

DIGIN

initiates inclusive cultural and community ideas, plans and actions that will contribute to creating and sustaining a neighbourhood that is **green, clean, safe and civil** by fostering improvements in its cultural, social, environmental, economic and physical makeup.

07 November 2012

Via email : pgmc@toronto.ca

City of Toronto
Planning & Growth Management Committee
City Hall, 10th Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Re PG19.6 – 158, 164, 181 & 200 Sterling Road OP & Zoning Amendment Applications

Dear Sir/Madam –

Introduction

The City of Toronto has very successfully created a downtown that is a great place to work and live. Now that there is a market for downtown living, industrial land is under increased rezoning pressure, and the City is making a new case to preserve it.

Comments re Refusal Report

There are many contradictions in the Refusal Report. One anomaly in the “we must save Industrial land” policy, is where is the Industry? The developer has been looking for tenants, with the help of the City’s economic development department. To date, to the best of my knowledge, any proposed tenants have been either inappropriate or need space in an earlier timeframe than is possible, given the usual planning process in conjunction with the current Municipal Comprehensive Review.

The Refusal Report also defends the surrounding older industrial land as incubator space for emerging business. That is a concept to whole-heartedly support; however, it isn’t industrial *land*, but *older building stock* that is useful as incubator space. The Sterling Road is an empty parcel of land in the middle of an emerging neighbourhood. Should it remain empty in the attempt to preserve Industrial land, rather than be developed to bring in new commercial, small retail and the residents to live, work and spend – also identified as goals within the Refusal Report.

There are several references in the report to “preserving industrial uses”. There is no industrial use to be preserved on the Sterling Road site in question. With the exception of the heritage-designated tower, all of the buildings were removed for soil remediation. In addition, based on conversation, much of the current incubating businesses located nearby hoping that many new residents and workers will move into the site and use their services.

The community generally supports this development. The developer has been responsive to community concerns, and is doing what it can, within legal/planning constraints, to ensure the preservation of the remaining and proposed Industrial and Commercial uses.

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The existing Nestlé plant fears being pushed out by incoming residents making noise and traffic complaints. Why isn't there a mechanism for ensuring that existing Industrial uses, which are meeting environmental requirements, cannot be pushed out? The Province and City want to give precedence to Industrial uses, but have not provided the legal means to do so.

Additionally, in personal aside, I have noticed an unsettling degree of social insecurity among both long-term and incoming residents with respect to the realities of existing non-residential uses. One of DIG IN's tenets is civility. It is simply not civil to push out existing, responsible neighbourhood business, like Nestlé.

Conclusion

Overall, there are some good points in the Refusal Report, but the theory of "preserving industrial land" seems to be just a theory at this point.

Where are the tenants for that empty parcel? Who's going to develop it "on spec" for purely Industrial use? Is it going to remain empty, instead of being an asset to the wider neighbourhood? How can existing industry be protected, while enabling appropriate development within the reality that people want to both live and work downtown?

Thank you for considering these comments and questions.

Yours very truly,



Ann Homan
DIG IN Member & Neighbourhood Resident

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