



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**222 Bremner Boulevard – The John Street Roundhouse
– Approval of Alterations to a Heritage Building**

Date:	March 13, 2008
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	Trinity-Spadina – Ward 20
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve alterations to the designated property at 222 Bremner Boulevard.

The John Street Roundhouse is identified for architectural and historical reasons. It is important both in its local significance to the economic and social development of Toronto and in its national historic significance to the contribution of railroads to Canada’s development.

The Roundhouse complex occupies the block immediately south of the CN Tower, bounded by Bremner Boulevard on the north, and Lakeshore Boulevard and the Gardiner Expressway to the south (see Attachment No. 1).

The purpose of this report is to identify and approve alterations that allow for the Retail Tenant building fit-out (Bays 18-32) that supports the adaptive re-use for retail purposes. This work includes alterations to interior spaces, the placement of signage on the Coal and Sanding tower and a steel canopy with a Leon’s sign at the business entrance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that the alterations to the heritage building at 222 Bremner Boulevard be approved substantially in accordance with the Heritage Impact Statement for the John Street Roundhouse, revised February 26, 2008, prepared by IBI Group Architects Ltd., received by City Planning Division February 26, 2008, on file with the Manager Heritage Preservation Services, subject to the owner:

1. Prior to the approval of a sign variance application;
 - a. providing a conceptual lighting plan for the exterior of the building and site to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
 - b. resolving outstanding issues with respect to the illumination of the Leon's sign to the satisfaction of the Chief Planner, City Planning Division
2. Prior to the issuance of any sign permit for 222 Bremner Boulevard;
 - a. providing a Conservation and Restoration Plan for the Coal and Sanding Tower to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
 - b. providing final design drawings of the proposed signs, including any alterations to the Coal and Sanding Tower, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services
3. Prior to the issuance of any building permit for 222 Bremner Boulevard including a permit for the demolition, excavation, and/or shoring of the subject property;
 - a. providing final architectural drawings of the interior alterations satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

1997	The City sought an outside party to restore and reuse the Roundhouse.
1999	City Council authorized a 20-year lease with Steam Whistle Brewing Incorporated to operate a specialty brewing operation and retail outlet in Bays 1 to 11.

2002	City Council authorized a head lease to a consortium comprised of O and Y Properties Incorporated, Headline Media and Tenen Developing and Producing Limited, and the amending of the lease with Steam Whistle to allow the brewery to acquire additional space in the building.
September 25, 26 & 27, 2006	City Council adopted Clause 39 of Administration Committee Report 6 entitled “Roundhouse – Lease Amendments with Steam Whistle Inc. and Overall Head Lease to a Single Purpose Ontario Corporation.”
January 29 & 30, 2008	City Council granted authority for the execution of a Heritage Easement Agreement with the tenant of the subject property.
March 3, 4 & 5, 2008	City Council approved alterations to the subject property for the base building fit-out and tenant rough-in.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The property, containing the John Street Roundhouse, is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties and designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The property is owned by the City of Toronto, and the John Street Roundhouse is now a feature in Roundhouse Park.

The John Street Roundhouse was completed in 1931 as a semi-circular structure with 32 bays that originally serviced steam locomotives (and later diesel engines). The Canadian Pacific Railway operated the facility until 1982 and closed the building in 1986.

In 1990 the Federal Government designated the John Street Roundhouse as a National Historic Site.

Steam Whistle Brewery has occupied bays 1-11 since 1999 and has recently acquired bays 12-14 to house their expanded facilities.

In 2006 State Building Group signed a lease agreement as the major tenant on the property and as a condition of their lease will enter into a heritage easement agreement that identifies and protects the key heritage features of the building. State’s first sub-tenant will be Leon’s Furniture Ltd. Leon’s will be occupying Bays 18-32.

COMMENTS

Heritage Impact Statement (HIS)

A heritage impact statement has been prepared by IBI Group Architects (February 26th, 2008) entitled John Street Roundhouse Retail Tenant Fit-out (Bays 18-32).

This document contains details of the specific alterations necessary for Leon's Furniture Ltd. to make use of the building and provide appropriate retail signage while taking into account accepted standards of conservation.

The Roundhouse Complex

The heritage character of the site includes the roundhouse and attached machine shop, the reconstructed turntable, an adjacent Coal and Sanding tower (relocated in 1995) and a water tower (see Attachment No. 2).

The Roundhouse Interior

The Roundhouse building is the best surviving example of a roundhouse in Canada and an important heritage resource representing the age of railway steam locomotion. In addition to the specific railway technology employed, the Roundhouse is a vital reminder of the historical development of Toronto's railway lands and the economic and social evolution of Toronto and Canada.

The interior is characterised by a heavy timber construction organized on a thirty-two bay radial composition six bays in depth. The interior space of the roundhouse is separated into two main areas by an original brick firewall between Bays 22 and 23. Massive vertical members rise roughly eighteen feet in the outer bays and to a further thirty feet in the central two bays that form the clerestory monitor. Purlins span the radial horizontals with mill deck roof members completing the final span.

A brick wall to the north is dominated by the large multi-pane windows typical of the outer perimeter of the first twenty bays. The location of the machine shop west of bays 23 to 28 interrupts this system of glazing. The inner perimeter is defined by the rhythm of double train doors that allowed the original engine access via the central train turntable.

Proposed Work

The key aspects of the work are described below (see Attachments No. 3 and 4) and follow the organization presented in the Heritage Impact Statement:

Concrete and Aggregate Floor Topping

The proposed flooring introduces a sound level surface while accommodating standard conservation practice regarding reversibility (a mandatory consideration for all the Roundhouse interventions).

Partition Walls and Enclosed Spaces

The introduction of secondary spaces within the roundhouse are required to accommodate programmatic administrative/service functions in addition to shrouding mechanical systems and necessity to mediate the scale for merchandizing home furnishings. The intent of the proposal is to minimize any such intervention that would compromise the appreciation of the characteristic features of this dramatic space.

Suspended Ceilings

The majority of the suspended ceilings that are introduced to moderate the larger scale volume occur in Bays 18 to 22 avoiding similar intervention in Bays 23 to 32. The appreciation of the larger more continuous expanse of the last ten bays is respected and the proposed location of ceilings in the southerly five bays (subject to appropriate detailing) is appropriate.

Curved Wall

The proposed strategy of this wall as a unifying element for the required office spaces and mechanicals is a sound approach to mitigating the intervention with a continuous design element. The proposed wood finish for this wall and corresponding pavilions may not provide sufficient contrast with the dominant wood of the original interior.

Entry Vestibule Wall Train

The current proposal represents an overwhelming impact on the appreciation of the characteristic features of the north end wall. The design of this feature should be developed to both remain secondary and reflect the organization of the rhythm of structure and glazing.

Perimeter Curtain Wall

A new curtain wall will envelop the interior perimeter and be constructed inset from the original train doors. The final detailing of that system and how it connects within the existing fabric has not been resolved but the overall approach is acceptable.

Where emergency exiting requires the train doors to be permanently pinned opened consideration of the impact of weather exposure and wind forces must be considered and accommodated.

Sign Package

Bill Dalton with IBI Group on behalf of John Street Roundhouse Development Corporation, has submitted an application for approval of variances from Chapter 297, Signs, of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code to permit, for identification purposes, two non-illuminated “Roundhouse” roof signs on the Coal and Sanding Tower, three illuminated fascia signs “Leon’s” at the uppermost level of the Coal and Sanding Tower, and one non-illuminated canopy sign, at the northeast face of the Roundhouse (see Attachments No. 5a to 5f).

Heritage Comments

Interior alterations

The applicant has submitted a Heritage Impact Statement that identifies the approach to the work as currently identified. The proposed work is based on standard conservation practice, recognizing the heritage character of the resource and addressing issues of minimal impact and reversibility.

The retail tenant fit-out renovation on the ground floor of the heritage building represents good adaptive reuse of the structure. Acknowledging the necessity for secondary spaces within the larger volume, as well as the introduction of an interior curved wall and entry vestibule, the detailing of materials and expression of the forms will be critical. Further consideration is required to determine the best expression of the contemporary interventions to allow the original characteristic features to be appreciated. Computer generated renderings should be submitted to evaluate the relationship between the original components and the contemporary additions.

Additional mechanical and electrical drawings must be submitted to communicate the impact of HVAC ducts, electrical and telecommunications systems within the space. Where significant components may impact the appreciation of the space, they should be represented in the rendering submissions.

Design refinements can be made prior to the issuance of a building permit and can be approved as satisfactory by the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.

Sign package

The dimension and material of the Leon’s main logo in three locations on the Coal and Sanding Tower is acceptable. However, the current proposal does not describe the repair and conservation work that will be done prior to the installation of the signs, and there needs to be a clearer articulation of old and new in the drawings. Design refinements can be made prior to the issuance of a sign permit and can be approved as satisfactory by the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.

Heritage staff cannot comment on the impact and/or necessity of the backlit illumination of the sign in the absence of understanding the overall lighting plan for the exterior and the park. In addition, backlighting of signage on heritage buildings is not encouraged, due to the obtrusions and/or attachments required.

The two “Roundhouse” signs on top of the Coal and Sanding Tower and the Leon’s canopy sign at the entrance are acceptable.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1: Location Map
Attachment No. 2: Photographs
Attachment No. 3: Ground Floor Tenant Fit-out
Attachment No. 4: Interior Rendering
Attachment No. 5(a-f): Signage Package