

877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East – Proposed Designation By-law Under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act - Consideration of Objection

Date: June 9, 2025

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: 16 - Don Valley East

SUMMARY

This report recommends that Council affirm its decision of March 26, 2025 (Item PH19.6) stating its intention to designate the properties at 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The City has received an objection to the Notice of Intention to Designate on behalf of the properties' owner within the statutory timeline.

The subject properties at 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East are located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue East and northwest of The Donway West. The subject properties are purpose-built bank branches constructed to serve the post-war Don Mills community, and both have continuously operated for nearly seventy years. The design and development of the properties were coordinated together. The property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East, known as the Bank of Montreal Don Mills Branch, contains a one-storey International-Style pavilion bank building constructed for the Bank of Montreal in 1956 and expanded in 1967. The property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East, known as the Bank of Nova Scotia Don Mills Branch, also contains a one-storey International-Style pavilion bank building constructed for the Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotiabank) in 1956 and expanded between 1966 and 1967.

City Council has until July 29, 2025, 90 days from the date of the end of the objection period, or 120 days from the issuance of the Notice of Intention to Designate, to make a decision on this objection as per the timeline under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Staff have reviewed the objections raised by the owner and are of the opinion that despite these objections, each property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, under 5 of 9 criteria for design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values.

As the properties have cultural heritage value or interest and meet the prescribed criteria pursuant to Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, these properties should be designated. Designation enables Council to review proposed alterations for the properties, enforce heritage property standards and maintenance, and refuse demolition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council affirm its decision to state its intention to designate the property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act as set out in Council Decision 2025.PH19.6 on March 26 and 27, 2025.
2. City Council affirm its decision to state its intention to designate the property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act as set out in Council Decision 2025.PH19.6 on March 26 and 27, 2025.
3. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bills in Council designating each property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

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

At its meeting of March 26-27, 2025, City Council stated its intention to designate the properties at 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.PH19.6>

BACKGROUND

Council has stated its intention to designate the properties at 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). Notice of Council's intention to Designate was served on the property owners and the Ontario Heritage Trust and was published in accordance with the OHA. The objection period ended on May 30, 2025.

A Notice of Objection was received by the City Clerk on behalf of the owners of the property within the required timeframe set out in the OHA. The OHA requires that Council consider and make a decision on an objection within 90 days from the end of the objection period. Council may decide to withdraw, amend, or affirm its intention to designate.

COMMENTS

Staff have reviewed the Notice of Objection dated April 25, 2025, prepared by Dormer Properties Inc. The Notice of Objection is included as Attachment 1 to this report. Through this letter, the owner outlines several reasons for their objection, which focus on the potential impact of designation on future development proposals. There are no planning applications for either property made to the City, and as noted below, development applications are not relevant considerations to the determination of cultural heritage value of a property for designation.

The OHA prescribes the process of designation of a property under Part IV of the OHA. The OHA also prescribes criteria under O. Reg 9/06 required to be evaluated to determine whether a property has cultural heritage value or interest and therefore should be recommended for designation under the OHA. Zoning By-laws and Planning Act applications do not determine the cultural heritage value or interest of a heritage property nor are they included in criteria for the evaluation or determination of cultural heritage value. Instead, Planning Act applications are to be informed by the designation by-laws and cultural heritage value or interest determined under the OHA such that a determination can be made whether the level of intervention and conservation proposed for a designated property is appropriate. To reach this understanding, it is necessary to first identify, evaluate and articulate the cultural heritage value of a property prior to planning for change and considering interventions to the heritage property.

The sequential approach described above is consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for Historic Places in Canada and is also consistent with the intent of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), which clarify that determination of the cultural heritage value should be undertaken prior to the application of heritage conservation policies to a particular planning application. Likewise, recent changes to the OHA emphasize early identification and protection of heritage properties by municipalities and changes made through Bill 108 require that municipalities designate properties with cultural heritage value or interest within 90 days of the Clerk issuing a notice of complete application for the planning application, unless the timeline is extended or waived by the owner. The appropriateness of proposed interventions to a heritage property within the planning process are then determined through an alteration or demolition application under Section 33 and Section 34 of the OHA. Whether a current or future planning application will conserve a heritage property is not a consideration or a determination to be made within the context of a designation by-law under Section 29 of the OHA.

The objector expressed the opinion that the heritage designation, particularly the statements of significance and listed attributes, would risk future development opportunities for the properties. Despite their objection, the objection letter also notes a desire to work with City staff on an approach to the development of the property while conserving each property's heritage value. As part of standard practice, City staff will work with applicants through the development review process to provide solutions and recommendations that achieve the optimal heritage conservation approach for each property. Early engagement with heritage planning staff is encouraged.

The objector did not identify individual criteria at issue in their objection but expressed the opinion that the properties were not "superior representative of the heritage in the area" and "are not the defining structures physical, visual or historical development of the 1950's master plan for Don Mills."

O. Reg 9/06 does not use the term "superior" and staff did not analyze these properties on a generic basis of being "representative of heritage in the area". Instead, staff's analysis of each properties' design value or physical value is set out below:

887 Lawrence Avenue East

The property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East has physical value as a rare example of an International Style structure in the main commercial area of Don Mills. Once the defining architectural style of the main commercial area, many International Style structures were lost to redevelopment, including the Massey Medal for Architecture winning 1955 Don Mills Convenience Centre. The property is one of only four International Style structures that remain in the main commercial area.

The property, along with the adjacent property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East, has design and physical value as a unique example of two separate bank buildings designed and built as a cohesive ensemble in the same architectural style within a shared landscape. Nearly identical in design, both properties are set back from Lawrence Avenue East and are separated by an open central area incorporating both properties and the public right of way between them. Each of their subsequent expansions in the 1960s were designed to match the original 1956 structures, while maintaining their visual relationship.

885 Lawrence Avenue East

The property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East has design and physical value as a representative example of an International Style bank pavilion. Its rectangular plan, flat roof supported by regularly spaced metal columns, recessed exterior walls comprised primarily of glass panels, and lack of applied ornamentation are hallmarks of the International Style, expressing volume over mass with a clear articulation of structure and proportional relationships. Its free-standing form, one-storey massing, and placement within a landscape with deep set back reflect the defining features of the pavilion bank typology.

The property has design and physical value as a rare example of an International Style structure in the main commercial area of Don Mills. Once the defining

architectural style of the main commercial area, many International Style structures were lost to redevelopment, including the Massey Medal for Architecture winning 1955 Don Mills Convenience Centre. The property is one of only four International Style structures that remain in the main commercial area.

The property, along with the adjacent property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East, has design and physical value as a unique example of two separate bank buildings designed and built as a cohesive ensemble in the same architectural style within a shared landscape. Nearly identical in design, both properties are set back from Lawrence Avenue East and are separated by an open central area incorporating both properties and the public right of way between them. Each of their subsequent expansions in the 1960s were designed to match the original 1956 structures, while maintaining their visual relationship.

A property must meet 2 of the 9 criteria to meet the threshold for designation under the OHA. Both properties meet and exceed the minimum threshold, each meeting 5 of the 9 prescribed criteria as identified and evaluated in the report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning dated March 3, 2025. Heritage Planning staff maintain the accuracy of their evaluation and professional opinion that the properties at 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East meet and exceed Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the OHA, on the basis of its design/physical, historical/associative and contextual values.

Should Council affirm its intention to designate, the City Solicitor will introduce a designating by-law to Council under Section 29 of the OHA. Once Council has passed a designating by-law, notice has been provided, and the by-law has been published in accordance with the OHA, an appeal may be made to the Ontario Land Tribunal in accordance with the OHA. The Ontario Land Tribunal Decision is binding.

CONCLUSION

The properties at 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East each meet 5 of 9 criteria under Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values. As such, and despite the Notice of Objection, the properties should be designated.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Thorne
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Letter of Objection – 877 and 885 Lawrence Avenue East
Attachment 2 – Statement of Significance – 877 Lawrence Avenue East
Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance – 885 Lawrence Avenue East
Attachment 4 – Photographs

**877 LAWRENCE AVENUE EAST
BANK OF MONTREAL - DON MILLS BRANCH
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

ATTACHMENT 2

Description

The property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East (Don Mills Bank of Montreal) is located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue East, approximately 170 metres west of The West Donway at the western edge of Don Mills' commercial centre. The property is comprised of a one-storey International-Style bank building constructed in 1956 and expanded in 1967.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Design and Physical Value

The property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East has physical value as a rare example of an International Style structure in the main commercial area of Don Mills. Once the defining architectural style of the main commercial area, many International Style structures were lost to redevelopment, including the Massey Medal for Architecture winning 1955 Don Mills Convenience Centre. The property is one of only four International Style structures that remain in the main commercial area.

The property, along with the adjacent property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East, has design and physical value as a unique example of two separate bank buildings designed and built as a cohesive ensemble in the same architectural style within a shared landscape. Nearly identical in design, both properties are set back from Lawrence Avenue East and are separated by an open central area incorporating both properties and the public right of way between them.

Historical and Associative

The property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East has value for its direct association with the development of Don Mills as an entirely Modernist master planned community. This is reflected through its International Style design and visual relationship with the adjacent property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East, including their unified design and landscape.

The property is also valued for its association with the architectural firm of John B. Parkin Associates, one of Canada's leading Modernist and most prolific firms of the 1950s and 1960s that contributed many significant buildings to Toronto during this period. A leading proponent of the International Style, the firm played a significant role in the development of Don Mills, designing many of its most important institutional, commercial, and industrial buildings. Designed and built in 1956 by John C. Parkin, the firm's Chief Designer and described as one of Canada's most important Modernist architects, the property formed part of a collection of International Style structures designed by the firm that would define the commercial area of Don Mills.

The property has further historical and associative value because it contributes to an understanding of the historical development of Don Mills as Canada's first entirely Modernist master planned community. Located within the commercial area of Don Mills, its International Style design reflects the various Modernist architectural styles that were used in the community's development while providing evidence of the original character of the commercial area which has undergone significant redevelopment.

The property also has value for its association with John C. Parkin, a pioneer of the International Style in Canada and chief designer of John B. Parkin Associates from 1947-1969. The property's scale, form, and massing reflect John C. Parkin's mastering of the International Style.

Contextual

Constructed in 1956 as part of the development of the commercial area of Don Mills, the property is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. This linkage is enhanced by the property's International Style design which was in response to the Modernist design requirements that were part of the master plan for Don Mills.

Constructed with the adjacent property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East as a pair of banks in the same architectural style, set back from Lawrence Avenue East within a shared landscape, the property is physically, functionally, and visually linked to its surroundings.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of the property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure, including the 1967 one bay addition at its eastern elevation, with its rectangular plan, one-storey height, and flat roof
- The flat roof with wide fascia
- The 18 exterior support columns and 14 interior support columns
- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the south side Lawrence Avenue East
- The open space to the north and east of the building

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of the property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure with its rectangular plan, one-storey height, and flat roof
- The flat roof with wide fascia
- The 18 exterior support columns

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the south side Lawrence Avenue East
- The open space to the north and east of the building

BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA - DON MILLS BRANCH**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)****Description**

The property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East (Don Mills Bank of Nova Scotia) is located on the south side of Lawrence Avenue East, approximately 120 metres west of The West Donway at the western edge of Don Mills' commercial centre. The property contains an International-Style bank building constructed in 1956 and expanded between 1966 and 1967.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**Design and Physical Value**

The property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East has design and physical value as a representative example of an International Style bank pavilion. Its rectangular plan, flat roof supported by regularly spaced metal columns, recessed exterior walls comprised primarily of glass panels, and lack of applied ornamentation are hallmarks of the International Style, while its free-standing form, one-storey massing, and placement within a landscape with deep set back reflect defining features of an International Style pavilion.

The property has design and physical value as a rare example of an International Style structure in the main commercial area of Don Mills. Once the defining architectural style of the main commercial area, many International Style structures were lost to redevelopment, including the Massey Medal for Architecture winning 1955 Don Mills Convenience Centre. The property is one of only four International Style structures that remain in the main commercial area.

The property, along with the adjacent property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East, has design and physical value as a unique example of two separate bank buildings designed and built as a cohesive ensemble in the same architectural style within a shared landscape. Nearly identical in design, both properties are set back from Lawrence Avenue East and are separated by an open central area incorporating both properties and the public right of way between them.

Historical and Associative

The property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East has value for its direct association with the development of Don Mills as an entirely Modernist master planned community. This is reflected through its International Style design and visual relationship with the adjacent property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East, including their unified design and landscape.

The property is also valued for its association with the architectural firm of John B. Parkin Associates, one of Canada's leading Modernist and most prolific firms of the

1950s and 1960s that contributed many significant buildings to Toronto during this period. A leading proponent of the International Style, the firm played a significant role in the development of Don Mills, designing many of its most important institutional, commercial, and industrial buildings. Designed and built in 1956 by John C. Parkin, the firm's Chief Designer and described as one of Canada's most important Modernist architects, the property formed part of a collection of International Style structures designed by the firm that would define the commercial area of Don Mills.

The property has further historical and associative value because it contributes to an understanding of the historical development of Don Mills as Canada's first entirely Modernist master planned community. Located within the commercial area of Don Mills, its International Style design reflects the various Modernist architectural styles that were used in the community's development while providing evidence of the original character of the commercial area which has undergone significant redevelopment.

The property also has value for its association with John C. Parkin, a pioneer of the International Style in Canada and chief designer of John B. Parkin Associates from 1947-1969. The property's scale, form, and massing with recessed exterior walls of large glass panels emphasizing volume over mass, and deep overhanging roof supported by carefully placed columns providing regularity over symmetry demonstrates John C. Parkin's mastering of the International Style.

Contextual

Constructed in 1956 as part of the development of the commercial area of Don Mills, the property is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. This linkage is enhanced by the property's International Style design which was in response to the Modernist design requirements that were part of the master plan for Don Mills.

Constructed with the adjacent property at 877 Lawrence Avenue East as a pair of banks in the same architectural style, set back from Lawrence Avenue East within a shared landscape, the property is physically, functionally, and visually linked to its surroundings.

Heritage Attributes

Design or Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of the property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure, including the 1966-67 two bay addition at its western elevation, with its rectangular plan, one-storey height, and flat roof with wide metal clad fascia
- The 20 exterior metal clad support columns
- Recessed exterior walls
- Large exterior glass panels atop a 5-inch base extending to the roofline separated by slender steel mullions

- The 12 interior support columns
- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the south side Lawrence Avenue East
- The open space to the north the building

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of the property at 885 Lawrence Avenue East:

- The scale, form, and massing of the structure with its rectangular plan, one-storey height, and flat roof with wide metal clad fascia
- The 20 exterior metal clad support columns
- Recessed exterior walls
- Large exterior glass panels atop a 5-inch base extending to the roofline separated by slender steel mullions
- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the south side Lawrence Avenue East
- The open space to the north the building

PHOTOGRAPHS

ATTACHMENT 4

877 LAWRENCE AVENUE EAST



877 Lawrence Avenue East (Heritage Planning, 2024).



1957-1959 image of 877 Lawrence Avenue East (Toronto Archives).

885 LAWRENCE AVENUE EAST



885 Lawrence Avenue East (Heritage Planning, 2024).



1957-1959 image of 885 Lawrence Avenue East (University of Calgary).