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City Clerk's Office

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

170 MERTON STREET

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

NOV 15 2017

RECEIVED

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

Take notice that Toronto City Council intends to designate the lands and building known municipally as 170 Merton Street under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Reasons for Designation

The property at 170 Merton Street (the former Visiting Homemakers Association) 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 170 Merton Street contains the former Visiting Homemakers Association building designed by Leslie Rebanks and constructed in 1969 as a two-and-a-half storey office building with brick cladding. An elevator was added on the east elevation in 1995.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The former Visiting Homemakers Association headquarters building has design value as a distinctive representative of the post-war style known as Late Modernism. A high degree of artistic merit and craftsmanship is evident in the castle-like massing of the building including the octagonal towers and bays, the integration of a terrace space within the complex and the use of concrete brick and mortar (originally pigmented a dark grey) with expressed corner joints combined with 'ribbon windows.

The building has associative value as the first purpose-built headquarters for the Visiting Homemakers Association (VHA), a Toronto-based social welfare agency which was founded in 1925 by Barbara Blackstock providing care to disadvantaged families, the sick, the elderly, and people living with intellectual disability and homelessness while also undertaking research and reporting on the co-relation between low wages, poverty and health. The VHA occupied the building for 40 years until 2010. The building has associative value as a formative work in the career of the Toronto-based architect Leslie Rebanks, a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and an elected member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, known for his award winning and critically-acclaimed projects for Wittington Properties Ltd. and Loblaws. The building also has value for its association with the W. Garfield Weston Foundation who donated the building and the property to the VHA dedicating it to the memory of Mrs. W. Garfield (Reta) Weston in 1970.

Contextually, the VHA headquarters building is important in defining and maintaining the mid-twentieth century character of Merton Street which, following the completion of the Yonge Subway line in 1954 and the local Davisville station, saw the transformation of the street from a late 19th-century road characterized by industrial buildings and Victorian semi-detached dwellings and row houses to a dense urban street of low-rise residential and commercial buildings with a variety of distinctive designs. The introduction of health and social welfare agencies, including the Girl Guides and War Amps as well as the VHA which had specially-designed headquarters, contributes to the distinctive post-war, architectural character of the street.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the former Visiting Homemakers Association are:


- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the north side of Merton Street between Yonge Street and Pailton Crescent
- The scale, form and massing of the two-and-a-half storey office building with its octagonal towers on the south, west and north elevations
- On the principal (south) elevation, the octagonal one-and-a-half storey bay and the raised terrace and staircase on the south elevation and the projecting roof overhang
- The principal (south) elevation and two side elevations facing east and west with their concrete brick cladding
- The interlocking detail of the bricks at the corners of the towers and bays
- The arrangement of openings on the principal (south) elevation which includes, at the first floor, the recessed entrance, the ribbon windows at the second level and the corner windows at the south-west corner at the basement, first and second floor levels
- The arrangement of openings on the side elevations (west and east) with the bands of ribbon windows
- The black metal frames of the ribbon windows with their vertically proportioned openings

The following are not included as heritage attributes:

The 1995 elevator tower on the east elevation

Notice of an objection to the proposed designation may be served on the City Clerk, Attention: Ellen Devlin, Administrator, Toronto and East York Community Council, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, 2nd floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2, within thirty days of November 14, 2017, which is December 14, 2017. The notice of objection must set out the reason(s) for the objection, and all relevant facts.

Dated at Toronto this 14th day of November, 2017


Ulli S. Watkiss
City Clerk