



March 11, 2020

Toronto East York Community Council
Ellen Devlin
2nd floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

email: teycc@toronto.ca

Re: 2020.TE14.5 - Queen Street West Planning Study - Bathurst Street to Roncesvalles Avenue - Official Plan Amendment - Final Report

Chair and Members Toronto East York

We are writing to ask you to consider deferring the adoption of any Official Plan Amendments until such time as the HCD Plan for the area can be finalized and adopted.

Queen West is Toronto's first line in the sand, the first street to be laid out as properties were subdivided by Simcoe. While that is not the history of most of the buildings along its length, which came much later as the area was developed around rail and streetcar lines, it is a street whose heritage is paramount, and irreplaceable. Queen Street's heritage should pre-empt other planning considerations. That heritage includes its fine-grained property ownership that allows for a rich diversity of buildings and businesses, as well as places to live and larger institutions.

Last year, ACOToronto held a symposium entitled Toronto's Disappearing Main Streets: Buildings and Businesses. That day-long event identified many factors contributing to the incremental destruction of our most important streets. The application of Avenues principles, intensification pressures, poor tax policies and the planning systems failure to find the right tools to ensure compatible development are all leading to the loss of Toronto's high streets, and with it the homes for small businesses. Yonge Street is already lost. Church Street is losing its important legacy businesses. Focussing on the artful façade without considering the ownership pattern or rich use pattern yields urban taxidermy, dead places in the city.

Much has been written about the proposed 6 storey height limit. What is more critical to protect is the narrow-fronted property ownership pattern. Conservation of facades or a building here or there does not begin to deal with the associated heritage value of the collective community life that our main streets support, and which has not been successfully re-instated in the City's recent re-developments. Moreover, the addition of

large developments along our main streets has led to overloading streetcar lines. Our downtown, streetcar suburbs have a harmonious balance that works well. Until we have solutions that work, introducing policies that will accelerate the loss of small buildings, and all the richness associated with them must be strenuously avoided.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Zambri". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'Z'.

Matthew Zambri
President, Architectural Conservancy Ontario Toronto Branch