

September 16, 2020

Councillor Mike Layton
Ward 11 University-Rosedale
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, Suite C47
Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

Dear Mike,

**Re: 33 – 49 Avenue Road and 136 – 150 Yorkville Avenue (File No.: 12 113502 STE 27 OZ)
Support for Heritage Demolition Permit & Rezoning Application**

We are writing on behalf of both the ABC Residents Association (ABCRA) and the Greater Yorkville Residents' Association (GYRA) to express our collective support for the recent proposal by First Capital and Greybrook Realty Partners to redevelop the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue. We are not only supportive of the above-noted rezoning application but also of Council's approval of a forthcoming application to permit the demolition of the existing designated heritage buildings on-site.

As the two major residents' associations in the Yorkville community, we have been actively engaged in collaborative discussions with both developers for over one year and in our opinion, the current proposal represents a great improvement to the 2017 OMB-approved Empire Communities development. Specifically, the overall increase in accessible public realm is 40% and the increase to the "new" York Square is fully 64%. Accordingly, this development embodies a rare opportunity to introduce a well-designed and high-quality building with exceptional public realm enhancements. In our view, the quality of the landscape and architectural treatments being applied to the public realm, represent design excellence and will offset the perceived loss of the existing 'heritage' building.

Specifically, the public realm enhancements and unique building design elements include:

- **Public Square - Size:** The size of the public square has increased from 283 square metres to 465 square metres compared to the 2017 OMB approval;
- **Public Square - Frontage:** Along Yorkville Avenue, the retail buildings have been pulled back and the public square opens onto the sidewalk in a substantial manner. The public square frontage is now proposed to be 44.2 metre, compared to a frontage of 28.9 metres approved by the OMB in 2017;
- **Public Square – Open to Sky:** Compared to the 2017 OMB approval, the canopy that previously covered the public square has been pulled back to allow for direct sky views.

However, a small portion of the public square continues to remain covered to offer weather protection;

- **Public Square – Water wall & Café:** An interactive 2-storey waterfall is proposed at the rear of the public square. The water will flow over a transparent glass wall behind which will be a small café. Together with the café, the interactive water feature will activate and animate the square all year-round while also softening the space and mitigating noise. The water flow rhythm can be programmed, together with the use of lights and music to suit events taking place in the square. Projections on the water wall will be able to accommodate public art opportunities or create a backdrop for events in the community such as Fashion Week;
- **Programming:** As per the 2017 OMB settlement, the developers will not only fulfill their legal obligation to program the square with music recitals, film + fashion events, visual and performance arts, etc., but they will work with the community to further enhance the cultural animation:
- **Yorkville Mall Connection:** The new pedestrian mews through the public square to the 2nd floor of the Yorkville Village shopping mall will further animate the square. The removal of the current “tunnel” to the mall and the consolidation of the site is a very big win;
- **Residential Lobby:** The residential lobby has been deliberately tucked away to allow for the square to feel truly public and will not function as a residential forecourt;
- **Retail Jewel Box:** The retail jewel box will be an architecturally significant standalone structure that will create a focal point and gateway to Yorkville Avenue. The jewel box will appear separate from the rest of the building but will also complement the main building. We are working with the developers to ensure excellent design and the use of high-quality materials, and the developer has agreed to consulting with both City and community Urban Design representatives;
- **Tower Twist:** A fundamental element of the tower design is the 12.5-degree twist, which not only provides elevated architectural interest but will allow for additional light to filter down to the public square below. It also creates an interesting access to the square for pedestrians walking east;
- **Materiality:** The applicant has committed to use materials of the highest quality and these elements will be detailed in the Site Plan. The tower is designed with exterior lines set by survey and will incorporate curved glass, bronze details throughout, and high-quality stone. The public plaza will incorporate a combination of granite paving and bespoke granite furniture pieces. Again, the developer has agreed to encode materiality in the Site Plan Agreement.

Accordingly, we support the proposed design and built form, including the proposed height, density, floor plate sizes, twisted tower orientation, new public square, retail jewel box, and the project's integration with the Yorkville Village shopping mall. Most importantly, we are supportive of removing the designated heritage buildings. While we appreciate that the demolition of the heritage buildings will be controversial to some, we believe that removing these buildings is an appropriate and proportionate trade-off to the benefits to the public space our residents' associations have negotiated for the neighbourhood. This is an opinion shared by the square's 'original' architect, Jack Diamond.

Through our discussions with First Capital and Greybrook, together with our own consulting architect Michael Spaziani, the applicant has agreed that the proposal should be revised to ensure the retail jewel box at the southwest corner of the site will be set back 4.5 metres from Avenue Road and that this change will be reflected in their next submission package to the City. We have also agreed the proposed use of high-quality materials will remain as currently proposed and that all future retail signage will comprise individually lit letters that will be carefully integrated into the elevation designs with a prohibition of sign boxes.

To ensure the project is built as currently proposed and in a timely manner, community and political support for both the Heritage Demolition Permit and Rezoning application is required. Accordingly, both ABC and GYRA support the proposal, including approval of the forthcoming Heritage Demolition Permit in advance of the Rezoning application and request that you please consider doing the same.

Sincerely,

John Caliendo & Ian Carmichael,
Co-Chairs
ABC Residents Association

Alan Baker, President
Greater Yorkville Residents' Association

cc: Oren Tamir, City of Toronto, Community Planning
David Driedger, City of Toronto, Community Planning