

1 Front Street West - Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property in the Union Station Heritage Conservation District Under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act and Authority to Amend a Heritage Easement Agreement

Date: November 7, 2025

To: Toronto Preservation Board

Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 10 – Spadina – Fort York

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve the alterations proposed for the heritage property located at 1 Front Street West under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act at the Dominion Public Building, in connection with a proposed redevelopment of the subject property and that Council grant authority to amend the existing Heritage Easement Agreement for the subject property.

The property at 1 Front Street West is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and is also contained within the Union Station Heritage Conservation District Plan. The Dominion Public Building at 1 Front Street West is identified as a "contributing building" within the Plan.

A related Zoning By-law amendment application proposes amendments to the scheme that was approved in 2020 to permit changes to the permitted uses.

The current Heritage Permit application is largely the same as the scheme that was approved in 2020. The only difference is that now modifications are being proposed to 14 of the 18 existing openings on the Front Street façade. The 7 central windows on each wing flanking the central entrance block would be lowered to allow access to the new retail units on the first floor. The modifications will enhance pedestrian access and permeability between the public realm and interior of the property while retaining some original windows, the building's heavy stone base and its symmetrical form. All other aspects of the conservation strategy that was approved in 2020 are still proposed including restoration of the canopy that once ran the length of the south façade of the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the application to alter the designated heritage property at 1 Front Street West, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act to allow for alteration of 14 openings at the north elevation of the property in conjunction with previously approved construction of a two mixed-use towers atop the property in accordance with the plans and drawings dated April 29, 2025 prepared by Architects Alliance and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated May 1, 2025 and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, all subject to and in accordance with a Conservation Plan, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, subject to conditions.

2. City Council direct that its consent to the application to alter the designated heritage property at 1 Front Street West, in accordance with Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act are subject to the following conditions:

- a. the related Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment permitting the proposed alterations has been enacted by City Council and has come into full force and effect.
- b. prior to the introduction of the bills for such Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment by City Council, the owner shall:
 1. Amend the existing Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 1 Front Street West substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated April 29, 2025, Architects Alliance, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated May 1, 2025, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.
 2. provide a detailed Conservation Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant that is substantially in accordance with the conservation strategy set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the property at 1 Front Street West prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated May 1, 2025, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
- c. Prior to the issuance of any permit for all or any part of the property at 1 Front Street West, including a heritage permit or a building permit, but excluding permits for repairs and maintenance and usual and minor works for the existing

heritage building as are acceptable to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, the owner shall:

1. Provide a detailed Conservation Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant that is substantially in accordance with the conservation strategy set out in the HIA prepared by ERA Architects Inc, dated April 29, 2025, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning for the property at 1 Front Street West, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. Amend the existing Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the property at 1 Front Street West substantially in accordance with the plans and drawings dated April 29, 2025, Architects Alliance, and on file with the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ERA Architects Inc., dated May 1, 2025, subject to and in accordance with the Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2 to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, including execution of such agreement to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.
3. Provide a detailed Landscape Plan for the subject property, demonstrating how it will support the cultural heritage value of the subject property, satisfactory to the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
4. Provide a Heritage Lighting Plan that describes how the exterior of the heritage property will be sensitively illuminated to enhance its heritage character to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager Heritage Planning.
5. Provide an Interpretation Plan for the subject property, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning and thereafter shall implement such Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
6. Submit a Signage Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
7. Provide building permit drawings, including notes and specifications for the conservation and protective measures keyed to the approved Conservation Plan required in Recommendation 2.b.2 including a description of materials and finishes, to be prepared by the project architect and a qualified heritage consultant to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
8. Provide a Letter of Credit, including provision for upwards indexing, in a form and amount and from a bank satisfactory to the Senior

Manager, Heritage Planning, to secure all work included in the approved Conservation and Interpretation Plans.

9. Provide full documentation of the existing heritage property, including two (2) printed sets of archival quality 8" x 10" colour photographs with borders in a glossy or semi-gloss finish and one (1) digital set on a CD in tiff format and 600 dpi resolution keyed to a location map, elevations and measured drawings, and copies of all existing interior floor plans and original drawings as may be available, to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

d. That prior to the release of the Letter of Credit required in Recommendation 2.c.8, the owner shall:

1. Provide a letter of substantial completion prepared and signed by a qualified heritage consultant confirming that the required conservation work has been completed in accordance with the approved Conservation Plan and Interpretation Plan, and that an appropriate standard of conservation has been maintained, all to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.
2. Provide replacement Heritage Easement Agreement photographs to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

3. City Council authorize the amendment of a heritage easement agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owner of 1 Front Street West in a form and content satisfactory to the City Solicitor and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.

4. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the necessary bill in Council authorizing the amendment of a heritage easement agreement for the property at 1 Front Street West.

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

In 1996, the Ontario Municipal Board approved a settlement between the Federal Government (the previous owner of 1 Front Street West), and the City to permit a tower massing envelope with a maximum height of 137 metres sited in the middle of the 1 Front Street West – Alteration to Heritage Attributes and Amendment to HEA

Front Street West property, above the Dominion Public Building as part of By-law 42593 to amend the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law 436-86. By-law 425-93.

On July 27, 2006, City Council enacted By-law 634-2006 designating the Union Station Heritage Conservation District ("the HCD") under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The HCD includes the Dominion Public Building at 1 Front Street West.

www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2006/law0634.pdf

On February 3 and 4, 2016, City Council stated its intention to designate the Dominion Public Building under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, to be effective upon the transfer of the property by the federal government and that notice of intention to designate be served on the new owner following the transfer of the property.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.TE13.18>

On September 30, October 1 and 2, 2020 City Council approved alterations at 1 Front Street West under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act.

[Agenda Item History - 2020.TE18.13](#)

Also at the September 30, October 1 and 2, 2020 meeting, City Council agreed to support a related settlement with respect to an appeal for revised Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to permit two tall buildings of 45 and 49 storeys to be constructed on top of the 4-storey Dominion Building.

[Agenda Item History - 2020.TE18.11](#)

BACKGROUND

Subject Site

The subject site is located at 1 Front Street West and is known as the Dominion Building. The property is located on the south side of Front Street between Yonge and Bay Street. The property is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and is also contained as a contributory building within the Union Station Heritage Conservation District.

Heritage Property

The Dominion Public Building has cultural heritage value for its historic role as the federal government's Toronto Customs House for the administration, taxation, inspection and storage of imported and exported goods. Conceived by the federal government as a Customs House only, the Dominion Public Building was completed as the third and largest Customs House in the city, as well as the first to incorporate the public offices and the examining warehouse in the same building. The construction of the Dominion Public Building during the Great Depression of the 1930s was a reflection of the significance of Toronto to the nation's economic status and recovery.

The associative value of the Dominion Public Building is also through its connection to T. W. Fuller, who served from 1927 to 1936 as the Chief Architect of the Federal

Department of Public Works, which was responsible for the in-house design of nearly all public architecture in Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the Great Depression, the Chief Architect oversaw monumental projects in the country's major centres, including Toronto where the Dominion Public Building remains Fuller's best-known work.

From a design standpoint, the Dominion Public Building is valued as a rare and exceptional example in Canada of Beaux-Arts Classicism, the international style popularized for monumental public architecture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Dominion Public Building has the hallmarks of the style with its imposing scale, the symmetrical organization of the facades, the hierarchy of spaces from grand to utilitarian, the decorative detailing inspired by classical precedents, and its placement in a highly visible and prominent setting. As a rare and early surviving example of a public building in Toronto constructed by the federal government in the early 20th century, the Dominion Public Building was among the first applications of Beaux-Arts Classicism to a federal design.

The Dominion Public Building stands as an important physical reminder of the imposing public spaces created by the federal government, combining the monumentality and grandeur of the Front Street portion of the building (including the interior Long Room) with the practicality and accessibility of the warehouse component to the rear. Designed in two phases, over time the Dominion Public Building changed from a Customs House to a multi-use federal building, and the interior alterations dating to the 1980s and 1990s are part of the evolution of the building.

In combination with the neighbouring Union Station (which was officially opened in 1927), the Dominion Public Building establishes the character of the area along Front Street, west of Yonge Street. Following the Great Fire of 1904 that destroyed most of the existing buildings in this area, Toronto's Civic Improvement Committee commissioned a plan (1911) by architect John M. Lyle based on the principles of the City Beautiful Movement that envisioned Front Street as a grand boulevard with expansive tracts reserved for monumental architecture that included a new Union Station and Customs House (the Dominion Public Building). According to the federal government, "The Dominion Public Building and Union Station together form probably the most imposing Beaux-Arts streetscape in Canada."

Contextually, the Dominion Public Building is historically, visually, physically and functionally linked to its important setting on the south side of Front Street where it anchors the southwest corner of Yonge Street (Toronto's "main street") and extends across the entire city block to Bay Street. As the third Customs House on the site, the Dominion Public Building occupies what was historically among the most sought-after locations in Toronto with its proximity to the city's financial district directly north, Union Station as its neighbour on the west, and the railway corridor and harbour to the south. The Dominion Public Building, with its office and warehouse components aligned to access Front, Yonge and Bay Streets, forms an important precinct.

As a monumental federal government building in a prominent location beside and complementing Union Station, the Dominion Public Building is a local landmark in Toronto.

The Dominion Public Building was classified as a Federal Historic Site in 1983 while it was still owned by the Federal Government. Today the Dominion Public Building is in private ownership.

Adjacent Heritage Properties

The following heritage properties are adjacent to the development site:

71 Front Street West

The property at 71 Front Street West is immediately west of the development site and comprises Union Station. Union Station is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by City of Toronto By-law 948-2005, is a National Historic Site of Canada, and is subject to a triparty Heritage Easement Agreement with the City of Toronto, and the Federal and Provincial governments.

181 Bay Street

The property at 181 Bay Street is located immediately north of the development site and contains the commercial office complex known as Brookfield Place. Brookfield Place includes the property formerly addressed as 42 Yonge Street, the Charles Moore and Company Importers and Wholesale Grocers Warehouse and Store, the property formerly known as 30 Yonge Street, the Bank of Montreal Building, and the property formerly known as 20 Front Street West, the Gowans Kent Building. This property is subject to multiple designation by-laws under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and to multiple Heritage Easement Agreements with the City of Toronto.

200 Bay Street

The property at 200 Bay Street contains the commercial office complex known as the Royal Bank Plaza. This property is included on the Heritage Register as part of the Union Station Heritage Conservation District.

1 Front Street East

The property at 1 Front Street East contains the performing arts venue formerly known as the O'Keefe Centre. This property is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by City of Toronto By-Law 115-2008.

Union Station Heritage Conservation District

The Union Station Heritage Conservation District ("HCD") Plan was adopted by City Council on July 27, 2006 as By-law 634-2006 and is in-force for the subject site. It is used by the City and property owners as a tool to strengthen and protect the significant heritage character of the Union Station Precinct.

Approved Alterations, 2020

The approved proposal consists of two new tall buildings above the Dominion Public Building (an east and west tower) and it includes a five-storey “shoulder element” above the designated building that links the proposed tall buildings.

The approved conservation strategy retained all of the building's exterior elevations and the interior Long Room in-situ (protected and governed by Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act). A step back of 10 metres will be maintained from the Front Street West elevation.

The Current Proposal

The current proposal is largely the same as that approved in 2020. Changes in the use of the building are proposed and these are subject to revised Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications.

From a heritage point of view the only changes involve modifications to the north elevation of the building to improve accessibility to new retail units on the first floor. Specifically, 14 openings on the north elevation will be lowered to grade to improve access to the retail spaces. Half of the modified window openings will be converted into entrances, evenly distributed on either side of the central entry, while the remaining openings will be turned into retail storefront windows. Changes also include modifying and reinstating the salvaged cast iron pilasters, or, if modification is not possible, fabricating new replicas to match the original detailing. A new metal spandrel panel will be added, and the wall will be rebuilt with a profiled return at the door jamb to reflect the historic entrance detail. Above this transom, new windows will be installed to align with the modified cast iron window dimensions. Below the transom, new storefront entrances and windows will be incorporated to enhance the overall design.

All other aspects of the conservation strategy that was approved in 2020 are still proposed, including the restoration of the canopy that once ran the length of the south façade of the building.

Heritage Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Act

The Planning Act guides development in the Province of Ontario. It states that municipalities must have regard for matters of provincial interest. Section 2(d) specifically refers to “the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest” and 2(r) “to a built form that is well designed and provides for a sense of place.”

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) (the "PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- the efficient use and management of land and infrastructure
- ensuring the sufficient provision of housing to meet changing needs including affordable housing
- ensuring opportunities for job creation
- ensuring the appropriate transportation, water, sewer and other infrastructure is available to accommodate current and future needs; and
- protecting people, property and community resources by directing development away from natural or human-made hazards
- conservation of cultural heritage and archaeology

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS recognizes and acknowledges the Official Plan as an important document for implementing the policies within the PPS. Policy 4.6 of the PPS states that, "The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans."

Policy 2.6.1 of the PPS directs that "Protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, shall be conserved"

"Conserved" is defined in the PPS as the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained.

Policy 4.6.2 states that "Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless the significant archaeological resources have been conserved."

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS and shall conform with Provincial Plans. All comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS and conform with Provincial Plans.

Provincial Plans are intended to be read in their entirety and relevant policies are to be applied to each situation.

Toronto Official Plan

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan. The Plan provides the policy framework for heritage conservation in the City. The following Official Plan policies apply to the proposed alterations:

3.1.6.4: "Properties on the Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council."

3.1.6.5: "Proposed alterations, development, and/or public works on or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained, prior to work commencing on the property and to the satisfaction of the City."

3.1.6.12. Designated heritage properties will be protected against deterioration by neglect through the enforcement of heritage property standards by-laws.

3.1.6.26: "New construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and to mitigate visual and physical impact on it."

3.1.6.27: "Where it is supported by the cultural heritage values and attributes of a property on the Heritage Register, the conservation of whole or substantial portions of buildings, structures and landscapes on those properties is desirable and encouraged. The retention of façades alone is discouraged."

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

Union Station Heritage Conservation District

The Union Station Heritage Conservation District ("HCD") Plan was adopted by City Council on July 27, 2006 as By-law 634-2006 and is in-force for the subject site. It is used by the City and property owners as a tool to strengthen and protect the significant heritage character of the Union Station Precinct.

The Statement of Cultural Heritage Value for Union Station in the Heritage Conservation District Plan states in part that "A strong Beaux-Arts presence around Union Station creates one of the most stylistically cohesive areas in the City of Toronto. This civic-minded architecture speaks strongly to the prominence of Union Station as a centre of urban activity."

The development site is within the Union Station HCD Plan. The Dominion Public Building, Union Station, and the Bank of Montreal building are identified as "contributing buildings" within the Plan. The HCD Plan can be found here: https://toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/8dfc-CityPlanning_Union-stationHCD.pdf

The Plan includes the following guidelines for new development:

Designers of new buildings should look to surrounding buildings for context, and especially consider the relationship of the building to Union Station [...] The following criteria, however, should be considered:

- The new structure respects the general size, shape and scale of the features associated with adjacent properties and the district as a whole, as well as directly considering its relationship with Union Station
- The site plan respects the general site characteristics associated with the property itself and district as a whole
- The design respects the general historic and architectural characteristics associated with the district
- The materials chosen are considered in context with those of adjacent contributing properties and with the district as a whole
- In the case of additions, critical significant features on existing buildings are not obscured, damaged or destroyed

The Plan also provides for the following objectives in terms of the Public Realm:

“The connective function of the Union Station District strongly defines the nature of its historical development. Enhancements in permeability, porosity and amenity of the streetscapes in the district provide a real opportunity to promote a physical dialogue with the district’s historical past. Enhancing connectivity and maintaining open spaces through public realm improvements promote the heritage character of the district and contribute to providing distinguished public spaces.”

Standards and Guidelines

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the "Standards and Guidelines") is the official document guiding planning, stewardship and the conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto.

The Standards and Guidelines can be accessed here:

<http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

COMMENTS

From a heritage planning point of view the proposed application is largely the same as that approved in 2020. The only change relates to alterations to 14 of the 18 existing openings on the Front Street façade. Heritage Planning staff have worked with the applicant regarding the proposal. Initially, the applicant proposed that all openings at the

front (north) elevation be lowered to enhance both accessibility and visual permeability between the exterior and interior of the property. However, the proposed lowering of window openings will impact the heavy stone building base as well as the window openings. While Heritage Planning staff recognized that the property does not contain a welcoming street edge in terms of accessibility or visual permeability, staff were not supportive of lowering every opening with accompanying cuts into the building base.

In this final version, the proposed scheme developed by staff and the applicant would retain most of the building base and lower the windows in a manner that conserves the symmetry of the façade. In fact, excluding the stone base between the proposed lowered windows, the continuous base retained at the west, central and east pavilion would result in approximately 62.5 per cent of the façade base as conserved with no change. Markedly, the adaptive reuse of the property with lowered entries to grade will create a public realm environment in which the building will be more accessible to the public and can enhance appreciation of this important heritage building. The heritage attributes and openings at the East, Central and West Pavilions at the north façade are not proposed for alterations. Also, window openings directly abutting these pavilions will not be lowered in order to contribute to the visual perception of a continuous base or foundation.

The improvement of connectivity and interface between the public realm and the interior of the building is a stated objective of the HCD Plan and would be improved by this proposal.

Staff will continue to work with applicant to ensure that materials used for retail entries and enlarged window openings complement the heritage features of the property and do not detract from the overall north façade composition.

Heritage Planning staff is satisfied that the proposal will limit impacts to the heritage attributes of the property and complies with the policies contained within the HCD Plan, particularly those policies relevant to the public realm.

Conservation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, the owner will be required to submit a Conservation Plan for the work described in the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by a qualified heritage professional to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

Landscape Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to final Building Permit approval for the proposed development, the applicant should be required to submit a Landscape Plan to the satisfaction of the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning.

The Landscape Plan should provide details as to how the proposed landscaping will support the heritage values, attributes and character of the Dominion Building.

Interpretation Plan

Should Council approve the proposed conservation strategy, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit for the proposed development, the owner should be required to submit an Interpretation Plan. The Interpretation Plan should serve to communicate the cultural heritage values of the Dominion Building and its contextual importance within the Union Station HCD.

Signage Plan

The recommended Signage Plan should provide details of the signage strategy for the property including the appropriate type, scale, location and number of signs.

Heritage Lighting Plan

The Heritage Lighting Plan should provide details of how the heritage features of the Dominion Building will be lit so that its unique heritage character is highlighted.

CONCLUSION

Staff are supportive of the proposal to alter the heritage attributes at the heritage property at 1 Front Street West to allow for the enhanced accessibility and visual permeability of ground level retail units at the north façade. This approval is sought in conjunction with the previously approved mixed-use project that adds two towers above the property, conserves all exterior facades and conserves the internal Long Room in situ. Staff support the retention strategy and alterations as set out within the conservation strategy and the mitigation measures proposed for the site and are of the opinion that the proposal has been designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes, and character of the heritage property.

Staff are satisfied the proposal is consistent with the Union Station HCD Plan, that it meets the intent of the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the City of Toronto's Official Plan heritage policies in conjunction with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada and recommend that Council approve the proposal under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Location Map
Attachment 2 – Photographs
Attachment 3 – Selected Drawings
Attachment 4 – Designating By-Law 1 Front Street West



This location map is for information purposes only and is oriented North at the top. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The arrow marks the north boundary of the property at 1 Front Street West containing the Dominion Public Building. The property is bounded by Front Street West (north), Yonge Street (east), The Esplanade (south) and Bay Street (west) with Union Station directly west.



The Dominion Public building from the intersection of York Street and Front Street West (ERA Architects Inc.)



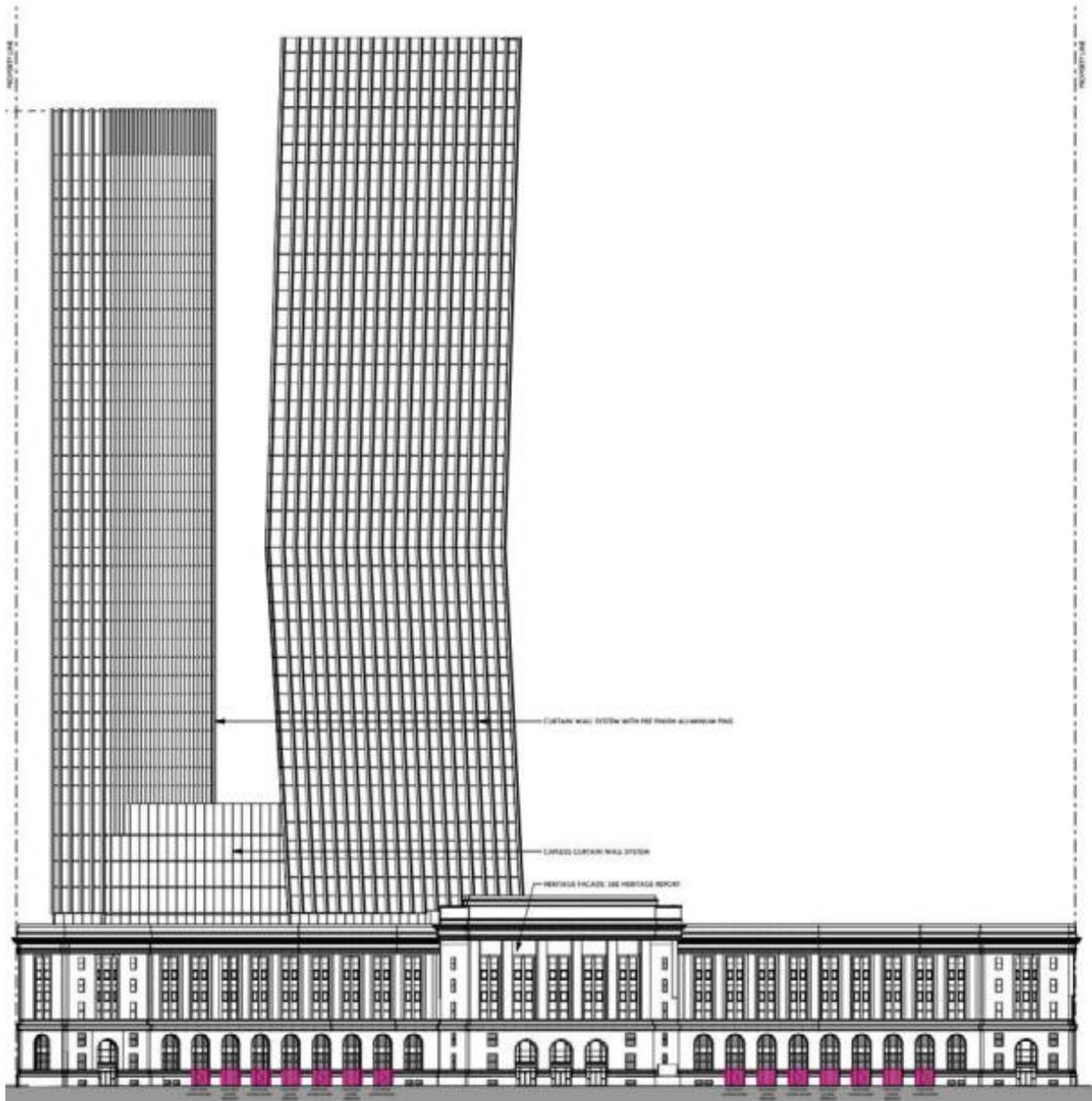
The central pavilion of the Dominion Public Building on the north elevation (ERA Architects Inc.)



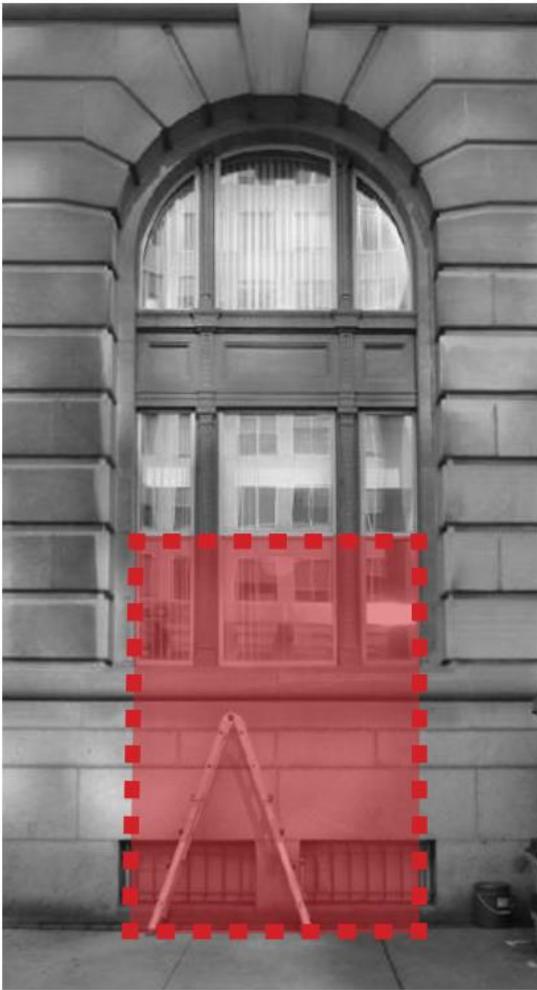
Historic photograph of the Dominion Public Building taken from the intersection of Yonge Street and Front Street in 1935 (Toronto Archives)



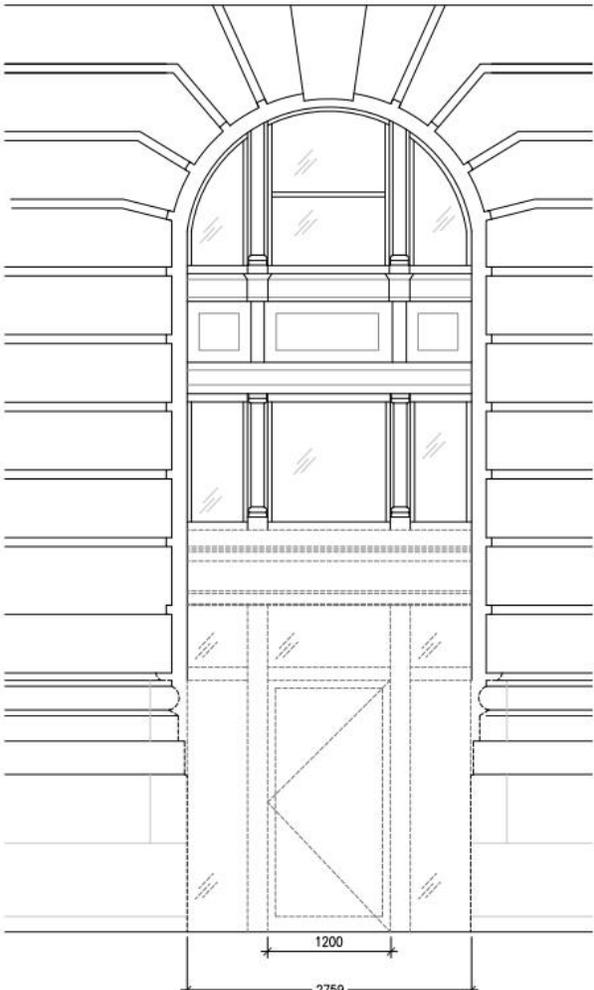
Rendering of proposal (architectsAlliance, 2025)



North Elevation of Proposed Development showing Previously Approved Towers with alterations to ground floor window openings (ERA Architects Inc., 2025)



41. Approximate area of removals required to convert Front Street windows



42. Schematic proposal for new entrances, showing modification of cast iron

East Portion of Front Street West Façade (ERA Architects Inc. 2025)



Renderings of proposal (architectsAlliance, 2025)

DESIGNATION BY-LAW - 1 FRONT STREET WEST ATTACHMENT NO. 4

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION (STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE)

City of Toronto By-law 423-2017

The property at 1 Front Street West is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual values. Listed on the inaugural City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now the City of Toronto's Heritage Register) in 1973, the Dominion Public Building is a key component of the Union Station Heritage Conservation District, which was designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act in 2006. Parks Canada's Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) designated the Dominion Public Building as a Classified Federal Heritage Building in 1983, and it was listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places in 2011.

Description

Anchoring the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Front Street West, the Dominion Public Building is a large-scale federal government building that was commissioned by the Government of Canada's Department of Public Works and originally served as Toronto's Customs House. Completed in two phases in 1929-31 (centre and east pavilions) and 1934-35 (west pavilion), the north section of the building on Front Street West rises five stories, while the rear section extends six stories to address the change in grade.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Dominion Public Building has cultural heritage value for its historic role as the federal government's Toronto Customs House for the administration, taxation, inspection and storage of imported and exported goods. Conceived by the federal government as a Customs House only, the Dominion Public Building was completed as the third and largest Customs House in the city, as well as the first to incorporate the public offices and the examining warehouse in the same building. The construction of the Dominion Public Building during the Great Depression of the 1930s was a reflection of the significance of Toronto to the nation's economic status and recovery.

The associative value of the Dominion Public Building is also through its connection to T. W. Fuller, who served from 1927 to 1936 as the Chief Architect of the Federal Department of Public Works, which was responsible for the in-house design of nearly all public architecture in Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the Great Depression, the Chief Architect oversaw monumental projects in the country's major centres, including Toronto where the Dominion Public Building remains Fuller's best known work.

From a design standpoint, the Dominion Public Building is valued as a rare and exceptional example in Canada of Beaux-Arts Classicism, the international style

popularized for monumental public architecture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Dominion Public Building has the hallmarks of the style with its imposing scale, the symmetrical organization of the facades, the hierarchy of spaces from grand to utilitarian, the decorative detailing inspired by classical precedents, and its placement in a highly visible and prominent setting. As a rare and early surviving example of a public building in Toronto constructed by the federal government in the

early 20th century, the Dominion Public Building was among the first applications of Beaux-Arts Classicism to a federal design. The Dominion Public Building stands as an important physical reminder of the imposing public spaces created by the federal government, combining the monumentality and grandeur of the Front Street portion of the building (including the interior Long Room) with the practicality and accessibility of the warehouse component to the rear. Designed in two phases, over time the Dominion Public Building changed from a Customs House to a multi-use federal building, and the interior alterations dating to the 1980s and 1990s are part of the evolution of the building.

With the neighbouring Union Station (which was officially opened in 1927), the Dominion Public Building establishes the character of the area along Front Street, west of Yonge Street. Following the Great Fire of 1904 that destroyed most of the existing buildings in this area, Toronto's Civic Improvement Committee commissioned a plan (1911) by architect John M. Lyle that was based on the principles of the City Beautiful Movement and that envisioned Front Street as a grand boulevard with expansive tracts reserved for monumental architecture that included a new Union Station and Customs House (the Dominion Public Building). According to the federal government, "The Dominion Public Building and Union Station together form probably the most imposing Beaux-Arts streetscape in Canada."

Contextually, the Dominion Public Building is historically, visually, physically and functionally linked to its important setting on the south side of Front Street where it anchors the southwest corner of Yonge Street (Toronto's "main street") and extends across the entire city block to Bay Street. As the third Customs House on the site, the Dominion Public Building occupies what was historically among the most sought-after locations in Toronto with its proximity to the city's financial district directly north, Union Station as its neighbour on the west, and the railway corridor and harbour to the south. The Dominion Public Building, with its office and warehouse components aligned to access Front, Yonge and Bay Streets, forms an important precinct.

As a monumental federal government building in a prominent location beside and complementing Union Station, the Dominion Public Building is a local landmark in Toronto.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the building known historically as the Dominion Public Building on the property at 1 Front Street West are:

- The placement, setback and orientation of the building on the south side of Front Street West where it extends from Yonge Street to Bay Street

- The scale, form and massing of the irregularly-shaped plan that rises five stories along Front Street to the flat roofline and follows the curve of Front Street west of Yonge
- The partially raised stone base with window openings, which is extended in height where the grade changes south of Front Street West
- On the reinforced concrete structure and above the granite clad foundation, the limestone cladding that is channelled on the extended first (ground) floor and smoothly dressed in the stories above, with the stone and metal detailing
- The tripartite organization of the north elevation on Front Street into the centre pavilion and the adjoining east and west pavilions, with the west pavilion rounded at the northwest corner and the east pavilion truncated at the northeast corner
- The horizontal division of the north elevation by the cornices above the extended first storey and beneath the parapet
- The centre pavilion, with the five-storey projecting frontispiece composed of six freestanding Ionic columns supporting the entablature inscribed "Dominion Public Building A.D. MCMXXX"
- At the base of the centre frontispiece, the two-storey main entrance where the three round-arched openings contain paired bronze doors beneath large transoms with metal mullions incorporating rope detailing and cast metal beavers (as symbols of Canada)
- The single secondary entrances on the north elevations of the east and west pavilions that repeat the detailing introduced on the central entrance The east elevation on Yonge Street, which extends 12 bays and is divided into three parts with a recessed centre section
- The five-bay west elevation facing Bay Street
- The fenestration on the north, east and west elevations, which is arranged between Ionic pilasters and features double-height round arched openings with keystones in the first floor, and single, paired and triple flat-headed openings with spandrel panels in the remaining floors, and the metal window mullions with the rope detailing in the first and second floors
- The classical detailing on the elevations facing Front, Yonge and Bay Streets, including the carved acanthus leaves, the dentils and the stone lion's heads
- On the rear (south) elevation, the end bays (east and west) that continue the decorative detailing and fenestration from the east and west elevations

- The central utilitarian section of the south wall with the fenestration and raised centre section
- On the interior, the organization and layout of the public spaces on the first-floor, including the three marble-clad lobbies
- The detailing in the east vestibule and lobby, with the marble floors, dado and door and window surrounds, including the marble door pediment inscribed "Long Room", the bronze window mullions between the lobby and the Long Room, the "enquiry" window in the lobby, and the classical detailing
- In the east pavilion, the two-storey Long Room, with the marble floors, dado and door and window surrounds, the marble counters with the brass wickets, the double row of square columns with the pilasters and the Corinthian capitals, the entrances with the bronze doors and classical detailing, the metal window mullions, the second-storey gallery with the brass balustrade, and the coffered plaster ceiling with the dentils and moulding