



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

This document was retrieved from the Ontario Heritage Act Register, which is accessible through the website of the Ontario Heritage Trust at **[www.heritagetrust.on.ca](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca)**.

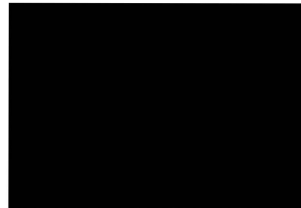
---

Ce document est tiré du registre 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](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca)**.

File No. ACS2025-PDB-RHU-0027

June 11, 2025

ByTowne Cinema  
325 Rideau Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 5Y4



**RECEIVED**  
2025/06/11  
(YYYY/MM/DD)  
Ontario Heritage Trust

Dear 

**RE: Designation of 323-327 Rideau Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act***

This letter is to advise you that Ottawa City Council, at its meeting of May 28, 2025, approved the following recommendation in respect of the above-noted item:

**That Council issue a Notice of Intention to Designate 323-327 Rideau Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act according to the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value.**

A copy of the complete report in this matter, as well as the minutes of the City Council meeting of May 28, 2025, can be found on the City's website at [ottawa.ca/agendas](http://ottawa.ca/agendas).

Enclosed is the Notice of Intention to Designate, served according to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, to be published online at [Ottawa.ca/heritagenotices](http://Ottawa.ca/heritagenotices) on June 11, 2025. You will have 30 days from the publication date, until July 11, 2025, to file an objection to the designation. Should you wish to object to the designation, you may do so by submitting a notice of objection in writing, outlining the reasons for the objection and any other relevant information. The notice must be received by the Clerk of the City of Ottawa within 30 days after the online publication of this notice.

Office of the City Clerk  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1  
[ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca)

Direct Line (613) 580-2424 Ext. 28136  
[caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca](mailto:caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca)

Bureau du greffier municipal  
Ville d'Ottawa  
110, ave. Laurier ouest  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 1J1  
[ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca)

Ligne directe (613) 580-2424 poste 28136  
[caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca](mailto:caitlin.salter-macdonald@ottawa.ca)

The notice of objection can be submitted via email to [CityClerk-HeritageObjections@ottawa.ca](mailto:CityClerk-HeritageObjections@ottawa.ca), or via registered mail or in-person delivery, by appointment, at the following coordinates:

Caitlin Salter MacDonald, City Clerk  
c/o Andrew El-Azzi, Committee Coordinator  
110 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1, mail code 01-71

To make an appointment, please contact Andrew El-Azzi, Committee Coordinator at 613-580-2424, ext. 21934, or at [Andrew.El-Azzi2@ottawa.ca](mailto:Andrew.El-Azzi2@ottawa.ca). When an objection has been received, City Council will consider the objection including all relevant information within 90 days after the end of the objection period. After consideration of the objection, Council may decide to withdraw the Notice of Intention to Designate or to pass a by-law designating the property under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Should Council pass a by-law to designate the property, there will be further correspondence from the City on how you may appeal this decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Should you require further information, please contact Lauren Luchenski, at (613) 580-2424, 21588 or by email at [lauren.luchenski@ottawa.ca](mailto:lauren.luchenski@ottawa.ca).

Regards,



Caitlin Salter MacDonald  
City Clerk

c.c.      Lauren Luchenski, Built Heritage Research Coordinator, City of Ottawa  
            ([lauren.luchenski@ottawa.ca](mailto:lauren.luchenski@ottawa.ca))  
            MacKenzie Kimm, Heritage Planner, City of Ottawa ([mackenzie.kimm@ottawa.ca](mailto:mackenzie.kimm@ottawa.ca))  
            Daniel Demois, ByTowne Cinema ([daniel@bytowne.ca](mailto:daniel@bytowne.ca))  
            Bruce White, ByTowne Cinema ([bruce.arthur.white@gmail.com](mailto:bruce.arthur.white@gmail.com))  
            Registrar, Ontario Heritage Trust ([registrar@heritagetrust.on.ca](mailto:registrar@heritagetrust.on.ca))

Encl.

**NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE 323-327 RIDEAU STREET AS A PROPERTY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST, PURSUANT TO SECTION 29 (3) OF THE *ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18**

**DATED AND PUBLISHED** at the City of Ottawa this 11th day of June, 2025

**TAKE NOTICE** that the City of Ottawa, on May 28, 2025 established its intention to designate 323-327 Rideau Street under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

The building at 323-327 Rideau Street is a two-storey, purpose-built movie theatre on the north side of Rideau Street between King Edward Avenue and Nelson Street.

**STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST**

The ByTowne Cinema is a representative example of a purpose-built post-war neighbourhood movie theatre, featuring elements of the Moderne architectural style. A neighbourhood movie house refers to a smaller-scale, local theatre situated in a residential area. Constructed in 1947, the ByTowne features typical elements of postwar neighbourhood movie houses, including a large lighted marquee, a former exterior ticket booth, as well as its two-storey massing, which was typical of the neighbourhood at the time of construction. Stylistically, the post-war neighbourhood movie house often featured the Moderne style. The style is characterized by its horizontality, smooth walls, simple ornamentation, rounded corners, and curved glass. The ByTowne features elements of the Moderne style through its rounded profile, streamline stone cornice, smooth brick cladding, and metal accents.

The ByTowne was designed by Toronto architectural firm Kaplan & Sprachman. Kaplan & Sprachman was a prolific firm comprised of architects Harold Solomon Kaplan (1895-1973) and Abraham Sprachman (1894-1971). The firm is notable for designing hundreds of movie theatres across Canada throughout the 20th century, as well as significant buildings for the Jewish community. The firm was instrumental in introducing the Moderne style to Canadian theatre architecture. Their theatres are characterized by streamlined surfaces and lighted marquees. The ByTowne is a representative example of Kaplan & Sprachman's design on a neighbourhood movie house, and the last intact example of the firm's theatres in Ottawa.

The ByTowne was constructed during Ottawa's post-war neighbourhood cinema boom when movie attendance and the theatre business in Canada reached new heights. In Ottawa, theatre chains and local entrepreneurs became interested in constructing neighbourhood movie houses in areas of the city with growing populations. Local proprietor Hyman Berlin opened the theatre as the Nelson Theatre in 1947, serving as the neighbourhood movie house for Lowertown and Sandy Hill residents. Berlin operated the theatre for only a few years before leasing it to Famous Players until the 1980s.

On October 1, 1988, local theatre operators Bruce White and Jean Cloutier re-opened the Nelson Theatre as the ByTowne Cinema. By 1989, White and Cloutier were operating the ByTowne as their main theatre for repertory programming, screening different cult, classic,

foreign, independent, and alternative films daily. The ByTowne continues to function as an independent repertory theatre and serves a gathering space for diverse and alternative narratives, subcultures, and community events. Further research could reveal more about Ottawa's independent cinema and film community, as well as the various groups and subcultures that use the ByTowne as a community space.

As a post-war neighbourhood movie house, the ByTowne is historically and functionally linked its surrounding neighbourhoods and Rideau Street's commercial activity. It was likely constructed in its on Rideau Street location to attract residents of both Lowertown and Sandy Hill. The ByTowne is functionally linked to other neighbourhood institutions and gathering places including the former Adath Jeshurun Synagogue at 375 King Edward Avenue (constructed 1904), and the Rideau Library at 377 Rideau Street (constructed in 1933).

The ByTowne is a landmark on Rideau Street and in Lowertown. Its prominent frontage on Rideau Street and its iconic marquee distinguishes it from surrounding contemporary buildings. At night, the ByTowne's lighted marquee makes it highly visible on Rideau Street, uniquely reinforcing its status as a historic and familiar landmark on its streetscape.

## **DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES**

Key exterior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of the ByTowne Cinema as a representative example of a purpose-built neighbourhood movie house with elements of the Moderne style include:

- Two-storey massing
- Flat roof
- Symmetrical façade featuring two projecting bays with rounded interior edges featuring header bond bricks, forming a central recessed bay
- Presence of ground floor storefronts with a recessed entrance with curved profile and metal accents including display cases
- Recessed main entrance with corrugated and polished metal accents including the form and expression of the former exterior ticket booth and display case
- Sidewalk entrance featuring the theatre's name in terrazzo
- First storey featuring light coloured smooth aggregate paneling with dark coloured stone base
- Second storey featuring buff brick cladding, limited window openings, horizontal accents including concrete lintels, sills, and streamlined cornice
- Presence of a projecting lighted marquee in the centre of the front façade, with a vertical sign featuring the theatre's name extending the height of the building

## **OBJECTIONS**

Please be advised that any person wishing to object to this designation may do so under the objection process set out in Section 29 (5) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by giving the Clerk of the City of Ottawa, within 30 days after the online publication of this notice, a notice of objection outlining the reasons for the objection and any other relevant information.



The notice of objection can be submitted via email to [CityClerk-HeritageObjections@ottawa.ca](mailto:CityClerk-HeritageObjections@ottawa.ca). The notice of objection can also be submitted via registered mail or be delivered in person, by appointment, at the following coordinates:

Caitlin Salter MacDonald, City Clerk  
c/o Andrew El-Azzi, Committee Coordinator  
110 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1, mail code 01-71

When an objection has been received, City Council will consider the objection including all relevant information, within 90 days after the end of the objection period. After consideration of the objection, Council may decide to withdraw the Notice of Intention to Designate or to pass a by-law designating the property under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

For further information please contact: Lauren Luchenski, [lauren.luchenski@ottawa.ca](mailto:lauren.luchenski@ottawa.ca)