



The Architectural  
Conservancy  
of Ontario  
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Preserving heritage  
since 1933

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March, 26<sup>th</sup> 2014

**From: Richard Longley, President, Architectural Conservancy Ontario**

**To: Ontario Municipal Board (File #PL1311176)**

**Toronto Preservation Board (PB29.12)**

**cc: Tim Grant, Chair, Harbord Village Residents' Association**

**Susan Dexter, Gus Sinclair, Harbord Village Heritage Advisory Committee**

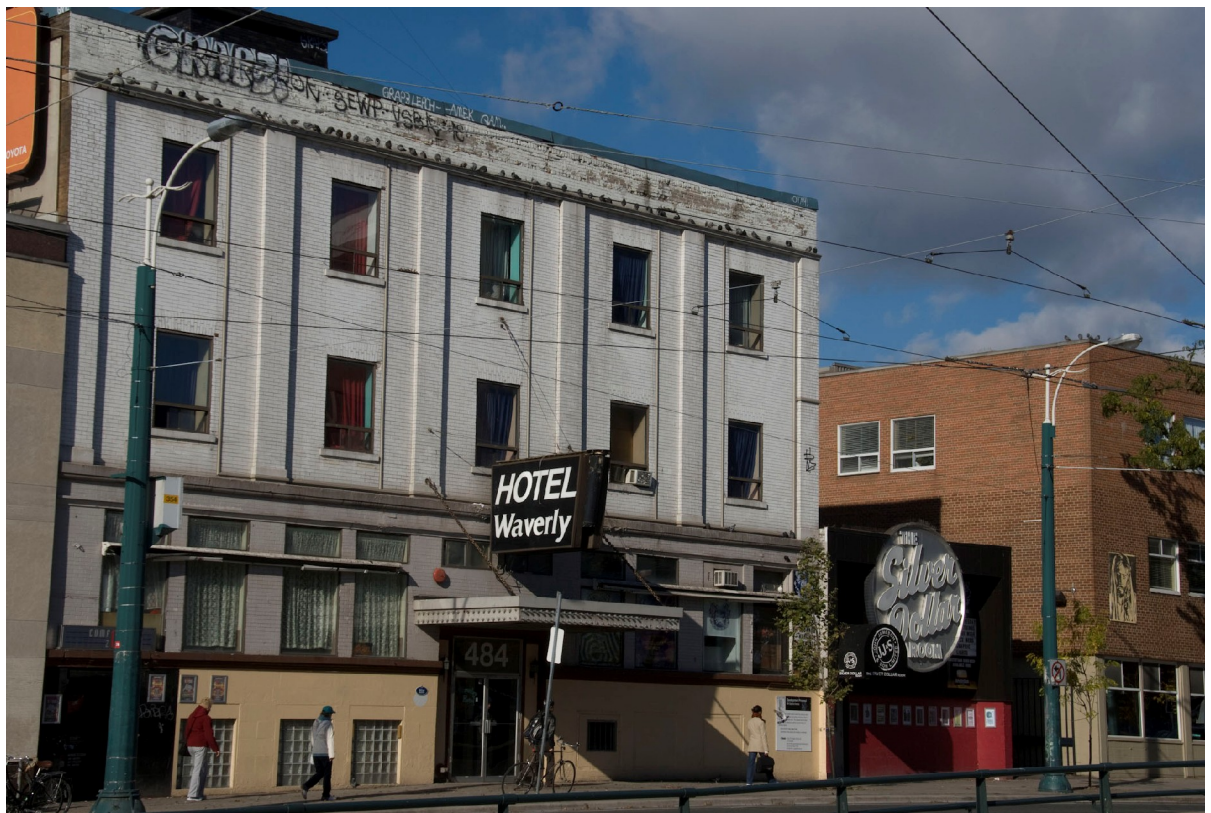
**Councillor Adam Vaughan, Ward 20**

**Cathy Nasmith, Chair, Toronto Architectural Conservancy**

**Paul Wynn, Jeffrey Wynn, The Wynn Group**

**Re: Hotel Waverly (M. J. Young, archt., built 1916-1917), 484 Spadina Avenue.**

**The Silver Dollar Room, (Ashley Woodburn archt., 1958), 486 Spadina Ave.**



**Hotel Waverly, 484 Spadina Avenue**, on the site of the 1882 NW YMCA, the Waverly is “one of Toronto’s longest running and cheapest hotels. Its accommodation provides low-cost housing benefiting Toronto's transient community as well as monthly residents – and, reputedly, some who rent by the hour. The hotel offers 24-hour laundry facilities, free parking and a snack counter.” Through 1970-1977 it was the home of “The People’s Poet” Milton Acorn (1923-1986) and (according to rumour he denied) for one week, starting April 6, 1968, of James Earl Ray, after his assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis TN on April 4, 1968.)

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**The Silver Dollar Room, 486 Spadina Avenue.** opened 1958. "From its humble beginnings as a cocktail lounge for the Waverly Hotel to one of Toronto's top blues bars, the Silver Dollar Room, with its dazzling circular sign, is still shining after 50+ years." (A sign which is equivalent in importance and city affection to the signs of Sam the Record Man, the El Mocambo and Honest Ed's.) With the Waverly, the Silver Dollar provides two of Harbord Village's most colourful and notorious venues. They do not deserve oblivion.

## Toronto Preservation Board, Feb 28, 2014 (PB29.12)

**The TPB proposes designation of the Silver Dollar Room but not the Hotel Waverly. It is the opinion of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario that this separation is incomprehensible. ACO proposes designation of the broad fore part of the Waverly Hotel (see photo below) with the Silver Dollar Room, as part of a development that will allow both institutions and the most conspicuous parts of their buildings to survive and thrive into the foreseeable future.**

The Hotel Waverly and the Silver Dollar Room are both owned by the Wynn Group which proposes to demolish them and build in their place a 22-storey, privately-operated residence, which will contain, among other amenities, a fitness club and a new Silver Dollar Room (with its sign on the inside where it cannot be seen by passers by).

With the University of Toronto Centre for Urban & Community Studies Building (formerly Tip Top Tailors) at 455 Spadina, the Waverly Hotel and Silver Dollar Room form the historic “frame” to Spadina Avenue north of College Street which leads to 1 Spadina Crescent (the neo-gothic former Knox College, built in 1875, which will soon become the home of the University of Toronto Daniels School of Architecture, Landscape & Design.)

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario proposes restoration of the most conspicuous parts of the Waverly and Silver Dollar, to provide a bold, heritage-respecting contrast to the equally bold 21C residence behind and above them. Thus the original construction and the new complement each other magnificently.





## Waverly Hotel and the Silver Dollar Room – Glory Days



Hotel Waverley (note spelling) a somewhat fanciful postcard of the 1920s



Hotel Waverley, 1927



Waverley Hotel, restaurant, 1920s



Silver Dollar Room, still from *The Silent Partner*, 1978  
(director: Daryl Duke with Elliott Gould, Christopher Plummer, Susannah York)

## **What to do with the Waverly Hotel and Silver Dollar Room?**

### **The Waverly Hotel:**

**Conserve and restore, for adaptive re-use, its broad, approx. 25ft deep, fore part** (see photo p3.)

**Restore the hotel's façade at street level, as in the 1927 photo, p4. Strip the facade of paint, restore its brickwork, install a reproduction of the 1927 Waverley sign, or replace the existing Waverly sign with marquee.** (Note different spellings, original and present.)

The restored fore part of the hotel is suitable for a variety of adaptive re-uses. (Hotel, fitness club - as proposed by the Wynn Group - café, retail, restaurant – see photo taken in the 1920s, above - and many more.)

### **The Silver Dollar Room:**

**Rebuild its façade with its original sign, on a contrasting background of black onyx rather than black-painted brick, concrete block and metal cladding.** (See the Silver Dollar sign and the Waverly sign and marquee, lit, at night, in a 1978 movie still, p5.)

### **Interiors:**

**Rebuild or restore, to meet the needs of the residence project (with its public amenities) and retention of the Silver Dollar Room, as a music bar.**

### **New construction:**

The proposed residence which rises up *behind* the fore part of the Waverly and above the Silver Dollar, is built with respect to the wishes of the City, the community (including students, staff and parents of Lord Lansdowne School with regard to shadow and other influences) and the needs of the project. This new construction, which will be of great depth and volume, may not be 22-storeys (as proposed by the Wynn Group) but it will be higher than the 4-storey Waverley and 2-storey Silver Dollar.

New construction should be in a 21C style that complements rather than attempts to reproduce the 1900 style of the Waverly. Heritage pastiche is not recommended!

The original Waverly and Silver Dollar are brought to a standard of magnificence they have not experienced for many years. Seen from the Spadina Avenue, their original architecture is restored but otherwise essentially unchanged. Behind the reborn Waverly and Silver Dollar rises the Wynn Group's student residence, in striking contrast to the heritage buildings in front of it.

**Examples of conserved heritage combined  
with 20C and 21C architecture in Toronto, please see below:**





### **Montgomery Square, 2384 Yonge Street**

Proposed 26-storey condo tower behind conserved 1936 former Post Office Station K. (One of the few buildings in the British Commonwealth to bear the EVIIR cypher of King Edward VIII - who reigned 20 January – 11 December, 1936. On the site of Montgomery's Tavern, which was the starting point, on December 4, 1837, of William Lyon McKenzie's march on Toronto.

<http://urbantoronto.ca/sites/default/files/imagecache/display-slideshow/images/articles/2013/04/7465/urbantoronto-7465-25701.jpg>



**Toronto Public Library Bloor/Gladstone Branch, 1101 Bloor Street West**

New addition to west, is wider, compared to the original building, than the Silver Dollar is to the Waverley Hotel. (Suggest: rebuild the Silver Dollar as part of the new residence and to the same height, faced in black to its present height, to show off the Silver Dollar sign. Above that level, build as part of the new residence.)



**University of Toronto Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design, 1 Spadina Crescent**, with new extension by Nader Tehrani and Katie Faulkner of NADAAA at rear (just north of the Waverley Hotel and Silver Dollar Room.)

<http://boundless.utoronto.ca/campaign-updates/u-of-t-to-transform-an-iconic-toronto-landmark-into-new-home-of-the-john-h-daniels-faculty-of-architecture-landscape-and-design/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsZ2dXf7qh4>



With regards,

Richard Longley, President  
Architectural Conservancy Ontario