



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF CANADA**  
**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY OF TORONTO**  
**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ**

ESTABLISHED IN 1909

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Protopresbyter Triantafillos Porfiris

October 16, 2023

The Chair and Members of the  
Toronto and East York Community Council  
City of Toronto

**RE: T8.4 - 98-100 Bond Street and 54-74 Dundas Street East - Zoning By-law Amendment Application**

Dear Councillors,

St. George's Greek Orthodox Church of Toronto ("St. George's"), the owner of property municipally known as 115 Bond Street (the "Church Property"), in the City of Toronto (the "City") does not generally oppose the proposed development for residential uses at 98 Bond St. (also referred to as the "Basis' proposal"), except for the issues noted below.

The issues refer to aspects of the proposed urban design that do not conform to the City's guidelines or will lead to traffic problems on Bond St. St. George's objects to these issues and asks that the application be deferred to provide time for a good urban design, instead of a tall building with street wall effects to the pedestrian particularly on Bond St.

Background. The church was built in 1895 to serve as the Holy Blossom Temple. The building is now occupied by St. George's Greek Orthodox Church as it was acquired by St. George's in 1937. St. George's is the oldest Greek Orthodox community in Canada and, up until 1961, the only Greek Orthodox church in the City of Toronto. It operates under the jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Canada.

On November 19, 1976, the City of Toronto designated the Church Property as a heritage property having architectural value and historical interest. By-law 637-76 was subsequently registered on title as Instrument No. CT212461. On June 29, 2018, City Council enacted by-law 807-2018 to amend former City of Toronto By-law 637-76 being a by-law to designate the property at 115 Bond Street (Saint George's Greek Orthodox Church, formerly known as the Holy Blossom Synagogue) under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, by revising the reasons for designation to describe the property's cultural heritage value and heritage attributes. The latter include the murals in St. George's church that were painted between 1981 and 1987 by two Pachomaioi monks (Christian ascetic monastic – see St. Pachomius) – Theophillos and Christostomos (renowned master iconographers). Toronto is the only city in the world outside of Greece to have had a church painted by monks from Mount Athos.

St. George's is therefore a significant heritage resource of the City. This includes both external and internal elements, in addition to its contextual importance. Annually, the Church Property participates in the Doors Open Toronto event, and thousands of people have been visiting this historically significant structure.

We next list the issues with this rezoning application.

- (i) The developer has filed several resubmissions since the original proposal in July 2021, a few of them in the last 6 months. The original proposal was for a 30-storey building with 287 residential units, whereas the current proposal is for a 23-storey building with 336 units. Although we expressed several concerns at the public consultation, the developer never contacted us since then. We only had initial discussions with the developer in January and March 2021 based on preliminary 2-d sketches of the development. This is in contrast to p.9 of "Public Consultation Strategy Report" which stated that our community was consulted on the proposal.

Furthermore, despite the significant changes from the original submission no other public consultation meeting was held.

In fact, the latest planning rationale provided by Bousfields, dated March 9 2023, has significant deviations from the current plan submission that is being considered at this Community Council meeting. Why is that? Is this acceptable?

- (ii) The building is located on Bond St., a unique street for the City of Toronto, the "Cathedral row" as it is sometimes cited, with a significant number of heritage buildings, both north and south of Dundas, despite its short distance. The design of the building does not take any cues from the surrounding heritage buildings.

More specifically, page 38 of the submitted "Heritage Impact Statement" report lists the specific City of Toronto Downtown Tall Building Design Guidelines that apply to the design of buildings adjacent to heritage properties and Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). However, neither this report nor the Planning Rationale report describe how the proposed design adheres to these guidelines.

In our initial discussions and public consultations, we had strongly encouraged the developer to take into account the heritage nature of Bond St. when designing the building. For example, Toronto Metropolitan University has taken such cues in the design of its proposed new building at 137 Bond St., southeast corner of Bond and Gould St.

In contrast, we are disappointed to see that the developer at the other end of the street, 98-100 Bond St., has not taken any cues from the surrounding heritage buildings.

- (iii) The 15-storey middle tower only has a 10m setback from the adjacent property on the north. The City's guidelines call for a 12.5m setback. On the west side the width of Victoria Street Lane is only 5.93m. Although the plans show an additional 14.5m setback for the 15-storey tower, this only applies to the middle tower above the podium. Any residential units that the developer

may put in the podium or in the main tower will be about 6m from the property on the other side of Victoria Street Lane that TMU is planning to develop.

- (iv) Although the original application had a 3m setback of the main tower and a 6m setback of the middle tower above the podium on Bond St., these setbacks have been eliminated in the current submission. Instead, only the 15-storey (middle) tower has 1.5m step back above the 8<sup>th</sup> floor whereas the main tower (23-storeys) has 0m step back. This would render the pedestrian with a street wall effect. This is not acceptable on any street and particularly on this historic street for the City of Toronto as mentioned above. Moreover, the north side of the towers seems unfinished further accentuating the street wall effect. This is not good urban design.
- (v) The base building is setback 3 metres from Victoria Street Lane and 2.3 metres from Dundas Street East for the first 3 storeys. In addition, on the southwest side, levels 4 through 6 have been stepped back at the corner to open the view from Dundas Square looking east. However, none of these setbacks or step backs have been applied to Bond St. Why is that? Shouldn't these setbacks and step backs be symmetrical?
- (vi) Despite its massive density, the building has no parking whatsoever. Is it reasonable to accept that none of the dwellers in the 336 units would have a car? Is it reasonable to accept that none of the visitors to those units would have a car? Even with a 10% assumption of residents/visitors bringing cars, this would create a significant demand for street parking on Bond St. and the neighbouring streets. This would create a huge accessibility problem for our parishioners on Sunday mornings, particularly the elderly ones, as they would not be able to find street parking and would eventually stop coming to St. George's.

St. George's has made efforts to make its building accessible. However, the proposed project, due to its impractical urban design aspects conflicting with the character and history of the street effectively undermines accessibility for a long-standing historical site and community.

We understand the City may be in general allowing development of residential buildings with no parking. However, in this case this may cause severe negative ramifications on St. George's and its heritage building.

We are fortunate in Toronto to have rare architectural gems and invaluable community centres of historical importance that bring community life to these areas of the city. A focus on maximum density in newcomer structures, via designs that disregard the urban planning needs of these historical sites, create a situation where these gems of community-building are threatened by the City's growth and development instead of incorporated by a city placing a primacy on inclusiveness.

Since we do not believe this is either the developer's or the City's intention, we urge both parties to come up with a proposal that would resolve this issue for St. George's parishioners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grigoris Karakoulas', written in a cursive style.

Grigoris Karakoulas  
President of the Board