

1213 Danforth Avenue (Allenby Theatre) – Alterations to a Designated Heritage Property

Date:	November 19, 2007
To:	Toronto Preservation Board Toronto East York Community Council
From:	Director, Policy and Research, City Planning Division
Wards:	Toronto-Danforth – Ward 30
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council approve alterations to the heritage property at 1213 Danforth Avenue. The property was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act by City Council on September 25, 26, 27, and 28, 2006 (By-law No. 106-2007).

Imperial Oil / Esso proposes to restore the historic façade of the former Allenby Theatre and incorporate it as part of the retail component of a new gasoline station to be developed on the theatre property and on the former gas station site immediately west of the theatre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that

1. The alterations to the heritage building at 1213 Danforth Avenue be approved substantially in accordance with the Heritage Impact Statement for 1213 Danforth Avenue (Roxy Theatre Esso Station), prepared by E.R.A. Architects Ltd., dated August 2007, and received by the City Planning Division September 14, 2007, on file with the Manager Heritage Preservation Services, the alterations as generally illustrated on Attachment 6 of this report, subject to the owner:
 - a. Prior to final site plan approval;

providing a detailed Conservation Plan, prepared by a qualified heritage consultant, detailing the interventions and conservation work and including as-found photographs of the interior and the exterior of the theatre structure to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services or her designate;

providing a final site plan and landscape plan satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services or her designate;

providing a graphic design for the signing of the historic theatre marquee, including font, size, colour, and illumination to the satisfaction of the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services or her designate;

- b. Prior to the issuance of any building permit for the heritage building at 1213 Danforth Avenue, including a permit for the demolition, excavation, and/or shoring of the subject property;

providing a Letter of Credit, in a form and an amount satisfactory to the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to secure all work included in the Conservation Plan;

providing building permit drawings satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services or her designate; and

- c. Prior to release of the Letter of Credit;

completing the heritage conservation work, satisfactory to the Manager, Preservation Services or her designate;

submitting final as-built photographs of the heritage building at 1213 Danforth Avenue satisfactory to the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services or her designate.

Financial Impact

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The subject property is part of a redevelopment proposal by Imperial Oil Limited for a new gas station facility with supporting retail uses on what was formerly a Texaco gasoline station at 1195 Danforth Avenue, and the adjacent Allenby (Roxy) Theatre at 1213 Danforth Avenue (Attachment No.1). A site plan application has been submitted to the City for this proposal and is being reviewed by Community Planning staff.

COMMENTS

Background

The Allenby Theatre (more recently known as the Roxy Theatre), was constructed in 1935 by the partnership of Kaplan and Sprachman, the firm responsible for between seventy and eighty percent of all movie theatres constructed in Canada between 1921 and 1950.

The Allenby Theatre was designated by the City in 2006 as a representative example of the style of theatre constructed between World War I and II with notable Art Deco / Art Moderne detailing (Attachment No. 4). This is characterized in the north (front) elevation of the Allenby Theatre by the horizontal banding across the elevation, a prominent parapet which incorporates stepped and rounded corners, and brick pilasters between the second floor windows which create a strong sense of verticality. The original doors, marquee and ticket booth are also notable features of the original façade (Attachment No. 3).

An assessment of the condition of the existing façade by E.R.A. Architects Limited, has determined that the north elevation remains in good condition with only minor failures or damage (Attachment No. 2). Insensitive alterations that have been made in the past are reversible. Although presently boarded up, the configuration of the original ground floor window openings has not been altered. The window openings on the second floor have also not been altered although the original glazing units have been replaced with inoperable aluminum frames. The masonry is generally in good condition including both brick and precast concrete elements with some replacement of bricks and minor repair of the mortar joints recommended.

Proposal

The applicant is proposing to retain the existing heritage façade as part of a two storey volume that will form part of an extended retail / convenience store addition. As well, the proposal will include the retention in situ or rebuilding of the two side elevations and flat roof of the theatre to the approximate depth of the original lobby space, beyond which the single storey addition will be constructed. This will ensure that the principle façade of the theatre is viewed from Danforth Avenue as part of a three dimensional volume. Direct pedestrian access is provided to Danforth Avenue via the original front doors of the theatre. Four pump islands are proposed under a new weather canopy located in the centre of the development site. Vehicular access is provided via two driveways; one along Danforth Avenue and a second along Greenwood Avenue (Attachment No. 5).

Heritage Comments

The applicant is proposing to undertake a full restoration of the exterior of the north façade of the heritage structure. This includes but is not limited to:

- removal of deteriorating paint from the precast concrete elements with light cleaning
- replacement of windows on ground and second floor to replicate original condition
- repair of existing marquee to replicate original in size and style
- restoration of original terrazzo inlay marble at the front entrance
- restoration of the existing front doors and ticket booth
- reinstatement and restoration of vitrolite banding on ground floor around windows and entrance

These restoration initiatives are set out in the Heritage Impact Statement prepared by E.R.A. Architects dated August 2007 and as more generally depicted in the elevations attached to this report (Attachment No. 6).

The restored marquee will be used to sign the new facility. The design of the proposed signage will be subject to final approval by the Manager, Heritage Preservation Services or her designate, to ensure its compatibility with the heritage character of the theatre marquee.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
Attachment No. 2 – Photographs – current condition
Attachment No. 3 – Photographs – historical photos
Attachment No. 4 – Reasons for Designation
Attachment No. 5 – Preliminary Site Plan
Attachment No. 6 - Elevations