

Mr. Patrick Gossage
Chair, Toronto Preservation Board
Ste. A18 - City Hall
2nd Floor
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2N2

Dear Mr. Gossage:

I was unable to attend the 26 November meeting of the Toronto Preservation Board. My interest in being there was to respond to the proposal to dismantle and later reconstruct the facade of the Mount Sinai Hospital (100 Yorkville Avenue), a designated heritage structure.

I am now familiar with Heritage Preservation Services' 13 November staff report in which ERA Architects Inc. recommendations are outlined. ERA argues that the structure is in a derelict condition but they do not claim that it cannot be restored as it stands.

1. They propose dismantling the building and saving the stone ('a composite stone material?') but discarding the brick because the hard mortar makes it difficult to salvage; therefore in reconstructing the facade, old or new matching brick would have to be found.

2. They propose siting the reconstructed facade 2 metres closer to the property line so as to provide more commercial space behind it and to provide more parking beneath it. I submit that these reasons are inadequate.

The end result would be a compromised restoration on a new location. The loss of the 2 metres in front of the facade would mean that it would no longer benefit from the substantial set-back that gives it a special context on the street. The reconstruction, substitution of materials, and re-siting add up to a severe undermining of the integrity of the structure's heritage value.

I would think that the facade could be effectively buttressed, and supported from below during excavation, and that the expense for this would be trivial compared to the overall cost of the project. Surely protecting the structure by these means is not an insurmountable challenge. The facade would have to be safe-guarded from accidental damage as work gets underway. Finally - we need to be confident that the developer is firmly committed to the conservation of the facade.

We residents of Greater Yorkville are constantly compelled to fight to retain the remnants of the old village. The Mount Sinai facade is a sad but particularly important reminder of Yorkville's history. Please help us to preserve it as a true heritage structure.

Sincerely,

Shirley Morriss