TORONTO STAFF REPORT

January 6, 2003

To: Toronto Preservation Board

From: Joe Halstead, Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

Subject: Union Station – Summary of Major Interventions
Toronto Centre-Rosedale - Ward 28

Purpose:

This report outlines the major interventions embodied in the Union Pearson Group Concept Design for Union Station further to the verbal presentation at the November 26th, 2002 Toronto Preservation Board Meeting.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

(1) the City endorses "in principle" interventions as described in the report prepared by the Union Pearson Group titled "Union Station Toronto, Statement of Intent: Interventions", dated December 2002, and

(2) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

Union Station was built as a joint venture between Canadian Pacific Railway and Grand Trunk Railway. Construction began in 1913 and the first passenger train was received and dispatched on August 11, 1927. The City purchased the Station in August, 2000.

Union Station is designated as a National Historic Site and protected under a Heritage Easement Agreement held by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Parks Canada).

In July 2002, City Council selected Union Pearson Group as the preferred proponent from the RFP to restore, develop and operate Union Station, and directed staff to negotiate the appropriate agreements to give effect to their proposal. A report to the Administrative Committee on the results of those negotiations is anticipated shortly.

Union Pearson Group has submitted a preliminary Concept Design outlining their proposal for the Station. A companion document has been prepared by the Heritage Consultants for Union Pearson Group (Fournier Gersovitz Moss Architectes & Associes) that documents the interventions proposed as part of the Concept Design.

Comments:

The four major areas of intervention that are being proposed are described in detail in Attachment No. 1 and are summarized as follows:

Departures Concourse

A large opening is proposed in the departure concourse that would create a multi-level space in conjunction with a food court on the lower level.

The departure concourse was a key component of the original inter-city passenger circulation within the station.

The creation of the double storey space would establish a renewed focus on the central spine of the Station. This north-south pedestrian axis links directly to the Great Hall at the north and waterfront access to the south. In conjunction with the proposed stairways in the arches of the Great Hall this strategy serves to accommodate the needs of contemporary commuter and inter-city passenger circulation.

West Wing

The ground floor originally accommodated a waiting room, restaurant and public amenities. The upper floors of the West Wing initially contained offices of the train companies.

The West wing is to be converted to either office or hotel use with the ground floor accommodating restaurants, retail and lobby spaces for the upper floor function. This would require removal of all contemporary alterations and some original fabric. The main public space, the former Waiting Room would be restored to perform a semi-public role adjacent to the Great hall.

The relationship of public spaces and circulation connections to the west is a key concern in the layout of the ground floor. The West Wing retains vestiges of former public areas on the ground floor and office area above. The importance of these individual areas must be balanced with the viability and design integrity of the new uses and the complex as a whole.

Moats

The proposal covers the moats to provide a covered link to the TTC and alternate east-west pedestrian access reducing congestion within the station. The moats currently link the TTC and street to the lower level GO access.

The moats initially provided service access for taxis and baggage handling.

A key design consideration is how to enclose these areas for additional pedestrian circulation without compromising the moat as a device to enhance the monumental street façade.

Stairs in arches of Great Hall

A new stair is proposed at either end of the Great Hall that would link three levels and function as a prime vertical circulation within the complex.

Although early designs explored the use of the arches as major circulation elements, they became tenant spaces with the Great Hall.

This intervention is a bold move to accommodate the contemporary circulation incorporating existing monumental elements within the Great Hall.

Conclusions:

Staff of the Culture Division support the proposed interventions in principle with further design development to follow that will refine aspects of the design.

The Federal Government is also currently reviewing the document "Statement of Intentions: Interventions" as prepared by Julia Gersovitz of Fournier Gersovitz Moss Architectes & Associes (Heritage Consultant for Union Pearson Group). They will be supplying more detailed comments later in January.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment No. 1 - Statement of Intent: Interventions (not available electronically at this time)