

677 Wellington Street West – Official Plan Amendment Application – Final Report

Date: December 2, 2021
To: Toronto and East York Community Council or City Council
From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards: Ward 10 - Spadina-Fort York

Planning Application Number: 21 231547 STE 10 OZ

SUMMARY

This City initiated Official Plan Amendment application proposes to amend the Official Plan for 677 Wellington Street West, a City-owned property designated Parks and Open Spaces, to add the property to Site and Area Specific Policy 265 in order to allow long term leases of the property. This property contains the Wellington Destructor and the proposed technical amendment would facilitate the adaptive reuse of the site.

This report reviews and recommends approval of the application to amend the Official Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council amend the Official Plan to add 677 Wellington Street West to the list of properties in Site and Area Specific Policy No. 265, as shown in Attachment 1 to the report dated December 2, 2021 from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District.
2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Official Plan Amendment as may be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on August 25, 2014, City Council adopted Official Plan Amendment 273 (OPA 273) to implement the recommendations of the South Niagara Planning Strategy, which details the City's vision for the South Niagara area. The recommendations included direction for staff to study the adaptive reuse opportunities of the Wellington Destructor, as well as to redesignate the 677 Wellington Street West lands from Regeneration Areas to Parks and Open Space Areas.

The Council decision is available at the following:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PG35.4>

OPA 273 was appealed in its entirety. A settlement hearing has concluded and it is expected that OPA 273 will be in full force and effect once conditions associated with the appeal have been satisfied by the appellant.

At its meeting on April 24, 2018, City Council adopted staff's recommendations to study the adaptive reuse opportunities for the Wellington Destructor, and to develop and undertake a proposal call process for the adaptive reuse of the Wellington Destructor site.

The Council decision is available at the following:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.GM26.2>

At its meeting on November 9, 2021, City Council approved the recommended Head Lessee proponent and authorized City staff to enter into a long term ground lease of the property, subject to the necessary City of Toronto approvals.

The Council decision is available at the following:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.GL26.9>

PROPOSAL

The subject lot is a 0.85 hectare City-owned property that includes the Wellington Destructor, a 3,700 square metre vacant heritage building constructed in 1925, originally used as a garbage incinerator. It remained in active use until the incineration of solid waste was halted in the mid-1970s. The building was adapted to be used as a transfer station until 1986, at which time it was decommissioned. The building has been vacant since.

The Wellington Destructor building is architecturally significant as a surviving example of an early 20th century industrial structure designed with elements of Modern Classicism. The Property was listed on the City of Toronto Heritage Register in June 2005 by City Council, and is subject to policies for its conservation.

In 2014, City Council adopted OPA 273 to implement the recommendations of the South Niagara Planning Strategy, which details the City's vision for the South Niagara area. The recommendations included direction for City staff to study the adaptive reuse opportunities of the Wellington Destructor for cultural and community space, community hub or other appropriate uses.

At its meeting on April 24, 2018, City Council adopted staff's recommendations to seek and secure a head lessee that will participate with the City in the adaptive reuse of the Wellington Destructor site by designing, constructing, leasing and managing the site during a long term lease.

The primary objectives and goals of the re-use of the Wellington Destructor include: balancing cultural, economic, environmental and social benefits; respecting the heritage of the building; and activating the site with a mix of uses. A two stage procurement process, including a Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals (R.F.P.), was undertaken by Corporate Real Estate Management (C.R.E.M.) to seek and secure a head lessee for the adaptive reuse of the Wellington Destructor. Following the review and evaluation of R.F.P. proposals by an interdivisional City staff team, C.R.E.M recommended TAS as the head lessee to Council.

At its meeting on November 9, 2021, approved the recommended head lessee proponent and authorized C.R.E.M. staff to enter into a long term ground lease of the property, subject to the necessary City of Toronto approvals. City staff have identified the need for a City-initiated Official Plan Amendment and a zoning by-law amendment on the site in advance of completing a head lease agreement for the building.

Reasons for Application

The purpose of this City-initiated Official Plan Amendment application is to add 677 Wellington Street West to Site and Area Specific Policy 265 to exempt it from Official Plan Policy 4.3.8, which prohibits the disposal of City-owned land in areas designated as Parks and Open Spaces. The proposed technical amendment would allow the City to enter into a lease agreement with the head lessee and facilitate the adaptive reuse of the site.

Provincial Land-Use Policies: Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

Provincial Policy Statements and geographically specific Provincial Plans, along with municipal Official Plans, provide a policy framework for planning and development in the Province. This framework is implemented through a range of land use controls such as zoning by-laws, plans of subdivision and site plans.

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) (the "PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong

communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- the efficient use and management of land and infrastructure;
- ensuring the sufficient provision of housing to meet changing needs including affordable housing;
- ensuring opportunities for job creation;
- ensuring the appropriate transportation, water, sewer and other infrastructure is available to accommodate current and future needs; and
- protecting people, property and community resources by directing development away from natural or human-made hazards.

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS recognizes and acknowledges the Official Plan as an important document for implementing the policies within the PPS. Policy 4.7 of the PPS states that, "The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans."

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) came into effect on August 28, 2020. This was an amendment to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019. The Growth Plan (2020) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City forms an integral part. The Growth Plan (2020), establishes policies that require implementation through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), which is a requirement pursuant to Section 26 of the Planning Act.

Policies not expressly linked to a MCR can be applied as part of the review process for development applications, in advance of the next MCR. These policies include:

- Directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, contribute to environmental sustainability and provide for a more compact built form and a vibrant public realm;
- Directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process;

- Achieving complete communities with access to a diverse range of housing options, protected employment zones, public service facilities, recreation and green space, and better connected transit to where people live and work;
- Retaining viable lands designated as employment areas and ensuring redevelopment of lands outside of employment areas retain space for jobs to be accommodated on site;
- Minimizing the negative impacts of climate change by undertaking stormwater management planning that assesses the impacts of extreme weather events and incorporates green infrastructure; and
- Recognizing the importance of watershed planning for the protection of the quality and quantity of water and hydrologic features and areas.

The Growth Plan (2020), builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan (2020), take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise. In accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform with the Growth Plan (2020). Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform with the Growth Plan (2020).

Toronto Official Plan

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan and as follows:

Chapter 3 – Building a Successful City

Section 3.1.1: The Public Realm Section 3.1.1 of the Official Plan includes policies on the public realm. The policies encourage development that improves the public realm (streets, sidewalks and open spaces) for pedestrians. This section speaks to the importance of views from the public realm to prominent buildings, structures, landscapes and natural features. Parks and open spaces will be located and designed to connect and extend, wherever possible, to existing parks, natural areas and other open spaces.

Section 3.1.5 provides policy direction on the conservation of heritage properties on the City's Heritage Register and on development adjacent to heritage properties. Policy 5 requires proposed alterations or development on or adjacent to a property on the Heritage Register to ensure that the integrity of the heritage property's cultural heritage value and attributes will be retained. Policy 26 requires new construction on, or adjacent to a property on the Heritage Register be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of the property and to mitigate the visual and physical impact on it, including consideration such as scale, massing, materials, height, building orientation and location relative to the heritage property.

Section 3.5.2 of the Official Plan contains policies regarding the creation of cultural capital. The Official Plan recognizes that great cities offer and promote a vibrant cultural life and that a flourishing cultural life is a magnet attracting new residents to the City and convincing existing residents to stay.

Chapter 4 – Land Use Designations

OPA 273 redesignates the 677 Wellington Street West lands as Park and Open Space areas. Parks and Open Space Areas consist of the parks and open spaces, valleys, watercourses and ravines, portions of the waterfront, golf courses and cemeteries that comprise a green open space network in Toronto. These spaces are intended primarily to provide areas of passive and active recreation.

Development within Parks and Open Space Areas is generally prohibited, with the exception of recreational facilities, cultural works, conservation projects, and essential public works and utilities where necessary.

Policy 4.3(8) provides that the sale or disposal of publicly owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas is discouraged and no City owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas will be sold or disposed of.

Chapter 7 - Site and Area Specific Policies

Chapter 7 contains site and area specific policies that vary from one or more of the provisions of the Official Plan and require a further layer of local policy direction for an area.

Site and Area Specific Policy 265 provides a list of City owned land in the Green Space System or Parks and Open Space Areas for which the Official Plan's provisions prohibiting the disposal of City land do not apply.

The City of Toronto Official Plan can be found here: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>.

Garrison Common North Secondary Plan

The site is within the Garrison Common North Secondary Plan Area. The Secondary Plan's major objectives include:

- Ensuring that new development be integrated into the established city fabric in terms of streets, blocks, uses, density patterns;
- Permitting a variety of land uses and densities;
- Providing community services and facilities;
- Protecting industrial and communications uses; and
- Provision of a range of housing types in terms of size, type, affordability and tenure through new development.

The site at 677 Wellington Street West is located within Policy Area 1 of the Garrison Common North Secondary Plan 2. Policy Area 1 contains policies to guide the future land use and development potential within the area bordered generally by Bathurst Street, Wellington Street West, Strachan Avenue and the

Metrolinx Rail Corridor. These policies were updated and brought into effect with the passing of Official Plan Amendment 231 in December 2013.

Policy 10.1(e) of the Garrison Common Secondary Plan states that the area will be subject to a further planning exercise and study, which will take into consideration the need to provide employment uses within the area. In particular, Policy 10.1(e)(v) states that heritage considerations need to be addressed for the Wellington Street incinerator, and the potential for adaptive reuse and preservation of the existing structure.

Through the adoption of OPA 231, City Council established a framework and terms of reference that provided City Planning staff with direction to undertake the study that resulted in the South Niagara Planning Strategy.

The Garrison Common North Secondary Plan is available on the City's website at: <https://www1.toronto.ca/planning/14-garrison-common.pdf>

South Niagara Planning Strategy (OPA 273)

In October 2013, City Planning staff commenced a study of the South Niagara area, which is located generally between Wellington Street West, Bathurst Street, Strachan Avenue and the Metrolinx Rail Corridor. The study resulted in the adoption of OPA 273 by City Council in August 2014. The objectives of the South Niagara Planning Strategy are as follows:

- Identify and protect the South Niagara Area's unique locational and heritage attributes;
- Ensure protection of existing City-services and the established neighbourhood;
- Provide a framework for new developments that will ensure an appropriate fit within the area context;
- Identify opportunities to expand and enhance the public realm and transportation network including better connectivity;
- Provide for continued employment uses within new developments in a manner that limits impacts to residential uses within the South Niagara Area;
- Expand existing park spaces; and
- Ensure visual transitions and view corridors resulting from any new development relating to the adjacent Fort York National Historic Site are appropriate.

OPA 273 amends the land use designations in the study area on Official Plan Map 18 – Land Use and Policy 10.1 of the Garrison Common North Secondary Plan to reflect these objectives. OPA 273 specifically amends Map 18 – Land Use by redesignating the 677 Wellington Street West site to Parks and Open Space Areas, with the objective of creating a parkland connection to facilitate a future southern extension of Stanley Park to the north landing of Garrison Crossing.

The South Niagara Planning Strategy promotes the reuse and refurbishment of the Wellington Destructor and exploration of opportunities to establish a cultural/community facility within and around the existing building. Additions to the building, which are sympathetic to the Destructor's heritage character, and

implement the transition policies of the South Niagara Strategy, may be considered, to the satisfaction of the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, to provide additional floor space on site in order to achieve adaptive re-use of the site, subject to necessary planning or heritage approvals. Community space, office uses, cultural uses and other non-residential uses compatible with the surrounding community will be permitted.

Official Plan Amendment 273 as adopted by City Council is available on the City's website at: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2014/law1042.pdf>

Community Consultation

City Planning held a virtual drop-in consultation session with the community on December 1, 2021. Staff from CreateTO were also present at the drop-in session along with seven members of the public. Comments from the public were generally in support of allowing a long term lease of the property to facilitate the adaptive reuse. Several comments expressed concern regarding the potential noise and transportation impacts of the adaptive reuse, which will be addressed through the forthcoming Zoning By-law Amendment application once the head lessee is secured.

COMMENTS

The proposal has been reviewed against the policies of the PPS (2020), the Growth Plan (2020). Staff are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with the PPS and conforms with Growth Plan.

This application proposes to add 677 Wellington Street West to Official Plan Site and Area Specific Policy 265 so that it is exempt from Official Plan Policy 4.3.8, which prohibits the disposal of City-owned land in areas designated as Parks and Open Spaces.

Adding this property to the list of properties in Site and Area Specific Policy 265 would not change the designation of the subject lands and would facilitate the adaptive reuse of the Wellington Destructor by allowing the City to negotiate a long term lease of the property, as directed by City Council. The adaptive reuse of the Wellington Destructor will help fulfill the objectives of the South Niagara Planning

Strategy by transforming the existing City-owned heritage building as a cultural and community hub. As such, City staff recommend approval of the application to amend the Official Plan.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings
Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment

Attachment 1: Draft Official Plan Amendment

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW NO. XXX-2021

To adopt an amendment to the Official Plan for the City of Toronto respecting the lands known municipally in the year 2021 as 677 Wellington Street West.

Whereas authority is given to the Council of the City of Toronto under the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended, to pass this By-law; and

Whereas Council of the City of Toronto has provided adequate information to the public and has held at least one public meeting in accordance with the Planning Act;

The Council of the City of Toronto enacts:

1. The attached Amendment 567 to the Official Plan is hereby adopted pursuant to the Planning Act, as amended.

Enacted and passed on _____.

Frances Nunziata,
Speaker
Clerk

Ulli S. Watkiss,
City

(Seal of the City)

City of Toronto By-law No. XXX-2020

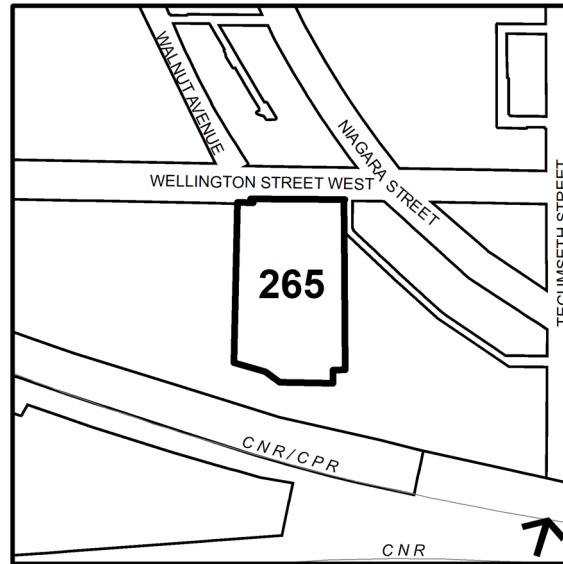
AMENDMENT NO. 567 TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN

To adopt an amendment to the Official Plan for the City of Toronto respecting the lands known municipally in the year 2021 as 677 Wellington Street West.

The Official Plan of the City of Toronto is amended as follows:

1. Site and Area Specific Policy 265 of Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies is amended by adding the following text and map respecting the lands known municipally in the year 2021 as 677 Wellington Street West.

677 Wellington Street West:



2. Map 29, Site and Area Specific Policies, is amended by labelling the property at 677 Wellington Street West as being subject to Site and Area Specific Policy No. 265.