



October 26, 2020

Chair and Members

Toronto Preservation Board

c/o Ellen Devlin

2nd floor, West Tower, City Hall

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Via email: teycc@toronto.ca

RE: Item 18.5 Demolition of a Property Designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act - 33 Avenue Road (Ward 11)

Chair and Members Toronto Preservation Board

We are writing to endorse the staff recommendations that the application for the demolition of 33 Avenue Road, commonly known as York Square, be refused by Toronto City Council.

ACO Toronto has a long-established interest in the conservation of York Square. In 2012, we brought it to the attention of the City of Toronto as being worthy of designation and provided extensive materials to support the designation. The designation report prepared by the city staff in 2013 is excellent, laying out carefully the significance of the project to the history of Toronto and the rest of the world. If ever a designation report was defensible this is it. In a nutshell, the York Square project broke new ground, being the first to integrate new and old into a rich new whole, the first to conserve existing building fabric in a redevelopment, long before there were any legal tools to support heritage conservation. It became the hippest address in the City. It put its architects, Diamond and Myers, along with Toronto on the international architecture and planning map.

ACO Toronto participated in mediation hearings for the previous proposed development on this property. We held an event in September 2017, "A Toast to York Square" to animate and celebrate the square. In 2020 we dropped a public education video entitled "York Square" produced in partnership with Old Toronto Series. York Square's modest contextualism, which 50 years later may seem unremarkable, "is actually the point". In an era when overdevelopment has become the norm, creating devastating winter wind conditions, choking our skyline, roads and transit, York Square reminds us how to add density without overwhelming, as did successor projects like the Hydro Block, Dundas-Sherbourne and at U of T, Innis College and the Department of Earth Sciences.

When the York Square property was sold and consolidated with an adjacent property in Yorkville, we anticipated an opening up of opportunities to shift development away from York Square and conserve far more of the existing, highly significant architecture and urban design. Regrettably, the project that is currently under discussion proposes complete demolition.

ACO Toronto was pleased to see the previous development abandoned because it preserved only a token vestige of York Square. Our position was, and continues to be, that because of the significance of the York Square project to Toronto's planning and architectural history, as well as its role in international planning, it should be preserved in toto.

Even though our interest in this property has long been established, we were not approached by the current developer to participate in the consultations regarding the proposed redevelopment.

Refusing this demolition application will draw a line in the sand against facadism and the development pressure that threatens even the most significant heritage properties.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Zambri".

Matthew Zambri,
President, ACO Toronto