



# GOODERHAM & WORTS

## NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

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TO MAYOR JOHN TORY AND MEMBERS OF TORONTO CITY COUNCIL

RE: DM 39.2

On behalf of the Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association, I am writing to urge the members of Toronto City Council to support the motion proposed by Councillors Wong-Tam and Cressy, **Making Space to Save the Arts in Toronto.**

Toronto benefits enormously from the presence of artists and the work they do. The arts contribute over six billion dollars annually to our local economy and provide an essential focus for tourism. However, without the presence of arts incubators and smaller venues and studios as were found in the Distillery, the essential ecology for the growth of larger productions, artists and events is not possible. This is the framework that makes the great cities of the world the magnets they have become. And this is the layer of our City that is currently endangered by a lethal combination of development and the pandemic.

Our organisation represents owners and residents in and around The Distillery Historic District. We are well aware of the contribution that the presence of artists in our community has made both to the economic viability of our neighbourhood, and to the quality of life we have been privileged to enjoy. The closure of the Artscape studios, theatres and workshops in the Distillery is devastating to our community as well as to the broader arts community and will leave us diminished in many ways.

Through the loss of the Distillery spaces, a number of our most important performing arts companies (Tapestry Opera, Nightwood Theatre) and many studio craftspeople have been displaced. They need homes to continue to create. There are large developments in the West Don Lands which could, with thought and foresight, include space for the arts and artists. For example, the Transit Oriented Communities planned for the First Parliament Site and the block north of it promote the concept of 'complete communities' at the core of their mandate. As such, they should include arts and heritage in their design. We urge the City to work with both the Province and the Federal government to ensure that this part of the 'complete community' is not overlooked. We strongly urge City Council to approve the motion as written to ensure that such, and even more creative, possibilities can be realised.

It is worth remembering that the Distillery was founded on the development of affordable ownership through Options for Homes which enabled many artists to achieve home ownership in the area. Cityscape, which bought the Gooderham and Worts complex shortly thereafter, encouraged the development of an artistic and cultural hub on the site by courting gallery and performance tenants. This became key to the marketing of their for-profit condominiums and has been the core of the Distillery District's attraction for tourists, retailers and residents ever since. It is a pattern for success which we encourage the City to embrace by embedding the arts, culture and heritage in the fabric of our City. The motion before you would be a significant step towards achieving goals which will immeasurably benefit all our citizens.

We urge you to support this motion without equivocation.

Diana Belshaw, Chair Gwna Development Committee



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