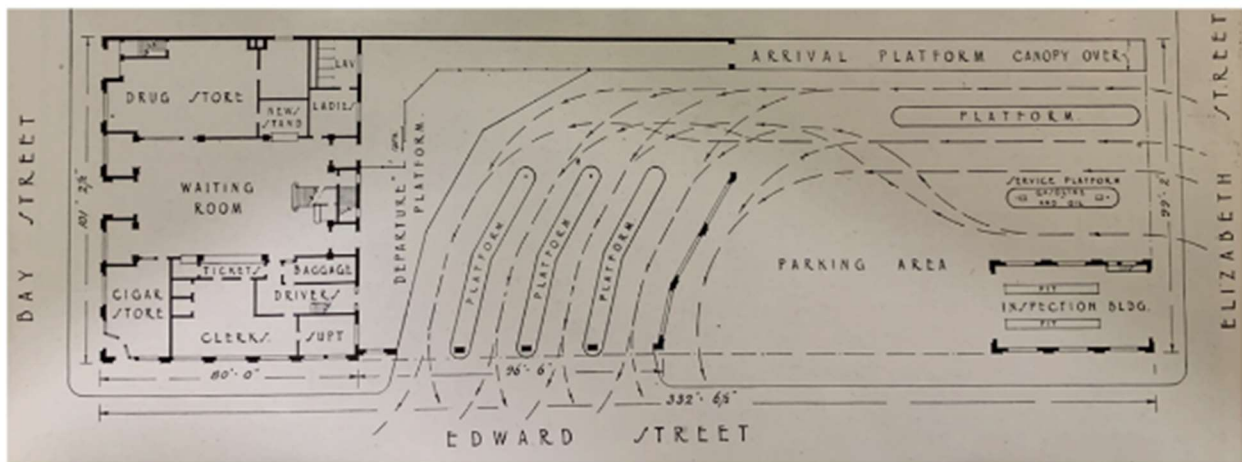


Figure 12: Floor plan of terminal building and bus yard, as illustrated in *Construction* magazine, published April 1932. The circulation paths of coach traffic within the bus yard are indicated by arrows.



Figure 13: Archival photograph of the terminal building's entrance hall from March 1932, showing the open mezzanine, leaded glass with Gray Coach crest, and doors connecting to the departure and arrival platforms. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 14: Current photograph of terminal building entrance hall, looking west. (Heritage Planning, 2025)



Figure 15: Current photograph of the terminal building entrance hall, looking southeast. (Heritage Planning, 2025)





Figure 16: Archival photograph of the original bus yard, looking west. The covered arrivals platform is seen on the left side of the image and the inspection building and service platform (demolished) are seen on the right. (City of Toronto Archives)



Figure 17: 604 Bay Street, looking southwest. (Heritage Planning, 2025)





Figure 18: View south on Bay Street, from Edward Street. (Heritage Planning, 2025)



Figure 19: View southeast from Edward Street, west of Elizabeth Street. (Heritage Planning, 2025)

## 5. LIST OF SOURCES

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