

Toronto STAFF REPORT

August 23, 2006

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Robert Freedman, Director, Urban Design

Subject: Festival Tower Public Art Plan (328-356 King Street West)
(Ward 20)

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to provide City Council with a copy of the Festival Tower Public Art Plan and to seek its approval as recommended by the Toronto Public Art Commission.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that City Council approve the proposed Festival Tower Public Art Plan.

Background:

An application on behalf of the King and John Festival Corporation for a 42 storey building containing the permanent home of the Toronto International Film Festival Group and residential condominiums (subsequently named Festival Tower) was approved by City Council in May of 2004. Section 37 benefits secured with this application include the provision and maintenance of public art of a value not less than one percent of gross construction costs of all buildings and structures to be erected on the lot except for the non-profit, five floor portion of the building.

The Section 37 provisions include a percent for public art program and the applicant has elected to meet this obligation in a timely manner. Owner representatives met with community planning and urban design staff to review the objectives of the program and to identify the on-site public art opportunities. Following due consideration, the owner drafted a public art plan and presented it to the Toronto Public Art Commission at its July 12, 2006 meeting. The Commission endorsed the Festival Tower Public Art Plan and recommended its approval by City Council.

Comments:

The Festival Tower Public Art Plan provides an introduction for the overall development and the project team. This plan discusses the owner's public art commitment and has described the art selection method. The owner has elected a direct commission, which is a program option, with local artist and internationally renowned Michael Snow. The plan outlines the on-site public art opportunities, the recommended site and the art site requirements. The owners have prepared and presented this public art plan in the early conceptual stages in order to have the artist involved in the design development and working drawing process.

An Art Advisory Committee has been formed including developer representatives and local professional advisors. The estimated budget is outlined and the plan also provides a preliminary schedule for the public art program.

Appendix A is the Festival Tower Public Art Plan as prepared by the owner.

Conclusions:

Festival Tower Public Art Plan meets the City's objectives for the provision of public art in private development and is in accordance with City Planning's Percent for Public Art Guidelines. At its July 12, 2006 meeting, the Toronto Public Art Commission recommended approval of the attached Festival Tower Public Art Plan. I am in full support of this public art plan and look forward to the results of the upcoming public art installation.

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Appendix A: Festival Tower Public Art Plan

Appendix A

Festival Tower
Public Art Plan, 328-356 King Street West
Toronto, Ontario

Presented to the Public Art Commission: July 19, 2006

By: Catherine Williams, Public Art Consultant

Also in attendance: Niall Haggart, King & John Festival Corporation

1. Introduction

Located at the northwest corner of King and John Streets in the heart of downtown Toronto's Entertainment District, the site consists of Festival Centre, a five double-storey podium building which will house the Toronto International Film Festival Group (TIFFG) together with Festival Tower, a 37 storey residential condominium development. It is a fitting location near Roy Thomson Hall, the Princess of Wales Theatre, SkyDome and dozens of restaurants.

The developer is King & John Festival Corporation, comprised of filmmaker Ivan Reitman and his two sisters Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels together with The Daniels Corporation. The Reitman family purchased the land at King and John Streets 35 years ago and built their business there. Before he founded The Daniels Corporation, John Daniels and his colleague Ephraim Diamond were the first to contribute \$25,000 in seed money for what would eventually become the Toronto International Film Festival, launched in 1976.

The Festival Centre will feature four dedicated year-round cinemas and one additional flexible screening space, a Film Reference Library, bar and café on the main floor and a restaurant on the second floor and a rooftop terrace.

Faced in precast treated to resemble limestone, the Festival Tower rises above the Festival Centre. It is set back from King Street, with its entrance on John Street. The 37 storey tower is tall and sleek, sheathed in clear and sandblasted glass culminating in an illuminated top that marks its presence on the Toronto skyline.

2. Public Art Commitment

In keeping with the Section 37 agreement, the developer proposes to spend 1% of the hard construction costs on public art. The developers currently estimate the construction costs for Festival Tower at \$50,000,000; therefore, the total estimated allocation to public art will be approximately \$500,000. Festival Centre is exempt as TIFFG is a charitable, cultural organization.

The King & John Festival Corporation began its public art process by investigating appropriate sites and types of artists. Contemporaneously, an agent for artist Michael Snow approached the architect with some interesting concepts for public art. The developer looked at these ideas, met with the artist and decided to proceed with a direct commission.

Michael Snow is an internationally renowned visual artist, filmmaker and musician. As a visual artist, he works in many media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, holography and photography. In experimental film, he is universally regarded as a seminal influence.

Snow has created a reputation as a "framer of vision" who, through his inventive and provocative work, has amazed and astounded audiences for close to fifty years. His work has appeared at exhibitions in every major art centre in Europe and North America, and his films have been shown at retrospectives and film festivals in the United States, Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, France, Austria and Italy. Five of his films have premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). In 2000, TIFF commissioned Snow with Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg to make short films, *Preludes*, for the 25th Anniversary of the Toronto International Film Festival.

In 2004, the Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne awarded him an honorary doctorate. The last previous artist so awarded was Pablo Picasso.

Michael Snow has executed prominent public commissions that include "Reflections", his photo mural at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, "The Audience", his frieze at Toronto's SkyDome, "Flight Stop", his photo/fibreglass Canada Geese at the Eaton Centre and "Windows Suite" a multi-screen video installation at the Pantages Hotel and Condominium in Toronto.

Snow's reputation in the visual arts and film make him a logical choice as an artist who could focus on the particular challenges and distinctive association with the Toronto International Film Festival.

The developers have had one preliminary meeting with City staff about this complex project. They are seeking the approval of the Public Art Commission now as they would like to have Michael Snow on board to be part of the design development and working drawing process. They wish to benefit from the artist's input as they finalize the design of the building.

3. Recommended Art Site

A number of sites for public art were explored; however, it became clear that TIFFG was relying heavily on signage and programming for the King Street façade. TIFFG has formed its own team of filmmakers to advise on extensive programming plans such that public art was precluded along the southerly elevation. Given also that TIFFG is exempt from a public art commitment, the developers are choosing to focus on the residential component.

Festival Tower faces John Street, north of King Street. The entrance is a glass wall capped by a canopy which is edged in aluminum with a wood soffit. To create a visual anchor for the 37 storey condominium tower, Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB) has designed the five level podium in precast treated to resemble limestone. This section is 33 metres high, which is equivalent to approximately 11 regular storeys in height. It is 43.5 metres in width. Thin, horizontal bands of windows cut through the podium with the top band wrapping around to the north façade of the building.

The recommended site for art is the five level podium, its precast cladding as well as the windows. The artist will be encouraged to wrap his treatment around the podium so that

pedestrians walking south on John Street will get a hint on the north façade before they see the full reveal on the east façade. Mindful that there will be development to the north on John Street, this wrap around treatment would be narrow. The artist can integrate his concept with the lobby and entrance canopy in some way.

Although the developer and City staff have expressed a preference for the public art to be viewable at the pedestrian level, the artist has been given the opportunity to address the illuminated rooftop, mechanical penthouse of the condominium tower. Connectivity between the illuminated top and the lower levels will likely be limited due to technical issues ranging from structural anchoring of the art, wind/snow loads and interference with residents' views.

4. Art Site Requirements

The following requirements will be listed in the Terms of Reference:

able to be viewed, primarily, from sidewalk level;

resistant to environmental conditions;

public safety;

low maintenance; and

strong relationship with film and/or the moving image.

5. Art Advisory Committee

The King & John Festival Corporation is familiar with and confident in the work of Michael Snow and intends to proceed with a direct commission from this prominent artist. The Terms of Reference will stipulate that the artist develop a proposal with variations. The proposal and its variations will include schematics showing the design direction, images, preliminary materials, a statement about the concepts and preliminary budget projections. An Advisory Committee of five will choose the winning design. They will be able to see how the artist arrived at his proposal and to weigh the merits of the variations he explored. The Selection Committee will include two representatives of the developer, Tom Dutton or Niall Haggart and Bruce Kuwabara, project architect, Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects and, pending confirmation, three representatives from the art community: David Moos, Curator of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, David Liss, Director/Curator MOCCA and Barbara Fischer, Director/Curator, Justina M. Barnicke Art Gallery, Hart House, University of Toronto. Mr. Moos and Ms. Fischer are local representatives as they both work in Ward 20.

6. Estimated Budget

The estimated budget is \$500,000., to be apportioned as follows:

Administration of commission, consultant's fees: up to 10% \$ 50,000.

Art, including artist's fee, materials, fabrication,

Installation, consulting fees for engineering or technical advice:	80%	\$400,000.
Maintenance fund:	up to 10%	\$ 50,000.
Total:	100%	\$500,000.

7. Preliminary Schedule

Brief Sent to Artist	September, 2006
Artist's Presentation to Advisory Committee	January, 2007
Contract/ Final Drawings	June/ July 2007
Fabrication	Fall 2008- Spring 2009
Installation	Summer 2009
Occupancy	Fall/ Winter 2009/2010