

APPENDIX M

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value – Union Station



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Metrolinx Heritage Committee – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Property Name: Union Station, Toronto

Description of property:

The Union Station Complex is a monumental, five-storey structure occupying a city block in downtown Toronto. Constructed 1914-1919, the complex officially opened in 1927 and was fully operational in 1930. The heritage property is composed of the station building (headhouse), its moat and teamways as well as the platforms and trainshed which covers the elevated railway tracks.

Constructed by the Toronto Terminal Railways (TTR) and designed by a consortium of architects comprised of Ross & Macdonald, Hugh G. Jones and John Lyle, the Union Station Complex is the finest Beaux-Arts railway station in Ontario and one of the best examples of Beaux-Arts architecture in the county.

Currently, the Union Station Complex serves as the hub for national, provincial, urban and inter-city passenger transportation.

Cultural Heritage Value:

The Union Station Complex is of cultural heritage value or interest for its historical, design and contextual values.

Historical Values

The Union Station Complex demonstrates historic values at the local and provincial levels. Construction of the massive facility was a response to the rapidly expanding rail networks in Ontario during the early 20th century and corresponding urban growth of Toronto. Railways had a dramatic effect on emerging urban centres, particularly in south-central Ontario and Toronto's dominance in this area was a result of its numerous rail connections. Railways also played an integral role in the industrialization process -- opening up new markets while, at the same time creating a demand for fuel, iron and steel, locomotives, and rolling stock. By 1927 when Union Station officially opened, it was handling 180 trains per day and between 60,000-75,000 passengers making it the busiest in the province.

Union Station is directly associated with several organizations and individuals significant to the City of Toronto and to the province. Chiefly, Canada's major railway companies (CPR, GTR/CN), the TTR and its engineer John Robert Ambrose as well as the architectural firm of Ross & MacDonald, and architect John Lyle.

Design Values

The Union Station Complex demonstrates design values at the local and provincial levels. The station building (headhouse) is a representative example of Beaux-Arts transportation facility, embodying the main tenets of the style in a single structure. This includes the exceptional quality of its design, symmetrical plan, prominent siting and use of exaggerated Classical forms and detailing. Further, it is a rare example of Beaux-Arts architecture executed at the full, monumental scale

associated with the style. It is the largest and most opulent railway station in Ontario.

Designed to represent one unified structure, the station building is three distinct units, with the station function occupying the centre section and office functions to the east and west. The front façade is 230 metres (752 feet) and features a colonnade of 22 gigantic Roman Doric columns. The steel frame structure is clad in Indiana limestone and demonstrates a hierarchy of treatment with an embellished front façade (Front Street), plainer east (Bay Street) and west (York Street) facades, and unadorned rear façade.

The trainshed is a representative example of a Bush trainshed which was used in larger Canadian railway stations. Toronto's trainshed is notable for its through-traffic design. The trainshed was planned as part of the 1913-14 design of the station building.

Contextual Values

The Union Station Complex has contextual values at the local level. Occupying the entire block between Bay and York streets, the Union Station Complex is the defining feature of the area. As the first of several large-scale buildings in the area, its scale, style and extensive use of limestone created the precedent for subsequent buildings including the Royal York Hotel and the Dominion Public Building. In addition, the Union Station Complex is one component of a larger transportation network which includes the high-level viaduct and associated subways (bridges) as well as the signal towers at John, Scott and Cherry Streets.

As a hub for passenger train travel at the local, provincial and national levels, the Union Station Complex is well-known to residents of and visitors to Toronto.

Heritage Attributes:

The heritage attributes essential to the cultural heritage values of the Union Station Complex are:
Design and Physical Value

As a rare and representative example of Beaux-Arts the property contains the following attributes:

- symmetrical form of a central loggia, flanked on the east and west by offices and pavilions
- a monumental sense of scale, as conveyed through the headhouse's massive rectangular footprint, oversized interior spaces and exaggerated stylistic elements
- a clear horizontal emphasis, achieved through:
 - a bold, continuous projecting cornice and largely uninterrupted roofline, lacking vertical punctuation
 - an acute length to height ratio along the principal façade
- the exterior and interior use of classical design elements, including:
 - tripartite divisions of base, column and entablature
 - the Doric order employed within the loggia and porticos
 - double pilasters and arched doorways punctuating east and west pavilions
 - decorative masonry motifs including egg and dart mouldings, dentils, scrolls, laurel wreaths and meanders
- the use of Indiana limestone for the channeled, ashlar and decorative masonry
- the use of rich materials throughout; marble, travertine, terrazzo, clay tile, copper, and cast iron
- exterior and interior use of low-relief motifs cast into doorframes
- the Great Hall, including:
 - its vast open space rising numerous storeys to a shallow barrel-vault
 - barrel-vaulted arches at each end terminating with massive arched windows illumination from diffuse, ambient lighting
 - decorative details including Corinthian columns, entablature carved with station names, clerestory and coffered Guastavino tiles

- built-in ticket booths
- the exterior office fenestration, diminishing in size with every higher storey
- monumental fenestration around doorways, and illuminating the Great Hall utilizing exposed copper or painted iron frames
- the high level of craftsmanship as seen in the carved masonry and Guastavino vaults

As a representative train station and transportation hub the property contains the following attributes:

- the ground level moat, set below Front Street
- a clear, functionally informed hierarchy of internal spaces
- distinct circulation paths for arriving and departing passengers
- the trainshed including the through-track configuration, arched trusses spanning columns between the tracks, all remaining exterior facades and smoke ducts, and the organization, location, materials and design of elevators, stairwells and rooftop penthouses.

Historical and Associative Value

- its direct relationship with the Royal York Hotel, as a railway hotel built by the CPR
- the direct associations with the railways, through names and coats of arms inscribed above the loggia
- the significance of the project to the portfolios of Ross & MacDonald and John Lyle

Contextual Value

- its relationship with the Dominion Public Building, creating a continuous Beaux-Arts streetscape between York Street and Yonge Street (Fig. continuous front)
- its occupation of the entire south side of Front Street between Bay Street and York Street
- the elevated tracks and trainshed, lining up with the USRC viaduct to the east
- its role in defining the Beaux-Arts character of the area

Metrolinx Heritage Property Location:

The Union Station Complex is located on Front Street in downtown Toronto. It occupies the entire block between Yonge and York streets. Directly to the east is this Dominion Public Building (built 1925-1930). The station is located in the centre of the Union Station Rail Corridor (USRC), a 7-kilometre stretch of track between the Don River (to the east) and Bathurst Street (to the west).