



SOUTH EGLINTON DAVISVILLE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Via Email: Mathew Green
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July 12, 2023
Toronto Preservation Board
Sandra Shaul, Chair

RE: PB8.9 - 551 Mount Pleasant Road (Regent Theatre) - Alterations to a Heritage Property and Authority to Enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement

SEDRA, the South Eglinton Davisville Residents' Association, represents the Davisville Village and South Eglinton neighbourhoods in Toronto. Our area boundaries are Yonge Street, Eglinton Avenue, Bayview Avenue and Merton Street. The Regent Theatre at 551 Mount Pleasant Road is in the heart of the SEDRA catchment.

Members of SEDRA's Heritage Committee have been actively involved with this location since a "Save the Regent" campaign began in 2017. There have been many concerned residents in the community who attended meetings both formal and informal, large and small. We were pleased when we heard the news that Terra Bruce Productions had purchased the theatre and announced plans for a live theatre venue. This project represents a pleasant and notable contrast to the stark condo towers being added to our neighbourhood.

We support the Heritage Staff Report recommendation to approve the proposed alterations to the heritage property at 551 Mount Pleasant Road. Even though there will be a substantial replacement of the existing building, the site will retain a spirit of live theatre connected to the strong cultural heritage on this site for almost 100 years.

I am surprised at the number of hidden gems on the list of heritage attributes that were included in the Heritage Staff Report. We note that the theatre has been through several major renovations over many decades and had fallen into disrepair in recent years.

We see that there is significant cooperation between the Applicant's heritage and design teams, and Heritage Staff. A lot of hard work has been put into discovering heritage attributes and developing a conservation strategy.

There are two items related to heritage attributes about which the Heritage Staff have expressed concerns and provided recommendations.

The first item is the stonework surrounding the north door side entrance at street level. Heritage Staff are proposing the stonework be maintained. We agree with the staff recommendation since the alternative is demolition of the stonework.

The second item relates to the plaster work and designs in the ceiling of the original lobby of the main entrance.

This item does not raise concerns for us as the ceiling design will be conserved either in the main lobby or the second-floor lobby. There may be more opportunity for patrons to experience the conservation of this design on the second floor in a more leisurely and relaxed setting.

Even though there is disagreement on these items, we are confident Heritage Staff and the Applicant will be able to work out the differences over time.

The Alternations Report of Heritage Staff was comprehensive and reflects the high professional standards for their department.

SEDRA is delighted that a cultural centre has been proposed for our community that will add vitality to one of our main streets and become a community resource.

Please approve these alterations to this heritage property.

Sincerely Yours,

Sharon Mourer
Chair Heritage Committee, SEDRA
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Copies:

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