



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Sign By-law Amendment to 279-283 Yonge Street (Hard Rock Café)

Date:	August 4, 2010
To:	Planning and Growth Management Committee
From:	Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building
Ward:	Ward 27 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
Reference Number:	P:\2010\Cluster B\BLD\CBO Office\2010PG10013

SUMMARY

This report reviews and makes recommendations on a request by David Monaghan of Kramer Design Associates, on behalf of Roch Capital Corporation, to amend Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, to implement a site specific amendment for the property commonly known as the “Hard Rock Café” and municipally known as 279-283 Yonge Street.

The application describes a proposal to erect a large format third party sign on the roof of the existing heritage designated building. The proposed roof sign is intended to contain five sign faces, each of various dimensions and each utilizing various methods of sign copy display, along with an architectural lighting column. The building itself is located at the south-easterly corner of Dundas Square and Yonge Street, immediately south of the public space known as Yonge-Dundas Square and located within the Dundas Square Special Sign District (DS-SSD).

Staff recommend approval of the application for a Sign By-law Amendment to introduce this site specific plan for the property municipally known as 279-283 Yonge Street. The proposal is the subject of a concurrent report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division with respect to the heritage issues related to this proposal. The proposal is generally in keeping with the vision for the DS-SSD as described by Chapter 694, Signs, General.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building recommends that:

1. City Council approve an amendment to Chapter 694, Signs, General, to adopt a site specific amendment for the property municipally known as 279-283 Yonge Street, substantially in accordance with the administrative design features as set out in Appendix A to this report;
2. The City Solicitor be authorized to prepare the necessary Bills for introduction in Council to implement the above recommendations, subject to such stylistic and technical changes to the draft bills as may be required; and
3. The applicant be advised that prior to the issuance of a sign permit, the applicant enter into an Encroachment Agreement with Right-of-Way Management, Transportation Services, for any proposed signs encroaching into the public right-of-way.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

279 Yonge Street - Request for Approval of Variances to the Former City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 297

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2001/agendas/committees/to/to010116/it003a.pdf>

Signage Vision for Downtown Yonge Strip

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-20298.pdf>

New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-24387.pdf>

New Sign Regulation and Revenue Strategy: Additional Considerations

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-25449.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

As part of the new sign regulations contained in Chapter 694, Signs, General, the City has introduced the ability for individuals to obtain site-specific amendments to properties.

These amendments are intended to set out specific regulations for the location, arrangement, type and design of signs for a specific location or area. An amendment to

Chapter 694 is required where the proposed sign is of sign class or a sign type that is not permitted in the sign district where the sign is proposed to be erected or where an applicant wishes to implement a Signage Master Plan on specific premises or within a defined area.

The property at 279 Yonge Street, built in 1918 as the Childs Restaurant and Office Building, was designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on November 8, 2001. The designation was granted for architectural reasons including: its Classical detailing; the white-glazed terra cotta cladding on the north and west building facades; its importance in context with the neighbouring Hermant Building at 19 Dundas Square which displays similar terra cotta cladding; and, the neighbouring John Bugg Store at 275-277 Yonge Street.

City Council at its meeting of January 30 and 31; and February 1, 2001, enacted By-law 2001-0049 which granted the original permission for the large format third party roof signs on the subject building. A copy of the amending By-law is provided as Appendix C to this report. This original approval was subject to a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City providing for a commitment by the owner to restore the building's exterior. This approval provided for the current seven roof signs within a parapet treatment above the existing building. The seven signs contain a combination of static vinyl and animated signage for the purpose of third party advertising and are all of various dimensions. Four of the signs face onto Yonge-Dundas Square, two signs face onto Yonge Street across from the Eaton Centre and one sign is located at the rear of the building, facing south along Yonge Street. Although sensitive to the sign height and shadow impacts of these roof signs onto Yonge-Dundas Square, staff at the time determined that the proposal is consistent with the use of spectacular signage at Yonge and Dundas in a concentrated manner as a revitalization tool.

Roof signs are generally prohibited under Chapter 694, Signs, General; however, the subject property is located within the Dundas Square Special Sign District (DS-SSD), where Chapter 694 permits the erection and display of certain roof signs. Chapter 694 permits the continued reliance on the specific forms of roof-top signage on 279-283 Yonge Street, previously permitted by City Council, including the site specific standards requested by the owner of the heritage property and expressly permitted by City Council through the approval and enactment of By-law No. 2001-0049. The applicant is of the opinion that, due to developments occurring in the immediate area since 2001, the exceptional signage permission granted by Council with respect to the property are no longer consistent with the surrounding area.

As a result, the applicant is advancing this current proposal, which exceeds the signage permissions for the property granted by Council and would require further site specific amendments to Chapter 694.

COMMENTS

Proposed Signage

In order to respond to the changing condition regarding large-format signs that is reflected in the immediate context of Yonge-Dundas Square, the applicant has proposed a roof sign containing five sign faces, each of various dimensions and each utilizing various methods of sign copy display, along with an architectural lighting column. The proposed roof sign is further described in the table below:

Table 1

SIGN FACE	PURPOSE	SIGN FACE DIRECTION	SIGN FACE DIMENSIONS	SIGN FACE AREA	METHOD OF COPY DISPLAY
A	THIRD PARTY ADVERTISING	NORTH FACING	7.01 METRES HIGH BY 27.025 METRES WIDE	189.44 m ²	STATIC
B	SPONSER NAME SPACE – THIRD PARTY	NORTH FACING	1.12 METRES HIGH BY 27.025 METRES WIDE	20.268 m ²	STATIC
C	CURVING SIGN FACE – THIRD PARTY	NORTH FACING AND WEST FACING	4.267 METRES HIGH BY 17.2 METRES WIDE (CURVING)	73.4 m ²	TRI-VISION
D	CURVING SIGN FACE – THIRD PARTY	NORTH FACING AND WEST FACING	19.05 METRES WIDE BY 11.887 METRES HIGH		ELECTRONIC MOVING COPY
E	THIRD PARTY ADVERTISING	SOUTH FACING	7.77 METRES WIDE BY 11.43 METRES HIGH	87 m ²	STATIC
LIGHT COLUMN	MAIN SPONSER – THIRD PARTY ADVERTISING	N/A	TOTAL HEIGHT FROM GRADE – 43.434 METRES	N/A	STATIC

The applicant also intends to replace the existing first party signs located at the second storey of the north and west facades. The intent is to replace the signs and improve the heritage aspects of the terra cotta cladding located behind the current signs. Figures 1 and 2 below describe the proposed replacement:

FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2



Heritage

The proposal is to replace the existing signage mounted on top of 279-283 Yonge Street with a new third party signage program including a variety of methods of sign copy display and a light column. The proposed design drawings are provided in Appendix B to this report. The intent is for this signage to finance the regular cleaning, spot restoration and lighting of the architectural façade on both the north and west elevations. The proposal also intends to redesign the two existing first party wall signs to reveal more of the building's terra cotta cladding.

The proposed third party roof signage is intended to respond and compensate for changes to Yonge-Dundas Square. The intent is to bring the signage into alignment with the current perception of Yonge-Dundas Square.

The applicant advocates that:

- The signage program, as proposed, generally conforms with Chapter 694;
- The proposal will not significantly affect the heritage attributes of the host building nor detract from the heritage attributes of adjacent heritage sites; and
- The third party roof sign will fund the conservation efforts intended for the host building including cleaning and restoration of the north and west elevations, redesigning the first party wall signs at the second floor to reveal more of the terra cotta cladding, and lighting the prevalent heritage features.

In response to the direction provided for in the Vision document in which to address large-format signage on heritage buildings, the applicant states that:

- The proposal conforms to the general approach by allowing for highly visible roof-top signage on heritage buildings. The exceptional context of the ‘Yonge Strip’ provides for such a juxtaposition which may not be appropriate elsewhere in the City;
- The proposal generally maintains the established character of the site and the building while establishing the site as a way for innovative advertising;
- The proposal reflects specific design principles for heritage buildings including, ensuring heritage elements are not obstructed, ensuring the installation is not damaging to heritage elements and allowing for a visual break between the sign and the heritage building; and
- The proposal builds upon the pattern demonstrated in the Vision document describing a sympathetic installation of large-format roof signage.

Illumination

Chapter 694, Signs, General, of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, contains provisions respecting the illumination of signs. These illumination provisions include:

- Controls respecting the brightness and brilliance of sign illumination;
- Prevention of light “spill” and light “trespass” on sensitive land uses; and
- Controls to implement the City’s adopted “Bird-friendly Guidelines”, including no up-lit signs.

It is the intent of the applicant to comply in all respects with the illumination provisions outlined in Chapter 694.

Plans and Renderings

In support of the amendment application, to provide for a third party roof sign atop the heritage building and two wall signs along the west and north facades, the applicant has provided a series of plans and renderings describing the signage program in the context of Yonge-Dundas Square. These plans and renderings of the proposal are provided in Appendix B to this report. Also in support of the application, the applicant has provided staff with a Sun/Shadow Study and a Heritage Impact Assessment.

CONTACT

Robert Bader
Supervisor, Variance, Tax & Permits
Sign By-law Unit, Toronto Building
Tel: (416) 392-4113
E-mail: rbader@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

V. Ann Borooah,
Chief Building Official and Executive Director, Toronto Building

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Administrative Design – Sign By-law Amendment for 279-283 Yonge Street
- Appendix B: Applicant’s submitted Plans and Renderings
- Appendix C: By-law 2001-0049