

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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To: Heritage Preservation Board
Re: HPB 17.4
78-90 Queen's Park

Sept. 25, 2020.

Dear Members:

Harbord Village Residents' Association urges this Board to defer approval on this item until a proper evaluation and protection of the Queen's Park Legislative precinct can be completed.

Approval for the two designations being sought at Falconer Hall and Edward Johnson is premature. They are embedded in the proposal for a 43-metre building on a roadway which, if approved, would overwhelm, rather than complement, the cultural heritage landscape of the northwest flank of Queen's Park. The massing of the building, the presence of a truck ramp big enough to accept large transport trucks, the loss of trees would forever change that streetscape.

We can do better. We must do better.

Capital cities like Washington, Ottawa, Halifax to name a few, have protections in place for significant heritage assets, like the Capital, the Parliament Buildings and the Citadel. Under the challenge of development, heights of new buildings and their impacts on the heritage framework and fabric, have long been an issue. Most, including Toronto, have implemented protected viewsheds. Others have addressed the need for regulations that ensure sympathetic transition to newer city elements.

But more recently, planners have re-framed the argument to conservation and protection of cultural heritage landscapes. A National Capital Commission (NCC) Region report expanded its evaluation to include "a sense of place." (p. 23) which includes "the remarkable pattern of landform, vegetation, buildings and streets which combine to make a distinctive and memorable place.

"The forms of the buildings, circulation routes and landscapes... are predominantly picturesque. The buildings are individual objects, designed in the round to be seen from all directions, with space and landscape between them. Buildings combine to make architectural groupings and the landscape acts as an organizing matrix, defining and connecting the outdoor spaces."

Just as Parliament Hill is dominant within the landscape of Ottawa, Queen's Park and the University and its federated and affiliated colleges and universities have dominated the history and the spine of Toronto, the most significant north-south roadway in the City's Downtown. Report after report of individual proposals, including the University's new secondary plan, remark on the park-like setting, the need "to conserve and protect heritage resources."

At least 25 buildings along the Queen's Park spine have been listed or designated. The Queen's Park-University Avenue axis has already been recognized in the TOCore Great Streets report, which seeks improvements to Queen-College to better recognize it as a significant landmark street. It recommended an evaluation of the College to Bloor section, with a particular emphasis on identifying features that contribute to the sense of place, generating guidelines for future development, ensuring infill respects the buildings and settings that frame the roadway.

In protecting the viewshed of Queen's Park, staff, commenting on August 15, 2011 meeting of TEYCC on the OPA 2011 amendment to protect the views of the Ontario Legislative Assembly said:

Planning Staff agree with the findings of the Heritage Impact Assessment and Viewshed Analysis that the "Queen's Park cultural heritage landscape is an extremely significant cultural heritage resource within the Province of Ontario" and would endorse the recommendation that the Queen's Park cultural heritage landscape be designated by the Province of Ontario "in recognition of the site's outstanding value within the Province of Ontario and to ensure its long-term conservation and appropriate management". But it stopped short of doing more than protect the silhouette of the legislature building, viewed from College Street.

Concerned that protections were being conducted on a site-by-site basis, heritage architects, planners, citizens and city politicians formed **The Ontario Capital Precinct Working Group**. It sought to bring Toronto and the Province together to develop and implement a precinct plan "that defines, protects and enhances the character, heritage attributes, cultural landscapes, accessibility, quality of design and quality of place of Ontario's Capital Precinct and its related areas." It called for a clear set of guidelines and regulations to govern development along the ! corridor from Queen to Bloor.

In many respects, we have been fortunate that north of College Street we have a landscape left ! to protect, one that has been used and occupied from the earliest times of human habitation ! along Taddle Creek, with buildings and a political historic context that dates back to Bishop Strachan and the Family Compact, early religious divisions and buildings on the northwest and east side of Queen's Park that have deep roots in the history of women's advancement.

If we are not careful, we could lose it, site by site: many of the buildings are simply listed, the ! landscape is in the balance and more developments are on the horizon. !

In 1825, the colonial town of York, population c. 10,000, set aside 166 acres on its northern shoulder, carved out of original park lots, for education. Close to 200 years later, we have a ! great university, a powerful provincial capital, a park setting with distinguished architecture, a ! sense of place, provided we act as good stewards.

Respectfully, !
Sue Dexter, Board HVRA !
97 Willcocks St. !
Toronto, M5S 1C9 !

Appendix:

1. Listed and designated buildings in the Queen's Park precinct:

Location	date	status
ROM	1910	designated
Wymilwood Falconer	1901	listed
Flavelle	1901	listed
Wycliffe	1891	Designated
Indigenous landscape Hart House	Pre-european	Project underway
Hart House gothic quad	1919	designated
Stewart Observatory	1855	listed
Gerstein Sig Sam	1892	listed
Canadiana	1951	listed
McMurrich	1912	listed
Naylor Best Inst.	1954	Character supporting
Botany	1931	listed
Queen's Park Legislature	1886-92	listed
White Gouinlock	1903	intention
White stable		designated
Reuben Millichamp	1888	listed
Christie	1880	listed
Mason	1896	designated
St. Michael's	1929	listed
Victoria Burwash	1909	listed
Emanuel	1929	listed
Men's residence Victoria	1909	listed
Victoria College	1892	listed
Birge-Carnegie library	1908	listed
Massey Building	1908	designated

