

June 27, 2022

Dear Members of the Toronto East York Community Council,

RE: 95 ST. JOSEPH STREET - TEYCC Agenda items TE 34.7 and TE 34.15, June 29, 2022

On June 29th you must make a very difficult decision with respect to matters relating to 95 St. Joseph Street:

- TE 34.7- A request for an OPA and Re-zoning and
- TE 34.15 A request to demolish a very important landmark Heritage building on the site.

We are a coalition of three condominium buildings that either abut or overlook 95 St. Joseph: 62 Wellesley Street (adjacent to the south), 1000 Bay/57 St. Joseph (adjacent to the east) and 1080 Bay/65 St. Mary Street (to the north). Together we represent 1600 condominium residences/2500 community members.

We have very serious objections to both proposals. To sum those up, ***if both requests are granted by you today the proper balance between community interests, heritage interests, and a property owner's right to development has not been achieved.***

HERITAGE

When we voiced our objections to the Heritage Preservation Board on June 14th, they were well received, and the Board did not accept the proposed Alterations Report.

The Preservation Board had already recommended full Heritage IV status on February 15th for this landmark building by Ernest Cormier, recognized as the most renowned Canadian architect of the 20th century, and on March 22nd you, the TEYCC, accepted that recommendation. Yet on June 14th the Developer, i.e., Daniels, was back asking for permission to demolish the building, retaining only the façade and burying the Cormier chapel beneath their high-rise tower.

Almost 300 communications were sent to the Preservation Board prior to its two hearings. They came from area residents, students, university alumni and faculty, and citizens from other parts of Toronto. Except for a small handful (about four), all communications voiced a strong support for proper, fuller heritage preservation of the building.

The Preservation Board did NOT agree with demolition of the building. On June 14th Board member Robert Allsopp summed it up: ***"This is a fragile place. It has some very special architectural pieces in it... it's a totality. How do we insert new development into that without destroying what we've already got? That we're adding to, we're not subtracting from, but we're adding to.... This is a very special place... not simply to St. Michael's College or the University, but to the citizens of Toronto, and we should treat this place with considerable attention and care.... So, whatever the Planning regime says about what's possible here, what's allowed, ... another approach needs to be taken here that's much gentler and much more careful about how hard it treads on this wonderful environment."***

ZONING

Our community has several major concerns about the proposed zoning, which we have voiced repeatedly to all levels of Planning, with no response.

The 39-storey tower is too tall.

- It will be the tallest building in the block, taller than anything else in the block. It is completely out of character with every building surrounding it.
- It will be taller than the adjoining Bay Street condos, taller than the government buildings in the Civic Precinct to the south.

The 39-storey tower will be completely out of character with every building surrounding it.

- The existing building is on the south flank of St. Michael's campus.
- The existing building helps form the harmonious architecture of St. Michael's campus.

The 39-storey tower will not transition from the adjoining Bay Street condos which are outside the Secondary Plan area, because it will be taller than those condos.

- When Councillor Layton asked on June 14th why it will not transition from the adjoining 32-storey condo at 1000 Bay, he was answered that there are other taller buildings around.
- Transition is a slope from taller down to shorter. It is impossible to transition down from any of those taller buildings without passing over either the adjoining 32-storey condo at 1000 Bay or the even shorter low-rise buildings on St. Mike's campus.
- If the developer is permitted to construct a 39-storey tower, it will be the building from which any future development in this area transitions down to the university and Queen's Park – because it will be the tallest

The site is part of the U of T Secondary Plan and is currently zoned for institutional use.

- The new U of T Secondary Plan, also before you (TE 34.8), proposes to keep that institutional zoning for the rest of the block.
- Yet the 39-storey tower proposed by Daniels has 27 floors of residential condo use.

Planning has done an incomprehensible 180° turn on this development application.

- In its first and only written evaluation, Planning unequivocally rejected as unacceptable both the 39-storey height and condo usage, but with a change in Planning staff, Planning has reversed its decision and the same 39-storey height and condo usage inexplicably are now acceptable. Why?

WHOSE INTERESTS ARE REALLY BEING SERVED HERE?

Who is driving this? Who is in charge here? Whose interests are really being served here? Not the community's. Not the citizens' of Toronto. Not St. Mike's and the affiliated universities'. Not the City's limited heritage holdings.

These matters will be decided on June 29th by you. It will be the last chance to achieve a balance between the competing interests here.

We are out of words. You may be our last hope.

It is up to you to come to some reasonable compromise.

Sincerely,



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