

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 15, 2026

Thornton – Smith Building Celebrating Yonge Street For Doors Open Toronto

After more than a century as the heart of Toronto, Thornton – Smith is celebrating the building’s participation in Doors Open by lighting up the façade of this prestigious landmark on Yonge Street.

Toronto, ON – The historic Thornton – Smith building on Yonge Street went live this evening with a world class lighting experience to celebrate Doors Open Toronto on May 23rd and 24th while showcasing the façade and architectural features of one of Toronto’s most prestigious buildings on Yonge Street.

With Toronto’s downtown businesses continuing to experience significant economic challenges since the pandemic, Ken Rutherford, the owner of the Thornton – Smith building for the past 40 years, has launched “**Forever Yonge – Reimagining the Experience**” to celebrate the spirit and history of Yonge Street and to recreate the excitement and energy that the street has historically been known for.



“We are so excited to be supporting the transformation of Yonge Street by launching **Forever Yonge**, while also showcasing the development of the world class Thornton – Smith building at Doors Open Toronto.” **said Ken Rutherford.** “I have been experiencing the vibrancy of Yonge Street since 1967 when as a 10 year old I would spend my weekends at Toronto Camera, my family’s retail camera store in the Thornton-Smith building. To create a more engaging pedestrian experience on Yonge Street and add a little class, we have developed a new innovative lighting experience for the building to build excitement with the millions of pedestrians who walk past it annually. I believe through this activation and others like it, we will encourage both new innovative experiential retailers and more traditional international retailers to open world class stores on Yonge Street to be closer to their customers and to provide much greater exposure and flexibility for promoting their brands.”

The building was designed in 1921 by architect John M. Lyle (1872 – 1945) for The Thornton – Smith Company, a British antique and interior design firm. Lyle, who was one of the pre-eminent architects in Canada at the time, was very vocal about the many false storefronts and unregulated billboards on Yonge Street. Through the design of the Thornton – Smith building he was given the opportunity to inject an architectural gem amongst much less distinguished buildings in the

increasingly crowded Yonge Street retail corridor. In 1926 Lyle’s design received the first gold medal awarded by the Ontario Association of Architects, along with recognition in international architectural journals in London and New York.

While the surrounding area has witnessed a century of transformation, the world class Thornton – Smith building has remained true to its original architecture. With a new world class experiential retailer on the ground floor and the second floor occupied by Salad King, a Toronto “landmark” that has been serving Thai food in the neighbourhood for 30 years, the building has maintained its’ position as the heart of Toronto as the city has evolved around it.

But the crowning jewel for this property is the Aperture Room, a stunning event venue that keeps the 100 years of history on Yonge Street alive by boasting exposed brick, hardwood floors, three magnificent skylights and original windows that have seen Toronto celebrate so many milestones on Yonge Street over the past century.



The Aperture Room, which opened in 2015, is also part of Mr. Rutherford’s master plan to transform Yonge Street by hosting world class events for international brands such as S&P, UHN and Foot Locker, lavish galas for the likes of Luminato and Buskerfest, cultural events for the likes of First Nations University of Canada and intimate concerts for the music connoisseur. Mr. Rutherford stated “We have always wanted to transform the third floor of the Thornton – Smith building, so rich with Toronto’s history, into something that would celebrate the legacy of the building’s prominence on Yonge Street. The name is also very close to my heart as it evolved from Toronto Camera, the family business that occupied the building for many years and was the country’s largest photographic store at the time.”

The century old Thornton – Smith building truly has brought the magic to Yonge Street and continues to maintain its position as the heart of the city.

For more information, images or to arrange an interview or site visit, please contact the owner:

J (Ken) Rutherford

Email: jkenrutherford@gmail.com

Phone: (647) 298-4950