

December 7, 2007

**To:** City Council

**From:** Toronto Preservation Board

**Subject:** Automotive Building at Exhibition Place – Approval of Alterations to a Heritage Building, and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement (Ward 19 Trinity-Spadina)

**Recommendations:**

**The Toronto Preservation Board recommended to City Council that:**

- 1. The alterations to the Automotive Building on the Exhibition Grounds at 2 Strachan Avenue be approved substantially in accordance with the plans by NORR Architects dated August 2007 on file with the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services, and the Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Andre Scheinman dated October 22, 2007 subject to the owner, prior to the completion of the City's alternate site plan approval process for Exhibition Place;**
  - entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City;**
  - submitting a Conservation Plan, prepared by a heritage consultant and based on the approved Heritage Impact Statement as prepared by Andre Scheinman dated October 22, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;**
  - submitting plans for interpretive panels or other interpretive materials to communicate the history of the property and the Don Valley brickworks: the research, design, and location of the interpretive materials will be to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services;**
  - providing a landscape plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;**
  - providing a lighting plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.**
- 2. Authority be granted by City Council for the execution of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act with the owners of the property at 2 Strachan Avenue (Automotive Building – Exhibition Place).**

Background:

The Toronto Preservation Board on December 6, 2007, considered the following report and letter:

- a. (November 29, 2007) from the Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division; and
- b. (November 27, 2007) from the City Clerk advising that the Budget Committee on November 14, 2007, during consideration of the 2008 Capital Budget for Exhibition Place, requested the Toronto Preservation Board to report directly to City Council at its meeting of December 11, 2007 on matters relating to the Automotive Building being a “Listed Building”.

The following persons addressed the Toronto Preservation Board:

- Dianne Young, Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place; and
- David Spry, OAA, Project Architect, Norr Limited Architects and Engineers.

City Clerk

Colleen O’Neill/acf

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- c. Administrator, Toronto and East York Community Council

<b>To:</b>	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
<b>Wards:</b>	Trinity Spadina – Ward 19
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

**SUMMARY**

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The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place has submitted plans for a complete renovation of the existing Automotive Building to a multi-purpose Class A Conference Centre and Ballroom. The purpose of this report is to outline and seek approval for the proposed alterations and to obtain the authority of the City of Toronto to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with Exhibition Place.

As part of the redesign of the Automotive Building, the Board of Governors engaged MHPM Inc. as the project manager; NORR Architects; Enermodal Engineering Limited as the LEED

consultant; and Andre Scheinman as the heritage consultant. Key requirements of the project were the, the preservation of the heritage character of the original building, the meeting or exceeding of international standards for conference centres and the achievement of LEED Silver certification.

While some of these objectives are competing in nature, the Exhibition Place design team has managed to preserve most of the significant heritage features within the conference centre design and has agreed to a full masonry restoration, a landscaping plan that will re-establish the heritage landscape on the south elevation, exterior lighting and other interior and exterior mitigation measures that will restore, enhance or document the heritage character of the building. As part of the redevelopment, Exhibition Place will enter into a heritage easement agreement with the City and the Automotive Building will be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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1. The alterations to the Automotive Building on the Exhibition Grounds at 2 Strachan Avenue be approved substantially in accordance with the plans by NORR Architects dated August 2007 on file with the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services, and the Heritage Impact Statement prepared by Andre Scheinman dated October 22, 2007 subject to the owner, prior to the completion of the City's alternate site plan approval process for Exhibition Place;
  - entering into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City;
  - submitting a Conservation Plan, prepared by a heritage consultant and based on the approved Heritage Impact Statement as prepared by Andre Scheinman dated October 22, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;
  - submitting plans for interpretive panels or other interpretive materials to communicate the history of the property and the Don Valley brickworks: the research, design, and location of the interpretive materials will be to the satisfaction of the Manager of Heritage Preservation Services;
  - providing a landscape plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services;
  - providing a lighting plan for the subject property, satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services.
2. Authority be granted by City Council for the execution of a Heritage Easement Agreement under Section 37 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* with the owners of the property at 2 Strachan Avenue (Automotive Building – Exhibition Place).

## **Implementation Points**

Timing issues related to budget approvals has meant that the City's intention to designate the property will be sought at the next meeting of the Toronto Preservation Board and Toronto and East York Community Council.

**Financial Impact**

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

## DECISION HISTORY

June 20, 1973	Automotive Building listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties, adopted by City Council
Exhibition Place Board of Governors, November 7, 2007	Unanimous approval of a report on the Norr Architects proposal, including the heritage conservation strategy. At the same meeting, a report on the conference centre design and costing issues was also unanimously approved and recommended for approval by City Council. The report recommended that the overall project budget increase from \$29.0M to 46.88M

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

Designed by architect D.E. Kertland and constructed in 1929, the Automotive Building celebrated the innovation of the automobile and for the next fifty years was the showcase for the newest and the best products within the automotive sector. It was listed on the City of Toronto heritage inventory in 1973.

NORR Architects has been engaged by the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place to develop plans for the future use of the Automotive Building as a multi-purpose Class A Conference Center and exhibition space. The proposed renovated facility will potentially host a wide range of events from ballroom galas to trade shows in association with the Direct Energy Center, to which it is linked by pedestrian tunnel. Architectural design solutions have been challenging in that a number of the stated objectives are difficult to achieve while also preserving the heritage character of the original building. However a key tenet of NORR's architectural design statement is to restore the building to its original grandeur and prestige.

## COMMENTS

### Heritage Impact Statement

In order to address the heritage elements within the Automotive Building, NORR Architects engaged heritage consultant Andre Scheinman to complete a heritage impact statement (report on file). Mr. Scheinman's report provides a thorough review of the project and makes important recommendations with respect to the mitigation of heritage impacts. Mr. Scheinman concludes that "beyond the discussion of the preservation of the specific heritage elements there is no question that the objective of the project envisaged by Exhibition Place is to assure the long-term optimal use and hence, existence, of Kertland's fine designs. Clearly in this regard a balance needs to be struck between essential modifications and essential character defining features." Heritage Preservation Services concurs with this assessment and has concluded that Exhibition Place has conserved many significant heritage features within its design and has provided an adequate mitigation strategy to address remaining impacts.

### Preservation of Significant Heritage Features

Within the proposal, a number of significant heritage features will be preserved or restored. The major initiative at the exterior walls is to restore the window sash with vision glass to almost all

of the window openings. The light and mullion configuration will closely replicate the appearance of the original multi-paned casements with transom and sidelights (units of this general type are shown on the schematic elevations in Attachment 1). The later exterior doors at the main entrance will be removed restoring the full effect of the monumental opening. The raised section of the proposed new roof system would create a clerestory running the length of the north side of the full lobby area. This would provide natural light in the main two storey circulation, reintroducing an aspect of the ambiance of the original sky lit interior.

All aspects of the north and south lobbies, the most significant interior spaces, will be carefully conserved and/or restored including all wall and ceiling finishes, railings, terrazzo flooring and light fixtures. At the south lobby this will involve the removal of the rubberized flooring and, if still existing, restoration of the original terrazzo below or replacement with a sympathetic material.

As a condition of their project approval, Exhibition Place will be proceeding with a full program of general exterior masonry conservation, an exterior lighting program and the design and execution of a landscape restoration for the southern elevation which was an important element of D.E. Kertland's original design. Exhibition Place will also agree to the designation of the building under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and will enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement with the City.

## **Heritage Impacts and Justifications**

In a pre-application meeting with the heritage consultant, Heritage Preservation Services staff raised concerns about the proposed roof replacement and the creation of solid walls on the south, east and west sides of the interior mezzanine edge. The central column line was technically necessary at the time of the building's construction and it is considered to be an important aspect of Kertland's design. The roof structure, and the long twin gable skylights which dictated the form of the roof, were the signature feature of the interior exhibit space as was view from the second floor mezzanine down to the display area on the main floor. In addition, the introduction of insulation to the original Don Valley brick walls was later identified as an additional heritage impact.

After considerable review by Exhibition Place staff and their consultants, the design team were unable to find alternatives to address concerns about the roof replacement and the introduction of walls that allowed the newly renovated building to be a viable and desirable conference centre within the competitive marketplace. In order to maintain the gabled roof with the exposed steel trusses, the conference centre would have to have at least one column in the middle of the ballroom/plenary space with a ten-foot deep bulkhead running the full length of the ballroom for the existing roof to be supported. Furthermore, the ballroom would not be able to have a full ceiling while at the same time have exposed steel trusses. At several workshops with consultants and show producers, all unanimously agreed that a conference centre with such obstructive views would not be competitive at all within the marketplace. In addition, the enclosure of the mezzanine is necessary to create the meeting rooms.

Finally, the proposed interior insulation and wall covering is necessary in order to meet LEED standards and to have an energy efficient building. In addition, to be a Class A conference centre, exposed brick with several layers of paint would not meet the acoustic or design standards required. To mitigate the heritage impact of this intervention, Exhibition Place will retain an area

of exposed brick as an aspect of the historical interpretation of the building which would also eventually include an exhibit devoted to a comprehensive commemoration/interpretation of the original design, use and evolution of the structure.

## **Conclusions**

The current proposal has little impact on the exterior of the building and includes a desirable conservation strategy for significant heritage features.

HPS staff acknowledge that the purpose built nature of the Automotive Building and the competitive environment of the Toronto area pose challenges to its future viability. Although Exhibition Place is not able to preserve some heritage features, it is committed to the restoration of the building to its original grandeur and prestige. This proposal represents a balance between essential modifications and the preservation of essential character defining features.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

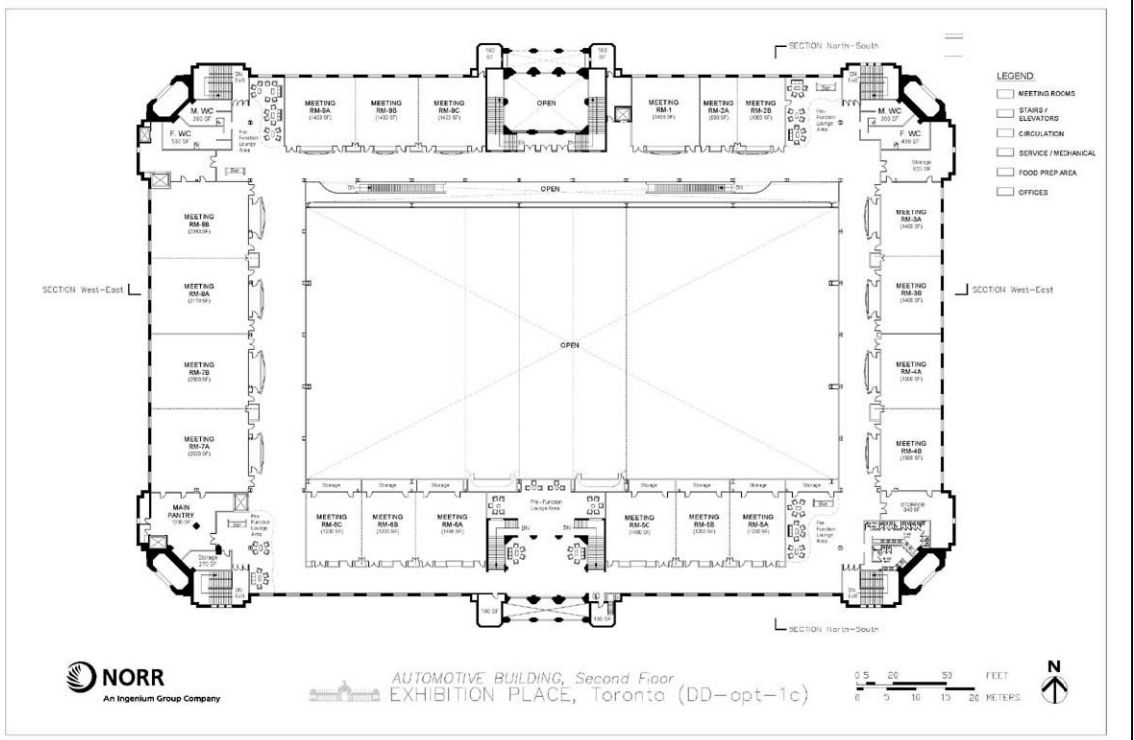
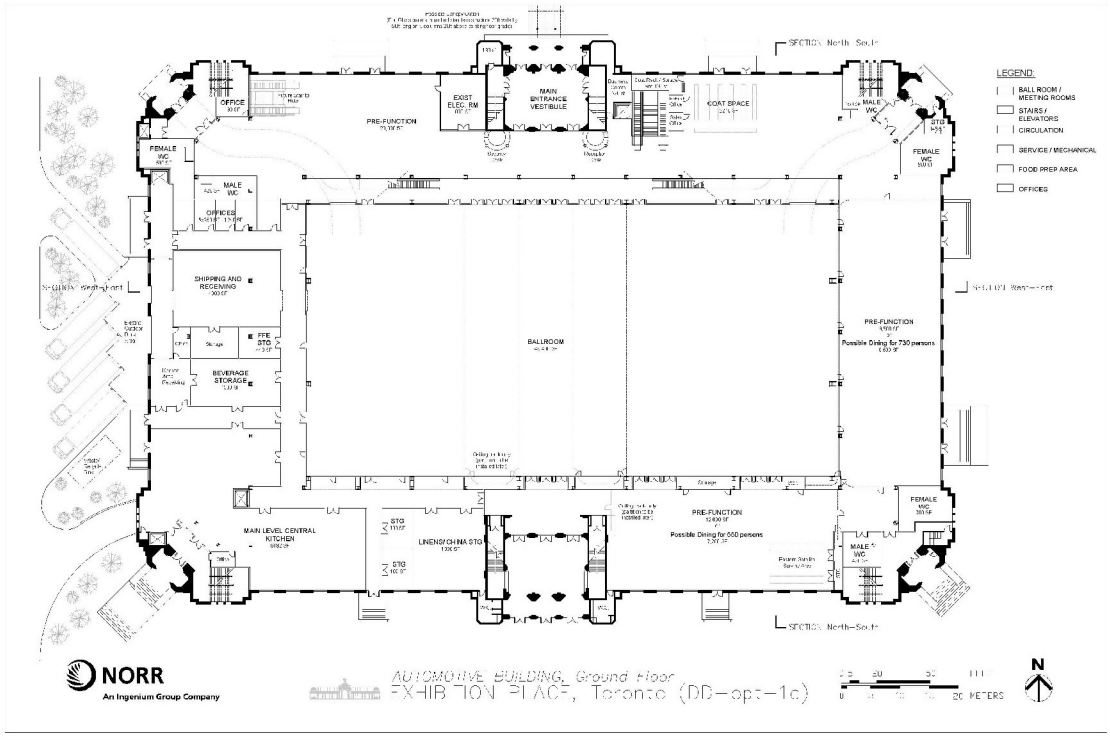
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Barbara Leonhardt  
Director, Policy and Research  
City Planning Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment No. 1: Plans and Drawings

# AUTOMOTIVE BUILDING AT EXHIBITION PLACE PLANS AND DRAWINGS - ATTACHMENT NO.1





Composite view from the steps of the Direct Energy Centre



North elevation



South elevation



West elevation



East elevation

November 27, 2007

To: Toronto Preservation Board  
From: Budget Committee  
Subject: 2008 Capital Budget for Exhibition Place

The Budget Committee, on November 14, 2007, during consideration of the 2008 Capital Budget for Exhibition Place, requested the Preservation Board to report directly to City Council at its meeting of December 11, 2007 on matters relating to the Automotive Building being a “Listed Building”.

for City Clerk

Merle MacDonald/acf