

West Don Lands Committee

Citizens for the Old Town
Corktown Residents & Business Association
Distillery Historic District
Dixon Hall
Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation
Friends of Corktown Common
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association
Little Trinity Anglican Church
St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association

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

April 12, 2021
By email: hertpb@toronto.ca

Re.: PB23.4 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 – 425 Cherry Street

To the Toronto Preservation Board,

The West Don Lands Committee wishes to express our support for the recommendations in the report noted above – to designate and protect the Heritage buildings at 425 Cherry Street as part of the revitalization of another block (Block 10) of the West Don Lands. We particularly want to underscore this action as part of a significant and meaningful act of reconciliation and reconnection of Indigenous Torontonians to the land, community and culture that is embodied in the Indigenous Hub that anchors Block 10.

The West Don Lands Committee has watched with anticipation the long build-up since the provincial government initially came to an agreement with Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) in 2014 to lead the redevelopment of Block 10. We were privileged to receive AHT at our June 2014 meeting when they presented their plans and needs for the block. Subsequently we have hosted and participated in many presentations and planning meetings during the development process.

Throughout this time the importance of the heritage buildings at Cherry and Front, southeast corner – which we know as the Canary Restaurant and the Palace Street School House – has been a shared concern between our community, AHT and their development partners. We have supported the efforts of all parties to preserve and adaptively reuse these buildings within the city's heritage framework in a way that brings them back to life in our community.

The resolution described in this report is one that we fully support. The importance of these buildings resides in their adaptability to the changing dynamics of the neighbourhood for more than 160 years. Whether the context has been residential, commercial, industrial, or now revitalizing urbanity, these buildings have been remade responsive to changing circumstances. Their most sorry period, when they sat virtually unused, is about to end with the resurgence of an exciting new expression of Indigenous-led vitality. These buildings are now to be repurposed as commercial and office space. They are being reanimated in a way that is sympathetic to their heritage built form while complementing and enlivening a meaningful new reconciliation context.

The parties to this project – AHT, their development partners Dream Kilmer and Miziwe Biik, and City Planning as well as the provincial government – are to be commended for their persistence and commitment to community engagement. The coalition members of the West Don Lands Committee have been active supporters and responsive sounding boards. We urge the Toronto Preservation Board to help us complete this rewarding journey by

acknowledging the excellent work embodied in this report: To designate the buildings at 425 Cherry; to ask Council to approve the alterations that will knit them into their new context; and to direct staff to enter into the negotiated easement agreements with AHT to make the redevelopment these buildings within Block 10 a reality.

Yours truly,

John Wilson
Co-Chair

Cindy Wilkey
Co-Chair