



The Annex Residents' Association

Toronto City Hall
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Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Delivered via email : teycc@toronto.ca

October 12, 2020

Attention: Members of Council

RE: Comments on TE 19.2, 78-90 Queen's Park Zoning By-Law Amendment and TE 19.11 80 and 84 Queens Park Queen's Park heritage

I write on behalf of the Annex Residents' Association on two counts: first to oppose the proposal from the University of Toronto for a massive complex on the planetarium site, situated just south of the ROM, and second to urge a comprehensive study of the Queen's Park heritage district.

The process through which this proposal has reached City Council in search of approval was flawed from the outset. The City's initial Design Review Panel – a panel that is intended to be neutral and objective – was stacked with senior representatives from the University. While our own representative recused himself on the grounds of conflict-of-interest, these senior University members did not and instead cast votes in favour, thus giving the project the green light.

The public consultations which ensued were compromised by the challenges of COVID 19. The on-line consultation of July 14 was a debacle: instead of allowing members of the public to freely have their say, the moderator allotted most of the meeting's airtime to the University representatives. They were allowed to give a lengthy initial presentation, complete with slide show, and afterwards to rebut each citizen's concerns one at a time as they were raised. Our own representatives were denied the right to show three slides of the project in order to illustrate their position. Even worse, many citizens were unable to access the meeting at all.

While there have been understandable changes in public process, the residents of this city still deserve one that is fair and unbiased. Indeed, there is a sense that this project has been bulldozed through, ironically in a time when most of the University's buildings

sit idle. The fact that the City's forestry department has already granted conditional approval for the removal of old growth trees on the site is yet another indication of lack of concern for our citizen's views.

The Toronto Preservation Board at its last meeting held on September 29 determined by unanimous vote that a comprehensive study of the Queen's Park cultural heritage district be undertaken and recommended rejecting the zoning amendments required by the University to erect this building. These decisions were significantly underpinned by the unprecedented public outpouring of concern. More than a hundred letters from across the city and beyond were submitted in protest. Yet – another flaw in the process – those voices were effectively silenced through the decision not to forward those letters to Council for consideration in the October 15th meeting.

The process has been unseemly. We need to take a pause, particularly in the context of the University's own planning. It's new secondary plan, that is even now under consideration, has identified many other sites on the St. George Campus that are ideal for development. And yet, while this secondary plan has yet to be approved, the University has made several development applications that are in the pipeline in addition to this one for the Queen's Park site.

The Queen's Park precinct is one that is critical to the cultural heritage of the entire city, indeed province. Yet the University asks us to desecrate the area with a building which is so out of scale and so unsympathetic in design with the other buildings and landscape. Queen's Park is a flagship area and any development proposal must be sensitive to this and the entire historic precinct. As Mr. Layton has said, "Its quality and character must be respected."

We urge you to act on the recommendations of the Toronto Preservation Board, to support a comprehensive study of the Queen's Park precinct and to reject the zoning amendments sought by the University.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rita Bilerman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rita Bilerman
Chair, Annex Residents' Association

C: Councillor Mike Layton