

North York Community Preservation Panel

July 2, 2020

2nd floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Ellen Devlin
email: teycc@toronto.ca

RE: PB15.7: Inclusion on the City of Toronto’s Heritage Register, Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, Alterations to a Heritage Property and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement – 1150 Eglinton Avenue East

Dear Chair Sandra Shaul and Members of Toronto Preservation Board,

The above noted report concerns the recommended listing, designation of and alterations to the former IBM (Canada) headquarters property, 1150 Eglinton Avenue East, which contains the “Modernist” building designed by John B. Parkin Associates in 1966-67.

The IBM HQ building complex is an iconic example of Modernist Canadian architecture and a landmark of Don Mills, especially the vista north from Eglinton Avenue. The wooded area with its carefully crafted driveway occupies part of the original West Don River valley lands.

The building is situated within Block 12 of the 60 acre planned re-development. Of the 5 proposed buildings within Block 12, 3 residential towers (32 storeys, 39 storeys and 34 storeys) are located behind the south façade of the IBM HQ building.

The report states that “the proposed development will retain 49.7% of the former IBM HQ building walls and incorporate them into a podium for the new development. The north face will be removed and replaced with new construction that is compatible with the retained portion of the former IBM HQ building. A tower is located on top of each of the three clusters where the massing of the IBM building is concentrated”.

First, we are pleased that listing and designation of this property is being brought forward at last (see Appendix 1 for chronology of preservation efforts). 1150 Eglinton Avenue East is one of two landmark Modernist properties which are associated with IBM, (and later Celestica) in the northwest quadrant of Don Mills and Eglinton. Both were nominated by NYCPP in 2011 and endorsed by the Toronto Preservation Board at that time; however it was not until 2016 that heritage assessment reports came forward for approval:

- 1150 Eglinton Avenue E. for listing and designation, and
- 844 Don Mills Road for designation (it was already listed)

Both were recommended by TPB but in October, 2016, North York Community Council referred the reports back to staff, diverting the properties from their intended path, and denying the legal advantage of having a designation in place as development proposals came forward.

Second, there appears to be an improvement in the proposed amount of heritage retention compared with earlier proposals, however the Panel continues to have concerns about whether the plan maintains the fundamental integrity of the design; the three towers radically poke through the existing low rise building. The original design scheme was based on the symbiotic relationship between the form of the existing building, with its spread-eagled layout, and its site on a ravine “bluff” above the Don River, and above Eglinton Avenue. We fear that the insertion of out of scale blocks will utterly distort and diminish the vista northwards from Eglinton.

Third, and as a logical extension of the second point, there needs to be increased attention to the landscape architecture of the property in its larger context. The flanking slopes above the West Don and above Eglinton Avenue comprise part of the Eglinton Cultural Heritage Landscape Corridor that spans from the west slope of the West Don to the east slope of the East Don branches of the Don River valley.

Fourth, while there is reference to Heritage Interpretation (and Heritage Lighting) and the required submission of an Interpretation plan, the report does not mention any specific details to the detriment of the heritage value. We note the major importance of the site in the story of Canadian business technology, and IBM in particular, and suggest that a commemorative component be included.

Finally, we note that 1150 Eglinton Avenue East (and 844 Don Mills Road) are important but are only part of a cluster of Modernist properties in the Don Mills area. The report of the Don Mills Crossing Cultural Heritage Resource

Assessment (CHRA), which recommends listing of several properties, was deferred by North York Community Council in November, 2019 and remains to be brought back for decision (see Appendix 2 for a tabular list of the properties).

The NYCPP recommends:

1. That the staff report be adopted and recommended to City Council including listing, intention to designate and heritage easement agreement;
2. That City Council request staff to report back on a Cultural Heritage Landscape designation for the Eglinton Corridor between the East and West branches of the Don River;
3. That Recommendation 6.a.6 be amended to require the Interpretive Plan to include a strong commemorative component;
4. That City Council request staff to report back ASAP on the outstanding properties assessed in the Don Mills Crossing CHRA Study.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Grenzebach
Interim Chair

Geoff Kettel
Past Chair

Appendix 1: 1150 Eglinton Avenue East - Chronology of Heritage Preservation Efforts

Appendix 2: Potential Heritage Properties in Don Mills Crossing Study Area

C.c. Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong
John Andreevski, Director (Acting), Community Planning, North York District
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Gary Miedema, Project Manager, Heritage Planning
Kristen Flood, Heritage Planner, Heritage Planning
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Appendix 1: 1150 Eglinton Avenue East - Chronology of Heritage Preservation Efforts

1997: 1150 Eglinton Avenue East was included in the City of North York's Inventory of Modernist Architecture (before amalgamation in 1998).

2010: ERA Architects republished the Inventory in 2010 in conjunction with the NYCPP's North York Modernist Architecture Forum.

2011: NYCPP submitted a nomination for listing of the property. The TPB endorsed the nomination and referred it to staff.

2016: Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) prepared and brought forward report recommending listing and designation under the Ontario Heritage Act of the 1150 Eglinton Ave. East property (and designation of the 844 Don Mills Road property)

Sept. 28, 2016 Toronto Preservation Board adopted the staff report and recommended it to City Council

October 13, 2016: North York Community Council referred the Heritage staff report back to City Planning to "allow any recommendations with respect to cultural heritage to be made in tandem with recommendations on the comprehensive development framework and the final report on the planning application for the lands." This had the effect of preventing the report from proceeding to City Council and adoption of the Intention to Designate for the properties.

June 28, 2018: City Council approved development applications for the Wynford Green development, including both 1150 Eglinton East and 844 Don Mills Road.

July 2, 2020: TPB - recommended listing, designation, alterations and Heritage Easement Agreement - 1150 Eglinton Avenue East,

Appendix 2: Potential Heritage Properties in Don Mills Crossing Study Area

Property	Use	NYCPP Nominated Properties 2010 - 17	CHRA Properties Assessed	CHRA Properties Recomm'd for listing Jan. 2019	HPS Properties Recomm'd for listing Dec. 2019	HPS Properties Recomm'd for listing Jan. 2020	Updated Status June 2020
81 Barber Greene Road	Office		X	X	X	X	?
1 Deauville Lane	Residential		X				
789 Don Mills Road	Office	X (2011)	X	X	X	defer	?
797 Don Mills Road	Residential- former office	X (2011)	X				
844 Don Mills Road ¹	Office	(Listed 2006)					See footnote
849 Don Mills Road	Office		X	X	X	X	?
885 Don Mills Road	Office		X				
1150 Eglinton	Office	X (2010)					Listing and Designation

¹ 844 Don Mills Road a listed property was assessed and recommended by staff for designation in 2016, but due to North York Community Council's decision, did not proceed to City Council for approval. 844 Don Mills Road is no longer recommended for designation under Part IV of the OHA as the entirety of the existing building will be (has been) removed with the two existing entrance portals dismantled and reconstructed within Blocks 4 and 5A of the new development. As noted in the Staff Report, dated May 29, 2018, reconstruction of the two portals forms 'a strong commemorative gesture within the development, [but] it does not constitute conservation'.

Avenue East ²							Report at TPB July 2, 2020
1200 Eglinton Avenue East	Office		X	X	X	Eliminate due to partial demol'n	Demolished
15 Gervais Drive	Office		X	X	X	defer	?
50 Gervais Drive	Office		X				
29 Gervais Drive	Office		X				
33 Green Belt Drive	Office		X	X	X	defer	?
61 Grenoble Drive	Residential (TCHC)		X	X			
48 Grenoble Drive	Residential		X				
95-155 Leeward Glenway	Residential		X	X	X	X	?
1123 Leslie Street	Office	X (2017)	X	X	X	defer	?
1133 Leslie Street	Office		X		X	X	?
1135 Leslie Street	Office	X (2017)	X	X	X	defer	?
44-52 Prince	Office		X	X	X	X	?

² 1150 Eglinton Avenue East was assessed by HPS and recommended for listing and designation in 2016 but (due to decision of North York Community Council) did not proceed to City Council for approval.

Andrew Place							
7 Rochefort Drive	Residential		X				
18-22 St Dennis Drive	Residential		X	X			
31 St Dennis Drive	Residential		X				
135 Overlea Boulevard (MGCI)	Educational (Secondary School)		X				
4 Vendome Place	Residential (TCHC)		X	X			
6-8 Vendome Place	Residential (TCHC)		X	X			
20 Wynford Drive	Office		X	X	X	X	?
39 Wynford Drive	Office	X (2011)	X	X	X	defer	?
50 Wynford Drive	Office		X	X	X	defer	?
70 Wynford Drive ³	Office	X (2010)					
90 Wynford Drive	Office	X (2011)	X	X	X	X	?
100 Wynford Drive	Office	X (2011)	X	X	X	X	?

³ Oxford University Press - demolished in 2010

175 Wynford Drive	Office		X				
Total (21)		9	29	19	16	8	