



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 19 and 21 Dundas Square – Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, and Authority to Enter into Heritage Easement Agreements

<b>Date:</b>	January 26, 2010
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Acting Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
<b>Wards:</b>	Toronto Centre-Rosedale – Ward 27
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### **SUMMARY**

---

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the properties at 19 and 21 Dundas Square (Hermant Buildings, 1913 and 1929) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and grant authority to enter into Heritage Easement Agreements. The properties were listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1990.

At its meeting of November 30, December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009, City Council approved a rezoning application for the properties at 252-258 Victoria Street and 19 and 21 Dundas Square that allows the development of part of the site with a 35-storey office/residential building. The proposal involves the demolition of the Hermant Annex located at 258 Victoria Street, which is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The owner has agreed to the designation of the Dundas Square properties and to enter into Heritage Easement Agreements with the City of Toronto for each of the sites.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

---

### **The City Planning Division recommends that:**

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 19 Dundas Square (Hermant Building, 1913) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
2. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 21 Dundas Square (Hermant Building, 1929) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
3. If there are no objections to the proposed designations in accordance with Section 29(6) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the solicitor be authorized to introduce the Bills in Council designating the properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
4. If there are objections in accordance with Section 29(7) of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Clerk be directed to refer the proposed designations to the Conservation Review Board.
5. City Council grant authority for the execution of Heritage Easement Agreements under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owner of the properties at 19 and 21 Dundas Square (Hermant Buildings, 1913 and 1929).
6. The City Solicitor be authorized to introduce the necessary Bill in Council authorizing the entering into of the Heritage Easement Agreements.

### **Financial Impact**

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The public Notice of Intention to Designate will be advertised on the City's web site in accordance with the City of Toronto Act provisions.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting of November 30 and December 1, 2, 4 and 7, 2009, City Council approved a rezoning application for the properties at 252-258 Victoria Street and 19 and 21 Dundas Square. In its decision, City Council requested Heritage Preservation Services to report to the Toronto Preservation Board, Toronto and East York Community Council and City Council on the demolition of the Hermant Annex at 258 Victoria Street. As part of the planning approvals, the owner has agreed to the designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act of the properties at 19 and 21 Dundas Square, and to enter into Heritage Easement Agreements with the City for the sites.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The properties at 19 and 21 Dundas Square, along with the adjoining sites at 252 and 258 Victoria Street, are the subject of a redevelopment application that would result in the replacement of the buildings on the Victoria Street properties with a new residential-commercial building. The Dundas Square properties contain the Hermant Buildings (1913 and 1929), which with the adjoining Hermant Annex (1920) at 258 Victoria Street, are listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

The development proposal involves the demolition of the Hermant Annex at 258 Victoria Street, which is a listed heritage property, as well as the building at 252 Victoria Street, which is not listed. The ward councillor has no objection to the demolition of the buildings at 252 and 258 Victoria Street. Staff consider the loss of the Hermant Annex a necessary compromise in order to secure the long-term preservation of the Hermant Buildings (1913 and 1929) at 19 and 21 Dundas Square, which together form a pair of early 20<sup>th</sup> century ‘tall buildings’ that define the south edge of Dundas Square. The owners have agreed to restore important heritage attributes on both buildings, which have been altered over the years. The restoration plan includes the rehabilitation of the north fenestration, replacement of the ground-floor storefront and repair of the terra cotta on 19 Dundas Square, the restoration of the original entry and lobby at 21 Dundas Square, and the provision of new ground-floor signage on both sites. The owner has agreed to the designation of the Dundas Square properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act and to enter into Heritage Easement Agreements with the City.

## **COMMENTS**

The Reasons for Designation are attached (Attachment Nos. 5 and 6). The properties at 19 and 21 Dundas Square are worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for their cultural heritage value, and meet the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario. Located on the southwest corner of Dundas Square and Victoria Street, the Hermant Buildings (1913 and 1929) are well-crafted representative examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century office buildings with classical styling that are associated with the Imperial Optical Company, its founder, Percy Hermant, and the architects that designed them. As neighbourhood landmarks, the Hermant Building (1913) at 19 Dundas Square is further distinguished by its distinctive terra cotta cladding, while the Hermant Building (1929) at 21 Dundas Square has Art Deco detailing that extends to the interior lobby.

A location map (Attachment No. 1) and Photographs (Attachment Nos. 2-4) are attached. The Reasons for Designation (Statements of Significance) are intended to be posted on the City of Toronto's web site and served on the owners of 19 and 21 Dundas Square and on the Ontario Heritage Trust according to the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Reasons for Designation (Statements of Significance) include a statement of the cultural heritage value of each property with a description of its heritage attributes.

## **CONTACT**

Mary L. MacDonald, Acting Manager  
Heritage Preservation Services  
Tel: 416-338-1079  
Fax: 416-392-1973  
E-mail: [mmacdon7@toronto.ca](mailto:mmacdon7@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Kerri Voumvakis  
Acting Director, Policy and Research  
City Planning Division

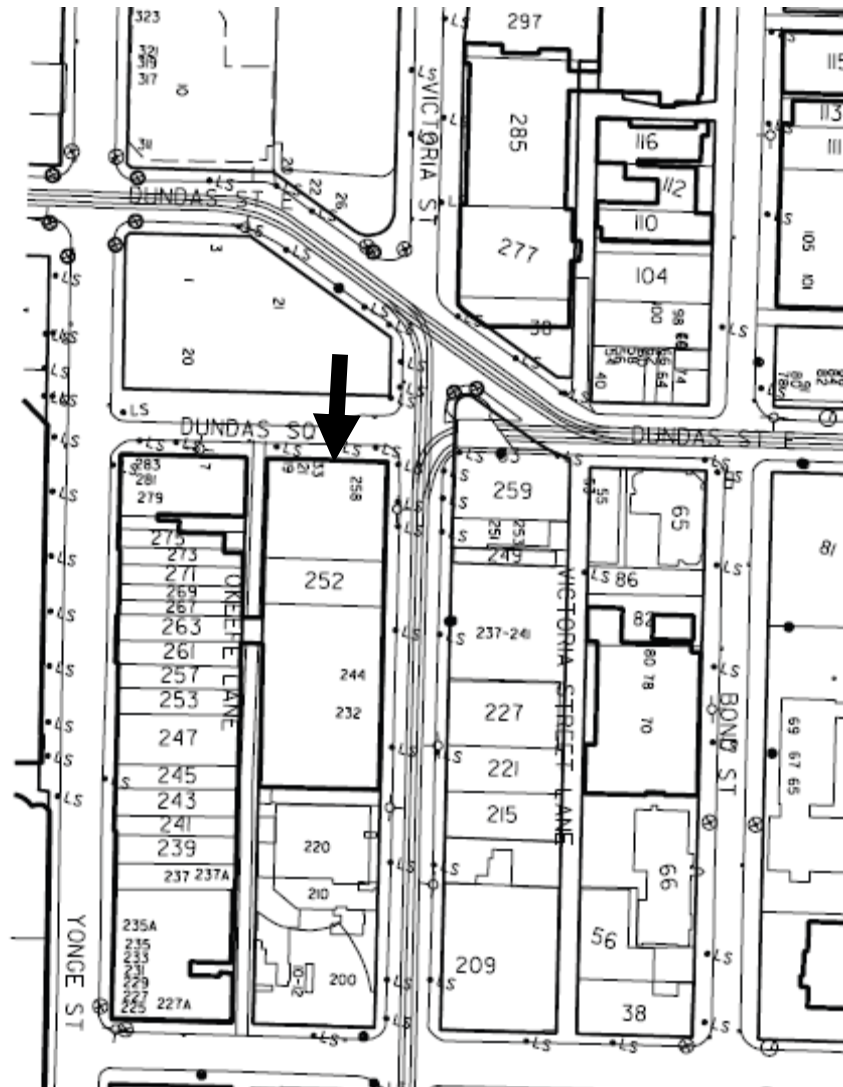
[P:\2010\ClusterB\PLN\HPS\TEYCC\te 03 09 10\teHPS02]

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map  
Attachment No. 2 – Current Photograph, 19 and 21 Dundas Square  
Attachment No. 3 – Historical Photograph, 19 and 21 Dundas Square  
Attachment No. 4 – Current Photograph, 258 Victoria Street  
Attachment No. 5 – Reasons for Designation, 19 Dundas Square  
Attachment No. 6 – Reasons for Designation, 21 Dundas Square

LOCATION MAP: 19 AND 21 DUNDAS SQUARE  
AND 252-258 VICTORIA STREET

ATTACHMENT NO. 1



The **arrow** marks the location of the properties.

This location map is for information purposes only;  
the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown.



Hermant Building (1913), 19 Dundas Square (right) and  
Hermant Building (1929), 21 Dundas Square (left)



Hermant Building (1913), 19 Dundas Square (right) and  
Hermant Building (1929), 21 Dundas Square (left).  
The Hermant Annex (1920) is shown on the left.

(Source: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1257, Series 1057, Image 622, c.1940s)





## **Hermant Building (1913)**

### Description

The property at 19 Dundas Square is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the south side of Dundas Square, west of Victoria Street, the Hermant Building (1913) is a 10-storey commercial office building, which is adjoined by the 15-storey commercial office structure, also known as the Hermant Building (1929) at 21 Dundas Square. Both properties are recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

### Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Hermant Building (1913) has design value as a representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial building that displays a high degree of craftsmanship with its application of decorative terra cotta. The building is illustrated in Terra Cotta: artful deceivers (1990) as one of a select group of surviving buildings in Toronto that retain this type of fireproof clay cladding. The Hermant Building (1913) also demonstrates technological achievement for its early use of reinforced concrete construction to support the heavy manufacturing equipment required by the original principal occupant, the Imperial Optical Company of Canada. As constructed, the building had an innovative glazed wall system with large pivoting windows that gave the north façade the appearance of transparency.

Historically, the Hermant Building (1913) is associated with Percy Hermant, a person of significance in the community as a businessman and philanthropist. In 1900, Hermant founded the Imperial Optical Company, which became the largest of its type in Canada for the production and sale of optical instruments, eye glasses and other visual aids. Under the leadership of Percy Hermant and his son, Sydney, Imperial Optical was also influential in the training and accreditation of opticians in Canada. Percy Hermant sponsored scholars at the University of Toronto and secondary schools in the city, and was president of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Toronto.

The Hermant Building (1913) was designed by the prolific Toronto architectural firm of Bond and Smith. After forming a partnership at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Charles Herbert Acton Bond and Sandford Fleming Smith became the sought-after designers for residential edifices in the Forest Hill, Poplar Plains and Annex neighbourhoods. Their practice included a range of building types, including commercial commissions for the Ideal Bread Company Factory (1912) on Dovercourt Road and the Mason and Risch Piano Company Warehouse (1911) on King Street West, with the latter project involving the application of decorative terra cotta. During the same period, Bond and Smith

completed the Hermant Building (1913) and relocated their office to the premises. The pair's plans for the Hermant Building (1913) were profiled in the April 1914 issue of Construction magazine.

Contextually, the Hermant Buildings at 19 and 21 Dundas Square together form a pair of landmark buildings overlooking Dundas Square. When completed in 1913, the first Hermant Building was briefly the tallest building in Toronto when most of the early skyscrapers were located in the city's financial district to the south. The adjoining Hermant Building surpassed its neighbour in height and anchored the southwest corner of Victoria Street. With the recent creation of public open space and amenities on Dundas Square, the Hermant Buildings (1913 and 1929) have gained greater visibility in their setting.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 19 Dundas Square are:

- The commercial office building completed in 1913
- The scale, form and massing of the structure, which rises 10 stories to include the penthouse
- The reinforced concrete construction with white terra cotta cladding
- The flat roofline with a penthouse on the south end and a stepped parapet on the principal (north) façade
- The organization of the principal (north) façade above the first floor storefront by piers that extend from the second to the ninth floor where they are ornamented with classical motifs
- The fenestration on the north façade, with flat-headed window openings, some of which have metal grilles and railings
- The setting of the building on the south side of Dundas Square, west of Victoria Street and beside the Hermant Building (1929) at 21 Dundas Square

## **Hermant Building (1929)**

### Description

The property at 21 Dundas Square is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual value. Located on the southwest corner of Dundas Square and Victoria Street, the Hermant Building (1929) is a 15-storey commercial office building, which is adjoined by the 10-storey commercial office structure, also known as the Hermant Building (1913) at 19 Dundas Square. Both properties are recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

### Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The Hermant Building (1929) has design value as a representative example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial building that displays a high degree of craftsmanship with its Art Deco influences. As a mid-sized skyscraper, its design employed the stylized classical Art Deco motifs on the exterior and interior, with decorative paneling along the roofline facing Dundas Square and Victoria Street, as well as crown moulding in the first-floor lobby.

Historically, the Hermant Building (1929) is associated with Percy Hermant, a person of significance in the community as a businessman and philanthropist. In 1900, Hermant founded the Imperial Optical Company, which became the largest of its type in Canada for the production and sale of optical instruments, eye glasses and other visual aids. Under the leadership of Percy Hermant and his son, Sydney, Imperial Optical was influential in the training and accreditation of opticians in Canada. Percy Hermant sponsored scholars at the University of Toronto and secondary schools in the city, and was president of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of Toronto.

The Hermant Building (1929) was designed by Benjamin Brown (1890-1974), purportedly the first practicing Jewish architect in Toronto. Brown established a private practice in 1913 and “was soon sought after by many Jewish clients in the clothing trade who commissioned him to design functional loft buildings constructed of reinforced concrete and dressed in stylish Art Deco cladding of cut stone and brick” ( Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 2010). Among his best known projects are the series of commercial warehouses on Spadina Avenue that are recognized on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties, with the Tower Building (1927) at #110, Balfour Building (1930) at #119, and Fashion Building (1929) at #126, as well as the neighbouring Commodore Building (1929) at 317 Adelaide Street West. It was during this period of activity that Brown received the commission for the Hermant Building, with the plans prepared in 1929.

Contextually, the Hermant Buildings at 19 and 21 Dundas Square together form a pair of landmark buildings overlooking Dundas Square. When completed in 1913, the first Hermant Building was briefly the tallest building in Toronto when most of the early skyscrapers were located in the city's financial district to the south. The adjoining Hermant Building surpassed its neighbour in height and anchored the southwest corner of Victoria Street. With the recent creation of public open space and amenities on Dundas Square, the Hermant Buildings (1913 and 1929) have gained greater visibility in their setting.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 21 Dundas Square are:

- The commercial office building completed in 1929
- The scale, form and massing of the structure, which rises 15 stories to include the penthouse
- The buff brick cladding with cast stone detailing
- The flat roofline with a penthouse on the south end and Art-Deco inspired stone panels along the north and east edges
- The organization of the principal (north) and east façades above the first floor storefronts by piers that extend from the second through the 14th floors and are separated at the 13<sup>th</sup>- and 14<sup>th</sup>-floors by relief panels with Art Deco designs
- The fenestration on the north and east facades, with the flat-headed window openings
- On the first-floor interior, the lobby with a stepped ceiling and Art-Deco inspired crown mouldings
- The setting of the building on the southwest corner of Dundas Square and Victoria Street, beside the Hermant Building (1913) at 19 Dundas Square