

2125 Lawrence Avenue West - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: June 30, 2026

To: Toronto Preservation Board

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

Wards: Ward 5 – York South - Weston

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance and description of heritage attributes found in Attachment 1.

The subject property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West, is a City-owned facility that is historically known as the Weston Lions Arena, is located in the Weston neighbourhood on the south side of Lawrence Avenue West, in Lions Park, adjacent to the Humber River. It contains an ice-skating arena constructed c.1948-49 of concrete block with rugged-brick and simulated-stone main façade. A location map and current photograph of the property are found in Attachment 2.

The property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West was listed on the City's Heritage Register on March 25, 2026.

On April 1, 2026, the City assumed responsibility for the Weston Lions Arena and is currently undertaking a comprehensive building condition review of the structure.

Staff have determined that the property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West has cultural heritage value and meets three 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.

Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the properties and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 2125 Lawrence Avenue West (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1 to the report (June 30, 2026) 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

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

November 12 and 13, 2025 City Council adopted with amendments EX27.6 - Reimagining Weston Lions Arena through a Nominal Lease with MLSE LaunchPad <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX27.6>

On April 23 and 24, 2025 City Council adopted Notice of Motion MM29.9 titled Working With MLSE Foundation to Explore Feasibility of Reimagining Weston Lions Arena. City Council directed the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in consultation with the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, to engage with Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment Foundation, the Ward Councillor, stakeholders and local residents, to explore the feasibility of reimagining Weston Lions Arena to better deliver high-quality and accessible sport and recreation opportunities. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.MM29.9>

City Council listed the property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on March 25, 2026. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.EY29.6>

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

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.

<https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-08/mmah-provincial-planning-statement-en-2024-08-19.pdf>

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical 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

Evaluation Analysis

The following evaluation analysis is based on the comprehensive research conducted on the property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West (see Attachment 3) and provides the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

The property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West meets the following three of nine criteria:

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

The property has design and physical value for being representative of a 1940s-era ice-skating-arena building type. The building is plainly finished being primarily constructed of concrete block with a rugged-brick and simulated stone main façade.

A convex-shaped compass roof shelters the main (rink) portion of the building. Characteristic of arena typology, the interior is defined by its clear-span, unobstructed open space with its heavy-timber, open-truss roof system, allowing for unimpeded views of the ice. Such ice skating arena buildings are now rare in the City of Toronto.

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

The property has historical value because it has direct associations with recreational activities in Weston since its opening in 1949. For 77 years the arena has offered activities and programming to the Weston community including various hockey teams, the Weston Figure Skating Club, recreational skaters and served as the home to the Weston Minor Hockey League.

The property is also directly associated with the theme of community development of Weston in the immediate post-Second World War era. At the time of the property's construction, Weston was a separate community of 8,700 residents. The construction of the arena represented a major development in the growing community at the time. The property was constructed by the Weston Lions, a community-service organization, and primarily funded by local donations and local fund-raising efforts. Much of the work to complete the arena comprised volunteer planning and labour. The property was operated by the Weston Lions Club continuously since its completion, as the club's main community service project, until March 31, 2026.

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

The property has contextual value because it is historically linked to its surroundings. The arena occupies part of what was formerly the Weston Fairgrounds - known as Lions Park since 1945 - and has historically been a place of recreation in the community. Starting in the late 1890s the fairgrounds became the site of the yearly Weston Fair. Since at least the first decade of the 1900s, the site has served the recreational needs of the community and was used extensively for hockey, ice-skating carnivals, marathon race, cricket, picnics, baseball, football, lacrosse, bicycle meets, rallies and dances. The property has been the site of ice-skating rinks since at least 1908, and perhaps earlier.

CONCLUSION

Staff have determined that 2125 Lawrence Avenue West meets three out of nine 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: 2125 Lawrence Avenue West - Statement of Significance (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

Clint Robertson, Heritage Planner
Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning
416-396-4946; Clint.Robertson@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Mary MacDonald, MA, CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 2125 Lawrence Avenue West - Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)
Attachment 2 – Location Map and Current Photograph
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

WESTON LIONS ARENA**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the categories of design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

Description

The City-owned property is in the Weston neighbourhood on the south side of Lawrence Avenue, in Lions Park, adjacent to the Humber River. It contains an ice-skating arena building constructed c.1948-49 of concrete block with rugged-brick and a simulated-stone main façade.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property has design and physical value for being representative of a 1940s-era ice-skating-arena building type. The building is plainly finished being primarily constructed of concrete block with a rugged-brick and simulated stone main façade.

A convex-shaped compass roof shelters the main (rink) portion of the building. Characteristic of arena typology, the interior is defined by its clear-span, unobstructed open space with its heavy-timber, open-truss roof system, allowing for unimpeded views of the ice. Such ice-skating arena buildings are now rare in the City of Toronto.

The property has historical value because it has direct associations with recreational activities in Weston since its opening in 1949. For 77 years the arena has offered activities and programming to the Weston community including various hockey teams, the Weston Figure Skating Club, recreational skaters and served as the home to the Weston Minor Hockey League.

The property is also directly associated with the theme of community development of Weston in the immediate post-Second World War era. At the time of the property's construction, Weston was a separate community of 8,700 residents. The construction of the arena represented a major development in the growing community at the time. The property was constructed by the Weston Lions, a community-service organization, and primarily funded by local donations and local fund-raising efforts. Much of the work to complete the area comprised volunteer planning and labour. The property was operated by the Weston Lions Club continuously since its completion, as the club's main community service project, until March 31, 2026.

The property has contextual value because it is historically linked to its surroundings. The arena occupies part of what was formerly the Weston Fairgrounds - known as Lions Park since 1945 - and has historically been a place of recreation in the community. Starting in the late 1890s the fairgrounds became the site of the yearly Weston Fair. Since at least the first decade of the 1900s, the site has served the recreational needs

of the community and was used extensively for hockey, ice-skating carnivals, marathon race, cricket, picnics, baseball, football, lacrosse, bicycle meets, rallies and dances. The property has been the site of ice-skating rinks since at least 1908, and perhaps earlier.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value of the property:

- the long, rectangular form of the arena with its two-storey front, extended height rink and one-storey side extensions
- the convex-shaped compass roof
- the exterior finishes of the two-storey frontispiece with rugged brick cladding; its fenestration with steel-sash windows and central entrance
- the exposed concrete block materials of the other exterior walls
- the interior layout and features of the lobby comprising its ticket windows and canteen stand and open foyer
- the interior layout and features of the skating rink's comprising its clear-span, unobstructed open space; heavy-timber, open-truss roof system; the oval ice surface area; the wood bleachers

Historical and Associative Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the historical and associative value of the property:

- the location of the arena in Lions Park (historically Weston Fairgrounds)

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of the property:

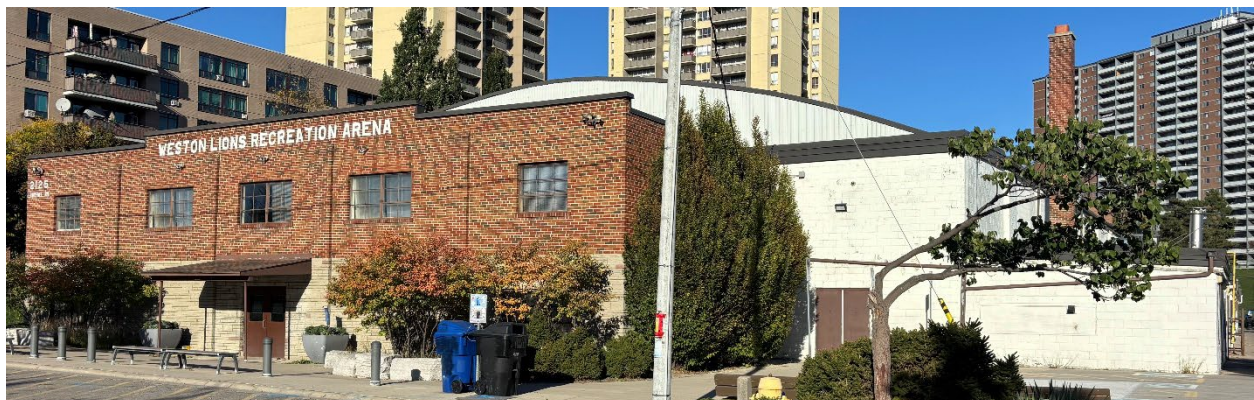
- the location of the arena in Lions Park (historically Weston Fairgrounds)

LOCATION MAP AND CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH
2125 LAWRENCE AVENUE WEST

ATTACHMENT 2



This location map is for illustrative purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The arena at 2125 Lawrence Avenue West is identified by the blue arrow. (City of Toronto mapping)



2125 Lawrence Avenue West – oblique view from the southwest showing the main (west) façade (Heritage Planning, 2025)

RESEARCH, EVALUATION & VISUAL RESOURCES

ATTACHMENT 3

2125 LAWRENCE AVENUE

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.



2125 Lawrence Avenue West – interior view (Heritage Planning, 2026)

1. DESCRIPTION

2125 Lawrence Avenue West - Weston Lions Arena	
ADDRESS	2125 Lawrence Avenue West
WARD	Ward 5 – York South - Weston
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Weston
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1948-49
ORIGINAL USE	Ice skating arena
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law	Ice skating arena
ARCHITECT	Unknown
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	NA
LISTING DATE	March 25, 2026

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 2125 Lawrence Avenue West 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.

2125 LAWRENCE AVENUE WEST

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.	N/A
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.	N/A
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.	N/A

3. RESEARCH

This section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the properties. 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).

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

For time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Ojibway oral histories speak of Ice People, who lived at a time when ice covered the land.¹ Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge and Humber rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. Beads made from seashells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated most of their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors², contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their village in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York. As evidenced by the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan Treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, the Haudenosaunee continued to have an interest in the resources of the area.

Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved into the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Anishinaabe people continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time,

¹ With thanks to Philip Cote for the reference to Benton-Banai, Edward, *The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway* (Indian Country Press, 1985), p. 26.

² <https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east>; Gary Warrick, "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds., *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), p. 72.

including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.³

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km², including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island).

The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold. Following the Toronto Purchase, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

The City of Toronto remains 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 also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the property which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The origins of the Weston Lions arena began in 1945 when Dr Alan Bull, president of the Weston Lions Club, started a move to build a skating rink. At the time, a major club focus was a recreational program begun in 1941 to curb "juvenile delinquency" in the community by providing recreational opportunities to area youth.⁴

Meanwhile, the Lions had put in a tender bid to buy the surplus military Drill Hall No. 13 at Malton with the intention to move and repurpose the 180 by 110 foot-building as the nucleus of a new arena.⁵ The idea was to add to the building to create accommodation

³ Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." n.d.

⁴ Toronto Star, October 11, 1947, page 5

⁵ ibid

for 3000 people and give it an ice surface "as large as Maple Leaf Gardens" with artificial ice plant.⁶ The facility was to be equipped with dressing rooms, showers, hobby rooms and a curling rink.⁷

With a street parade of bands and floats in February 1948, the campaign to develop an arena in Weston from the remodelled military drill hall from Malton was officially launched with a goal of raising \$125,000.⁸ The month before, the Lions Club had been successful in their \$7210 to obtain the drill hall and fundraising was launched.⁹

At some point during the planning phase for an arena, the decision was made to instead build a new building rather than re-assembling and re-using the Malton drill hall. Accordingly, the heating and plumbing equipment was salvaged from the drill hall with the rest of the materials re-sold.¹⁰

Construction started on the arena in late 1948 and by early Jan 1949 the shell of the new building had been completed.¹¹ Within, it was slated to have six dressing rooms, complete with showers, as well as a skate room, a crafts room, offices and a canteen.¹² Funding was by local individual and business donations, and Lions Club activities;¹³ volunteer labour partially contributed to actual construction.¹⁴ Notably, Conn Smyth, the famous owner of the Maple Leaf Gardens and Toronto Maple Leafs also contributed to the project.¹⁵ Smyth, who also owned a sand and gravel business, purportedly contributed 100 truck loads of sand for the ice pad on the condition that the ice surface be the same dimensions as his own Maple Leaf Gardens.¹⁶ By November 25, 1949, the building was ready for its "official opening".¹⁷ Upon completion, the 3,000 person facility was considered a "marvel" in a town of just 8,700 people.¹⁸

Since 1949, the arena has served as the club home for a Junior B hockey squad, a minor hockey league, figure skating as well as recreational skaters.¹⁹ Over the years its storied past was developed with the likes of former world figure skating champions Paul Martini and Barbara Underhill training here, as well as movies such as The Freshman filmed here, featuring Marlon Brando and "Score: A Hockey musical".^{20 21} Through its

6 ibid

7 Toronto Star, January 22, 1948, page 10

8 Toronto Star, February 13, 1948, page 14

9 Toronto Star, January 7, 1948, page 7

10 Toronto Star, January 4, 1949, page 13

11 ibid

12 ibid

13 Toronto Star, January 4, 1949, page 13

14 Toronto Star, March 25, 1949, page 27

15 Toronto star, November 7, 1949, page 24

16 Toronto Star, November 30, 1949, page 201

17 Toronto Star, November 24, 1949, page 18

18 Toronto Star, January 4, 1949, page 13

19 Toronto Star, November 30, 1949, page 201

20 ibid

21 CTV News, November 14, 2025 www.ctvnews.ca/toronto/article/local-ice-hockey-league-forced-to-find-new-home-to-make-way-for-mlse-launchpad/

history it also became the anchor of the local Lions Club, being its main community service project.²²

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.

Completed in 1949, with a primary regard for function, the property belongs to a now uncommon, historical, ice-skating-arena building typology.

A convex-shaped compass roof shelters the main portion of the building. Characteristic of arena typology, the interior is defined by its clear-span, unobstructed open space with its heavy-timber, open-truss roof system. Such a roof type allowed for clear views to the ice surface from the stands. Dressing rooms and other ancillary spaces span the south wall of the building as a one storey extension to the main portion of the building. The front of the building comprises a lobby, canteen, offices and other rooms and is finished with rugged-brick and simulated stone main façade, characteristic of a 1940s-50s aesthetic. The horizontal steel sash windows add to the mid-century character. The rest of the building displays exposed concrete-block construction materials.

The public area of the interior retains its original configuration and finishes. The lobby is plainly finished and features three ticket windows opposite a canteen. The rink portion of the building is dominated by the central ice surface with distinctive wooden bleachers lining the south and north walls. The bleachers feature tongue-and-groove backs; and the floors on which the bleachers sit are notable for their wood flooring. Such interior features are now unseen in arenas and create a highly distinctive environment.

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.

Lions Park, the location of the Weston Arena, had been used since the 1890s for public recreational purposes when it became the fairgrounds - and for ice skating since at least 1908.²³ Previously it had been occupied by the Weston Woollen Manufacturing Company, the largest employer in town, which closed in 1895.²⁴ From 1896 the land then became the site of the annual Weston Fair.^{25 26} In the late 1890s or early 1900s, the lands became used for more than the annual fair with other recreational activities

²² Toronto Star, November 30, 1949, page 201

²³ Weston Times and Gude, December 25, 1908, page 4

²⁴ Cruikshank F.W.

²⁵ Weston Historical Society, unpublished research notes "Fairgrounds to Lions Park", 2019

²⁶ Weston Times and Gude, December 25, 1908, page 4

occurring there. By 1908, two ice rinks existed - one of which had regulation-size ice, complete with dressing rooms and lighting, along with a "fair building"²⁷

In the years immediately following, and into the 1910s, the grounds were known to be used extensively for hockey, ice-skating carnivals, marathon race, cricket, picnics, baseball, football, lacrosse, bicycle meets, rallies and dances; by the late 1920s tennis was also played on the grounds.²⁸ The grounds were noted in the 1910s as being one of the beauty spots of Weston due to their picturesque location and groves of trees on the banks of the Humber River, and pressure was put on the town council to acquire the lands, which it did in 1912.²⁹

In 1945, deed to the 18-acre Weston Fairgrounds was provided to the Lions Club which had plans to build not only the arena, but also a swimming pool, new tennis courts, new baseball diamonds, an auditorium and tobogganing slides.³⁰ ³¹ Before the present arena was constructed, the Lions Club had purchased two buildings and had them moved to the site in 1945 for use as dressing rooms for the pre-existing facilities on site consisting of a lacrosse box where soccer and hockey were played, as well as four tennis courts, four softball and baseball diamonds, a football field and an open-air dance floor.³²

4. VISUAL RESOURCES



Figure 1: Main (south) façade of the arena, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)

27 Weston Times and Gude, November 20, 1908, page 4

28 Weston Historical Society, unpublished research notes "Fairgrounds to Lions Park", 2019

29 Weston Historical Society, unpublished research notes "Fairgrounds to Lions Park", 2019

30 Toronto Telegram, February 27, 1945, page 4

31 Toronto Telegram, June 1, 1945, page 4

32 ibid



Figure 2: Oblique view of the main (south) façade, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)



Figure 3: View of the rear (north) façade and one-storey south extension, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)



Figure 4: North façade, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)



Figure 5: Contextual view from the east of the arena within Lions Park, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)



Figure 6: Interior view showing the ice surface and heavy-timber truss roofing system, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)

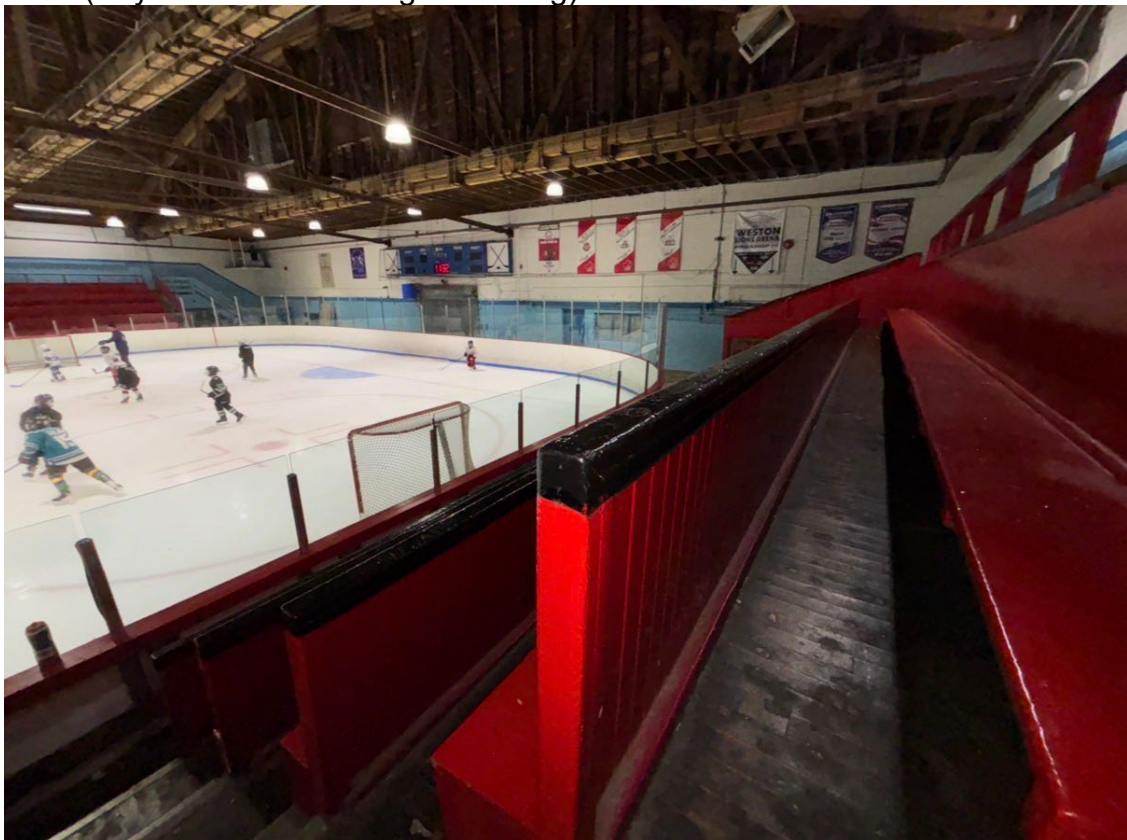


Figure 7: The wooden bleachers and stands, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)

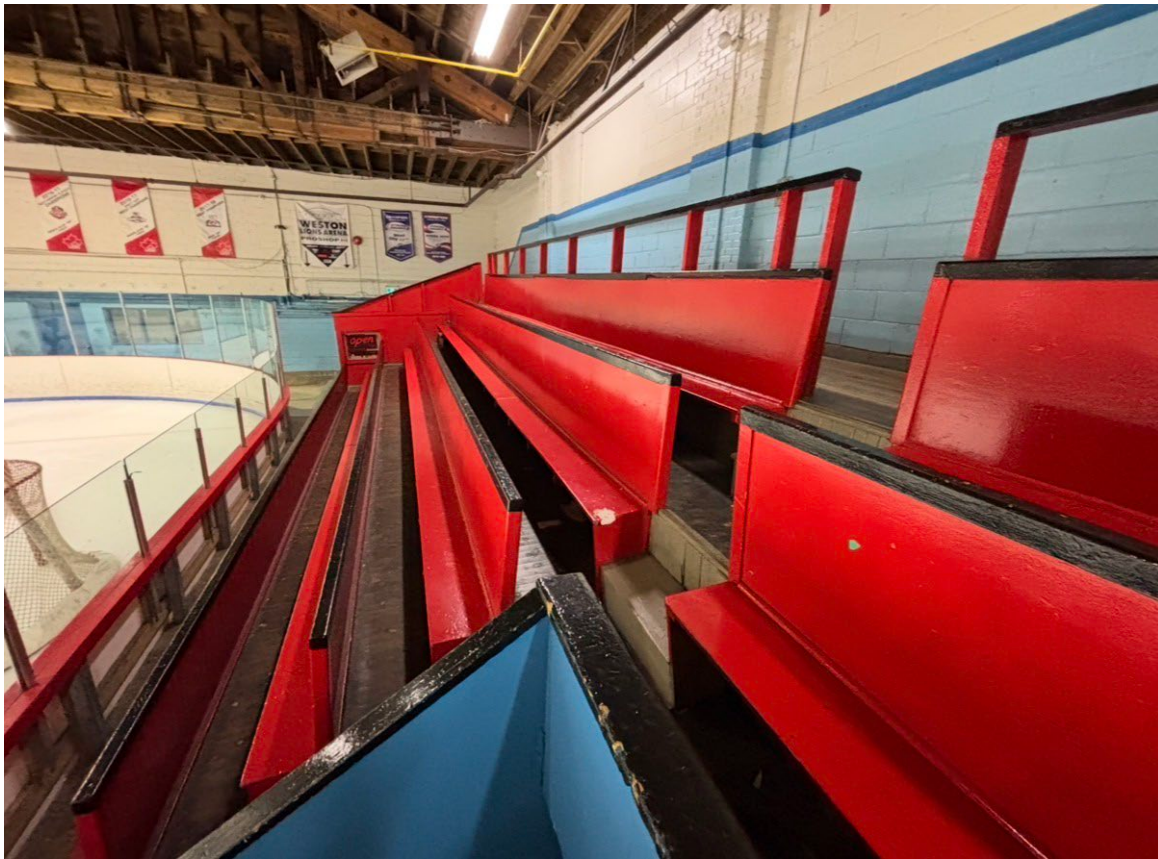


Figure 8: The wooden bleachers and stands, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)

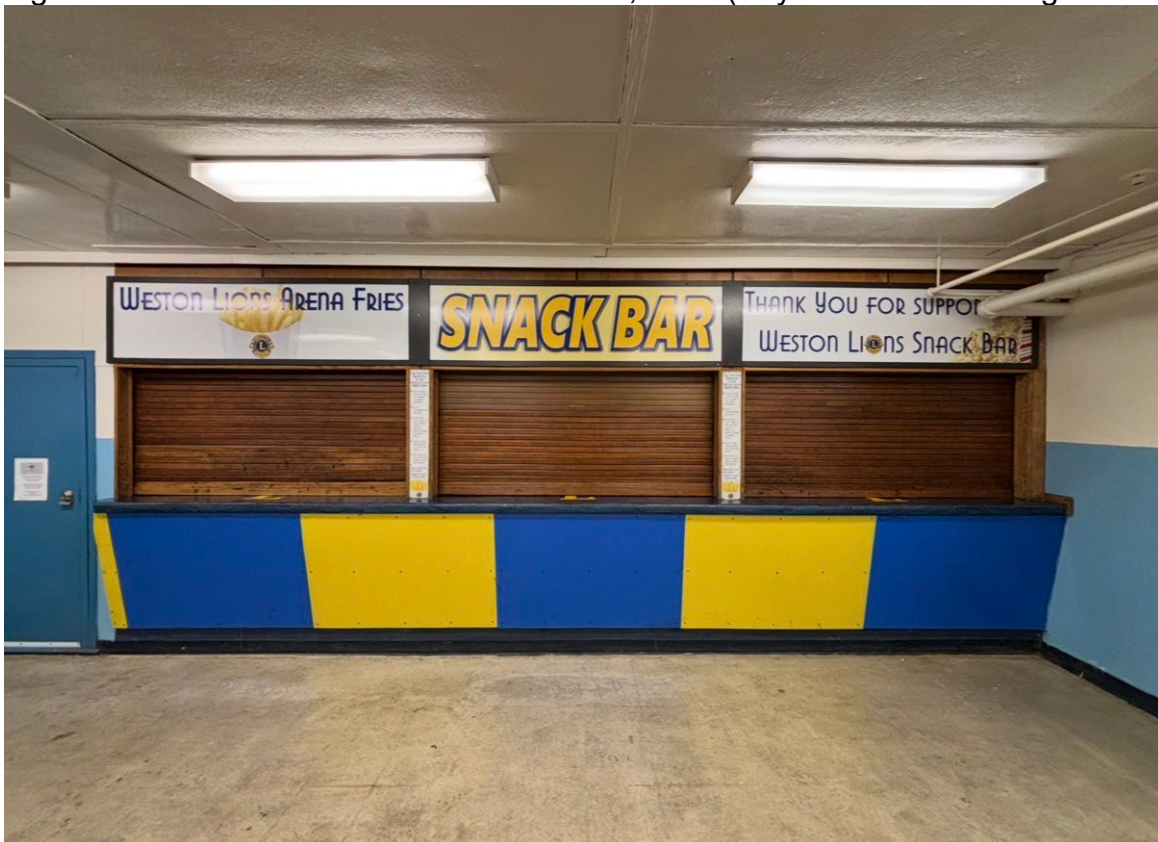


Figure 9: Portion of the lobby and canteen, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)



Figure 10: Lobby ticket windows, 2026 (City of Toronto Heritage Planning)

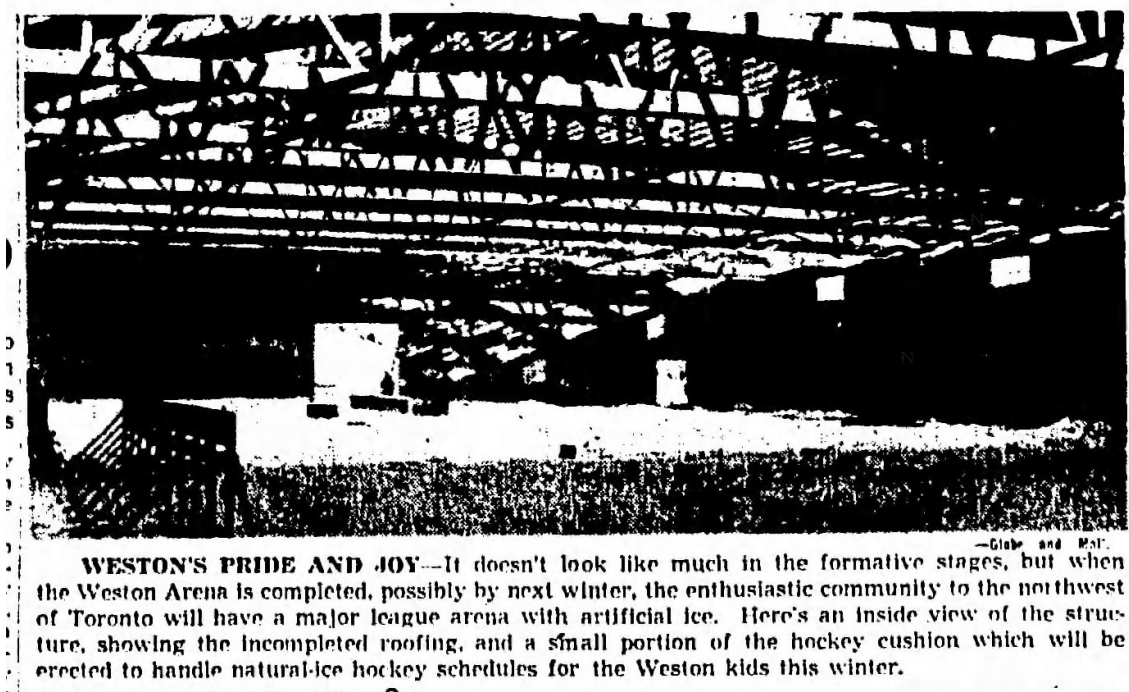


Figure 11: Globe and Mail feature showing the partially completed arena with commentary describing the building as "Weston's Pride and Joy", January 4, 1949 (Newspapers.com)

5. LIST OF SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- Cruickshank, Dr. Frederick D and Nelson, Joseph: "The History of Weston", 1937
- CTV News: November 14, 2025 www.ctvnews.ca/toronto/article/local-ice-hockey-league-forced-to-find-new-home-to-make-way-for-mlse-launchpad/
- Newspapers.com - Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Toronto Telegram
- Weston Historical Society, unpublished research notes "Fairgrounds to Lions Park", 2019
- Weston Historic Society - unpublished research notes "Fairgrounds to Lions Park", 2019
- Weston Historic Society - Weston Times and Guide newspaper