

25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan

Date:	March 9, 2007
To:	Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Robert Freedman, Director, Urban Design
Wards:	Ward 28 –Toronto Centre-Rosedale

SUMMARY

In compliance with the approval provisions, the owners of 25 York Street Tower submitted a public art plan for approval by City Council. The full plan, which is Attachment 1, outlines the method by which the owner will commission the public art in the publicly-accessible areas of the development. The plan provides public art objectives, site opportunities, estimated budget, art selection method and a project schedule. The owner will commence the selection of the art once the plan is approved. The resulting art installation will be owned and maintained by the 25 York Street Tower.

The 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan provides a framework for the commissioning of art and for the collaboration of artists with design teams to create a semi-integrated public art project. The attached plan meets the objectives of the City Planning Percent for Public Art Program and is supported by the Toronto Public Art Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council approve the attached 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

Public art is a requirement of the Revised Precinct B Precinct Agreement for the Railway Lands East. The plan was to be prepared in the early stages of the development to allow for the widest range of opportunities.

The agreement was registered on November 29, 1996 as Instrument No. CA441805. The site plan file number is 05 210904 STE 28 SA.

For on-site public art, the owner is required to produce a public art plan for review by City Planning staff and its advisory panel, the Toronto Public Art Commission. A draft plan was submitted to staff for review and input. At its meeting on February 28, 2007 the Toronto Public Art Commission reviewed the plan with the owner and recommended approval of the attached 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan is for a very high profile office tower in the downtown core. The site is located in the Union Station District. The owner is building the South Public Building for Union Station which will provide a direct connection from the building into Union Station. It is adjacent to the Air Canada Centre to the east and Union station to the north.

The public art plan proposes that the public art be situated in the large indoor galleria. An indoor site allows opportunities for a wider variety of artists in a broader range of media. This site will have significant pedestrian traffic and used by the tenants and the public alike. Visibility will also be high through the “glass skin” of the building façade. The public art will be very prominent.

COMMENTS

The 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan follows City Planning’s process and provides a full plan outlining the method through which the owner will commission the public art. The plan begins with an introduction to the development and the project team. The Site Context describes the location and the history of the area. The Public Art Site Opportunity describes the indoor wall and ceiling as the primary and secondary sites. The Art Selection Process outlines the invitational competition and short listed artists. The Jury is comprised of developer representatives and a majority of art experts, including two who work in the area. The Projected Budget provides cost allocations from the estimated budget. The plan includes a Promotion Section and an Estimated Schedule for the art installation in December 2008.

The 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan meets the City's objectives for the provision of public art in private development and is in accordance with the City Planning Percent for Public Art Program. This plan and site offer much potential for a prominent public art installation. I am in full support of this plan and look forward to the results and implementation.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan

Attachment 1
25 York Street Tower Public Art Plan

Submitted to the City of Toronto Public Art Commission
On behalf of Menkes Union Tower Ltd.
February 13, 2007
Prepared by Fela Grunwald Fine Arts

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 25 York Street Tower Art Plan provides a framework for the commissioning of art and for the collaboration of artists with design teams to create a semi-integrated public art project that will be equal to \$683,000.00.

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 Developer

Menkes Union Tower Ltd., a joint venture partnership between Menkes Developments Ltd., Hospitals of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) and Halcyon Partners Fund (an institutional real estate equity fund).

2.2. General Contractor

Menkes Construction Ltd.

2.3 Architect

Scott Cressman, Adamson Associates Architects

2.4 Landscape Architect

The MBTW Group

2.5 Location and Description

The 25 York Street, landmark office tower is located in the heart of the downtown core at the northeast corner of York and Bremner Blvd. This 30-storey development comprises 780,000 square feet of “AAA” office space. The project is adjacent to the Air Canada Centre to the east and Union Station to the north.

When completed in early 2009, 25 York Street will be the first major new office development in the downtown core in over a decade. It will feature “future friendly” technology in both building communication systems and tenant environments.

Its lead tenant, TELUS, will occupy 60% of the total rentable area and will have

prominent building signage rights. The ground floor will consist of approximately 30,000 square feet of retail space to service both building tenants and the public. It will have a direct connection to the Air Canada Centre galleria, Union Station and the downtown underground PATH system. The project is also adjacent to Maple Leaf Square, a proposed mixed use sports and entertainment facility with a 170-room boutique hotel, themed restaurants and a 50,000 square feet urban food market and is steps from Toronto's waterfront with all its retail shops, restaurants, Toronto Island Ferry and the Martin Goodman recreational trail.

This development supports the long-standing goals of the City of Toronto to realize the area south of Union Station and to foster stronger connections between the city and the waterfront. The public will have excellent transit accessibility, via TTC and GO Transit connections at Union Station, as well as convenient vehicular access via the Gardiner Expressway one block away.

The tower projects an ethereal quality that makes the building less imposing on the Toronto skyline, especially against a backdrop of heavily massed office towers to the north. A glass skin extends beyond the building, dissolving its edges, and accentuating the building's overall lightness. The extended fins at either end and on top of the building exemplify the illusion that the glazed façade is independent of the frame.

While providing a striking visual impact, the exterior skin also serves as an important sustainable design feature for this building, pursuing Silver status under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. . A horizontal orthogonal volume, sheathed in ebony glass, creates tension with the airiness of the transparent masses of the tower above it, and the two-storey atrium below it at grade level.

2.6 Heritage and History

The property was formerly owned by Marathon Realty and formed part of the lands known as the "Railway Lands."

The waterfront within the area has undergone several phases since the early 1800s. It figured briefly in the War of 1812 when a British warship was destroyed on the shore. In the 1830s proposals evolved to turn the shoreline into an urban promenade known as the Esplanade. Soon after, industry began to encroach: factories were established at Yonge Street and wharves began to be extended into the harbour.

This area was turned into a giant railway terminal in the 1850s. Five companies built railway lines over a period of 20 years. Part of the railway development involved three major land filling operations around the harbour. The first filling occurred when the original shore was reclaimed for a railway yard between 1854 and 1860, thus creating the Esplanade as a railway right-of-way and not as a public park as originally intended. Hotels, factories and warehouses sprang up throughout the district.

A second era of filling occurred in the mid-1890s when the Grand Trunk and Canadian

Pacific Railways filled half of the area to obtain additional space for railway yards. A final extension of land into the harbour occurred in the 1920s to create new wharves and industrial land.

Most of the commercial activity ended abruptly when the Great Toronto Fire of 1904 destroyed almost all of the buildings. Since then the area became mainly a railway yard for union station passenger trains.

3.0 PUBLIC ART SITE/OPPORTUNITY

There are numerous potential opportunities for Public art sites. Since the square adjoins property belonging to the Air Canada Centre, and a significant sculpture by John McEwen already addresses that space, we determined that it was not a suitable location for another large independent piece. The complexity required for an outdoor, integrated hard landscaping feature that involved 2 property owners precluded this as an art opportunity.

We have thus identified one site to consist of multi-components: the indoor Galleria Walkway. The indoor Galleria will be a combination of a public pedestrian passageway, and an access way to the tenant and retail spaces. This is not intended to be a gathering place, but a safe and friendly access route to the development, to Union Station and to the Air Canada Centre. The galleria will also be home to approximately 3 retail tenants with usage ranging from convenience store, coffee shop and perhaps a travel agency or other ancillary usage.

This site will see significant pedestrian traffic. It is expected to be a well-used thoroughfare for tenants of the building and the general public. Visibility will also be high from the street and the square through the 'glass skin' of the building façade. In the evening it will be trafficked by the public visitors to the sports and entertainment centres.

This site is additionally attractive for 2 reasons: 1) it is an interior site, allowing opportunities for a wider variety of artists in a broader range of media; 2) It includes a wall, a rare occurrence in the public art domain and widens the playing field further.

- 1) **Galleria Wall** – approximately 10 feet high x 85 feet wide (3.2 x 26 metres)

The Galleria wall will be a prime site for an independent work or series of art works. Both the architecture and the primary tenant, Telus Communications, suggest art work that reflects contemporary culture. The emphasis will be on art that is multi-disciplinary, incorporating technological art-making tools that are widely prevalent in the practice of today's artists.

- 2) **Galleria Ceiling** – approximately 32 feet high x 206 feet long x 20 feet wide (9.6 x 63 x 6 metres)

Since the height of the ceiling is approximately 32 feet, this will be the site for the second component of the commission. We would like to see sculptural elements that incorporate light, suspended from the ceiling along the entire length of the Galleria.

Since the area will see significant traffic in the evening, we feel that a light sculpture/installation will be the most visible, both inside the Galleria and from the outside looking through the glass skin. During the day the 3-dimensional sculptural elements will stand out and be highly visible. This piece will be independent of the required standard lighting of the Galleria.

The artists should take into consideration the history of the site, on an interpretive basis, rather than a specific theme being offered.

4.0 ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

4.1 Invitational competition

The art consultant and the developer(s) have reviewed portfolios of over 30 artists. We are submitting our choice of artists that are to present design concept drawings for each of the sites. They are to be paid a fee of \$2,000.00 each. The jury will select the winner(s).

The artists are:

- 1) Michael Awad
- 2) Nicolas Baer
- 3) Carlos Garaicoa
- 4) Luis Jacob
- 5) John Oswald
- 6) Robert Youds

The successful artist(s) will work with the architect and project manager to co-ordinate installation.

4.2 Jury

The committee will be composed of two developer representatives and three considered art experts, ideally including one artist.

They are:

1. **Peter Menkes** – President, Menkes Developments Ltd.
2. **Andrew Hoffman** –Chief Operating Officer, Menkes Developments Ltd
3. **Gregory Burke** – Director, The Power Plant
4. **Richard Balfour** - Richard Balfour, Lawyer and Art Collector, both private and for Torys; Board Member of the Art Gallery of Ontario, office located in the Ward
5. **Barr Gilmore** – artist, curator, graphic designer

Alternates:

1. Jay Smith – Sr. Vice-President, CIBC Wood Gundy, Board Member of the Art Gallery of Ontario; Past President of the Power Plant, Toronto, well known art collector
2. Ann Webb, Publisher, Canadian Art Magazine, Cultural Fundraiser, , Organizer of the Canadian Art Reel Artists Film Festival, Past Chair of Art Metropole, prominent international art collector

5.0 PROJECTED BUDGET

- **Gross Estimated Budget - \$683,000.00**
- Site allocation - Minimum of 80% of budget
- Administrative costs - up to 10% of budget
This includes the consultant’s fee, travel fees for out of town artists, courier, telephone and general office expenses.
- Maintenance fund - up to 10% subject to modification based on final design. If less is required the remainder will revert to the art site allocation.
- Subject to jury approval and supporting budget documentation, the artist(s) will be given discretion over the allocation of money for each component

The artists’ budget requirements must be supported with back-up documentation, i.e. quotes & estimates, where applicable. The following would be included in this budget:

- Design fee - includes dealer commission if applicable
- Material costs
- Fabrication costs

- Supervision of fabrication
- On-site labour costs related to installation
- Extraordinary equipment costs required for fabrication or installation
- Any necessary permits or testing costs
- Insurance costs - Comprehensive General Liability, studio and contents
- Legal fees
- Applicable taxes
- Travel and delivery expenses during fabrication and installation
- Contingency fund (5% of fabrication cost)

6.0 PROMOTION

The art consultant, in collaboration with the marketing department, will contribute to all promotional activity related to the competition, completion and installation of the art project, including press releases, unveiling ceremonies, proper accreditation and signage and liaison with the media.

7.0 SCHEDULE

Anticipated PAC approval: February 28, 2007

Community Council: March 27, 2007

City Council : April 23, 2007

Competition: Spring/Summer, 2007

Installation: December 2008