



150 Symes Road

Restore, Reuse, Revitalize



City-Building Highlights

-  Adaptive re-use of an industrial building
-  Preservation of employment use
-  Unique and flexible financing model
-  Neighbourhood regeneration through brownfield remediation
-  Natural heritage preservation
-  \$212k in planning application and permit fees

Situated on a ravine, a contaminated and now derelict former incinerator and waste transfer station has recently been declared a heritage building – making it about as challenging a development deal as one can encounter. BUILD TORONTO leverages its extensive experience to assist one investor in realizing tremendous City-Building benefits.

Situated northwest of St. Clair Avenue and Weston Road, 150 Symes Road is a heritage-designated building that was once the site of an incinerator. Most recently it was used as a waste transfer station until it was closed in 1996. While the Art Deco building is a beautiful example of early 20th century industrial architecture – and one of the area’s last standing pre-World War II buildings of heritage significance – the property had fallen into a state of disrepair. Subjected to vandalism, set on fire several times, and used for illegal parties, the derelict building had become a safety hazard and concern for the neighbourhood.



In 2009, the City deemed the property surplus and transferred it to BUILD TORONTO for disposition. Given its former use and environmental conditions, combined with its heritage designation and location on part of ravine lands, the property posed a number of significant challenges for any developer interested in its acquisition. In addition to the significant and costly retrofit that would be required, any potential development also needed the approval of both the City's Heritage Preservation Services and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

After receiving several bids on the site for various uses, BUILD TORONTO eventually secured an investor who had significant experience in the adaptive re-use of former industrial spaces and an exciting vision for the development as a hub for creative-industry employment uses and small forms of manufacturing, or clean-industrial use. This vision aligned with BUILD TORONTO's criteria to retain the property for employment uses.

When initial discussions between the investor and City staff failed to gain traction, BUILD TORONTO stepped in to advise the investor and facilitate the process with respect to the land use and planning requirements as well as the development approvals process. Leveraging its extensive expertise, BUILD TORONTO facilitated meetings with Etobicoke staff advocating the City-Building value of this development.

BUILD TORONTO also brokered meetings with the appropriate staff at Heritage Preservation Services, and assisted the investor in presenting its case. The investor's vision to retain the entirety of the building for adaptive re-use was articulated to Heritage staff, who threw their enthusiastic support behind this project. Where development proposals for heritage buildings typically involved maintaining only the façade of a building and constructing new within, this was amongst the only development proposals presented to Heritage staff that intended to preserve the architectural integrity of the building in its entirety.

With Heritage on board, the next step was to gain the support of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). When the investor initially ran into resistance from TRCA, BUILD TORONTO again worked its expertise, articulating the vision for the development to the TRCA. As a result of these extensive discussions, the project ultimately gained the important support of the TRCA.

Backing from all of these stakeholders as well as Councillor Frances Nunziata ultimately helped move this deal forward. BUILD TORONTO is also offering flexible financing for this site through a Vendor Take Back mortgage, taking on some of its risk to demonstrate its firm belief in this adaptive reuse development.

The 150 Symes Road development is an exciting example of BUILD TORONTO's commitment to City-Building, as the development will see the adaptive re-use of a heritage building, and also serve as a catalyst for the entire area to become a corridor for creative industries. Phase one of the development will involve restoring the existing building, with subsequent plans to build additional buildings on the site. To date, Tanurb has completed grading and environmental studies for the site and will be investing in the retrofit of the property and neighbourhood.

The development is expected to generate approximately \$112k in planning application and permit fees and approximately \$212k in property taxes annually.

