

# THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF CORNWALL

## By-law # 143-2007

**A By-law to designate the Port (Roxy) Theater known legally as Plan 16 part of Lot 213, City of Cornwall to recognize this Land and Structure for its Cultural (including Architectural and/or Historic) Heritage Value or Interest.**

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**WHEREAS**, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act authorizes the Council of a Municipality to enact By-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of cultural heritage value or interest;

**AND WHEREAS**, the Council of the Corporation of the City of Cornwall has caused to be served on the owners of the lands and premises in this case being the Corporation of the City of Cornwall itself, located on Plan 16 part of Lot 213, City of Cornwall, and upon the Ontario Heritage Trust, Notice of Intention to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the Municipality; and

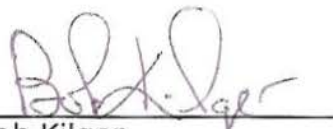
**AND WHEREAS**, no Notice of Objection to the proposed designation has been served on the Clerk of the Municipality;

**NOW THEREFORE**, The Council of The Corporation of the City of Cornwall enacts as follows:

1. There is designation as being of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest for the real property and particularly the Structure thereon Plan 16 part of Lot 213, more specifically described in Schedule "A" as Subject Property.
2. The Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and the Description of Heritage Attributes including such photos and additional specification details from the entire contents of Schedule "B" attached hereto and also forming an integral part of this By-law; and
3. The Municipality Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this By-law to be served on the owner and registered against the deed of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Trust. Also, to cause notice of the passing of this By-law to be published for information purposes, in a newspaper having general circulation in the Municipality.

**READ** a First, Second and Third Time, Signed and Sealed in Open Council this 24<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2007.

  
Denise Labelle-Gélinas  
City Clerk

  
Bob Kilger  
Mayor

**SCHEDULE "A"**  
**TO BY-LAW #143-2007**

Plan 16 part of Lot 213, City of Cornwall more specifically consisting of the property located at 132 Montreal Road (North Side), east of Lawrence Avenue, and west of Baldwin Avenue. The lot has a frontage of approximately 51.15 feet and a depth of 137.5 feet, totaling an area of 6969.6 square feet. Being the Port (Roxy) Theater of the City of Cornwall, in the County of Stormont, in the Province of Ontario.

An approximate depiction of said lands is found on the accompanying air photos to Schedule "A" and is indicated as "Subject Property".

**SCHEDULE "B"  
TO BY-LAW # 143-2007**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT  
R.S.O. 1990 (AS AMENDED), CHAPTER 337**

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS, PREMISES AND ARTIFACTS  
/STRUCTURES KNOWN AS THE PORT (ROXY) THEATER AT 132  
MONTREAL ROAD, PLAN 16 PART OF LOT 213, IN THE CITY OF  
CORNWALL, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

**THE PORT (ROXY) THEATER**

**REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**

**STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR  
INTEREST  
(FORMERLY REFERRED TO AS "HISTORICAL/NARRATIVE")**

Officially opened on Friday, December 26, 1941 as the Roxy Theater, the building was a state of the art movie theater employing the latest in construction techniques, audio equipment and safety features. Designed by noted Toronto architect Benjamin Swartz, the theater was part of a chain of movie theaters owned by Samuel Fingold under the name of Roxy Theaters. Described in the December 26, 1941 issue of the Daily Standard-Freeholder as "One of the finest theaters in the province...costing approximately \$75,000 the new Roxy...displays the very finest in theater construction and convenience." Safety of patrons was a primary concern reflected in the construction materials of reinforced concrete and structural steel used in the building to fireproof walls, ceiling, floors, balconies and staircases. The local newspaper also provided a detailed description of the "refinements" that added to the overall experience of the patrons.

"The handsome front of the theater is in black vitrolite trimmed with red stripping creating a pleasing ultra modern effect. From the exterior, the box office is the most unique feature of all, being made of maccotta which bears a close similarity to vitrolite but posses a concrete base. It is designed in such a manner that patrons are allowed to buy tickets from the outside in the summer and from the inside during the winter...Upon entering the theater one is impressed with the attractive terrazzo floor in the foyer which is spectacularly colored on a grey base. The lobby is highly decorative, the color scheme being a rich tangerine which gradually shades off to a lighter shade at every panel...Fixtures are the last word in illumination, featuring a screed process glass in the front and carrying the same design as is found in the box office, namely love birds scattered profusely. The new theater displays something entirely new in draping effects with draperies extending from wall to wall instead of the usual stage curtains. Drapes are a soft rich tangerine made from velour material..."

The architect chose the “modern Baroque” style for the theater, known today as Art Deco, certainly a novelty in Cornwall, and relied on many local firms to supply the materials for the project, including Entwistle for roofing and sheet metal, Atchison for plastering and Hodgins Lumber Company for wood.

During the mid 1960's the theater underwent renovations when the front façade was replaced with plywood paneling. There was a change again in 1992 when a simulated stone exterior of granex, new doors and windows were installed. The name of the theater was changed from the Roxy to the Port in 1966 to reflect its closeness to the Cornwall Harbour after the St. Lawrence Seaway was in operation. The original owner, S. Fingold, would go on to own and operate a chain business interests. In 1966 Fingold re-entered the movie exhibition business with joint ventures with Odeon Theaters. Today, the Port Theater continues to offer Cornwall residents the experience of an early movie palace while enjoying current shows. (Heritage Cornwall, 2007).

### **DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES** **(FORMERLY KNOWN AS “HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT”)**

The Port Theater has gone through several renovations in its lifetime both inside and outside, but the original structure itself remains basically unchanged from the day it opened. The building has always served as a movie house and has been the centre for family entertainment, especially for Saturday matinees. The primary outstanding historical statement concerning this building is that the Port Theater is the last existing “neighbourhood theater” in the City of Cornwall that continues to operate for the showing of movie films. The Art Deco style of architecture was popular for only about five years and to have a Cornwall example of this style would be of great interest since the Port Theater is of this particular style. The specific features of heritage importance to preserve are:

- rounded plaster valence in the vestibule
- rounded plaster valence in the foyer directly in front of the concession stand including a vaulted ceiling
- pot lights under the outside canopy including several hundred little exterior bulbs
- original exterior terrazzo flooring in the vestibule
- rounded entrance way (plaster bulkhead) in the shape of an Art Deco “R” at the bottom of the stairs leading to the balcony (the R standing for Roxy)
- the seat support standards with a small crest/emblem at the end of each aisle
- the ceiling comprised of rounded stepped down ceilings at different levels from the entrance to the theater to the screen
- the upstairs handrails at the east and west stairways which are rounded and stepped consistent with the Art Deco style and the even emulating curvature of the ceiling, which appears to be another Art Deco letter “R”

- at the front of the theater above the two exit door ways, there are 'L' shaped bold lines grooved into the walls, again, sleek stylistic streamlined
- the recessed entrance which provides an alcove at the rounded ticket booth forming an asymmetrical façade consistent with the Art Deco style and the round shape seen at the ceiling bulkheads and handrails
- the V shaped marquis with "a million little light bulbs", which is held in place by two heavy chains
- three main vertical brick piers (layered raised pilasters) on the upper section of the front façade (lending a three dimensional quality to the façade)
- the scalloped cornice
- the side walls supported by simple white brick buttresses
- the Corbiestep style roofline (Heritage Cornwall, 2007).