



204 High Park (northwest corner of High Park & Humberside) by photographer, John Huzil (1995)

## The Junction

Heritage Conservation District

### Junction HCD Committee

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Administrator  
Etobicoke York Community Council  
399 The West Mall  
Toronto, ON M9C 2Y2

Dear Etobicoke York Community Council members,

It is my pleasure to write on behalf of the Junction Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Committee regarding the zoning application # 14 152731 WET 13 OZ for 2978-2982 Dundas Street West & 406-408 Pacific Avenue.

As you may know, our nomination application to establish a Junction HCD was submitted to Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) on 25 April 2014. On 13 May 2014, Councillor Doucette and Councillor Perks simultaneously secured their respective Community Councils' approval for our nomination. Since then, HPS completed its prioritization of the pre-approved nominations. While the Junction was not selected as one of the area studies for the next two years, we appreciate the continuing support of the Etobicoke York Community Council in our efforts to convince HPS to select our area in the next year being considered.

We hope that if you have not already done so you will take the time to review our heritage district nomination application as part of your evaluation for the proposed zoning application # 14 152731 WET 13 OZ for the subject site at the corner of Dundas Street West and Pacific Avenue.

Our Committee strongly disagrees with the designation of Dundas Street West as an 'Avenue,' and especially so within the proposed Junction HCD boundaries. Further we note that this zoning application exceeds even the mid-rise guideline standards for 'Avenues.' Therefore, we respectfully ask that the proposed zoning amendments be declined.

We recommend a design committee with a few community members to work with the developer at the Site Plan approval stage. This approach worked for the Daniel's development project on Bloor Street West across from High Park and would strongly encourage community involvement be considered for this building. It was an opportunity for committee members to learn about the vision of the architect, to offer suggestions that had a positive impact and gain consensus for the many improvements that were incorporated into the final design.

The Junction has a rich history. For more than a century, the Junction has evolved and that evolution continues today.

West Toronto Junction began as a village, grew into a town and then established itself as the City of West Toronto before amalgamating with City of Toronto in 1909. The district is rich with heritage architecture in many styles, from the century mark and earlier, as well as a mixture of buildings from subsequent eras. Conservation has been a part of the Junction culture for several decades. We are the beneficiaries of these previous efforts and proud to continue that culture of conservation. We have been extremely fortunate to have some portion of our original city heritage for our enjoyment, and the enjoyment of future generations.

*“The primary objective for every Heritage Conservation District is the protection, conservation and management of the attributes and heritage resources of the district so that the area’s historic significance, cultural heritage values and character, as identified in the HCD Study and Plan, are protected in the long-term.” – HCD Policy #8*

The Junction HCD Committee was established to prepare the heritage nomination application, and our team aspires to achieve and uphold the ideals described in HCD Policy #8, today and in the future when our district is granted heritage status.

As we await the opportunity to undertake our heritage Study, we do not yet have formal design guidelines to share with developers and the community. However, we do have the Character Area designation to inform development along this neighbourhood main street. And, most importantly the community of residents and business owners has informally articulated consensus about the value of the Junction character – the ‘fit’ of proposed developments into the existing streetscape – in their feedback at many consultation meetings.

Besides, there is another HCD policy to offer direction in this matter.

*“Any alterations to the HCD and its resources shall respect and reinforce the history, character and cultural heritage values and attributes of the district. Changes to the district shall not diminish or detract from the character, history, cultural heritage values and integrity of the district.” – HCD Policy #12*

Once again, the objectives expressed in HCD Policy #12 provide the Junction HCD Committee with a framework to guide re-development projects at this juncture and in the future.

Moreover, other recent developments along the original ‘main street’ of the former City of West Toronto have respected the heritage character. The Junction HCD Committee is aware of two other development projects that required Committee of Adjustment approval to add a third floor and a three-storey rear addition. These properties at 2990 and 3016 Dundas Street West are located in the same block as the subject site. Therefore, we strongly encourage this building to follow these precedents and blend into the Junction neighbourhood.

In our opinion, a building with a height of 26.4 metres does not ‘respect’ and would ‘diminish’ the integrity of the district.

Responsible management of change within the HCD would also reject the zoning application. Four times density is significantly out-of-scale with the entire surrounding neighbourhood; that’s not an incremental or transitional change. This building will dominate the landscape of the historic main street.

“Section 2.3.1 of the Official Plan contains Healthy Neighbourhoods policies, which state that the intensification of land adjacent to neighbourhoods will be carefully controlled so that neighbourhoods are protected from negative impact. Developments in *Mixed Use Areas* that are adjacent or close to *Neighbourhoods* will, among other matters, be compatible with those *Neighbourhoods*, provide a gradual transition of scale and density to the *Neighbourhoods*.”<sup>1</sup>

This proposed building is incompatible intensification and should be restricted to the existing zoning by-law standard of 14 metres with a corresponding density appropriate to the area of the lot.

“Section 3.1.2 of the Official Plan contains Built Form policies, ... most of these qualities are influenced directly by the built form of adjacent buildings. These policies seek to ensure that new development be located and organized to fit with its existing and/or planned context.”<sup>2</sup>

The proposed built form does not fit within the planned HCD context.

Given the spirit and vision of these heritage and Official Plan policies and the ability of other development or refurbishment projects to conform with commonly accepted attributes of the Junction neighbourhood with respect to mass and height, the Junction HCD Committee expects this development project will embrace the spirit of our impending HCD, as well.

Please be assured that the Junction HCD Committee does not wish to prevent property owners from developing or improving their property, nor do we wish to stifle the creativity of architects, we only wish to retain the legacy of our rich past.

According to the staff report, “the West Toronto Junction is identified as a Potential Heritage Conservation District. [L]ands identified as a Potential Heritage Conservation District are subject to Site and Area Specific Policy 305, which states that where Section 37 of the *Planning Act* is used in developments within or in close proximity to those specific areas identified as Potential Heritage Conservation Districts, cash contributions to fund Heritage Conservation District studies may be eligible as community benefits.”<sup>3</sup>

It is ironic that this property owner will be paying section 37 funds for our HCD Study.

Perhaps some may agree that paying section 37 funds is a community benefit. We would suggest this is a temporary and short-sighted reward, because all that money won’t and can’t restore what will be lost. The cultural heritage value of a contiguous, more than a century old mainly intact town will be lost forever and cannot be replaced with money!

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Staff report for action – Final Report – 2978-2982 Dundas St W and 406-408 Pacific Ave V.05/13, page 4.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Staff report for action – Final Report – 2978-2982 Dundas St W and 406-408 Pacific Ave V.05/13, page 5.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Staff report for action – Final Report – 2978-2982 Dundas St W and 406-408 Pacific Ave V.05/13, page 6.

The 'Avenue' designation is especially problematic for an historic main street, such as the section of Dundas Street West through the Junction HCD boundaries, because it is an integral part of the neighbourhood and the character of the district.

The Avenue designation has created conflict with Character Area and HCD policies. It is the philosophy of the Junction HCD Committee that the Character Area and HCD policies are the predominant priority and the Avenue designation is secondary.

We understand the need for intensification and the City's intent to direct that intensification to specific places, such as along Avenues. However, any Avenue should not automatically expect to have a mid-rise structure as described in the *Avenues and Mid-Rise Guidelines* especially when the width of the road is the smallest at 20 metres. Further, we would suggest that our 'avenue' is actually a narrow strip of mixed use land that bisects a residential zone and it is an integral component of our Junction HCD application.

We provide the following as preferred examples of recently re-developed Junction 'main street' properties.

The first is the Starbucks building that replaced the Handyman Shop at 3077 Dundas Street West.<sup>4</sup> The Starbucks design aligns with the character of the adjacent buildings and follows the various Performance Standards outlined in #19, which includes complimentary building materials, cornice lines and step-backs for adding additional height, etc. While the height of the new building also exceeds the adjacent property, it does not overwhelm the visual impact of the streetscape, as will happen at the subject site.

The former Rue Morgue building located at 2926 Dundas Street West was demolished and an entirely new building constructed on the site. The new building has made every effort to respect the heritage character of Dundas Street and looks to be a good fit in size and architectural terms.<sup>5</sup>

Coincidentally, on page 99 of the *Avenues and Mid-Rise Guidelines* is a photo that depicts the best practise of a Character Area Performance Standard. The right-hand photo is the Junction's TD Bank at the corner of Dundas Street West and Medland Street.<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, the former TD building was re-purposed as The Beet.

On the opposite corner of Medland Street, the Wellness Centre building was refurbished to respectfully blend into the existing streetscape.<sup>7</sup> As a contemporary structure, it also co-exists beside the historic TD bank.

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to the attached photo exhibit of the before and after.

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to the attached photo exhibit of the before and after.

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to the attached photos exhibit, photograph A.

<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the attached photo exhibit, photograph B.

However, both Medland buildings have stepped back enough at the adjacent cornice line to disguise additional floors. As well, neither redevelopment has excessively increased the height of the original building with multiple floors that would dominate or be out-of-scale with the existing streetscape.

Therefore, as recent redevelopments, these examples should establish a pattern of precedence for the Junction and for this developer to maintain the heritage character of the street.

Character Area Performance Standard #19 supports the position of the Junction HCD Committee.

*“All mid-rise buildings on the Avenues should respect and be sensitively integrated with heritage buildings in the context of Heritage Conservation Districts.”*

And the last paragraph on page 94 of the *Avenues and Mid-Rise Guidelines* describes the essence of our vision for The Junction HCD.

*“Where new mid-rise buildings are developed in Character Areas, building design should be sympathetic to context and certain heritage characteristics. This may include, but is not limited to, building step-backs and cornice lines, façade articulation, and building materials.”*

Since we understand the matter before the Etobicoke York Community Council is focused on the zoning amendment, we defer further discussion about Site Plan issues to our participation on the Community Design Committee.

The Junction has been extremely fortunate to have its heritage built form mostly intact for all to enjoy. As we have heard during many consultation meetings, it is the reason most of the residents chose this neighbourhood to call home.

At this critical juncture in the Junction’s evolution it would be a shame to permit the zoning amendment for this development project to proceed as proposed when it will create such a conspicuous and significant anomaly – an undeniable non-conforming structure – in a future HCD.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

From the Junction HCD Committee:

Tina Leslie, Chair  
Martin Lennox  
Madeleine McDowell  
Neil Ross  
Christopher Sears  
David Wencer



**BEFORE:** *Junctioneer* photo of the Handyman Shop at 3077 Dundas Street West, 22 October 2009.



**AFTER:** 3077 Dundas Street West as it was redeveloped in 2010.





**BEFORE:** photo by Martin Lennox of the former Speers Funeral Home, known as the Rue Morgue building at 2926 Dundas Street West, 26 July 2010.



**AFTER:** 2926 Dundas Street West as it was redeveloped in 2015.



**PHOTOGRAPH A:** southwest corner of Dundas Street West at Medland Street, 24 March 2014.



**PHOTOGRAPH B:** southeast corner of Dundas Street West at Medland Street, 24 March 2014.