

June 21, 2022

Dear Councillors,

RE: 95 ST. JOSEPH STREET- Part IV HERITAGE DESIGNATION; TEYCC Agenda items TE34.15 and TE34, June 29, 2022

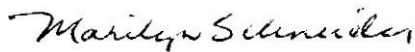
The enclosed is our request to you to protect the heritage status previously approved on March 9, 2022, for the Basilian Seminary at 95 St. Joseph Street. We ask you to listen to the expert opinion of the Toronto Preservation Board, who could not recommend the Amendments Report for this site at their recent meeting on June 14, 2022.

The community has been working to preserve this building since 2017 when they came together to file the application for Heritage Designation. Almost 300 communications about this site were sent to the Toronto Preservation Board prior to its two meetings voicing their support for proper heritage preservation of the building. Communications came from area residents, students, alumni and citizens from across Toronto. Shandra Shaul, the Chair of the Board, noted that in her tenure she had never received so many communications on one file. Many in the community would lose faith in the Heritage Protection process of the City if this development is allowed to go forward.

Each of us is the President of our Condominium Corporations, all of which either abut or look onto 95 St. Joseph Street – part of a unique green oasis leading into Queen’s Park. Together we represent 1600 condominium unit owners and over 2500 area residents who live in our buildings. 95 Action Group is a coalition of area residents.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with this sensitive heritage site of importance to all Torontonians. Please vote to save Cormier’s Basilian Seminary and respect and uphold the decision of the Toronto Preservation Board.

Yours truly,



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Board President
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Rocco Mortelliti
Board President
1000 Bay/57 St. Joseph Street



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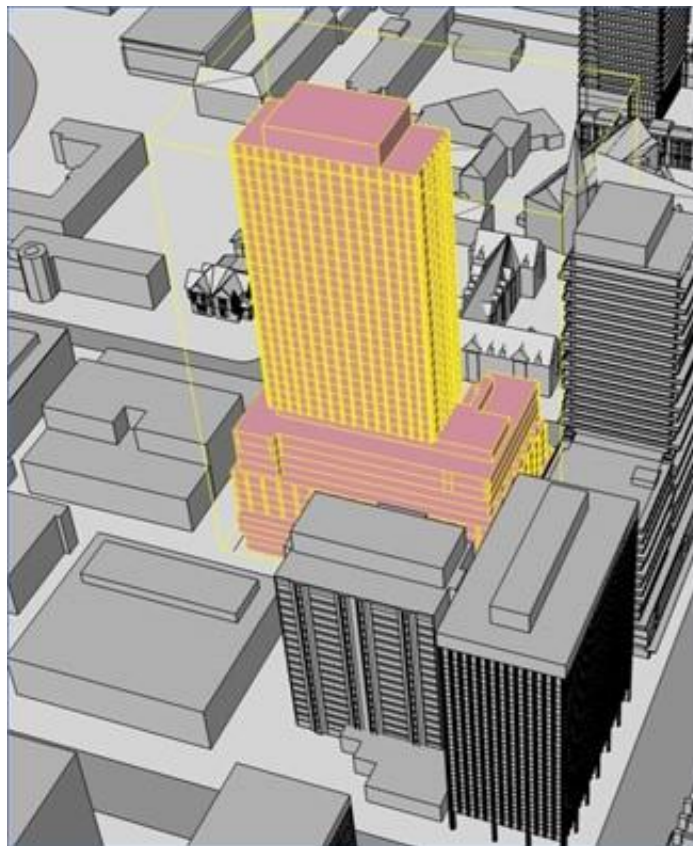


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Time-Critical Call to Save Toronto Heritage



St Joseph Street, Low-Rise Streetscape and Cormier's Seminary Building



Developer's Rendering – Effect on Streetscape and St Mike's Campus

In just a few days' time, on June 29, you will be asked to approve an Official Plan amendment and a Rezoning Application to allow a development application at 95 St Joseph Street. This is a site of Canadian significance with implications for all Torontonians. Please consider these points before you make your decision:

This is a Rare and Precious Toronto Heritage Building of National Importance

The Basilian Seminary was designed by famed Canadian architect Ernest Cormier – who heritage expert Phyllis Lambert has called “*one of the most important Canadian architects of the 20th century*”. It seems unlikely that Ottawa would demolish its Cormier-designed Supreme Court Building. Or that Montreal would demolish Cormier House (ultimately owned by Pierre Trudeau), or Cormier’s Roger-Gaudry Pavillion at the University of Montreal. Why would Toronto demolish this landmark building, one of the only three Cormier buildings in this city?

This is a Unique and Important part of Toronto

The proposed redevelopment plan for 95 St Joseph will largely destroy the Level IV heritage protected Basilian Seminary. It is an integral part of the Cultural Heritage Landscape of St Michael’s College Campus in the University of Toronto, close to Queen’s Park and, along with Carr Hall just across the street, part of Cormier’s master plan for the campus. It is on the south flank of St. Michael’s campus.

The graphic illustrates how inappropriate it would be to replace the building with a high-rise tower that does not fit into the scale of the other buildings on the street and the campus. Most major cities worldwide jealously preserve the locale of their grand legislative buildings and their great universities. *We enclose a recent article from The Globe and Mail about the building.*

The Basilian Seminary is sited on St Joseph Street, the last remaining low-rise (nothing higher than 4-storeys), institutional, tree-lined gateway street leading eastwards into Queen’s Park from Bay Street. “*St. Joseph’s Street, this avenue to pass into the University, to rest your mind, to think, is free to all Torontonians - the student, the scholar, the homeless. Space and beauty for freedom of thought must be preserved in your planning*”. *Mary Pat Kielty, 1958 St Mike’s Alumnus.*

Toronto’s Heritage should be Protected

Earlier this year, TEYCC approved this building for full Part IV Heritage Designation. Less than three months later, the first test of this protection came when the City Heritage Alterations Report (which supported the Developer’s request to demolish the building, save for a façade and one chapel to be buried under the 39-storey tower). On June 14 the Toronto Preservation Board refused to support this. Of course, the City will benefit from substantial revenues from the development for laudable causes such as affordable housing – but can it really only be achieved at the cost of sacrificing our sparse Cultural and Heritage resource?

“I prefer to say this is a fragile place. It has some very special architectural pieces in it... it’s a totality. How do we insert development into that without destroying what we have got? I’m not going to support this recommendation because it doesn’t start from that point.”

Robert Allsopp, Toronto Preservation Board Member

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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June 28, 2022

To: Members of the Toronto East York Community Council,

RE: TE34.8. University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan – Official Plan Amendment Application – Final Report (Ward 11 – Statutory: Planning Act, RSO 1990).

Dear Councillors,

We are a coalition of three condominium buildings situated along the east and southeast edges of St. Michael's campus in the new East Campus Character Area, immediately outside the boundary of the Secondary Plan area: 62 Wellesley Street (adjacent to the south), 1000 Bay/57 St. Joseph (adjacent to the east) and 1080 Bay/65 St. Mary Street (further away to the north). Together we represent 1600 condominium residences/2500 community members.

We know this corner of the campus very well. Many of the residents of our buildings are students, faculty, alumni or otherwise associated with the University of Toronto and have participated actively in the public process regarding the Heritage Designation of 95 St. Joseph Street (over 300 communications sent). They care deeply about the surrounding area.

We now repeat a request we have already made both orally in community consultation and in writing, that two seemingly minor, but significant changes be made to the proposed Secondary Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines, both in the East Campus Character Area.

1. Secondary Plan, page 17: East Campus Character Area, 5.15 f , Tighten up the intent and parameters of transition by Inserting the words “nearby” and “southern” into the definition;
2. Urban Design Guidelines, page 50: Figure 2.21 Change the gold cross identifier on 95 St. Joseph Street, which should instead be designated a “Potential Taller Institutional Element.”

Secondary Plan: Request to tighten up the intent and parameters of transition by inserting the words “nearby” and “southern” into the text definition on Page 17, East Campus Character Area, 5.15 f.

We applaud Planning for recognizing that within the new East Campus Character Area, the easternmost portion, composed primarily of the University of St. Michael's College and Victoria University campuses, comprises a very special, beloved area with “a more intimate public realm character” with intimate green enclosed spaces, framed by architecturally harmonious structures, often of heritage value. Because of this recognition, Planning has documented that in the central, “interior,” or “core” part of this area, development will be limited primarily to restoration, and no taller institutional elements will be permitted.

The southern piece, south of St. Joseph (section 5.15 f) is inherently and undeniably a continuation of the central “core” campus, not only in low-rise built form, but in architectural style, which is known to have been carefully planned and coordinated, first by Ernest Cormier, and then by successive architects.

- All existing built forms are now uniformly low-rise institutional buildings, echoing those of the central “core” campus.

- All existing built forms are architecturally harmonious with those of the central “core” campus.

The only exception to this uniform harmony of height and style will be the Basilian Seminary at 95 St. Joseph, if the Council approves on June 29th the 39-storey condo tower development being proposed for the site. However, the Basilian Seminary is just inside the eastern edge of the East Campus Character Area.

To the south of the southern piece is the Civic Precinct of low- and mid-scale government buildings, mostly around 14-storey, none more than 24 storeys. For any new development in the southern piece, there should also be transition to the interior portion of the Character Area north of St. Joseph Street from the Civic Precinct to the south.

To protect the very special character of the southern portion of the East Campus Character Area, and to preclude the possible misuse or abuse of any ambiguity in the parameters of transition, we request that the wording of (f) be amended as follows:

“f) south of St. Joseph Street, include a mix of low-scale institutional buildings, mid-scale institutional buildings and taller institutional elements, which will be designed and massed to provide noticeable and discernable built form transition in scale from the **NEARBY** eastern **AND SOUTHERN** edges of the Character Area to the lower scale Queen’s Park Character Area to the west and to the interior portion of the Character Area north of St. Joseph Street.”

Urban Design Guidelines: Request to change the gold cross identifier on Figure 2.21

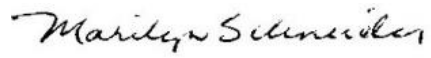
In the proposed Urban Design Guidelines, Figure 2.21 on page 50 shows a map of the Secondary Plan area on which are identified proposed and potential taller institutional elements. Shown here is every “Existing and Approved Taller Institutional Element” with a grey cross, and every “Potential Taller Institutional Element” with a pink cross, as well as three “Existing and Approved Tall Buildings” with blue crosses, and one “Proposed Tall Building” with a gold cross.

The single building identified as a “Proposed Tall Building” with a gold cross is 95 St. Joseph Street, the development application which is being considered by TEYCC for approval on June 29th - but for which the Heritage Preservation Committee has not accepted the heritage alterations report that proposes demolition of the heritage IV building, preservation of only the façade and the chapel to be buried under a condo tower. Without demolishing the building, the construction cannot proceed.

Whether or not TEYCC approves the development application, it is at present, in limbo, only an application. So identifying this as a “Proposed Tall Building” rather than a “Potential Taller Institutional Element” is presuming Council’s decision and usurping Council’s authority. And, if for some reason it were not to be approved, this “Proposed Tall Building” designation would still be present in the Urban Design Guidelines.

Development within this southern section of the East Campus Character Area is now described in the Secondary Plan as having to transition in scale from the eastern edge of the Character Area to the lower area to the west (see above). So, by identifying this building as a “Proposed Tall Building,” Planning may be establishing 39-storeys as the height from which other developments will transition downward.

Sincerely,



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