

339 Queen Street East – Proposed Amendment to Designating By-law under Part IV, Section 30.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: June 2, 2026

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: Ward 13 – Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council amend the Reasons for Designation within the 2017 City of Toronto By-law 715-2017 designating the property at 339 Queen Street East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, to include within the property's description reference to the direct association of the property with Cecil B. Tadman's nearly 50-year ownership of the property as the Home Furniture Company Limited, to further clarify the property's value as a representative example of Chicago School style architecture, and to include the historic post and beam timber frame construction as a heritage attribute.

The property at 339 Queen Street East is located at the south-west corner of Queen Street East and Parliament Street. Built in 1907, with an extension in 1925-1926, the building is a three-storey, brick-clad store and warehouse, with curtain wall cladding on the first two storeys of the principal north and east façades. The property continuously operated as a furniture store for over a century. The property was originally owned by the Home Furniture Carpet Co. Ltd. from 1907 until 1928 and was sold to an employee, Cecil B. Tadman, who renamed the business "The Home Furniture Company Limited." Tadman continued to own and operate the store for nearly 50 years until his death in 1976. The property was then owned and occupied by Marty Millionaire Ltd. from 1978 until 2014.

A rehabilitation of the building was completed in 2017 to house the WE Global Learning Centre, within which the original post and beam timber frame construction was retained. Staff have subsequently reviewed the interior and determined that it contributes to the physical value of 339 Queen Street East and its association with the Chicago School style and is therefore a heritage attribute. Additionally, in June 2024, the local Councillor requested that Heritage Planning staff respond to a concern expressed by the Tadman family that despite his long association with the property and the prominence of his business, Cecil B. Tadman's was not referenced in the designation by-law.

On December 2, 2025, the Toronto Public Library (TPL) announced the purchase of the property at 339 Queen Street East to house a new district library branch that will replace the current neighbourhood St. Lawrence branch located at 171 Front Street. At present TPL staff and Heritage Planning staff are exchanging information about the heritage significance of the building, including the proposed designation by-law amendment.

As a result of staff review, Heritage Planning recommend that the City Council amend designation By-law 715-2017 with the Revised Reasons for Designation, appended as Attachment 2 to this report. A comparison of the existing and proposed revised wording for Schedule "A" of By-law 715-2017 is appended in this report as Attachment 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council state its intention to amend By-law 715-2017, which designates the property at 339 Queen Street East under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, pursuant to Section 30.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with Attachment 2, Statement of Significance (Revised Reasons for Designation): 339 Queen Street East appended to the report, June 2, 2026, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the proposed amendment to the By-law 715-2017, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council amending By-law 715-2017 under Part IV, Section 30.1 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

On July 7, 2017, By-law 715-2017 was enacted designating the property 339 Queen Street East under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The designating By-Law is available at:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2017/law0715.pdf>

COMMENTS

Staff reviewed information provided to the City about the Tadman's Home Furnishing Company Ltd. and conducted additional historic research about Cecil B. Tadman's association with the property prior to and after his ownership. As a result, staff are of the opinion that Tadman's period of occupation should be included in Revised Reasons for Designation in Attachment 2.

Further, prior to By-law 715-2017's adoption, staff did not have an opportunity to enter the property and identify potential interior heritage attributes prior to the pending rehabilitation of the building. Recently, Heritage Planning staff conducted a site visit with staff from TPL and identified that the post and beam timber construction on the building's interior merits inclusion as a heritage attribute in the Revised Reasons for Designation in Attachment 2.

CONCLUSION

The Statement of Significance for the property at 339 Queen Street East, appended as Attachment 2 to this report, comprises the Revised Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Amend a Designating By-law.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Thorne
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation) By-law 715-2017

Attachment 2 – Statement of Significance (Revised Reasons for Designation)

Attachment 3 – Redline to Schedule "A" to By-law 715-2017 Respecting 339 Queen Street East

Attachment 4 – Location Map and Current Photograph

Attachment 5 – Photographs

Attachment 6 – List of Sources

339 QUEEN STREET EAST
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)
BY-LAW 715-2017

ATTACHMENT 1

The property at 339 Queen Street East 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 all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

Description

The property at 339 Queen Street East is located at the south-west corner of Queen Street East and Parliament Street. Built in 1907, with an extension in 1925-1926, the building is a three-storey, brick-clad store and warehouse, with curtain wall cladding on the first two storeys of the principal north and east façades. The property was originally owned by the Home Furniture Carpet Co. Ltd. from 1907 until 1977 and then owned and occupied by Marty Millionaire Ltd. from 1978 until 2014.

Statement of Significance

The former Home Furniture Carpet Co., Ltd. building, at 339 Queen Street East, has design value as a fine representative of the Chicago School which was a dominant architectural style for commercial buildings between 1895 and 1910 and was a precursor to 20th century steel and glass skyscrapers. The chief characteristics included a steel, post-and-beam structural system which permitted extensively glazed, curtain-wall façades on the lower floors and typically featured more traditional windows combined with masonry cladding on the upper levels. The 1925-1926 extension was faithful in repeating the original style and architectural detail.

The property is valued for its association with John Francis Brown, founder of J. F. Brown Co. and subsequently the Home Furniture Carpet Co., Ltd., a department store business in operation in Toronto for over 90 years (1885 until 1977). The property is also valued for its association with John Franklin Brown who extended the building in 1925-6 to create the Home Bowling Club, later known as the Riverdale Bowling Alleys, which occupied the property for over 50 years. The property is also associated with Marty Millionaire Ltd., a well-known furniture sales and rental emporium which provided props to Toronto's film industry from 1968. This business was located in this building at 339 Queen Street East for over 35 years (1978-2014).

The property is valued as it demonstrates the work of Henry Simpson (1864-1926), an innovative and prolific Toronto architect, who was eulogized as "one of the best known Toronto architects in the era of building expansion." (Obituary, Henry Simpson, Toronto Star, 17 December 1926) Simpson began his career as an intern of the architect E. J. Lennox, and then practised in New York, before returning to practice in Toronto by 1889. He is credited with designing over 120 buildings including the Metallic Roofing Co. showroom, a National Historic Site. Simpson also designed J. F. Brown's first retail

building, at 193 Yonge Street, which is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The property's location, the south-west corner of Queen and Parliament, is valued for its historical association with the evolution of the Corktown neighbourhood from being situated on the outer edges of the original town of York and the adjacent sites of the town's first institutions, to its transformation as an important intersection where Parliament St. connected waterfront industry with northern residential communities and Queen St. became a significant artery connecting the city with the communities of Riverdale, Leslieville and beyond.

The property at 339 Queen Street East has contextual value as it supports the historic character of this important intersection of Queen and Parliament streets. The Chicago School style building has been a distinctive local landmark within the predominantly Victorian Style Corktown neighbourhood for more than a century.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes on the exterior of the property at 339 Queen Street East are:

- The original location of the building at the south-west corner of Queen Street East and Parliament Street
- The form and massing of the three-storey rectangular volume with a flat roof
- The north and east elevations including the following:
 - The pattern of the curtain wall glazing at the first and second floors including:
 - The pairs of large panes of glass between structural supports at the first and second floors
 - The pairs of transom lights above each large pane of glass on the Parliament Street elevation (n.b. these are currently covered with board panels)
 - The pairs or triplets of transom lights above each large pane of glass on the Queen Street elevation, with the pair over the recessed entry (n.b. these are currently covered with board panels)
 - The original spandrel panels below the glazing, divided to match the pattern of the transom lights above
 - The original narrow band for signage between the first and second floors
 - The moulded brick entablature band which runs between the second and third floors
 - The bricks pilasters, with their narrow capitals, rising two floors to the brick entablature between the second and third floors
 - The third floor level including:
 - The window openings with their segmental-arched headers
 - The pattern of paired, double-hung, single-pane sash within the window openings
 - The moulding strips connecting the window heads

The rear, east façade of the 1925-6 extension, and the fire escape stairs on the south façade are not identified as heritage attributes.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REVISED REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 339 Queen Street East 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 all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

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Statement of Significance

The former Home Furniture Carpet Co., Ltd. building, at 339 Queen Street East, has design value as a fine representative of the Chicago School which was a dominant architectural style for commercial buildings between 1895 and 1910 and was a precursor to 20th century steel and glass skyscrapers. The chief characteristics of the style found at 339 Queen Street East include the building's structure which is a combination of load-bearing masonry, timber frame, and steel curtain wall construction. The 1925-1926 extension was faithful in repeating the original style and architectural detail.

The property is valued for its association with John Francis Brown, founder of J. F. Brown Co. and subsequently the Home Furniture Carpet Co., Ltd., a department store business in operation in Toronto for over 40 years (1885 until 1928) and present at this location starting in 1907. The property is also valued for its association with John Franklin Brown who extended the building in 1925-6 to create the Home Bowling Club, later known as the Riverdale Bowling Alleys, which occupied the building extension for over 50 years. The property is also associated with the Home Furniture Company Limited, which occupied the property for nearly 50 years (1928-1976). The property is also associated with Marty Millionaire Ltd., a well-known furniture sales and rental emporium which provided props to Toronto's film industry from 1968. This business was located in this building at 339 Queen Street East for over 35 years (1978-2014).

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 - The third floor level including:
 - The window openings with their segmental-arched headers
 - The pattern of paired, double-hung, single-pane sash within the window openings

- The moulding strips connecting the window heads

The heritage attributes on the interior of the property at 339 Queen Street East are:

- The historic post and beam timber frame construction

The rear, east façade of the 1925-6 extension, and the fire escape stairs on the south façade are not identified as heritage attributes.

339 QUEEN STREET EAST
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

ATTACHMENT 3

The property at 339 Queen Street East 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 all three categories of design, associative and contextual value.

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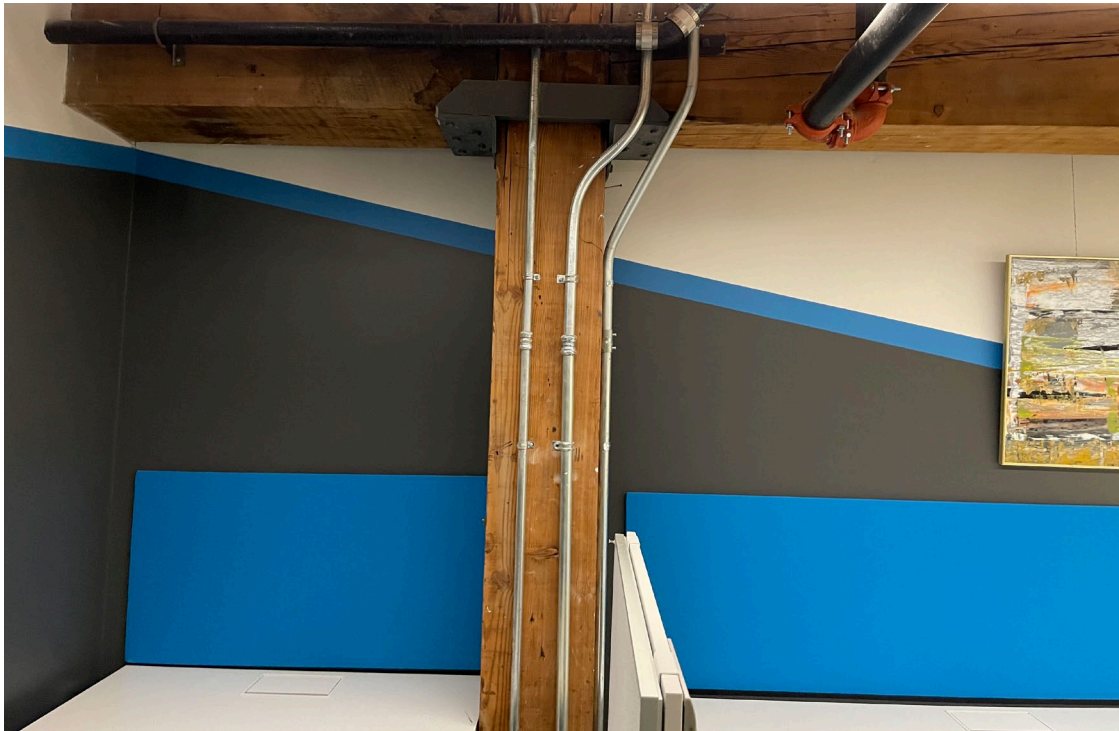


Figure 3. View of the basement level of 339 Queen Street East with beam timber frame construction (Heritage Planning, 2026).



Figure 4. View of the third floor of 339 Queen Street East with beam timber frame construction (Heritage Planning, 2026).

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- Census of Canada, Toronto: 1931.
- Might's Great Toronto City Directories: 1927, 1928, 1929, 1977, 1978.
- Land Registry Office Records, Metro Toronto: Books 228, 228A, 228B, Plan 7A.
- Tax Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto Archives: 1929-1930 and 1938-1939.
- Toronto Public Library, ProQuest Newspapers, Globe and Mail: 1976.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Sinclair, Gordon. "Let's Be Personal." CFRB Radio Station Transcript. 1967.