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September 27th, 2016

Heritage Preservation Board
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON

RE: 2490 and 2506 Yonge Street - City of Toronto Heritage Registry

Madison Properties Inc. (Madison) on behalf of 2500 Yonge Street Limited would like to acknowledge receipt of the September 15th, 2016 memo, executed by Mary L. Macdonald of the City of Toronto's Heritage Preservation Services, regarding the City of Toronto's intention to list the properties municipally known as 2490 and 2506 Yonge Street (the Subject Property) on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

Please note that Madison strongly objects to the listing of the Subject Property on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register.

Madison has retained a Professional Heritage Architect, Christopher Borgal, President of Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architects, to advise us with this matter. Please see the attached letter from Mr. Borgal outlining our objection to this listing.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Kevin McKeown
Madison Properties Inc.



362
DAVENPORT ROAD
SUITE 100
TORONTO, ONTARIO
M5R 1K5

26 September 2016

The Madison Group
369 Rimrock Road
Toronto, ON M3J 3G2

Attention: Mr. Kevin McKeown

email: kevin@madisongroup.ca

RE: Heritage Listing, properties at 2490 and 2506 Yonge Street

Dear Sir:

At your request, I have reviewed the justification for listing as a heritage site of the above captioned address. It would be my opinion that a delay in the process is justified based on the need for further investigation on our part. As you are aware, it is my opinion that the listing or designation of older structures provides reduced respect for our heritage when every structure becomes listed or designated - if everything is listed, nothing has value.

In the case of the subject property it appears that the reasons for the listing are remarkably "thin" and I have analyzed the city's position in the following. Ontario Regulation 9/06 is used to develop a reason for listing or designation and I have included same in the following with my own comments - however, the regulation is used to develop an understanding of heritage sites whose preservation would be in the "Provincial interest" and as noted below it does not appear that this structure would meet that test. I note that any one of the 9/06 items, if a significant strength, can trigger a listing or designation but none of the categories below are sufficiently strong to trigger this. In our evaluation starting on the following page, the City's information is presented in italics and our own in bold face with an additional column in the evaluation charts representing our opinion as to significance:

Evaluation:

Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed by the Province of Ontario for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Design or Physical Value		
i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	X	N/A
ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	N/A	N/A
iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A	N/A

The property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street), have design value as a three-storey complex distinguished by its large scale which is elegantly proportioned by architectural features from the Late Classical Revival style. The building covers half of the block between Castlefield and St. Clements Avenues, west of Yonge Street. It displays the plain walls of dark red brick, stone quoins, arched windows with fanlight detailing and double pilasters along their sides.

It is our opinion that the subject building is not a such rare building of its type as to trigger significant heritage interest or be of Provincial Interest (as is the objective of Regulation 9/06). Many neighbourhoods in Toronto and other municipalities across Ontario (both large and small) continue to have former theatres of this type located behind the street frontage - it was a common built form prior to the advent of television. It is representative but not rare or unique. There is nothing special about the building design, which is rather pedestrian in its execution, type or material. Indeed, the mass of the building is poorly executed and clumsily joined to the rear portion which was the theatre auditorium. Large scale alone is not a significant feature.

Therefore, it is our view that the building attributes should not be considered significant enough to trigger a listing or designation.

Historical or Associative Value		
i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	N/A	N/A
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	X	N/A
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	X	N/A

The associative value of the property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street), is linked to their role in development of main street character of Yonge Street in 1920s after the annexation of the village of North Toronto by the City of Toronto. The Capitol Theatre Building is one of the earliest building on the west side of Yonge Street contributing to the formation of a streetwall. The historical value of the subject properties is also linked to their role as a local landmark and contribution to the social history of the area as a local theatre and later an event theatre.

The property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street) have value for their connection to the notable Toronto architect Murray Brown, who designed the alterations to the subject properties between 1923 and 1929. Murray Brown (1885-1958) began practise in early 1920s. He designed several residential and commercial buildings but focused especially on theatre and bank design. His projects included several theatres for Capitol Theatre Company in Ontario, Saskatoon and Halifax. Murray is also the architect of two theatres in the Yonge-Eglinton area including Belsize Theatre (1926) and Bedford Theatre (1927).

It is our view that any building has the potential to yield information regarding a community or culture. This does not make any specific building significant in terms of Provincial interest. The development of the streetscape of Yonge Street in this area was no more and no less consistent with the development of streetscapes of the same period across the city. While this may have been one of the first buildings of this size in this block, this should not convey a status that is any different from other “first” buildings in the rest of the city. We see no special value in the subject property.

We have reviewed the work of Toronto architect Murray Brown who did indeed design several buildings in Toronto and in other places in Canada. Mr. Brown worked within the style of his own time and place and is not noted for advances in the design profession in Canada (his biography has still not been added to the national document). While one of his notable projects is the interesting and restored atmospheric theatre in Port Hope, his oeuvre is relatively limited and very little, if any, of cutting edge design appears have been created - indeed, the design of the subject property is competent but not of architectural prominence due to poor proportions, weak decorative features and a poor junction with the original theatre block to the west. While he worked on several theatre projects, which was his specialty, this was a building form typical of its time in the same manner as, currently, there are architects who specialize in the creation of Costco stores and fast food restaurants. Therefore, it is our view that this architect was not significant to this community and the ideas represented by the subject building are not significant - they are simply representative of the site’s time and place.

Contextual Value		
i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	X	partial
ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	X	partial
iii. landmark	X	N/A

Contextually, the property at 2490 Yonge Street and a portion of the property at 2506 Yonge Street (including entrance address 2510 Yonge Street) are valued for their contribution to the commercial main street character of Yonge Street, north of Roselawn Avenue which is typified by surviving two-, and three-storey buildings with stores at grade, that began in the early 20th century. The contextual value of the three storey complex is also related to its historical, visual and physical links to the surroundings on Yonge Street, as a prominent local feature anchoring the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Castlefield Avenue with its chamfered corner, distinctive scale and decorative detailing.

While the building does contribute to its streetscape, it is not more important in doing so than the adjacent buildings to the north and across the street. Indeed, the aesthetic of the building is sufficiently bland to create a streetscape which is a rather dour addition to this part of Yonge Street. Redevelopment of the property with appropriate and advanced modern architecture, while commemorating the earlier structure, may serve the community better than the preservation of this individual building. While the building is linked

to its surroundings, every other building on the block can be said to do the same thing - this is not so special in its context that its preservation would be in the Provincial interest.

Conclusion

Therefore, based on our own preliminary assessment, it is our opinion that the subject property has limited historical value and its placement on the heritage list should be rejected. Regardless, if the building is listed, its removal or renovation should not be precluded by the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act for the reasons identified above.

Sincerely,
Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architects

Christopher Borgal OAA FRAIC CAHP
President