



Project No. 15171

May 9, 2016

City of Toronto  
Toronto and East York Community Council  
c/o Ellen Devlin  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Tower, City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor Layton and Community Council Members:

**Re: *Item TE16.5 - - Broadview Avenue Planning Study  
Estonian House, 958 Broadview Avenue***

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We are planning consultants to the Estonian House and the Alterra Development Group with respect to the above-noted matter.

On their behalf, we have reviewed the final staff report dated April 22, 2016 and the attached recommended Official Plan Amendment No. 343 and the Urban Design Guidelines. On behalf of our clients, we wish to advise Community Council of our objection to the proposed Official Plan Amendment and urban design guidelines as presently drafted.

In our opinion, the documents as proposed do not appropriately recognize the special physical and locational characteristics that apply to the subject site. As a result, they would have the potential to frustrate the redevelopment of the site in a manner which would achieve both appropriate residential intensification objectives and the objectives of the Estonian House to remain on the site and in the community in renewed and updated facilities.

In order to address these concerns, we are requesting that the site be excluded from the recommended Site and Area Specific Policy 509 and the urban design guidelines. Estonian House and Alterra are intending to file a site-specific rezoning application for the property in the near future. Given the unique site characteristics, we believe that it would be preferable to establish a planning framework for the site that is responsive to the site characteristics through the site-specific analysis of a development application rather than attempting to impose a development template that is premised on the more typical configurations of the lots fronting on Broadview Avenue to the south and east.

### Background

Estonian House has a long-established presence on Broadview Avenue. The Toronto Estonian House was purchased on April 1, 1960. It is located at in what was the Chester Public School house, built in 1891. Two additions were built, the first in 1963, when a 400-seat hall was built at the rear of the building, and the second in 1976, when a four-storey facade was constructed. It houses a number of Estonian organizations such as the Toronto Estonian School, the Toronto Estonian scout troop Kalev, the Põhjala Tütred Guides, the Estonian Toronto Credit Union, Heinsoo Insurance, the Estonian Central Council in Canada, choruses for men and women and a folk dancing group, and the Estonian Consulate in Toronto.

Estonian House has been located on Broadview Avenue for over 55 years, and wishes to remain in this location as part of the community into the future and to evolve into a true cultural hub.

In order to do so, it must renew and update its facilities on the site and has for some time been exploring options to redevelop the site by adding residential uses as part of a mixed-use development. Given the size and depth of the site and its location within an area of apartment development, there is a significant opportunity to achieve all of these objectives in a responsible and sensitive way.

Partnering with Alterra Development Group, the redevelopment team and its architects have studied opportunities for redevelopment on the site and have concluded that, given the unique site characteristics, there is an opportunity to develop a taller building along the Broadview Avenue frontage, incorporating facilities for Estonian House, with a lower building behind that would take advantage of the depth of the site and the proximity to the Don Valley open space system.

### Comments

On Map 1 to the proposed Site and Area Specific Policy 509, the subject site appears to be shown as falling within both between the apartment neighbourhood to the north backing onto the valley (Character Area C) and the shallower street-related properties to the south, which back onto the low-rise residential neighbourhood to the west (Character Area A).

Properties in Character Area A have typical lot depths of 30-40 metres and back onto low-rise residential properties. In contrast, the subject site has a depth of over 135 metres and backs onto the Don Valley. In this respect, the site has much in common with the apartment sites to the north, which have heights of 23 storeys (980 Broadview), 18 storeys and 19 storeys (1000 and 1010 Broadview) and 23 storeys (1048 Broadview).

Despite the foregoing differences in built form character, both Character Areas A and C have height limits of 6 storeys, with required building setbacks above the 5<sup>th</sup> storey. In our opinion, based on our review of the staff report and the background studies, there is no apparent planning or urban design rationale for imposing such low heights in Character Area C, which has an existing high-rise built form character.

We note that Section 5 of proposed Site and Area Specific Policy 509 includes site-specific development policies for the subject site, which appear to recognize the specific site circumstances and encourage an appropriate mix of uses “where possible” to enable accommodation of a multi-purpose non-profit community facility.

However, the proposed policies allowing new development in “mid-rise and low-rise form” and providing a transition between tall buildings to the north and the *Neighbourhoods* to the south are unclear in a number of respects. In particular, it is not clear whether the permission for “mid-rise form” would allow heights greater than 6 storeys or whether the height limits in Character Areas A and C would continue to apply.

Furthermore, the wording of Policy 5.3, which speaks to conserving “the integrity” of the property’s cultural heritage values and attributes, is inconsistent with the wording and policy approach set out in Official Plan Amendment No. 199, as recently approved by the Ontario Municipal Board. More consistent wording would either speak to retaining the integrity of the cultural heritage values and attributes or conserving the cultural heritage values and attributes, recognizing that the word “conserved” has a specific meaning as defined in the new Cultural Heritage policies.

Similarly, the wording of Policy 5.4, which seeks to avoid “undue negative impact” on the rear yard amenity of properties in the adjacent *Neighbourhoods* designation, uses language that varies from the language in the Official Plan, which seeks to “adequately limit” such impacts. By choosing different words, it is not clear whether the proposed policy is seeking to impose a greater or lesser impact test than the general wording. In the absence of any rationale to diverge from the Official Plan wording, we recommend that the “adequately limit” test be retained.

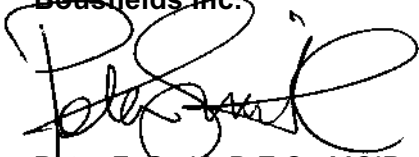
With respect to the urban design guidelines, it is noted that the Estonian House site is addressed at some length on page 35. The Guidelines note that the site has “unique conditions and dimensions”. While they state that a more thorough review and community consultation is needed if a development application comes forward, nonetheless, the Guidelines propose a set of development principles, including conservation of the heritage building, appropriate built form transition towards the adjacent *Neighbourhoods* area, adequate separation distances from adjacent properties, sensitivity to adjacent valleys and ravines, front yard landscaping and the potential to serve as a cultural hub for the community.

In our opinion, the approach outlined in the urban design guidelines argues for a site-specific evaluation of appropriate building height and massing on the subject site through a development application, rather than an *a priori* imposition of a proposed height limit of 6 storeys as appears to be suggested by Official Plan Amendment No. 343.

Thank-you for your consideration of this submission. If you have any questions and/or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me or Sasha Lauzon of our office.

Yours very truly,

**Bousfields Inc.**



Peter F. Smith B.E.S., MCIP, RPP

PFS/kah:jobs

cc: *Francis Kwashie, City Planning*  
*David Kalm, Estonian House*  
*Rob Cooper, Alterra*