

CITY OF ST. THOMAS

BY-LAW NO. 167-2001

A by-law to designate 384 - 390 Talbot Street  
in the City of St. Thomas, as a building  
of historic and architectural value.

WHEREAS pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 18, the Council of a municipality may by by-law designate a property including buildings and structures thereon to be of historic or architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS notice of intention to designate the property at 384 - 390 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, Ontario, has been duly published and served, and no notice of objection has been received to such designation;

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ST. THOMAS, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. There is hereby designated as being of historic and architectural value or interest the property known as 384 - 390 Talbot Street in the City of St. Thomas, all of which is described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, for the reasons set out in Schedule "B" attached hereto.
2. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of the by-law to be registered upon the ] title to the property described in the aforementioned Schedule "A" in the proper Land Registry Office.
3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in the St. Thomas Times-Journal.
4. This by-law comes into force on the day it is finally passed.

READ a First and Second time this 3rd day of December, 2001.

READ a Third time and finally passed this 3rd day of December, 2001.

  
Peter J. Leack, City Clerk

  
Peter Ostojic, Mayor

## Reasons for Designation: Southern Loan Building

### History:

The Southern Loan building, and its annex, at 384-390 Talbot Street, played an integral part of the banking scene in St. Thomas when the Southern Loan and Savings Company opened this building, in 1899, as its new headquarters, in the booming railway town of St. Thomas.

The Southern Loan and Savings Company had been in existence since 1870. The bulk of its business was mortgages, especially for farms in Elgin, Kent and Essex counties. As well, residential mortgages were held for properties in St. Thomas, Windsor and Toronto.

This grand building was designed by Neil R. Darrach, of St. Thomas, who also designed St. Thomas City Hall and many other buildings in this city. Darrach had an office on the second floor of this building for several years, when the building first opened. The building is an architectural statement that reflects the immense amount of money that was present in the late 1890's in this city. With a local economy based on railroads, and with several main lines having headquarters in this city, this building easily reveals its place in St. Thomas' banking history.

In 1903, the Southern Loan purchased the Southwestern Farmers and Mechanics Savings and Loan Company as well as the Star Loan Company, both of St. Thomas. When the Huron and Erie Mortgage Company purchased the much respected Southern Loan and Savings for three million dollars, in April 1927, the announcement made the headlines in the local papers as one of the most important financial transactions in the business and commercial history of Western Ontario.

Eventually, the Huron and Erie Mortgage Company merged with the Canada Trust Savings Company to form Canada Trust, Huron and Erie. The Canada Trust building sits adjacent to the Southern Loan and its annex building, marking the east corner of Talbot and Elgin Streets, as a long standing banking area.

When the Canada Trust banking merger occurred, much of the building was leased out to professionals for office space, making it home to lawyers and barristers, as well as several doctors. In recent years the building was leased as commercial property, with residential on the second levels.

### Architectural:

The Southern Loan Building is large, two storey, pressed red brick, late Victorian building that still presents a grand facade on the south side of Talbot Street. For the purpose of this designation, the north facade is of primary concern.

The recessed main entrance is situated inside a large semi-circular arch of carved Ohio sandstone. Each end of this arch rests upon an intricately carved ledge, under which are a trio of pink marble pillars, set upon a solid stone base, forming a grand portico at street level. Small mosaic tiles and original stone slab steps, form the floor of the entrance. On either side of the grand entrance are two large store bays, built upon solid cut stone at street level. Each bay is fitted with large display windows comprised of three large plate glass panes. Each of the large bay windows is complemented above by a smaller rectangular window, made of multiple panes of beveled and leaded glass. A cast iron molding runs the entire length of the first floor, above the windows. The intricately carved date stone, bearing the date 1899, is set into the stone lintel above the first floor windows. The stonework used in the piers at either end of the

building, on first level, matches the stonework in the grand portico.

On either end of the second floor level, is a set of two double hung windows which frame the three smaller centre windows, which are also double hung. These windows have replaced the original windows, as noted by the area above the windows which has been covered, but still leaves the footprint of the original window construction. Above each of the end windows is brick eye browning, which forms a double semi-circular arch. The three centre windows sit on a curved brick and stone wall to form a bow window above the lower portico. All of the second floor windows are balanced symmetrically over the lower level, which adds weight and importance to this building. A large stone lintel extends across the centre section of the second level. Near the roof line, are a set of detailed cast iron moldings, which match the molding at the first floor level. The large name plate "Southern Loan" is carved in sandstone and set above the centre bow windows. Above the date stone at the roof line, the building is finished with stone coping for parapets.

The annex of the Southern Loan Building sits to the west of the original building. It is also made of pressed red brick and repeats much of the original building in design and height. The single bay on the first floor, has a large triple pane, plate glass display window which is similar in size to the main building's windows. The two street entrances to the annex, as well as the second floor of the annex, are both set back similarly to the main entrance. A cast iron molding, set slightly lower than in the main building, runs along the top of the first floor windows. This rests just under a stone sill, which the second floor windows rest upon. These windows match those of the main building in size and shape, but they are set singularly between brick columns which are capped with simple sandstone capitals. Above this is set a sandstone lintel, that runs the entire length of the annex's facade. The final detail in the annex's facade would be the heavy bracketed, cast iron molding which crowns the building just below the roof line. It adds weight and stability to the addition, balancing it against the main building, while still defining the secondary structure as important.

#### Interior:

Much of the original finishes have been removed as a result of several severe fires in this building. There are many scars from the fires that are still visible, including scorch marks in the yellow bricks along the original main staircase. Perhaps one of the most intriguing features is the sixteen vaults which have been constructed in this building. The largest vaults are the ones stacked above each other, from the basement to the second floor. Although all of the vaults may not be viable in any future renovations planned for this building, it would be essential to the building's history, to attempt to re-use at least several of the best vaults and or doors. Many of the vaults still retain their original hardware and locking mechanisms. Several of the vault doors are in excellent condition, some still have original ornate hand painting, others have distinctive cast iron detailing, all which re-enforces the importance of this building in the banking and commercial history of St. Thomas.