



November 26, 2008

Chair of the Toronto Preservation Board
Mr. Robert Saunders
Toronto City Hall
Second Floor, Suite A15
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2

Dear Mr. Saunders:

This letter is to reaffirm the support of the Board of Directors of Women's College Hospital for the proposed master plan for our new building, as designed by Diamond + Schmitt Architects.

As you are aware, there are no stronger devotees to the history, legacy, and cultural significance of Women's College Hospital than the Board of Directors, six of whom were elected to the current Boards as members of the citizen's group know as Friends of Women's College. (I myself am a long standing member of Friends.)

In planning our future as a new model of health care ... Ontario's first purpose built academic and research ambulatory hospital, with a special focus on women's health ... we commissioned a functional study of our facilities by Murphy Hilgers. We learned to our regret that our existing facilities are so seriously outmoded and inadequate that the cost of restoration alone would far exceed the cost of building anew.

Because we are determined to provide new models of interprofessional education and service, we need a fresh approach to design with an emphasis on efficiency and flexibility. Our new master plan from Diamond + Schmitt provides us with the maximum efficiency and the least possible disruption in patient service as we build.

The Board very seriously considered preserving the 1935 west wing of the original 76 Grenville St. building. Indeed, that was our first intention. However, it became clear to us that this preservation was impractical and stood in the way of our using our resources most effectively.

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Our chief and proudest inheritance is the mantle of those brilliant and determined women who first claimed the right to study and practice medicine in Ontario, who founded the hospital initially as a Women's Medical College and who went on to pioneer the hospital services for women. Health care focused on women, and the full scope of practice and teaching for female physicians, are the true inheritance we cherish and observe today.

It is from respect for this intellectual and scientific heritage ... not out of esteem for the physical buildings ... that Women's College Hospital was declared a National Historic Site in 1999.

The new building will honour that heritage in aspiration, in innovation, in pioneering research, and in the high quality of care for women and their families. It was in this spirit that the Board of Directors unanimously approved the Diamond + Schmitt plan.

It goes without saying that we intend to commemorate the founders' work in our unique historic archive (featuring historic objects and records), and in the prominent placement of the Francis Gage "Woman" statue in our new building. Indeed, we feel that our beautiful new master plan is very much in the spirit of the Hospital motto engraved on the statue: Non quo sed quo modo, Not What We Do But How We Do It. In other words, our true heritage is not in the outmoded stones and mortar, but in the fiercely guarded legacy of women-focused health care and research.

Sincerely

Michele Landsberg, O.C.
Chair, Board of Directors
Women's College Hospital

cc: Mr. Scott Barrett
Senior Co-ordinator Heritage Preservation
Suite A 17, Toronto City Hall

Mr. Dan DiDartolo
Co-ordinator Heritage Preservation
Suite A15, Toronto City Hall

FRIENDS OF WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

790 BAY STREET, 9TH FLOOR, TORONTO, ON M5G 1N9

Mr. Robert Saunders
Chair of the Toronto Preservation Board
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, 2nd Floor, Suite A16
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Friends of Women's College Hospital Support for The Proposed Master Plan for the Hospital

Dear Mr. Saunders:

The members of Friends of Women's College Hospital are united in their support for the 2008 plans to develop Women's College Hospital. The mandate in 2007, that Women's College is to become Ontario's first ambulatory care hospital with a focus on women's specific health concerns is clearly a terrific opportunity and future for the Hospital.

The Friends of WCH have always advocated remaining on the current site which is ideally located in terms of proximity to: U of T, other hospitals with specialized and general services, plus easy access to Yonge and University Ave. subways. The Hospital investigated the possibility of utilizing some of the current structure and received the expert opinions that such was not practical in view of current building code requirements and because the new use of the facilities is entirely different than was the case when the Hospital was built (first phase in 1935, the west wing in 1956 and east wing in 1971).


That distinctive statue "Woman" by artist Frances Gage has moved from time to time within the Hospital and will retain a prominent location in the new building. The motto on that statue "Non quo sed quo modo", meaning "Not what we do but how" continues to speak to the services to be provided under the new mandate. Women's College has great respect for its past and maintains on site Archives which feature records, research and materials in the ongoing WCH history. These materials and displays are to have a place on the main floor of the new Hospital...an exciting prospect because these items are currently displayed in the basement of WCH.

The entrance and lobby of the current building are well known to Friends of WCH as many gatherings have been convened in that space. We are pleased that the new plans call for an open and welcoming core which will be wonderful to celebrate as compared to the current lobby which has always been an HVAC challenge...freezing cold in winter and very hot in summer. The lobby design makes it difficult for patients to navigate, especially those with wheelchairs, crutches or canes.

The Diamond + Schmitt Architects have given the WCH Board an inspired plan complete with the magic to stir the hearts of past, present and future caregivers who will teach, conduct research and most importantly provide women-focused care to those who require it.

Please be assured that Friends of WCH are lined up to help build the New Women's College Hospital.

Yours sincerely,


Jocelyn Palm
Treasurer
On behalf of the FWCH Directors

cc: Dan DiDartolo, Coordinator Heritage Preservation
Scott Barrett, Senior Coordinator Heritage Preservation
