



**CHURCH WELLESLEY
NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION**

Representing the residents of the Church
Wellesley area of Downtown Toronto

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February 9, 2016

Toronto Preservation Board
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Dear Members of the Toronto Preservation Board,

Historic Yonge Street HCD Plan

CWNA wishes to place on record its support of the Historic Yonge Street HCD Plan. We believe it is a vital first step in preserving the valuable physical assets that chronicle the many architectural styles evident in the development of "Toronto's Main Street", and creating a unique, liveable and visit-able location that will deliver economic benefits to the City of Toronto.

First and foremost, as a community-based association, we are concerned with the lived experience of our constituents. Developers and others too easily forget that our downtown area is, in fact, a densely populated community that is home to a great variety of people with an equally broad range of incomes, employment and recreational interests. The eclectic mix of styles and uses of buildings in the identified stretch of Yonge Street encourages a broad diversity of residents and visitors alike, and is a vital foundation for a complete community.

We note that some developers, for example Graywood/MOD Developments, have made considerable and successful efforts to preserve and enhance Yonge Street's unique ambience, in the spirit of the HCD. It **can** be done, and we are dismayed that other developers place their profitability above any sense of community responsibility and continue to propose "could-be-anywhere" cookie-cutter developments along this stretch of Yonge. The HCD is a necessary first step in forcing them to address community concerns and build a city environment that looks to the future, but has a sense of place and purpose that is rooted in its heritage. To quote Jane Jacobs: "*Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.*"

CWNA also notes:

1. There are differences between the HCD and OPA 183 and the North Downtown Yonge Urban Design Guidelines. The Staff Report of Jan 27 2016 suggests: "*It is anticipated that these differences may be addressed and reconciled in a future staff "Request for Directions" report on the OPA 183 Ontario Municipal Board appeal.*" We strongly urge Toronto Preservation Board to make full and urgent reference to this reconciliation in its recommendations to TEYCC. If these policies are not fully congruent, we are concerned that those who oppose any one of these policies will make use of the discrepancies to weaken and/or overturn any or all of the policies.

2. The 65 properties specifically named in Recommendations 4-44 MUST be placed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register without delay. We have already seen (at the former Stollery's site) that developers are poised to exploit the slightest opportunity and, unfortunately, the vast majority of them appear to have little regard for the City's heritage.

We wish that Draft Report could have been more inventive and creative in its recommendations to enhance the HCD area's facilities for local resident use (e.g. by creating public meeting and resting spaces, and insisting on policies that would firmly reinforce the current fine-grain retail) and for visitor use (e.g. by reinforcing Yonge Street's unique role as a celebratory and parade route). We wish, too, that the proposals could have been more comprehensive in re-imagining the future uses of the street, for example by rebalancing the emphasis from motorized transport towards (the already more prevalent) pedestrians. These will have to be addressed in future discussions.

Nonetheless, we again wish to state our support for the HCD Plan, and commend it to you as the current best way forward for revitalizing an important part of our neighbourhood.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Horberry
President, Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association

Cc: Mary MacDonald
Tamara Ansen-Cartwright
Dialog
David Oikawa,
Councillor Wong-Tam, Ward 27