

Community heart being demolished

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Re: Join us at the wrecker's ball

Aug. 20.

I greatly sympathize with Christopher Hume's concerns about seeing architectural landmarks destroyed in Toronto, but aesthetic considerations aren't the only aspects that make our buildings valuable. While some buildings may not qualify as architectural jewels, they serve communities in terms of their function — it's what's inside that counts.

In Don Mills, we are currently witnessing the destruction of a building that meant a great deal to this community because it functioned as its heart and soul in many ways: the Don Mills Centre shopping mall, which for generations had served thousands of families in the neighbourhood and beyond, but which is particularly missed by those who live nearby but do not drive, including many elderly and disabled residents.

The building is being demolished despite strong voices of protest, including a 5,000-signature petition; despite the fact Don Mills, which is Canada's first planned, award-winning community, was designated as a heritage site by the Ontario Heritage Foundation and despite that an important planning document, the Central Don Mills Secondary Plan, calls for change in the area to be managed in such a way as to retain and enhance the existing character of the area. (The building will not be replaced. Instead, there will be condominiums and a few outdoor stores.)

When we consider the value of our landmarks, we must look beyond appearances and give the last word to the community that is directly affected by any demolition.

Simone Gabbay, Toronto
