



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

This document was retrieved from the Ontario Heritage Act e-Register, which is accessible through the website of the Ontario Heritage Trust at **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

Ce document est tiré du registre électronique, tenu aux fins de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, accessible à partir du site Web de la Fiducie du patrimoine ontarien sur **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER O.18 AND
330 UNIVERSITY AVENUE
CITY OF TORONTO, PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW

To: Canada Life Assurance Company
c/o Adason Properties Limited
181 University Avenue
Suite 2000
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 3M7
Attn: David House

Ontario Heritage Foundation
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 1J3

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto has passed By-law No. 1997-0069 to designate 330 University Avenue as being of architectural and historical interest.

Dated at Toronto this 21st day of February, 1997.



Sydney K. Baxter
City Clerk

✓

No. 1997-0069. A BY-LAW

*To designate the property at 330 University Avenue as
being of architectural and historical interest.*

(Passed February 3, 1997.)

WHEREAS by Clause 12 of Neighbourhoods Committee Report No. 3, adopted by Council at its meeting held on February 3, 1997, authority was granted to designate the property at 330 University Avenue as being of architectural and historical interest;

AND WHEREAS the *Ontario Heritage Act* authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historical or architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS the Council of The Corporation of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the land and premises known as No. 330 University Avenue and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation Notice of Intention to designate the property and has caused the Notice of Intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*;

AND WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "B" to this by-law;

AND WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served upon the Clerk of the municipality;

THEREFORE the Council of The Corporation of the City of Toronto enacts as follows:

1. The property at 330 University Avenue, more particularly described and shown on Schedule "A" to this by-law, is being designated as being of architectural and historical interest.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedules "A" and "C" to this by-law in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the property at 330 University Avenue and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

BARBARA HALL,
Mayor.

SYDNEY K. BAXTER
City Clerk.

Council Chamber,
Toronto, February 3, 1997.
(L.S.)

SCHEDULE "A"

In the City of Toronto, in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 on the east side of Simcoe Street according to Plan 1-49-55 registered in the Land Registry Office for the Metropolitan Toronto Registry Division (No. 64).

The westerly limit of University Avenue and the easterly limit of Simcoe Street as confirmed under the Boundaries Act by Plan BA-1093 (Instrument CT258877).

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Plan SYE2829 dated January 24, 1997 as set out in Schedule "C".

SCHEDULE "B"

Heritage Property Report

Basic Building Data:

Address:	330 University Avenue (west side of University Avenue, north of Queen Street West)
Ward:	5
Current Name:	Canada Life Building
Historical Name:	Canada Life Building
Construction Date:	1929-1931
Architect:	Sproatt and Rolph
Contractor/Builder:	Anglin-Norcross Limited, contractors
Additions/Alterations:	some windows and doors replaced; numerous interior changes
Original Owner:	Canada Life Assurance Company
Original Use:	commercial (office building)
Current Use*:	commercial (office building)
Heritage Category:	Landmark Heritage Building (Category A)
Recording Date:	September 1996
Recorder:	HPD:KA

* this does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined in the Zoning By-law

Historical Background:

1. Canada Life Assurance Company:

The Canada Life Assurance Company was the first life insurance company formed in Canada and is one of the 8 oldest in North America. The firm was founded in 1847 as "The Canada Life" by Hugh C. Baker, a Hamilton banker and mathematician who served as the company's first president, general manager and actuary. As the only life insurance company in the Province of Canada West prior to Confederation, the company reported to the provincial government. Before the turn of the 20th century, Canada Life established branch offices in 6 American cities. In 1903, its British headquarters opened in London, with branches throughout Britain and Ireland.

In 1903, Canada Life relocated its Canadian head office from Hamilton to Toronto, occupying the Toronto branch office at 40 King Street West. In 1929, Canada Life sold this office building and the neighbouring Cawthra House to the Bank of Nova Scotia (the site is now occupied by the Bank of Nova Scotia Building, completed in 1951 and now part of Scotia Plaza). Two years later, Canada Life moved into its new head office building on University Avenue.

2. University Avenue:

University Avenue was laid out in 1829 as "College Avenue", a route leading to University Park and the future site of King's College, a university endowed by the Church of England. A 120-foot-wide boulevard, flanked by landscaped walkways, was laid out by Andre Parmentier, a Belgian horticulturalist. The campus was eventually completed in 1842-1845, only to be appropriated by the provincial government as a branch of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum in 1859. During the latter year, the City of Toronto acquired a 99-year lease for College Avenue and the area to the north where Queen's Park was unveiled in 1860. The Province of Ontario's fourth and current Legislative Buildings opened at the south end of Queen's Park in 1892 (the property is included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties). The presence of the government attracted other institutional buildings to the area, including the west extension of Osgoode Hall, the College Street wing of Toronto General Hospital, and the Armouries (the latter building was demolished in 1963).

In 1909, Toronto's Civic Improvement League was formed to promote the Beaux Arts planning ideals introduced in European cities, as exemplified by the Champs-Elysees in Paris with its sweeping vistas and monumental buildings. The League's plans were interrupted by World War I, but interest was revived in 1928, when the City adopted the "University Avenue Extension Act". A Commission was appointed by the City to design the route from Queen to Front Street. University Avenue was extended south of Richmond Street on an angle to Front Streets. North to Queen's Park, University Avenue was divided by a landscaped boulevard (the setting for monuments) and flanked by wide sidewalks. The commission recommended that new buildings along the route adhere to a uniform cornice line of 100 feet, but towers could extend beyond this height. In 1931, the City established a review committee to judge designs, which excluded residential buildings, controlled height, colour and materials, and rejected overhead wires, billboards and illuminated signs. With the Great Depression, only Union Station (opened in 1927) and the Dominion Public Building (completed in two phases in 1926 and 1935) were constructed on Front Street, while the Parker Pen Building (now demolished) and the Canada Life Building opened on University Avenue. According to William Dendy, "today, only the Canada Life Building...still indicates the monumental effect that the commissioners sought in 1929" (Lost Toronto, 191).

3. The Canada Life Building:

The Canada Life Assurance Company commissioned the Toronto architectural firm of Sproatt and Rolph to design their new headquarters. Henry Sproatt (1866-1934), the son of a civil engineer and land surveyor, completed four years of architectural training with Toronto architect A. R. Denison. During a three-year period spent working in various architectural offices in New York City, Sproatt returned to Toronto to assist architect David Roberts, Jr. on the design of the George Gooderham House at Bloor and St. George Streets. After an architectural tour of Europe, Sproatt formed a partnership with Frank Darling, Samuel Curry and John Pearson in 1893. With the departure of Curry the next year, Ernest Rolph (1871-1958) joined the firm as a draughtsman. Rolph gained engineering experience during the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental route through the Rocky Mountains. He studied architecture with David Roberts, Jr., where it is likely he met Sproatt. In 1900, Sproatt and Rolph formed a partnership which lasted over three decades. Among their most important

commissions were projects for the University of Toronto, including Hart House, Soldiers' Tower, and additions to Victoria University. The pair worked on Eaton's College Street Store and the Royal York Hotel in association with the Montreal firm of Ross and Macdonald. Beginning in 1928, Sproatt and Rolph gained further experience in the design of skyscrapers when the firm prepared plans for the Canada Permanent Building at 320 Bay Street in association with the Toronto firms of Mathers and Haldenby and F. Hilton Wilkes. All of the above-noted properties are included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

The design for the Canada Life Building evolved from a 6-storey horizontal block with a 600-foot-long facade to the selected composition with a 12-storey shaft, arranged in two tiers, and a 6-storey tower. The building contained a hospital, laboratory and assembly hall on the 8th floor, a staff cafeteria on the 9th floor, executive offices for the president and general manager on the 11th floor, facilities for the chairman of the board of directors on the 12th floor, and two executive dining rooms on the 13th floor. The tower contained, on different levels, the switchboard, elevator machinery, board room, and 17th-floor observation lounge. The top floor housed a 40,000 gallon water tank. The building rose above two basements, with a tunnel running under Simcoe Street to a separate boiler house and garage. A contemporary description of the building noted that "the architects have striven to express in some measure the importance and stability of the company, while retaining the essential simplicity of an office building, and at the same time have endeavoured to produce a structure which, in process of time, shall harmonize with its venerable and dignified neighbour, Osgoode Hall" (Journal, RAIC (June 1931), 237).

In 1951, the distinctive weather beacon was added as an advertising feature, a gimmick copied from a New York City insurance firm. Colour-coded neon lighting reflects updates from Environment Canada's weather centre at Pearson Airport: steady green for fair weather, red for cloudy skies, white flashes for snow, and red flashes for rain. The lights flash from top to bottom to signify cooler temperatures, bottom to top for a warming trend, and remain steady for no change.

In 1971, the company opened Canada Life Place on the west side of Simcoe Street, behind the Canada Life Building (Canada Life Place is not included in the Reasons for Designation). The two properties are linked by wood and glass bridges, extending above and across Simcoe Street.

Architectural Description:

The Canada Life Building displays the tiered outline of the second-generation skyscrapers of the post-World War I period, with the enriched Classical detailing favoured during the early 20th century. The first generation of skyscrapers, introduced in Chicago and New York City in the late 1880s and copied in major North American cities, favoured a single shaft arranged like a Classical column with a base, shaft and cornice. The second-generation skyscrapers evolved in New York City following the passage of a 1916 zoning by-law. To allow as much light as possible to reach the street, high rises were set back from the lot line and rose in a series of progressively narrower setbacks. Although not mandated in most cities, the design became a standard building type in the 1920s.

Constructed with a steel skeleton, the Canada Life Building is clad with Indiana limestone above a granite base. The E-shaped plan features a long facade along University Avenue, with a 12-storey centre block, 6-storey tower, and 8-storey wings. The lower 4 stories have channelled stonework. All walls have flat-headed window openings with multi-paned sash windows. In the upper floors, the window openings are divided by pilasters with enriched Classical stone detailing. Letters spelling "CANADA LIFE" are placed on the north, west and south faces of the tower.

On the principal (east) facade, a three-storey portico with 10 columns rises above the ground floor. At its base, three bronze doors are inset behind polished aluminum gates. The centre door is marked by a semi-circular pediment with an oversized keystone and console brackets. The colonnade is topped by a balcony at the 5th-storey window openings. Decorated aluminum spandrels are placed beneath the 7th and 8th storey windows. The 9th-storey openings are marked by bracketed sills and divided by moulded panels. A balcony runs beneath the 13 bays

at the 10th-storey level where the offices of the chairman of the board were located. One floor up, the window openings have individual balconets with stone carving. Cornices divide the structure horizontally above the 1st, 4th, 8th, 11th and 12th stories. The 6-storey tower, rising in a series of setbacks, has balconies and fanlights at the 15th storey where the board room was situated.

The wings are similarly designed with channelled stonework in the lower floors. The window openings are divided vertically by pilasters, and the walls are divided horizontally by cornices above the 1st, 4th and 8th stories. At either end of the east facade, a single entrance is set in a segmental-headed opening with a multi-paned fanlight and oversized keystone. The rear (west) wall on Simcoe Street juts out in a series of three wings. This wall displays the same decorative treatment and pattern of openings as the others, with a central entrance in the centre block.

Interior features of note are the ground-floor vestibule, entrance hall and elevator, with bronze elevator doors and hardware. On the 11th floor, the elevator foyer has marble doorcases, pilasters, egg-and-dart moulding at the ceiling, and light fixtures. Off the foyer, a doorcase displays Classical detailing and a transom with grillwork. The elevator machine room on the 14th level has a brass handrail. On the 15th floor, the board room has columns and fluted pilasters, a panelled ceiling, and brass fixtures, with chandeliers and ceiling- and wall-mounted fixtures. Also on the 15th floor, the lavatory has tiled floors and walls, and the anteroom has panelling and fluted columns with a dentilled cornice. The 17th-floor observation lounge has doors (2 on each of 3 walls) with transoms and egg-and-dart moulding, panelling and monumental fluted pilasters, a vaulted ceiling, and light fixtures.

Context:

The Canada Life Building is located on the west side of University Avenue, north of Queen Street West. The building is set back from the thoroughfare behind an iron fence. On the north, an area of landscaped open space separates the Canada Life Building from its neighbour. To the south, Campbell House, the historic house museum (relocated from Adelaide Street East and designated under the Ontario Heritage Act), faces Queen Street West. The landscaped grounds and west wings of Osgoode Hall are opposite on the east side of University Avenue.

In the immediate area, buildings of architectural significance are the University Club of Toronto (1929) at 382 University Avenue, the Royal Canadian Military Institute (portions of which date to the 19th century) at 426 University Avenue, the Maclean Publishing Company Building (1911) at 481 University Avenue, and two buildings constructed for the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission (dating to 1915 and 1935 and now the location of Princess Margaret Hospital) at 610 and 620 University Avenue. The latter properties are recognized on the Inventory of Heritage Properties. The buildings at 481 and 610 University Avenue were also designed by Sproatt and Rolph.

Summary:

The Canada Life Building is significant as the second head office in Toronto of Canada's first life insurance company. Completed in 1931, it is a late work by the important Toronto architectural firm of Sproatt and Rolph. The building is a significant example of a second generation skyscraper, distinguished by its monumental tiered plan, Classical detailing, and trademark weather beacon. It is the only surviving building on University Avenue completed as part of an improvement scheme to create a ceremonial boulevard in the Beaux Arts tradition, linking the Ontario Legislative Building at Queen's Park with Union Station on Front Street. Located next to Campbell House and across from Osgoode Hall, the Canada Life Building is a prominent landmark in the central area of Toronto.

Sources Consulted:

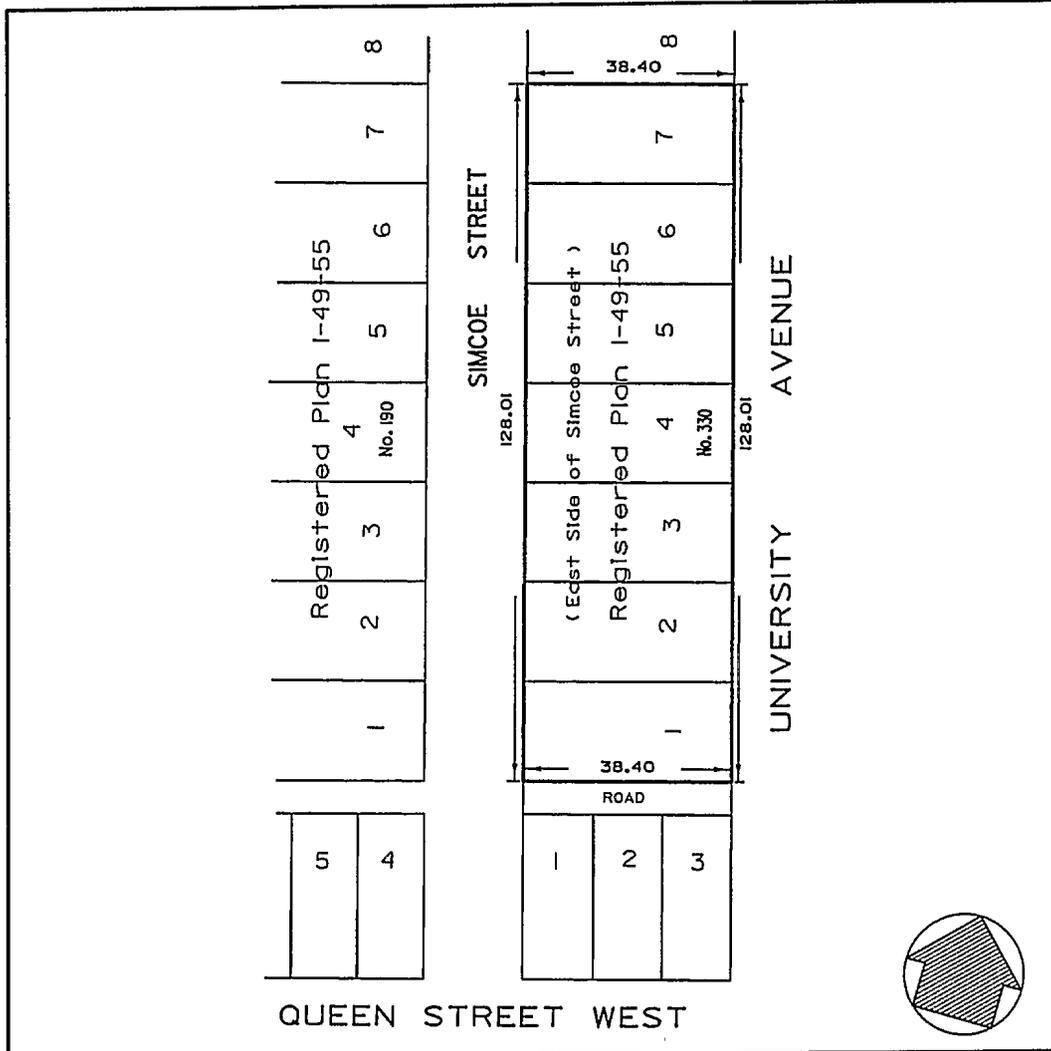
Art in Architecture. Toronto Landmarks 1920-1940. Department of the City Clerk, Records and Archives Division, 1987.

-
- Arthur, Eric. Toronto. No Mean City. 3rd ed. Revised by Stephen A. Otto. University of Toronto, 1986.
- Beszedits, Stephen. Eminent Toronto Architects of the Past. B and L Information Services, 1983.
- "Canada Life Building completed." Construction (April 1931), 112-120, 123-131.
- Contract Record (2 October 1929), 1205, (24 May 1930), 554, (13 August 1930), 62, and (31 December 1930), 1608.
- Dendy, William. Lost Toronto. Rev. ed. McClelland and Stewart, 1993.
- Dendy, William, and William Kilbourn. Toronto Observed. Oxford University, 1986.
- McHugh, Patricia. Toronto Architecture. A City Guide. 2nd ed. McClelland and Stewart, 1989.
- "The New Canada Life Building, Toronto." Journal, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (June 1931), 221-237.
- "Plans filed for Canada Life Building." Construction (9 February 1930), 43.
- "Proposed head office building in Toronto for the Canada Life Assurance Company". Journal, RAIC (February 1929), 45.
- Since 1847: The Story of a Great Institution. Reprint. Canada Life Insurance Company, 1931, 1969.
- Skinulis, Richard. "Guiding lights." Business Journal (January-February 1987), 48.
- "Weather in lights". Toronto Star (20 June 1991), A7.

Kathryn Anderson
September 1996

SCHEDULE 'C'

MAP AREA 51G-22



 Part of Premises
No. 330 UNIVERSITY AVENUE

NOTE:
THIS SKETCH IS NOT A PLAN OF SURVEY
AND HAS BEEN COMPILED FROM SURVEY
NOTES AND OFFICE RECORDS. IT SHALL
NOT BE USED EXCEPT FOR THE PURPOSE
INDICATED IN THE TITLE BLOCK.

CITY WORKS SERVICES
CITY OF TORONTO

SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE
LAND DESIGNATED AS
BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND
HISTORICAL VALUE OR INTEREST

RATIO 1:1000
Metres  Metres

Drawn ME
Checked W.J.J.
Date: JAN. 24, 1997.

W. Kowalenko - City Surveyor

FILE
U8-H2

PLAN SYE2829

SYE2829