



22 June 2022

To the Chair and Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council:

Re: TE34.24, 250 University Avenue and Request to Amend the Zoning By-law, Application No. 18 150984 STE 20 OZ

Zoning amendments at landmark intersection

This month (June 15), Toronto City Council removed part of the Osgoode Hall property from a zoning by-law amendment that would have permitted Metrolinx to use 20% of the Osgoode Garden for transportation uses. The unanimous decision and direction to staff to investigate other options for Ontario Line infrastructure raised awareness of the significance of the landmark intersection.

The zoning amendment before the TEYCC for 250 University would be another major impact on the intersection, kitty corner from Osgoode Hall and similarly requires consideration of the special context. Yet, the development application for 250 University represents a lack of coherent planning for the landmark intersection, with respect to: 1. Transportation; 2. 2004 urban design guidelines for the northwest quadrant of Queen and University; and 3. natural environment.

1. Transportation

Although the original proposal for 250 University originated long before the present form of the Ontario Line and its proposed station entrances, the request before the TEYCC for a zoning by-law amendment and the associated documents show no specific response to the current form of the Ontario Line, a surprising omission given the huge scale of the Ontario Line and the fact that the project is now under the microscope at Osgoode Station. On May 3, 2021, I asked Planning by email: “Does the current proposal [for 250 University] take into consideration the underground infrastructure for the Ontario Line?” On September 15, 2021 (4 months later), staff punted my question to Metrolinx: “At Metrolinx's June 17th Virtual Open House, their Presentation Materials identified the CIBC bank building on the other side of Simcoe Street as a Future Station Building for the Ontario Line station. Metrolinx will host another presentation on September 30th about this section of the Ontario Line, which may be the best place to ask detailed questions about underground connections to the subway.”

With respect to the planning of 250 University, located at the southwest corner of a major “intersection” of two subway lines, it appears that in 2021 the City was not taking responsibility for the interface between Metrolinx’s Ontario Line and our urban fabric.

On the other hand, when the Chair of the Toronto Preservation Board, Sandra Shaul, requested that Metrolinx attend the Board’s May 10, 2022 meeting to discuss/explain how 250 University fits into the agency’s plans for Osgoode Station, Metrolinx simply did not appear.

I request that the TEYCC defer its decision on 250 University until City staff and Metrolinx have had sufficient time to respond to City Council's June 15, 2022 direction with respect to the location of transit infrastructure for Osgoode Station.

2. 2004 Urban Design Guidelines for Queen-University/Canada Life

GBCA Architects' Heritage Impact Assessment for 250 University overlooked the City's 2004 urban design guidelines for "Queen-University/Canada Life" (<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/976f-Toronto-Urban-Design-Guidelines-Queen-University-Canada-Life.pdf>). This City planning document for the Canada Life campus (p 7): (i) links the Bank of Canada Building to the ensemble of buildings at Queen and University; (ii) recognizes the "sense of continuity and coherence" of this ensemble; and (iii) states that "[t]he buildings at the south end of the [Canada Life] Campus, in association with the adjacent buildings on the south side of Queen Street, are to form an appropriate urban ensemble framing the Campbell House."

I understand that Canada Life has launched a "future planning exercise" for its campus and is discussing the current outdated As of Right Master Plan completed in the early 2000's. They "are considering what a new potential Master Plan may look like for the Canada Life Campus encompassing the evolving city of Toronto development policy framework" (Great West Realty Advisors to Liz Driver, April 30, 2021). Deviations from the 2004 Urban Design Guidelines for Queen-University/Canada Life with respect to 250 University may set a precedent for the Canada Life Campus, with unexpected consequences, by reducing the City's planning control of the area's long-recognized special character.

I request that the TEYCC defer its decision on 250 University until City staff have considered the 250 University proposal in relation to the 2004 Urban Design Guidelines for Queen-University/Canada Life, in consultation with stakeholders. .

3. Natural Environment

The Osgoode and Campbell House gardens are recognized for their contribution to the downtown natural environment. The Osgoode property is one of only a few properties in the city with a right to sun. The proposal for 250 University will reduce sunlight on both gardens.

I request that the TEYCC defer its decision on 250 University until a professional study is undertaken to assess the impact of reduced sunlight on both gardens.

I trust that the above three concerns will be addressed in order to ensure a coherent planning process for the intersection, especially with respect to Ontario Line infrastructure and the Canada Life campus.

Liz Driver, Director/Curator

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