

KAPLAN, Harold Solomon (1895 – 1973)

Harold Kaplan was a Toronto based architect who designed many fine buildings in the city and across the country. He was particularly well known for the design of movie theatres executed in a progressive “modern” style, which he introduced to many regions of Canada.

Harold Kaplan was born in Bucharest, Romania on September 10, 1895 and came to Toronto as a child. He attended Toronto Technical School in 1914-15 where he took architecture and building construction courses. Kaplan then served an apprenticeship with the architect Henry Simpson from 1910 to 1914. He then worked for the firm of Page and Warrington in 1919 and 1920 before practicing on his own in partnership with Abraham Sprachman beginning in 1922.

Kaplan and Sprachman designed a number of commercial and industrial buildings in the fashion district of Toronto. This included the York Mercantile Building, York at Piper Street (1929-30) and the Fashion Building, Spadina at Camden Avenue (1926-27) both were influenced by the medium rise warehouse so prevalent in the Garment District in New York City, with their sunken span-

drels allowing the piers to give a sense of verticality and top decorated with Art Deco motifs at the setbacks.

The most impressive design the firm did was the Eglinton Theatre, Eglinton near Avenue Road, Toronto which is the last remaining Art Deco theatre in Toronto with its rich interior detailing and large seating area intact. The firm also designed the Elgin Theatre, Ottawa (1937) and the Capitol Theatre, Sarnia (1936), Odeon Theatre, Kingston (1941), Varsity Theatre, Vancouver (1939), Center Theatre, Chatham (1940), Century Theatre, Sudbury (1946), Odeon Theatre, London (1941) and the Donlands Theatre, Donlands at O'Connor, Toronto (1946).

Kaplan and Sprachman also designed the Glen Grove Apartment building, Yonge Street at Glengrove (1930-31), Royal York Court Apartments, Yonge at Sherwood Avenue, (1928) and the Fox Film Building, Bond Street near Dundas (1935), all in Toronto. The firm also designed the New Mount Sinai Hospital, University Avenue at Elm Street, Toronto (1952, now Queen Elizabeth Hospital).