



MIZIWE BIIK
ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

March 10, 2022

Attention: City of Toronto Heritage Preservation Board

I write on behalf of Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment & Training in strong support of the City of Toronto's and Na-Me-Res (Native Men's Residence)'s application to modify the building at 67 Adelaide Street East, Toronto. Our organization strongly supports a de-colonization approach to the development of Toronto's first Indigenous low barrier men's shelter and the Indigenization of the architectural building design.

It is important that this location accurately represent the First People of the land on which it is built. The City of Toronto has identified "reconciliation" as a priority; this should be inclusive of the decolonization of 67 Adelaide.

"Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country. For that to happen there must be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the cause, and action to change." (*Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 6*)

Knowing the history of the land we stand on is important, as is heritage preservation. In guaranteeing the preservation of heritage, we should not be blind to preserving settler heritage only, but openly acknowledge the heritage of the first people. In doing so, we advocate for the right to self-determination of Indigenous service organizations and support them in creating a culturally identifiable safe space for the community.

The new Na-Me-Res men's shelter will help address the over-representation of Indigenous homelessness in Toronto. This is a growing need that must be met with support and understanding. Culturally appropriate Indigenous services delivered from a building that visually represents the Indigenous people is a vital component of in-service delivery. The development identified in this letter is instrumental in narrowing service gaps, and supporting community members mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Our organization stands in support of Na-Me-Res' right to self-determination through the development of the low barrier men's shelter at 67 Adelaide Street East, and we encourage the residents of Toronto to join in acknowledging the Indigenous heritage of Toronto.

In unity and support,

Nancy Martin
Executive Director