

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

April 18, 2001

To: Downtown Community Council

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

Subject: 444 Yonge Street (College Park) - Alteration to a Designated Heritage Property,
Toronto Centre-Rosedale - 27

Purpose:

To approve the proposed alterations to 444 Yonge Street (College Park).

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) approval be granted for the proposed alterations (Attachments No. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) to 444 Yonge Street (College Park) as shown in the Phase One drawings prepared by E.R.A. Architects Inc., dated March 22, 2001, on file with the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services;
- (2) the drawings submitted by the applicant for building permit be substantially in accordance with the Phase One drawings prepared by E.R.A. Architects Inc., dated March 22, 2001, on file with the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services;
- (3) prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant prepare a Restoration Plan providing a detail description of the proposed alterations to the lower level, the ground floor level, and the foyer of the seventh floor of the subject property, to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services; and

- (4) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

College Park (444 Yonge Street) (Attachment No. 1) was included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1973 and designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 1975 (By-law No. 510-75).

Built in 1928-33 by Ross and MacDonald, Sproatt and Rolph Associates to house the Eaton's College Street store, it remains a fine example of early twentieth century classical commercial building design and an important landmark within the City. Examples of the fine materials and workmanship displayed on the exterior elevations are evident as well in the major interiors of the building. Most notable among these is the seventh floor "art deco" Auditorium (theatre / concert hall), the Round Room (restaurant), and their adjoining foyer designed by French architect Jacques Carlu. This portion of the building has been closed to the public for almost 25 years and is in need of considerable restoration work.

The proposed alterations include the first phase of restoration of the seventh floor. Specifically, the applicant is proposing to undertake a complete restoration of the public areas (foyer) to prepare for the tenancing and further restoration of the restaurant and auditorium areas. The applicant is also proposing alterations to the lower level (market) and ground floor to provide larger retail spaces with improved pedestrian connections to Yonge Street and the surrounding block (Attachment No. 1). Exterior alterations will also be made to expand the Market level on the west side. This alteration will not however impact on the heritage fabric of the building.

The Toronto Preservation Board considered these proposed alterations and has endorsed the staff recommendations.

Comments:

Ground Floor and Lower Level Alterations

Originally designed for a single tenant, the physical design of the ground floor of College Park has proven over the years to pose serious limitations to the success of the many small retail stores that have replaced the Eaton's department store. The elevator or pedestrian arcade running north-south along the interior east side of the building while a notable aspect of the original design, is also a major contributing factor to the limited visual accessibility and physical connection that exists between the interior retail shops and Yonge Street. The current design of the interior space also provides for limited east-west connections through the block linking

Yonge Street to the College Park retail, the adjacent City park and the retail mall in the adjoining building to the west. These connections are critical to the success of retail in College Park and to the animation of both Yonge Street and the adjacent parkland (Attachment Nos. 2 and 3).

To improve pedestrian connections to College Park, and in response to changing trends in the retail market, the applicant is proposing to organise the ground floor to accommodate 4-5 major retail tenants. Each of these tenant spaces will be directly accessible from Yonge Street. To achieve this, two of the original Yonge Street entrances will be reinstated. In addition, two existing Yonge Street shopfronts and one College Street shopfront will be altered through the replacement of glass windows with more substantial glass door openings. This will be done without compromise to the visual prominence of the original entrances or to the overall composition of the exterior facades (Attachment Nos. 4 and 5). Demising walls will be installed within the ground floor and lower level to establish the limits of retail, lobby space and interior pedestrian circulation routes.

To provide an east-west connection through College Park the applicant proposes to establish a central galleria on axis with the main retail entrance off Yonge Street (Attachment No. 2). Maintaining the symmetry of this entrance, the applicant proposes to remove the existing street level to arcade staircase, and the arcade to ground floor level staircase in this location. The applicant also proposes to remove the floor plate of the existing ground floor along the length of the proposed galleria to provide a lofty double height ceiling. These alterations will provide more direct visual and physical access between Yonge Street and the Market level below.

Seventh Floor Foyer Restoration

It has long been the desire of the City and the heritage community to see the seventh floor of College Park restored to its former glory and again made accessible to the public. The alterations proposed to the seventh floor constitute a complete restoration of the public areas that provide access to both the auditorium and the restaurant. In addition, new mechanical equipment will be installed, new washrooms will be constructed and elevator upgrades will be completed within this area to provide improved service to the entire seventh floor. This restoration work will be undertaken by the applicant in preparation for future restoration of the auditorium and restaurant in conjunction with the tenanting of these spaces (Attachment Nos. 6 and 7).

Conclusions:

The proposed alterations affect the reasons for designation of the heritage property at 444 Yonge Street. However, these alterations provide the opportunity to once again establish College Park as a healthy and profitable retail destination with the potential to improve retail in the larger area of Yonge Street. The alterations also include the first phase of the long awaited restoration of the seventh floor. For these reasons, and given the sensitive approach to all alterations proposed by

the applicant, staff considers this request to be reasonable and recommends that approval be granted for the proposed alterations to 444 Yonge Street (College Park).

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Joe Halstead
Commissioner Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

List of Attachments:

- No.1 Statement of Heritage Intent 444 Yonge Street, E.R.A. Architects, March 26, 2001
- No.2 College Park Ground Floor Proposed Tenancy Allocations, plan, March 22, 2001
- No.3 College Park Market Level Proposed Retail Tenancy Allocations, plan, March 22, 2001
- No.4 College Park Yonge Street Proposed Alterations, elevation, March 22, 2001
- No.5 College Park College Street Proposed New Entrance, elevation, March 22, 2001
- No.6 College Park 7th Floor Existing Conditions, plan, March 22, 2001
- No.7 College Park 7th Floor Proposed Alterations, plan, March 22, 2001