

PB7.4.15

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September 24, 2015

Dear Ms. Bettencourt and Members of the Preservation Board:

Re: Preservation Board Agenda Item 7.4 Heritage Listings for 35 properties on Bathurst and Markham Streets

It is rather ironic that today we discuss the historic value of a segment of a neighbourhood in Toronto, now a destination in the City, that has seen such a colourful history of reinvention. Although he wasn't always popular with locals or with City officials, ultimately, Ed Mirvish created an irreplaceable street – rather, Village - the functional heritage of which continues to require protection today.

Conversion and displacement are terms we often hear when discussing development plans for Toronto. When considering areas similar to what is now Mirvish Village, specifically Gerrard St around the Toronto General Hospital, or Yorkville in the 1960's and 70's, one wonders: does adaptation in the name of Progress signify smart conservation of valuable aspects or traits of Toronto's historic neighbourhoods, or do these "necessary" changes lead to such an extensive diminishing of what was so real, great and unique about them that these historic neighbourhoods end up sliding, casually and increasingly, unnoticed until bulldozed into oblivion?

We agree with our neighbours at the Annex Residents' Association, Mirvish Village is an outstanding example of adaptive re-use of heritage structures. Having participated in the Four Corners Study with adjacent residents' associations, PARA, HVRA and the ARA in cooperation with planning staff, and with Westbank on their development proposal, the SVRA also fully endorses this study and the staff report being presented at this meeting with its recommendations for 35 listings, including the preservation of the buildings on Bathurst Street which respond to the study; however, we would further encourage the designation of an Heritage Conservation District. The buildings in their entirety in Mirvish Village, including those at the south west corner Bloor and Markham Sts., form an integral part of the history of our area and are worthy of integration NOT "Facadism"; something denounced in the public consultations for the Four Corners Study and yet which is a significant part of Westbank's reconfiguration of this historic development site, that is, Mirvish Village.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Hunter, Chair, Seaton Village Residents' Association

Cc: Doug Rylett,
CC: Leo Panitch