

## **120 Bloor Street East and 1286 Bloor Street West - Inclusion on the Heritage Register**

**Date:** September 18, 2025

**To:** City Council

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

**Wards:** Ward 11 – University-Rosedale; Ward 9 - Davenport

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council include 120 Bloor Street East and 1286 Bloor Street West on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for their cultural heritage value and interest according to the Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion) found in Attachments 1 and 2.

The subject property at 120 Bloor Street East is located on the north side of Bloor Street East between Park Road and Church Street in the Bloor-Yorkville neighbourhood.

The subject property at 120 Bloor Street East contains a 7-storey Modern Classicism style building with a 2-storey mechanical penthouse, constructed for the Crown Life Insurance Company in 1954. A location map and current photograph of the heritage property are found in Attachment 1.

The subject property at 1286 Bloor Street West is located on the north side of Bloor Street West between St. Clarens Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue in the Junction-Wallace Emerson neighbourhood. The building once contained a purpose-built movie theatre (Academy Theatre), designed by architects George Redmond and Neil Beggs constructed in 1913. A location map and current photograph of the heritage property are found in Attachment 2.

The properties recommended for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register have been researched and evaluated by staff using the criteria prescribed in Ontario Regulation 9/06 and meet one or more of the provincial criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest and are 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**

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

1. City Council include 120 Bloor Street East on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in accordance with the Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion) attached as Attachment 1 to the report, September 18, 2025, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.
2. City Council include 1286 Bloor Street West on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in accordance with the Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion) attached as Attachment 2 to the report, September 18, 2025, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

## **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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On May 19, 2021, Council adopted TE25.18 – Bloor-Yorkville Area – City-Initiated Secondary Plan – Status Update. A Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) will identify, document, and evaluate properties of cultural heritage value or interest within the mixed-use areas of the Bloor-Yorkville Secondary Plan study area, where growth is anticipated. [Agenda Item History – 2021.TE25.18](#)

## POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

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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 included in the Heritage Register under subsection 27 (1) 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 included on the Heritage Register as a non-designated property if the property meets one 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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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, and to provide the City with time to evaluate those properties

for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, should an application to demolish a listed property be submitted.

### **120 Bloor Street East**

In 2020, Heritage Planning initiated a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) as a part of Phase 1 of the Bloor-Yorkville Secondary Plan – Research and Analysis, in order to identify, document, and evaluate properties of cultural heritage value or interest within the mixed-use areas of the Bloor-Yorkville Secondary Plan study area, where growth is anticipated. The property at 120 Bloor Street East has been identified as a potential heritage property in the CHRA for the Bloor-Yorkville area. The CHRA was suspended during the pandemic, but Heritage Planning has resumed the study and is finalizing the CHRA for consideration in Q4 2025.

The subject property at 120 Bloor Street East contains a 7-storey Modern Classicism style building with a 2-storey mechanical penthouse, constructed for the Crown Life Insurance Company in 1954. Constructed in structural steel, reinforced concrete, and Silver Queenston and Grey Indiana limestone, the property was built during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as a part of Insurance Row in the Bloor-Yorkville area.

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.

### **1286 Bloor Street West**

The subject property at 1286 Bloor Street West contains a 3-storey, Classical Revival-style building, which once contained a purpose-built movie theatre (Academy Theatre), constructed in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century. Constructed in brick and stone, the property was built within the first decade of Bloor Street's primary period of development in the Junction-Wallace Emerson area.

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.

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

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.

A municipality is not required to consult with property owners or the public before including non-designated properties on the municipal register under the Act. The City's current practice, developed prior to Bill 23 amendments to the Act coming into effect, notifies property owners and invites them to attend the Toronto Preservation Board meeting to discuss the recommendation of a property's inclusion on the City's Heritage Register. There is also an opportunity for owners and the public to share concerns (in person or writing) when Community Council or Planning and Housing Committee considers a heritage related matter.

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.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Following research and evaluation of the properties at 120 Bloor Street East and 1286 Bloor Street West according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that both of the properties meet one or more provincial criteria and merit inclusion on the City's Heritage Register. The respective Listing Statements (Reasons for Inclusion) are included as Attachment 1 and Attachment 2.

## CONTACT

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## SIGNATURE

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Jason Thorne  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning

## ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment 1 – 120 Bloor Street East Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion)  
Attachment 2 – 1286 Bloor Street West Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion)

**Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion)**

Staff have undertaken research and evaluation for the property at 120 Bloor Street East 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 on the north side of Bloor Street East between Park Road and Church Street, the property at 120 Bloor Street East known as the Crown Life Insurance Building contains a 7-storey plus 2-storey penthouse office building completed in 1954 and designed in the Modern Classical style by the architectural firm of Marani & Morris. Constructed as the new Toronto head office location of the Crown Life Insurance Company, the limestone-clad building with cut stone and granite detailing is part of the Bloor-Yorkville neighbourhood, an area whose context is defined by the presence of pre- and post-World War II office buildings, many built for insurance companies and designed by Marani & Morris.

The property at 120 Bloor Street East has cultural heritage value as it meets the following criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act:

Anchoring the north side of Bloor Street East between Park Road and Church Street, the property at 120 Bloor Street East contains the Crown Life Insurance Building. Commissioned as the company's headquarters and completed in 1954, the 7-storey office building with a 2-storey mechanical penthouse on a T-shaped plan is valued as a fine example of Modern Classicism. At the subject property, the style's tension is defined by the contrast between its modern structural steel and reinforced concrete structure with a regular rhythm of gridded metal window openings, all elegantly clad in traditional Silver Queenston and Grey Indiana limestone. On the principal (south) elevation, carved limestone relief sculptures, including two corner plaques and a large Crown Life Insurance Company Coat of Arms surmounting the centred and colonnaded main entrance, further signal the style's lingering classical sensibilities for civic and institutional architecture.

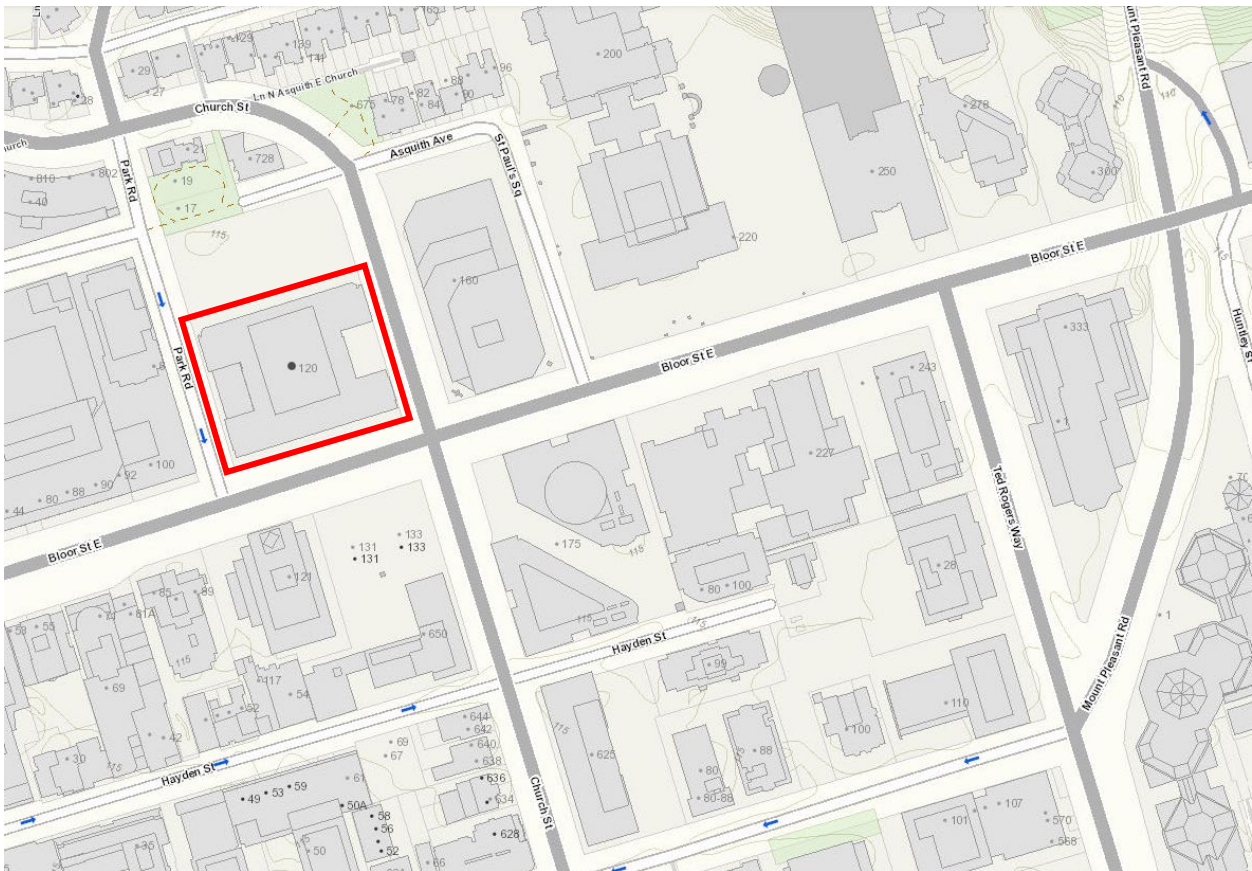
The property at 120 Bloor Street East is also valued for its association with the prominent Toronto partnership of Marani & Morris (including its successor firms), recognized as "one of the leading architectural firms in the country". The firm was responsible for many prestigious civic and institutional buildings in Toronto during the post-World War II era, including five properties along the ceremonial boulevard of University Avenue and six institutional commissions defining "Insurance Row" along the Bloor Street East corridor between Yonge and Jarvis streets. With more commissions than any other firm for projects along these significant thoroughfares, the transitional Modern Classicist design aesthetic of Marani & Morris is distinguished as a defining part of both the University Avenue and Bloor Street East streetscapes today.

Contextually, the Crown Life Insurance Building is valued for its role in defining, maintaining and supporting the mid-20th century character of the Bloor-Yorkville area envisioned as Insurance Row, where a collection of six purpose-built commercial towers commissioned as the Toronto head offices for several significant insurance companies to Canada's history were strategically constructed in the 1950s and 1960s to take advantage of the intersection of the then-new Yonge and Bloor-Danforth subway lines.

As part of this Insurance Row collection along Bloor Street East – “the major venue of Toronto's insurance companies” – the Crown Life Insurance Building at 120 Bloor Street East is historically, functionally and visually linked to its surroundings where it contributes to the broader group of Marani & Morris-designed buildings, including the 1953 and 1968 additions to the 1926 Manufacturers' Life Building (200 and 250 Bloor Street East), the 1956 Confederation Life Building (321 Bloor Street East), and the 1956 Traders Building (625 Church Street) which is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.



120 Bloor Street East, south elevation (Heritage Planning, 2025).



120 Bloor Street East (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, 2025).

**Listing Statement (Reasons for Inclusion)**

Staff have undertaken research and evaluation for the property at 1286 Bloor Street West 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 on the north side of Bloor Street West between St. Clarens Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue in the Junction-Wallace Emerson neighbourhood, the property at 1286 Bloor Street West contains a 3-storey, Classical Revival-style building, which once contained a theatre.

The property at 1286 Bloor Street West (Academy Theatre) has cultural heritage value as it meets the following criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act:

The property is an early and rare example in Toronto of a type of building - a purpose-built movie theatre. The first purpose-built movie theatre in Toronto was constructed in 1909 – just a few years before this one in 1913, making the subject property one of the earliest purpose-built movie theatres in the Toronto and now one of the oldest surviving theatre-buildings in the city.

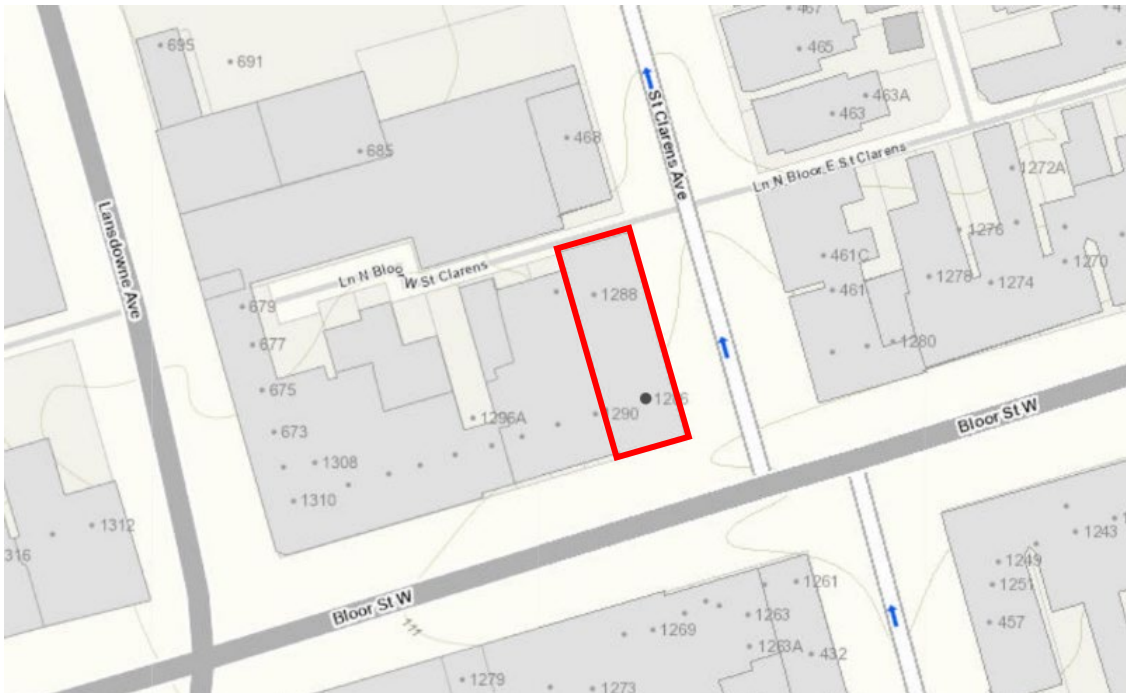
The property has design or physical value for being a representative of the Classical Revival style, expressed by its classical pilasters, semi-circular windows, ornamental window surrounds, and its rusticated base. Simple classical roofline and secondary cornices originally added to the character. The property demonstrates the work of the architectural practice of George Redmond and Neil Beggs (1913 – 1921), being one of six known movie theatres designed by the duo, with four of their theatres being in Toronto and two others elsewhere in Ontario.

The property was constructed during the earliest primary development of Bloor Street West in the Junction-Wallace Emerson area, in the decade before the First World War. It potentially yields information that contributes to an understanding of that community by reflecting this earliest historical development.

The property contributes to defining, supporting and maintaining the historical main street character of Bloor Street West in the Junction-Wallace Emerson area. It was developed in the decade prior to the First World War, with its 3-storey scale and historic architectural design making it integral in the streetscape.



1286 Bloor Street West, south elevation (Heritage Planning, 2025).



1286 Bloor Street West (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, 2025).