

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

Date:	January 3, 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 base building fit-out that supports the adaptive re-use for both museum and retail purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that the alterations to the heritage building at 222 Bremner be approved substantially in accordance with the Heritage Impact Statement for the John Street Roundhouse, revised November, 2007, prepared by IBI Group Architects Ltd., received by City Planning Division November 8, 2007, on file with the Manager Heritage Preservation Services, subject to the owner:

1. Prior to final site plan approval;
 - providing signage guidelines for the exterior of the building and site.
 - entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the entire subject property.
2. 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:
 - providing final architectural drawings of the exterior and interior alterations satisfactory to the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services.
 - conducting a condition assessment of the building.
 - providing a Conservation Plan satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.
 - providing a letter of credit, in a form and an amount satisfactory to the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to secure any work identified and included in the Conservation Plan.
3. Prior to release of the Letter of Credit:
 - Completion of all work outlined in the Conservation Plan.

Financial Impact

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

Implementation Points

A subsequent report will be necessary to detail the final design and communicate the nature of the alterations specific to the retail occupation and museum function within the Roundhouse.

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.”

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.

COMMENTS

Heritage Impact Statement (HIS)

A heritage impact statement has been prepared by IBI Group Architects (November 20th, 2007) entitled John Street Roundhouse Base Building Fit-out and Tenant Rough-In.

This document contains details of the specific alterations necessary to make use of the building while taking into account accepted standards of conservation. In addition to such details as reversible infill to the original inspection pits, the HIS includes the specification for the restoration of the Locomotive Turntable.

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

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.

Designs have been submitted for a retail entrance and requisite loading facilities as well as an internally offset curtain wall system (see Attachment No. 7). The curtain wall system is similar to the currently occupied bays (1-11) in that a distinct enclosure is offset from the train doors (retaining the door's original operation and appearance) while providing a weather protected, secure envelope.

Two loading options have been presented pending resolution of outstanding issues with Hydro One (see Attachment Nos. 4 & 5).

Heritage Comments:

The proposed work is based on standard conservation practice, recognizing the heritage character of the resource and addressing issues of minimal impact and reversibility. Where new elements are introduced the aesthetic is based on two basic strategies:

1. Significant construction (loading bays canopy) or identification aspects (main entrance) are expressed with an industrial scale in design and detail (see Attachment Nos. 8 & 9). This approach incorporates a vocabulary compatible with the industrial scale and construction of the Roundhouse, while utilizing contemporary detailing that clearly identifies it as new construction.

2. Interventions such as the offset curtain wall and exit doors are expressed with a lighter more transparent construction to recede within the context of the original heritage fabric (see Attachment Nos. 8).

The applicant has submitted a Heritage Impact Statement (dated November 20th, 2007) that identifies the approach to the work as currently identified.

The base building renovation on the ground floor of the heritage building represents good adaptive reuse of the structure. Staff will require further information on the specific configuration of the retail space and associated building systems to determine the impact on the heritage façade and interior heritage elements prior to approving a building permit.

In addition, exterior retail signage design guidelines should be prepared and included in the Heritage Easement Agreement in order to prescribe appropriate signage on the heritage façade.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1: Location Map
Attachment No. 2: Photographs
Attachment No. 3: Photographs
Attachment No. 4: Site Plan Option A
Attachment No. 5: Site Plan Option B
Attachment No. 6: Ground Floor Plan
Attachment No. 7: Building Elevations Front and End Wall
Attachment No. 8: Building Elevation Rear Wall
Attachment No. 9: Canopy Details