

TE21.1.10

Submission from
David Harrison

TEYCC21.1 Jan 17/17 – ARA deputation re; Bloor Block Study

Good morning, I am David Harrison, Chair of the Annex Residents' Association. We have been an active participant in the Working Group, established by Councillor Cressy in 2015, working towards the Bloor Block/Annex Study and the development of the proposed amendment to the Site and Area Specific Policy No. 344 (Bloor Corridor) of the Official Plan. This covers the lands on the north side of Bloor Street West between Walmer Road and St. George Street, all within the Annex neighbourhood. The Working Group comprised the Councillor and his staff, City Planning and Heritage staff, the Annex Residents' Association, the 95 Prince Arthur Committee for Responsible Neighborhood Development, Huron Sussex Residents Organization and the Harbord Village Residents' Association .

The Working Group was primarily established in response to an application at 316 Bloor Street West (northwest corner of Bloor and Madison) for a 42-storey mixed commercial/residential building. The ARA and other community groups found this to be totally inappropriate for the neighbourhood in terms of height and massing. This became a particular concern in light of adjacency issues related to the West Annex Heritage Conservation District, Phase One: Madison Avenue. Also the unit plan for largely studio and 1-bedroom units, makes no provision for families in a neighbourhood with an extensive and growing family demographic. Other development applications in the planning area are expected to emerge soon.

The ARA has been focused on development in this area, dating back to 2007 when it was an active proponent of and participant in the Bloor Corridor Visioning Study (coordinated in large part by Jennifer Keesemat). That work led to OPA No. 98 that Council adopted in 2009 as the Site and Area Specific Policy No. 334. That Policy

called for the gradual reduction in building heights from Bloor and Avenue Road to the Spadina node and westwards towards Bathurst Street.

The ARA is not a NIMBY association: we fully accept that densification and intensification, particularly at transit nodes, is the responsible way forward to reduce GHG emissions, other pollutants, and congestion. These problems are costing the GTA billions in lost productivity each year. We have worked successfully with developers in the Annex to strike a balance between density and human scale, heritage preservation, and quality of life in our neighbourhood, most recently, at 250 Davenport and several developments along Dupont Street.

This is why we have been proactive in working with City Planning staff and the Working Group on the Bloor Block/Annex Study over the past two years. We would prefer lower heights than recommended for the Bloor/Spadina intersections, but recognize that the desired goals of the Provincial Policy Statement require compromise, and accept the recommendations in the Staff Report.

However, we are not yet informed as to the specific plans for the extension and redevelopment of the Tartu College site and property owned by the College at 11 Madison Avenue. Despite requests we have not been able to obtain concrete information on what is being proposed. The ARA is therefore reserving judgment on this aspect of the OPA until such information is provided to the Association.

With that reservation, the ARA supports the recommendations in the Staff Report: Final Report – Bloor Corridor/Annex Block Planning Study.