



TORONTO SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **RE: Ontario Science Centre**

The Toronto Society of Architects, in fulfilment of our role as advocates for the built environment in Toronto and the surrounding region, calls on the Province of Ontario and Premier Doug Ford to reconsider plans to move the Ontario Science Centre and any potential demolition of this significant architectural landmark.

We take this position on the following principles:

### **Architectural Significance**

Opened in 1969 and originally known as the Centennial Centre for Science and Technology, the Ontario Science Centre is a building of national architectural and cultural significance. Representative of an era of heroic civic buildings looking to establish a unique Canadian architectural identity, it is part of a select group of landmarks across the country built to mark Canada's centennial. Designed by the celebrated practice Moriyama Teshima Architects, the complex has been specifically built for its site, responding to the changing levels of the Don River ravine and forging an irreplaceable relationship between building and landscape. Its spaces engage all senses, encouraging exploration and physical interaction—a reflection of the science centre's role as a pioneer of hands-on science education.

Demolishing the Ontario Science Centre would demolish an irreplaceable part of the province's and country's history. As caretakers of this landmark, the Province must invest in the repair and maintenance of this facility.

### **Sustainability**

The building and construction industry represent 40% of greenhouse gases emitted in the province. Similarly, a significant portion of the waste filling landfills is caused by the construction and demolition of our built environment. The demolition of the Ontario Science Centre and its replacement with a new structure would generate unnecessary waste and require significant energy and material resources. The climate crisis we face today requires us to acknowledge our collective responsibility to change how things are done and demolition should be a last resort after all other options are exhausted.

Should the Province proceed with moving the Ontario Science Centre, the existing structure should be re-used and adapted to new uses that continue to serve the community. Our city is filled with examples of adaptive reuse projects that have converted much more challenging existing structures to new uses including community spaces, theatres, museums, and more.

**Placemaking**

The Ontario Science Centre is an important cultural institution and community resource for Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park, dense neighbourhoods that have historically been underserved. This institution plays a vital role as a community hub and is among the few large-scale cultural institutions outside of the city centre.

While our city and province have an urgent need for housing, this should not come at the expense of cultural institutions and community spaces which are essential for the health of neighbourhoods. There are other places better suited for additional housing development.

**Consultation**

As a place belonging to all Ontarians, any decision to move the Ontario Science Centre should include extensive public consultation. We have not been made aware of any previous consultation sessions on this topic and urge the Province to allow Ontarians to participate in a debate on the future of the Ontario Science Centre.

The Ontario Science Centre is a shared place of significance for many Ontarians. We firmly believe in the importance of not only retaining, but repairing and celebrating this important architectural landmark and cultural institution and call on the Province to rethink its plans.

As always, we make ourselves available to work together for a better Toronto and Ontario.

On behalf of the Toronto Society of Architects,



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Chair  
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