

Sent via Email (via teycc@toronto.ca)

19 April 2021

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

Dear Councillors:

**Re: 63-91 Montclair Avenue  
Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition Applications  
TEYCC Item TE24.18  
Response to Request for Direction Report  
South Forest Hill Residents Association**

We represent the South Forest Hill Residents Association (the “SFHRA”), a group of residents who advocate for and support good development in South Forest Hill. The SFHRA has retained our firm together with expert land use planner David Butler and urban designer Michael Spaziani in connection with the above-note development applications, the purpose of which are to permit a two-tower building on Montclair Avenue of 21 and 23 storeys (the “Proposal”).

Presently, there are no buildings taller than 8 storeys on Montclair Avenue. In fact, there are no buildings taller than 8 storeys within Forest Hill Village. The only buildings taller than 8 storeys within the entire South Forest Hill area are located along Eglinton Avenue, much further north.

As Councillor Matlow will know, the SFHRA and its consultant team have been active participants in the development approvals process to date. The SFHRA participated in the Working Group organized by Councillor Matlow involving the Applicant, the City, area residents and the Forest Hill Village BIA in November 2020. Three meetings were scheduled. At the initial meeting, the SFHRA (supported by many others) presented its central concern as being the height and massing of the Proposal. At the second meeting, the Applicant presented a modified proposal that did not include any reduction in height, apart from the podium. In fact, the Applicant refused to talk about height in any meaningful manner in either two Working Group meetings. The third meeting was ultimately cancelled, and the Applicant proceeded straight to an LPAT appeal.

The SFHRA team has reviewed the Request for Direction Report dated 25 March 2021 (the “Report”), and support staff’s recommendation to oppose the Proposal at the LPAT and continue discussions with the Applicant to resolve outstanding issues. The SFHRA is also generally supportive of the substantive

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comments made in the Report. However, the SFHRA would like to offer the following additional comments for this Committee's and Council's consideration:

*Height, Fit and Stability*

Montclair Avenue and Bantry Avenue are narrow dead-end streets. As staff have indicated, the Official Plan does not identify Montclair Avenue or Bantry Avenue as roads to be widened. Nor is the subject site (an assembly of multiple smaller sites) within an area designated for growth in the Official Plan. In this regard, we refer you to Section 2.3.1 of the Official Plan, which states that "... *most of Toronto's existing apartment buildings are located within built-up Apartment Neighbourhoods where significant growth is not anticipated on a City-wide basis.*" And "... *a cornerstone policy is to ensure that new development in our neighbourhoods respects the existing physical character of the area, reinforcing the stability of the neighbourhood*" (emphasis added).

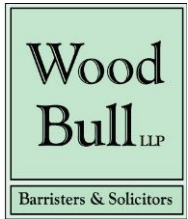
As noted earlier, there are no buildings taller than 8 storeys within Forest Hill Village. It is hard to conclude that the introduction of 21 and 23 storey building elements "respects" the existing physical character of the area.

There is also a serious question about the impact of the Proposal on the stability of the neighbourhood. Permitting building elements at these heights would create clear precedent and pressure for additional tall buildings within Forest Hill Village. Presently, there are none.

Some weight has been given to the fact that there are tall buildings to the south of the subject site. However, those sites are largely within the St Clair - Bathurst Study Area, an area distinct from Forest Hill Village (and the larger South Forest Hill). Furthermore, those tall buildings have a significantly lower density (FSI) than the Proposal. Whereas the tallest buildings in the vicinity, being 310-320 Tweedsmuir Avenue at 30 storeys, have an FSI of 5.5 x, the Proposal is for 11.3 x. For those reasons, the SFHRA submits that the tall buildings in the St Clair corridor cannot be accepted as a strict precedent for the height that is being proposed. Respectfully, to do so would be comparing "apples to oranges".

Much has been said about the subject site being near a transit station, making it a candidate for intensification. It is important to note that even the assembly of these multiple properties (presently a duplex, attached and detached homes) for the development of an 8 storey building would constitute intensification for the purpose of provincial policy. Furthermore, provincial intensification policy does not trump local policy aimed at preserving the shape and feel of neighbourhoods.

The SFHRA is not advocating for a no redevelopment option, or even a non-intensification option. However, for the reasons noted above, the SFHRA submits that the height and massing of the Proposal needs to be significantly reduced.



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### *Other Planning Matters*

The SFHRA is also concerned with the other planning matters, as identified in the Report, including but not limited to transportation, tree preservation, streetscape, pedestrian connectivity and open space. However, it is SFHRA's view that many of the additional planning matters may be largely resolved once the appropriate height and massing are determined. For that reason, only high level commentary on these additional matters is provided here.

The Proposal provides very little relief at grade. Careful consideration must be given to setbacks and the provision of open space and pedestrian and vehicular connectivity at grade, to ensure that the Proposal fits within the existing character of the street and to ensure safety for all residents. Trees and street greening should be part of this consideration.

The SFHRA agrees with staff that the proposed setback of the Proposal is not consistent with the established building setback pattern along Montclair Avenue, and needs to be adjusted.

A technical matter of particular concern is the accommodation of traffic and emergency vehicles. Given the narrow width of Montclair and Bantry Avenues, and the current inability of fire and other emergency vehicles to easily turn around on Montclair, the SFHRA is very concerned that traffic (regular and emergency) and parking for the Proposal will overwhelm the block and create serious safety concerns. Staff has indicated that Fire Services will review the Proposal at the Site Plan Control stage. Given the current condition of Montclair, and the large size of the Proposal, the SFHRA submits that it is critical that the fire and emergency vehicle review be done at the zoning stage.

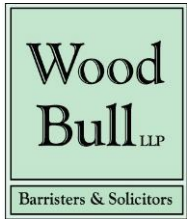
### *Section 37*

The SFHRA requests that it be included in any future discussions regarding Section 37 contributions, if such discussions become relevant.

### *Conclusion*

The SFHRA is supportive of staff's recommendations in the Report, and is very appreciative of the time staff took to consider its comments in the preparation of the Report. The SFHRA welcomes the opportunity to participate in future discussions between the City and the Applicant/Appellant regarding the planning issues raised in the Report and in this submission. The SFHRA will be seeking party status in the LPAT appeal proceeding to facilitate that continued discussion.

In closing, it is worth re-stating the objectives of the SFHRA - to promote good development in South Forest Hill. The SFHRA is not advocating for a no redevelopment option, nor a non-intensification option. The SFHRA is advocating for a development that fits within the existing neighbourhood, and



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does not threaten to destabilize Forest Hill Village or the broader South Forest Hill area with over-developments in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours very truly,

**Wood Bull LLP**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jshapira", is positioned below the firm name.

Johanna R. Shapira

JRS/mp

c. M. Gilbert, SFHRA