



November 29, 2022

Chair and Members,
Toronto East York Community Council

Re: Item TE 1.7 – 759-763 Queen Street East.

Dear TEYCC Chair and Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Ralph Thornton Community Centre, one of the City's ten AOCC's, which is located directly adjacent to the address under consideration.

As part of the initial community consultation on this proposal, RTCC had submitted a comprehensive outline of our concerns, which is attached for your information. We understand that, since the applicant has appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, the opportunities to further influence this application at the City planning level are significantly reduced.

We do hope that, should this appeal be successful and the application go forward, the issues we had raised in our earlier correspondence will be addressed in discussions between City Planning and the developer. In particular, we trust that the challenges of deliveries and pick-ups, including garbage disposal, on a site that is directly adjacent to a Child-Parent Centre outdoor play area will be addressed in a manner that ensures the health and safety of the children and families that use the Centre.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. Any steps that can be taken to incorporate them at this stage of the process would be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Campey
Executive Director

Encl.



May 4, 2022

Raymond Tung

City Planning

Dear Mr. Tung,

Thank you for organizing the online community meeting which provided an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to share concerns and suggestions regarding the proposed development at 759-763 Queen Street East.

This letter is sent from the Ralph Thornton Community Centre and building partners – the South Riverdale Child-Parent Centre, and Don Valley Community Legal Services. We wanted to follow up on the April 4 meeting to document and highlight some of the concerns raised at that meeting, to make sure that they are fully taken into account in the City's planning moving forward. They are:

Height and massing of the building:

The proposal as submitted substantially exceeds both the current zoning permission and the mid-rise guidelines for the City – double the square footage density permitted, and a height ten metres greater than permitted, and at least one storey higher than the mid-rise guidelines would support. Being directly adjacent to RTCC, this proposal will dwarf our heritage building, and is substantially taller and more dense than any current, or to the best of our knowledge, planned development along the portion of Queen Street East close to the Centre.

Access to the building:

We were very concerned to hear that the only access to the building for deliveries will be from the Queen Street East side. Queen Street is one of the busiest thoroughfares in the City, with a streetcar line that is a vital artery for Toronto's public transit network. The parking that is available on Queen Street East during 'regular' hours is already fully occupied at all hours, and during rush hour, there is no place to park or stop in front of this building. Queen Street vehicular and streetcar traffic is already hampered by drivers stopping for 'just a moment' to make deliveries or pick-ups, and adding the Amazon, Uber Eats, Fedex, and other 'just in time' delivery vehicles for twenty-nine residential units and three commercial units to this mix will further disrupt both transit and vehicular traffic. Additionally, some of these deliveries will attempt to use Saulter Street as a location to park, and this small residential street adjacent to RTCC is, again, already beyond capacity for cars and trucks.

RTCC only has four dedicated parking spaces, and despite attempt to enforce parking restrictions, we very often already find that delivery and service vehicles servicing our building are unable to park and access our building due to illegally parked vehicles, who can often not wait for the time it takes traffic enforcement to arrive and clear a space. Again, adding twenty-nine residential and three commercial spaces with no dedicated arrangements for deliveries, service vehicles, or visitor parking will exacerbate an already challenging situation.

Building parking:

While we appreciate that a development on a major transit corridor merits some reduction in the number of vehicle parking spaces required, we worry that the dramatic reduction in spaces proposed for this development is unrealistic. To suggest that less than a third of the owners of what will be million dollar condominiums will own cars, or not have visitors seeking parking, is, at very best, wishful thinking. Unit owners who cannot secure one of the limited parking spaces will place additional pressure on already limited street parking, and anyone visiting the building will be similarly challenged. Even the bicycle parking proposed for the building does not meet the recommended minimum number of spaces, despite the suggestion in the meeting that it is 'abundant.'

Garbage Disposal:

We are extremely concerned about the plans for disposal of waste from the building. While we appreciate that there is an interior garbage room, and private garbage disposal planned, we are still concerned that garbage will be 'put out' for pick-up in the laneway behind the building, directly adjacent to the Child-Parent Centre play area, for pick up. It seems unlikely that there could be a perpetually enforceable arrangement where the building operators receive 'valet' garbage pick up – where the contracted disposal company enters the building to retrieve all waste from the garbage room for direct placement into a garbage truck. A situation where waste bins sit immediately beside the playground is not only unpleasant – especially during the height of summer when the waste will decompose and ferment in the heat – but we perceive such placement as a health and safety hazard, for the young children and families.

Light and noise well:

While we appreciate the fact that an increasingly dense City means the loss of views and light in many situations, we anticipate that the proposal will negatively impact not only users of RTCC, but also creates potential challenges for the new residents. The proposal calls for a 'light well' on the east side of the building, mirroring the existing indentation on the west side of RTCC, which currently provides light for the second and third floor hallways of RTCC, as well as very limited light to the Mezzanine. This construction will entirely eliminate the west views from the second and third floors of RTCC, and significantly reduce the natural light received by those two spaces.

Additionally, the existing windows that open from those two hallways provide ventilation for the second and third floors, and are left open during operating hours (and with Covid, have formed a vital aspect of the Centre's ventilation, since our antiquated HVAC system does not enable adequate air circulation in the building). Since the building offers a wide range of programming, including community events, concerts, parties and receptions that often go until 1:00 or 2:00 AM, we are very concerned that the noise from these events will travel through these open windows, reverberate in the entirely enclosed well, and disturb the residents of adjacent units. We value our capacity to serve our community by providing a space where these events can take place, and we want to avoid confrontations down the road with adjacent residents who may not have been aware of this situation when they purchased their units. Even putting aside the noise from late night events, the large air conditioning unit at the base of the well, which services the library branch, will create constant ambient noise that will reverberate in the enclosed space.

Other Concerns:

We also share the concerns of neighbouring residents that the excessive height and massing of the building will have a negative impact on their enjoyment of their homes in terms of increased competition for parking and lack of privacy for their outdoor space.

RTCC staff have also flagged the concern that particular attention needs to be paid to the RTCC foundation adjacent to the new construction, as it may not be adequate to withstand such significant excavation and construction directly adjacent without significant remediation and support. The foundation of the building is more than 100 years old and its condition is uncertain. Currently, vermin penetrate the wall adjoining the neighbouring property, and several years ago, water entered through the walls when a water line burst in the neighbouring building, which leads us to believe that there is a significant risk to the integrity of our foundation during construction.

Construction Issues:

While we understand that City Planning does not deal directly with issues related to the construction of the building, we did want to document these at this point so that they are on the record.

The construction of this project will have a significant impact on the operations of all partners at RTCC. Just the construction of the presentation centre has already created challenges for us, in terms of inconsiderate street and laneway parking, contractors that have not shown caution or respect for the children and families accessing the South Riverdale Child-Parent Centre, and demolition work taking place onto Queen Street East without required permits and appropriate safety precautions, requiring emergency services to call and attend on at least one occasion.

Moving forward, we want to ensure that any construction does not jeopardize the safety of our service users – we are particularly concerned with ensuring that the South Riverdale Child-Parent Centre playground area and those with mobility challenges – an integral and vital aspect of the Centre's operations – remains safe and operational throughout the construction period. Since the main entry to RTCC is directly adjacent to the construction site, we are also concerned that this access must be safely and clearly maintained throughout the construction process.

Given the extremely tight access to the Centre and the adjacent residences, we also want strategies that ensure that both residential and emergency access is maintained at all times – again, the fact that this has already been an issue with the simple modifications required for the presentation centre leave us extremely concerned that the full construction project will create an impossible situation for our neighbours.

We were surprised to hear, at the meeting, that the construction plans had not taken into account the planned construction for the Ontario Line, less than a block away – these two projects taking place at once threaten to make our immediate neighbourhood totally impassable – a thorough, well documented plan, outlining mechanisms for reporting and immediate response to situations of concern, and ensuring communication and coordination across the silos of the different departments and jurisdictions must be in place prior to commencement of any demolition or construction activity on the site.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these concerns. We look forward to seeing them addressed in the City's response to this application, and are happy to provide any additional information or perspective that may be helpful in your next steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Campey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Campey" clearly distinguishable.

John Campey, Executive Director

cc. Councillor Paula Fletcher
Queen/Saulter Branch, Toronto Public Library
South Riverdale Child-Parent Centre
Don Valley Community Legal Services
Riverside BIA
Carly Bowman
Patrick Mattozo
Aderonke Akande