PB36.3.6

ERA Architects Inc.
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July 11, 2018

Toronto Preservation Board
100 Queen St West
City Hall
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: TORONTO PRESERVATON BOARD MEETING
ITEM PB26.3

COMMENTS REGARDING THE INCLUSION ON THE CITY OF TORONTO'S HERITAGE REGISTER OF 901 LAWRENCE AVENUE WEST

Members of the Toronto Preservation Board,

This letter is intended to provide comments in regard to the City's intention to include 901 Lawrence Avenue West on its Heritage Register. ERA Architects undertook a Preliminary Heritage Evaluation of the property with the intent of determining what, if any, the heritage attributes of the buildings were, and if they warranted additional in-depth research and evaluation. Our evaluation concluded that any heritage value of the Columbus Centre might have, lies in the cultural uses and community services that have been provided at this location.

The summary provided in the Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register report, dated June 25, 2018, states:

> "The property at 901 Lawrence Avenue West has been the subject of a redevelopment application which would result in the demolition of the Columbus Centre." (p.1)

In respect to this statement, consideration of the redevelopment application before the LPAT has been adjourned at the request of the property owner, Villa Charities Inc., in order to engage in further public consultation with respect to the applications and future of the entire campus site. The intention is to allow this consultation to run its course prior to any further consideration of redevelopment. Presently, there are no dates scheduled in the LPAT process for the application. However, it is also important to note from a heritage standpoint that the perceived heritage value is based on the uses on the site, and Villa Charities is committed to its continued presence on the property with the ability to expand and enhance the services provided at this location.

There is a significant discrepancy between the Ontario Regulation 9/06 Evaluation Checklist and the Heritage Attributes within the report. In the Evaluation (Section 3), under Design of Physical Value, the report states:

> "The evaluation has determined that St. Mary's Training School and the addition of the Columbus Centre do not have design or physical value. The original school building has been substantially altered reducing its integrity while the Columbus Centre has not been found to meet any of the three above criteria." (p.19)

However, within the listing of proposed heritage attributes the "Scale, circular form and massing of the three storey rotunda designed as a large gathering space" are included. (p.9)

The proposed heritage attributes of the property in the listing report also include:

> "The setback, placement and orientation of the Columbus Centre rotunda sitting within the landscaped setting of the sculpture garden which includes mature trees, and provision for sculptures and a pathway which connects with the Villa Colombo" (p. 9)

We believe that the inclusion of the open landscape in the list of attributes should be reconsidered. This portion of the property was not part of a landscape master plan, and the vast majority of sculptures are a recent addition (within the past 5 to 10 years) to the property. The evidence does not support the notion that the proposed contextual value should include the landscaping. Further review is required to ensure that such a broad statement does not impact the entirety of the campus.

The adoption of the recommendation would carry with it significant impact for the owner organization, and by extension, the community that the organization serves. The owner believes more time is required to consider the content of the report, in particular the heritage attributes as described, to allow discussion between heritage experts, as well to provide the owner with an opportunity to consult with its lead counsel who has been out of the country. As there is no redevelopment proceeding at the site pending further public consultation, there is no urgency to the decision and it would be appropriate to defer it.

The owner therefore respectfully requests that the Board direct Heritage Preservation Services staff to remove the scale, form and massing of the rotunda from the list of heritage attributes. Further, it requests that the landscape also be removed from the list of heritage attributes, or at the very least, the description should be revised to provide greater clarity prior to any inclusion of the property on the Heritage Register.

Sincerely,



Christopher Lawless, Project Manager
E.R.A. Architects Inc.