

Leaside Residents Association Incorporated

1601 Bayview Avenue

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May 20, 2021

North York Civic Centre
Main floor, 5100 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON M2N 5V7
Attention: Carlie Turpin
email: nycc@toronto.ca

RE: NY24.13 Preliminary Report - Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision Application - 70 and 80 Wicksteed Avenue, 202, 204, and 206 Parkhurst Boulevard and 99 Vanderhoof Avenue (Ward 15)

Dear Councillor James Pasternak, Chair, and Members of North York Community Council,

This application concerns a zoning bylaw amendment and plan of subdivision required to permit the proposed development for retail uses on the above noted lands. Retail uses on the subject lands are permitted by site-specific Zoning By-Law No. 442-2014, related to a previously approved (2014) application, but an amended ZBA will be required to permit the current proposed development.

The Current Proposal compared with the Previously Approved Application

Section 2.0 THE PROPOSAL of the Planning Rationale Report submitted with the revised submission identifies the changes between the previously approved application and the current proposal. The changes in the revised package appear to relate to making the northern most building (Building A) suitable for meeting the needs of Canadian Tire as opposed to Walmart.

The key changes are:

- reduction in rear yard setback along Vanderhoof Avenue from 3.0 m to 1.0 m
- reduction in exterior side yard setback along Laird Drive from 2.0m to 1.03 m
- anchor retail gross floor area (building A1) increased from 5,574 m² to 6,858 m²
- max. gross floor area (all buildings) increased from 15,852 m² to 20,184 m²
- building height increased from 17.8 m to 22.0 m

The Planning Rationale Report (p.14) indicates:

“...the proposed Building A retail component encompasses a total gross floor area (GFA) of 7,550 m² and is generally in alignment with what was previously approved and permitted. The proposed Building A retail use represents a slight GFA increase of 3.3% in comparison to the permitted maximum GFA of 7,308 m² anchor retail component as per site specific provisions of By-law 442-2014. The proposed location and building footprint of Buildings B, C and D continue to reflect what was originally approved and permitted. The total proposed development is approximately 4,332 m² larger than the previously approved and permitted total of 15,852 m², in which large portions of this GFA increase is a result of the racking system for the proposed warehouse storage and automotive uses that is accounted for as part of the total GFA, but the actual saleable are is generally in line with what was previously approved.”

The Planning Context - OPA 450 - Laird in Focus

Since the approval of By-law No. 442-2014, the key change in the planning context for this application is the development and approval of the Laird in Focus Plan, including extensive public engagement, which was adopted by City Council in July, 2020. While this Plan specifically applies to the West side of Laird Drive and the North side of Vanderhoof Avenue, whereas the subject property abuts the East side of Laird Drive and the South side of Vanderhoof Avenue, several parts of this Plan are relevant to this application, especially the Public Realm and Setbacks sections, and should be used as guidelines to good planning in the Leaside Business Park/Laird Drive context. The relevant parts of OPA 450 recommended to be used in assessing the current application are listed in the Appendix to this letter.

Based on the above, the following are our preliminary comments on the revised submission:

Setbacks

Setbacks on both Laird and Vanderhoof are reduced in the current proposal compared with the previous approval. Setbacks should be maintained, not relaxed, in order to support a strong public realm and healthy, landscaped streetscapes

Parking

The current proposal shows a reduction in the amount of surface parking (from 255 spaces to 148 spaces) but this still represents a large area with increased water runoff. Can this area be reduced and/or runoff mitigated?

Toronto Green Standards

The current proposal is only for Tier 1 – again, it should be possible to provide for a more eco-friendly proposal, Tier 2 or more?

Street Design

Add the following to the list of applicable Design Guidelines (p.5 of Preliminary Report):

- Complete Streets Guidelines
- Streetscape Manual

Therefore it is recommended:

- **that the current proposal be reviewed in the context of the relevant portions of OPA 450.**

Respectfully submitted,

Geoff Kettel

Geoff Kettel,

Co-President (with Carol Burtin Fripp)

c.c. Councillor Jaye Robinson

John Andreevski, Acting Director, North York District, City Planning

Sarah Ovens, Planner, North York District, City Planning

Leaside Business Park Association

Appendix: Excerpts from OPA 450 regarding Laird Drive and Vanderhoof Avenue

Vision

- ii. Promote Laird Drive as an enhanced main street which connects the new community focus area with the existing Leaside Memorial Gardens and facilities;
- iv. Connect Leaside to the West Don River Trail by enhancing Vanderhoof Avenue as a park connector of existing and future parks.

Goals

The goals of development on the lands are to:

- v. Transform Laird Drive into a vibrant and unifying main street which accommodates appropriately scaled mid-rise development with an enhanced and high quality public realm;

Public Realm

- 5.1 The public realm structure on Map 2, Structure Plan, establishes and identifies a network of existing and new streets, gateways, public parks and open spaces, transit facilities, community facilities, pedestrian connections and POPS.
- 5.3 The public realm will enhance and expand upon the local character and identity of the community promoting civic life.
- 5.4 Opportunities will be explored with development and streetscape improvements to interpret and commemorate the history of Leaside, including its role as a rail and manufacturing hub, and the function of Laird Drive as a main street and transition between the original eastern industrial and western residential portions of the neighbourhood.
- 5.5 New development and public realm improvements will prioritize pedestrian movement and promote safe, convenient, comfortable and resilient spaces for pedestrians and cyclists by providing:
 - i. A finer grain street network that includes generous sidewalks on new and existing streets to be complemented by trees and other landscaping;
 - ii. Green, safe and comfortable spaces for all users and activities;
 - iii. Local streets that primarily support an increase in pedestrian activity;
 - iv. Midblock pedestrian connections through larger development blocks that improve pedestrian movement and access through generous walkways and landscaping; and
 - v. Coordination of goods movement related to the Leaside employment area and balancing these needs with pedestrian movement and safety.
- 5.7 Laird Drive will be an enhanced main street to accommodate:
 - i. Safe and separated cycling facilities;
 - ii. Gateways with public realm enhancements within the right-of-way to achieve high quality civic outdoor amenity spaces; and
 - iii. Curb extensions on local streets adjacent to Laird Drive will provide additional space for pedestrians and landscaping.
- 5.9 Vanderhoof Avenue will connect existing and future parks and open spaces, and will provide:

- i. A multi-use path and sidewalk on the north side of the street with a future connection east to the West Don River Trail; and
- ii. Additional trees to be planted within the setback area to create a double row of trees.

5.10 Local streets will provide a finer grain street network with building setbacks that accommodate landscaping and promote pedestrian connectivity, and vehicular and servicing access where appropriate.

Building Setbacks

7.1 Generous landscaped setbacks will be provided along all streets in order to integrate with the Leaside character, contribute to the public realm, and allow additional space for pedestrians, landscaping, amenities, and soil volumes to accommodate healthy tree growth. The setbacks will be sufficient to ensure direct and accessible at-grade connections from ground floor uses to the public sidewalk.

7.2 Setbacks of the first underground level abutting public streets will be provided to ensure adequate soil volumes for large canopy trees.

Built Form

8.1 Development will have a high standard of design, be appropriately scaled, relate positively to the existing and planned context and contribute to enhancing the surrounding public realm around the Eglinton Crosstown LRT Station, and along the Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East corridors.

8.3 Buildings should provide high quality, continuous ground floor weather protection along streets, parks and open spaces, and at building entrances, where possible.

Employment Mobility and Goods Movement

10.20 In recognition of the importance of the Leaside *Employment Area*, achieve safe and balanced mobility that will:

i. Encourage movement of goods along preferred corridors as identified in the Laird in Focus Mobility Report, informed by the City-wide Freight and Goods Movement Strategy;

iii. Locate goods service access for development along Laird Drive at the rear of the property from local streets, public lanes, and/or shared private driveways; and

iv. Encourage loading and servicing uses to be consolidated and located underground.

14. Sustainability

14.1 Environmentally sustainable built form will be encouraged through the development of individual sites.

14.2 Development will be encouraged to meet the Tier 2 Standards of the City of Toronto Green Development Standards.

14.3 Co-energy facilities will be encouraged.

14.4 Infrastructure which encourages sustainability will be provided with development such as cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, and sustainable storm water management facilities.