



STAFF REPORT THIRD PARTY SIGN VARIANCE

Supplementary - Application by Streetlife Media Inc. for Five (5) Third Party Sign Variances With Respect to a Third Party Sign Proposal on a Northerly-facing Wall of an Existing Building at 2 Queen Street East

Date:	September 14, 2010
Ward:	Ward 27 – Toronto Centre-Rosedale
File No.:	TP-10-00003
IBMS File No.:	10-222207

Heritage Preservation Services Comments

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 2 Queen Street East (also know as 173 Yonge Street) was listed on Toronto’s Inventory of Heritage Properties, by Council on November 21 & 23, 1973. It was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by City Council on April 18 1988. A Heritage Easement Agreement with the City was registered on December 6, 2001.

The applicant would require a heritage permit under s. 33 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for the proposed sign, as it is an alteration that affects the heritage character of the designated property. The application would necessitate a report to the Toronto Preservation Board and to City Council. City Council would then refuse the alteration, approve the alteration, or approve the alteration with conditions.

The building was constructed in 1909-1910 as a branch of the Bank of Montreal. The Toronto architectural firm of Darling and Pearson prepared the plans for the building. It is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style. Rising two stories, the principal (west) facade on Yonge Street and the south wall on Queen Street East are clad with terra cotta panels above a polished granite base. The principle, west façade, is organized into four horizontal “orders”. The

first order is the ground floor with three tall round-arched openings containing a centre door and two flanking windows. The recessed entrance is elevated and contains double doors, a multi-paned transom with ironwork, a name band reading BANK OF MONTREAL, and an embellished lunette. The second order appears as a mezzanine on the exterior, with a band of recessed flat-headed windows that are organized with three over the centre door and a pair over each of the flanking windows. The third order is the projecting cornice supported by curved brackets with triglyphs and dentils. The fourth order is the parapet with banding and carvings that correspond with the wall panels below. With its terra cotta finishes and its position at a major intersection, the Bank of Montreal is a landmark at the northern edge of the Financial District.

SIGNAGE VISION FOR THE DOWNTOWN YONGE STRIP

Heritage Preservation Services staff have reviewed the third party sign variance application for 2 Queen Street East with regard to the document “A Signage Vision for the Downtown Yonge Strip” March 2009 (Signage Vision), and have the following comments:

1. The “Signage Vision” document provides guidance for large format signage in this special area, establishing a framework for addressing large format signage that addresses the protection and enhancement of heritage buildings to ensure compatible signage design. A heritage objective of the Signage Vision is that “signage should be sympathetic, subordinate and compatible with the existing heritage structure by respecting the building’s architectural proportions as defined by its vertical and horizontal articulations, including window openings. The objective is for signage to compliment the defining characteristic of the heritage building.”
2. The Signage Vision Design Strategy notes that signs as “additions” to heritage buildings must be, “compatible in mass: The size and scale of signage should be limited to its relationship with the heritage building; signage should not be larger or taller than the building itself,” and “[a]dditions should be designed to harmonize with the architectural ‘orders’ of the heritage building – the key vertical and horizontal articulations in the façade.” It should be noted that the Signage Vision provides examples of how large format roof-top signage can be added to heritage buildings but does not appear to contemplate large format fascia signs on heritage buildings.
3. The proposed large format sign would be placed on the north side wall of the heritage façade and appears to cover an area greater than 50% of the north wall. The sign is too large to be placed next to the heritage façade. It is out of proportion with the size of the façade and would dwarf the dimensions and fine terracotta decorations on the heritage facade diminishing their character and landmark stature. The proposed sign does not reference the horizontal orders of the heritage façade: a horizontal line from the bottom of the sign drawn across the heritage façade would cut through the round headed openings on the first floor and would not reference the mezzanine, cornice or parapet levels.

Additionally a sign of this scale and proportion should not be placed this low on a building elevation given its visual impact on the adjacent public realm.

RECOMMENDATION

Heritage Preservation Services is recommending that the Sign Variance Committee refuse the application.

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SIGNATURE

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