

APPENDIX M

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value – Gerrard Street East Subway



A Division of METROLINX
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Metrolinx Interim Heritage Committee – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Property Name: Gerrard Street East Subway, Toronto

Description of property:

The Gerrard Street East Subway is a subway structure that carries the Metrolinx Lakeshore East Rail Corridor over Gerrard Street, east of the Don River in Toronto, Ontario. The structure is located within an urban area, and carries the rail corridor on a railway embankment that extends eastwards from Union Station. Adjacent to the railway embankment and the Queen Street East structure are a mix of residential and commercial land uses. In addition, the Gerrard Street East Subway, which shares a joining wall with the Carlaw Avenue Subway is part of the abutment system, and is located immediately adjacent to the structure.

It is recommended that Metrolinx proceed with identifying Gerrard Street East Subway as a Provincial Heritage Property.

Cultural Heritage Value:

The Gerrard Street East Subway is a subway structure that carries the Metrolinx Lakeshore East Rail Corridor over Gerrard Street, east of the Don River in Toronto, Ontario. The structure is located within an urban area, and carries the rail corridor on a railway embankment that extends eastwards from Union Station. Adjacent to the railway embankment and the Queen Street East structure are a mix of residential and commercial land uses.

The subway structure was constructed in 1930 immediately following the Toronto Waterfront Grade Separation Project, as a continuation of grade separation efforts in the City of Toronto. During the late-19th and early-20th century, urban centres like Toronto began undertaking extensive grade separation projects in order to raise railway traffic above street level. The projects were undertaken in order to ease the increasing congestion of pedestrian, vehicular, and streetcar traffic that was intersecting with freight and passenger rail service. As a result, a series of grade separation projects were undertaken by cities in collaboration with railway companies. The projects resulted in the construction of railway embankments that extended for kilometres in order to separate the street-level traffic from the railway traffic throughout the city.

The structure is designed as two linked three span subway structures and currently carries three tracks over Gerrard Street East as part of the elevated rail corridor east of the Don River. The Gerrard Street East Subway consists of reinforced concrete abutments with pedestrian spans constructed into the substructure, a steel plate girder structure that forms the main span of the subway, and the railway embankment that carries the rail corridor over Gerrard Street East.

The subway consists of both concrete and steel, both common construction materials for railway structures in the 1920s. The substructure is constructed on reinforced concrete, built by the Richardson Construction Company. At the turn of the 20th century, most railway structure abutments and piers were built of concrete as opposed to the earlier-used masonry structures. Railway structures constructed completely of concrete were not used much in Canada until the 1930s, despite being popular for

highway construction.

The steel superstructure of the Gerrard Street East Subway was a common building material and element used extensively throughout the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Despite the introduction of structures built entirely of concrete, steel girders were used well into the 20th century and can be found as part of modern railway structures today. The steel for the Gerrard Street East Subway was fabricated and erected by the Canadian Bridge Company Ltd., a well-known steel fabricator and bridge manufacturer in southern Ontario.

Heritage Attributes:

The key attributes essential to the cultural heritage value or interest of Gerrard Street East Subway are:

- Concrete abutments with pedestrian spans/walkways constructed into earthen embankment;
- Concrete arcaded piers separating pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic;
- Concrete panelling and decorative details that are represented in similar subway structures along the corridor; and
- Steel plate girders.

Metrolinx Heritage Property Location:



Figure showing the location of Gerrard Street East Subway, Toronto.