July 4th, 2016

To: Sign Variance Committee
Re: Appeal Concerning Two First Party Wall Signs on the Fith Storey South and East Elevations and One First Party Ground Sign on the South Property Frontage-88 Scott Street

Members of the Committee,

I am writing to support the appeal concerning two wall signs and one ground sign at 88 Scott Street.

The site is located within the Berczy Park precinct in the Old Town of Toronto. The precinct contains significant park space, cultural centres, and residential and business communities. The area is undergoing extensive planning to improve the public realm. The revitalization of Berczy Park and reconstruction of Wellington Street to expand and beautify the pedestrian zone are important community initiatives. Any alterations to the character of the area must be examined carefully.

The application meets the test of the nine criteria. Staff objections to the application point to impacts related to Berczy Park and Wellington Street. I am satisfied the proposals do not diminish the precinct as a pedestrian oriented neighbourhood nor its vibrant public space.

The Proposed Signs are compatible with the development of the premises and surrounding area.

The placement of a wall sign at the top of a podium/lower scale building has been approved on larger office redevelopments in the area, including 333 King Street East at Princess Street for the Coca-Cola head office. Planning policy has encouraged office use within the east downtown and with appropriate design and placement as with this proposal this signage is compatible with a mixed use neighbourhood.

The placement of the ground sign does not interfere with the flow of pedestrians. The set back of the east side of the development makes the clear east-west pedestrian thoroughfare away from the sign. No deviations from walking path are required, which is an important standard for visual accessibility. Wellington Street streetscape improvements planned for 2017 include widening of the sidewalk from Yonge Street to Church Street, and ensure a generous unimpeded pedestrian path.
The Proposed Sign does not adversely affect adjacent premises

Berczy Park has been carefully redesigned to be a vibrant public space to be enjoyed by residents, visitors, and workers. The proposed wall signage as designed does not impose onto this park and will not detract from its enjoyment by users.

The Proposed Signs do not alter the character of the Premises or surrounding area.

Scott Street represents the eastern edge of the Financial District within the City’s planning policy framework. The placement of wall signage at a higher elevation is an appropriate variance given the office use for the building, and the limited size and modest design of the signage.

The placement of the ground sign has been considered to avoid interference with the primary flow of pedestrians around the site and does not diminish the improvement of the area as a pedestrian oriented precinct.

The Proposed Signs are not contrary to the public interest

The signs do not negatively affect the use of Wellington Street or Berczy Park as the two most important public realm considerations in the report.

I respectfully request the Committee allow the appeal for the first party wall signs and ground sign at 88 Scott Street.

Sincerely,

Pam McConnell
Deputy Mayor and City Councillor, Ward 28