



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom) – Approval of Alterations to a Heritage Building, and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

<b>Date:</b>	April 2, 2008
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
<b>Wards:</b>	Toronto Centre Rosedale (27)
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

#### **SUMMARY**

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The applicant is proposing a 48-storey residential building with a two-storey mixed use podium that incorporates portions of the existing heritage building. Due to overriding geotechnical considerations, the existing heritage building will be dismantled and reconstructed as part of the project and the reconstruction will act as a façade for the podium for the new building.

The proposal represents the best available solution to resolving various heritage, planning and technical issues affecting the heritage components of the development. Although dismantling and reconstructing the heritage façade is not an acceptable strategy in most cases, the proposed conservation strategy balances a loss of heritage authenticity against potential substantial damage during the period of construction.

The purpose of this report is to outline and seek approval for the proposed alterations and to obtain the authority of the City of Toronto to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### The City Planning Division recommends that

1. City Council approve the alterations to the heritage building at 832 Bay Street, substantially in accordance with the Heritage Impact Statement (Conservation Strategy) Supplementary Report for 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom, prepared by E.R.A. Architects Ltd., dated March 14 2008, on file with the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, subject to the owner:
  - a. Prior to introduction of Bills in Council;  
  
entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City for the retained and reconstructed portion of 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom), including design guidelines for exterior signage;  
  
providing a detailed Conservation and Restoration Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant, detailing the dismantling, storage, restoration and reconstruction of 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom) satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;
  - b. Prior to the issuance of any building permit for 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom), including a permit for the demolition, excavation, and/or shoring of the subject property;  
  
providing a Letter of Credit, in a form and an amount satisfactory to the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to secure all work included in the Conservation and Restoration Plan;  
  
providing a record of the as-found condition of 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom), including all survey documentation and interior casting samples, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;  
  
providing building permit drawings, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services; and
  - c. Prior to release of the Letter of Credit;  
  
completing the heritage conservation and restoration work, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services; and  
  
providing and implementing an Interpretation Program for the 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom) satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.

2. City Council grant authority for the execution of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* with the owners of the property at 832 Bay Street (McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom).

### **Financial Impact**

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

### **DECISION HISTORY**

The applicant has submitted applications for a Zoning By-law Amendment (Application Number: 06 162279 STE 27 OZ) and for Site Plan Approval (Application Number: 07 264454 STE 27 SA).

The property was included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties on June 15 and 16, 1989 and was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act on December 16, 1999 (By-law 836-1999).

### **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The subject property is located at 832 Bay Street and consists of the former McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom (see Attachment 1). The McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom was completed in 1925 according to the designs of architects Hutton and Souter of Hamilton, Ontario. The building housed the Toronto automobile dealership of R.S. McLaughlin, president of General Motors of Canada. The Addison on Bay dealership, which occupied the property since 1955, has recently vacated the site.

The McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom is a good example of a specialized commercial building highlighted with Neo-Gothic design elements. The significant exterior features are found on the facades along the Bay and Grenville Streets flanking the main entrance. Constructed of steel with buff brick cladding and cut limestone trim, the building has a two-storey plan which is angled to follow the jog in Bay Street. The main entrance is set in a stone arch containing double wood glazed doors. The entrance is flanked by bronze light fixtures and surrounded by a commercial sign area and a parapet. The elements of interest on the east and south walls are the large copper-trimmed showroom windows, and segmental-headed window openings with metal glazing. (The north and west walls are not included in the designation.) Significant interior details are the plaster columns and ceiling beams and mouldings in the first floor new car showroom. (No other interior elements are included in the designation.)

The property at 832 Bay Street fills the short block from Grenville to Grosvenor Streets on the west side of Bay Street. A rare surviving example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century automobile showroom in Toronto, it has been occupied continuously by a car dealership since 1925. With its location on Bay Street where it jogs north of College Street, the McLaughlin Motor Car Showroom is an important neighbourhood feature.

The subject property is adjacent to two heritage buildings, 51 Grosvenor Street (Kenson Apartments, included on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties) and 76 Grenville Street (Women's College Hospital, included on the Ontario Heritage Properties Database and designated as a National Historic Site of Canada.)

## **COMMENTS**

### **Heritage Impact Statement and Geotechnical Report**

The applicant submitted a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) prepared by E.R.A. Architects Inc. dated August 11, 2006 as part of the application for Zoning Amendment. The Conservation Strategy proposed to retain all historic elements that are included in the Reasons for Designation mentioned in By-law 836-1999. The new building was to be constructed with the heritage facades and a portion of the interior showroom in place, and the existing heritage building was designed as a podium for the new building. Because of the narrow width of the property, the basement garage walls were designed to be constructed as close to the lot lines as possible, which means excavating the new foundation walls within 0.5 m of the designated facades.

Subsequent to the City's review of that initial report, McClymont & Rak Engineers, Inc. completed a geotechnical survey of the site, including a borehole investigation. Based on their analysis, the engineers concluded that there was a high probability that the masonry wall of the designated building, which is supported on weak, soft soils, will start cracking uncontrollably during the proposed deep shoring installation/excavation (the new basement foundation walls are very deep at 22m). In addition, information learned from a construction site directly adjacent to the subject property indicated that the soils beneath the foundations are likely poorly consolidated, low quality glacial deposits which would be subject to subsidence.

Based on the conclusions of this study, Heritage Preservation Services staff met with the owner and E.R.A. Architects to determine a revised conservation strategy. Heritage staff also consulted with senior City Buildings staff on all engineering considerations for the project.

### **Revised Conservation Strategy**

E.R.A. Architects submitted a supplementary HIS and revised Conservation Strategy on March 14, 2008 (see Attachment 2). The report provided an update on issues arising from the geotechnical site conditions and construction methodology. The basic configuration of the proposed development, including a 48-storey residential tower and a 2-storey retail podium incorporating the heritage designated facades on Bay and Grenville Streets, is not altered. However, the revised strategy proposes that the designated facades would be measured, dismantled, salvaged, repaired, stored and reconstructed on the new concrete building structure once it is built.

The revised strategy also proposes that the southern part of the building be demolished and the decorative interior elements be reconstructed (from moulds and survey drawings) within the new building. The structure of the new building has been adjusted to locate the columns of the correct octagonal section to permit an accurate reconstruction of the interior features.

## **Staff comments**

After extensive investigation, consultation and consideration, HPS staff agree with the conclusions of the consultant's report that the proposal represents the best available solution to resolving the various heritage, planning and technical issues affecting the important heritage components of the development. Although dismantling the heritage façade is not an acceptable strategy in most cases, the proposed conservation strategy balances a loss of heritage authenticity against potential substantial damage during the period of construction.

Generally, the proposed Conservation Strategy maintains the exterior integrity of the heritage building by retaining its three-dimensional built form and character-defining attributes. All of the decorative exterior elements, including the stone veneer, brick veneer and metal windows will be protected by salvaging and each will be numbered and catalogued with their locations noted on drawings so they can be returned to their original positions and orientations. The designated elevations will be measured, recorded and photographed to capture the existing size and geometry. The proposed tower is adequately set back from the outer walls of the heritage building in order to sufficiently delineate the reconstructed and proposed buildings.

The proposed retail on the ground floor of the heritage building represents good adaptive reuse of the structure and is consistent with the historical use of the building. However, prior to the submission of a building permit for the podium area, heritage staff requires further information on the interior configuration of the retail space and the possible impact on the heritage façade as it relates to the configuration of the retail units. In addition, a more detailed drawing and description of proposed alterations to the existing service entrance, as well as the introduction of a main entrance to the residential portion of the development on Bay Street, must be provided.

Heritage staff will require that interior survey documentation, including an on-site inspection of sample latex rubber moulds, be provided to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation prior to the release of any demolition permit.

Exterior retail signage design standards have been drafted and will be reviewed and included in the Heritage Easement Agreement in order to prescribe appropriate signage on the heritage façade for all future retail uses.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Barbara Leonhardt  
Director, Policy and Research  
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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Location Map  
Attachment 2: Heritage Impact Statement (Conservation Strategy), Supplementary Report, 832 Bay Street, prepared by E.R.A. Architects Inc., March 14, 2008