



AVRA
AVOCA VALE
RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION

February 19, 2024

City of Toronto
100 Queen Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Attention: Toronto and East York Community Council

teycc@toronto.ca

Re: 1365 Yonge Street – Application number 23 154139 STE 12 OZ

Dear Members of the Toronto and East York Community Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Avoca Vale Residents' Association (AVRA) as a follow up to our initial letter to the City planners (copy enclosed) of October 23, 2023 which stated our serious objections to the Applicant's proposed development for 1365 Yonge Street. At that time, we offered to the developer "to pro-actively participate in crafting a better development for this site". Our genuine offer was unfortunately turned down and a new Application has been submitted which is essentially as we read it, the same basic building in form, massing and density with a few minor tweaks. Apparently, this was enough to satisfy the City Planning Department, stewards of our City's physical form and livability, if no one else.

This letter once again will briefly describe some of our many reasons for objecting to what we believe is a seriously flawed, and harmful proposal to the physical fabric of our community.

Some examples:

The Planning Report by the Goldberg Group cites for relevant context not only the nearby approved high-rise developments but as well the several 40-50 storey projects proposed in their various current stages of the approval process. The use of precedent projects whether approved or not is used consistently and extensively by every Applicant's Planning Consultant as a primary rationale to continually 'up the ante' and build a self-fulfilling case for more height

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and density. What is curious however is that when supporting documentation to the Application is provided, such as for wind, shadow, or transportation reports, many of these proposed high-rise towers and their possible deleterious cumulative impacts are left out of their studies and reports, such as in this case. This selective 'context', and its inclusion or exclusion confirms for us that the Applicant would like to have it 'both ways'. We submit that the City has either agreed to this prejudicial 'cherry picking' or simply ignored or overlooked it in their consideration of this Application.

Take for example the Wind Study by RWDI which did not include in its wind tunnel modelling, among several, the neighbouring high rise tower proposal across the street at 1366 Yonge and the approved tower at 1417 – 1429 Yonge. Even with this 'context-less' study the findings for the wind impacts at street level are significant for three of our four seasons. The cumulative impact of the buildings proposed and approved, if actually added to and studied in the modelling, regardless of the Applicant's included mitigating measures to the downdraft effects from a tall tower, would no doubt make the microclimate in and around this building worse than reported. The very same absence of a context (other large buildings proposed or approved) which was used as part of the planning argument to justify this proposal, can be found in the shadow study. Though a real context would exacerbate the reported shadow impacts, even those shown demonstrate that this proposed 50 storey tower's shadows would extend well into David Balfour Park at the other end of Rosehill Avenue during certain seasons.

The City is investing considerable resources in personnel and funding in the hopes of creating active, pedestrian and cycle friendly streetscapes such as along Yonge Street, as well as open spaces such as David Balfour Park on Rosehill Avenue. At the same time the City continues to recommend and ultimately approve development proposals such as this one destined to create difficult street level microclimates too dark, windy and gloomy for sitting comfortably at a patio in warm weather, or even standing and socializing at other times of the year. Unless properly and fully considered, the street level conditions of tower buildings, despite the artist's cheery renderings, will remain empty promises....and the proof is already around us.

The Traffic Study by Lea Consultants has significant shortcomings in similarly obvious ways that do not require engineering credentials to recognize. Their study is based (p 10) on eleven selected proposed and approved developments in the immediate area but also leaves out the 40+-storey tower proposed at 1366 Yonge across the street. This proposal will certainly impact traffic in the area. Their study identifies Pleasant Blvd, a key access route to the site with a busy bus and subway station across the street, as having a roadway cross section of 4 lanes, two in each direction. This is true for a small portion of the street (though some lanes have

limited parking and bus queuing along them) but it narrows considerably to two lanes at the Avoca/Pleasant intersection at the east end.

We would again highlight as we did in our first letter that access from Pleasant Blvd to the subject site, and for that matter to the proposed development site at 11 Pleasant Blvd. is confined to a narrow 12ft wide laneway approximately 100 ft.– too narrow for a requisite sidewalk and single lane of traffic. This traffic bottleneck and certain safety concern must be evaluated when considering access to the proposed 655 new residential units, as well as those proposed for 11 Pleasant Blvd. In addition to car, bicycle and pedestrian circulation one must also account for access for emergency vehicles, large moving trucks, garbage trucks and other service vehicles, as well as pick up and delivery vehicles...all arriving at this narrow and we believe potentially dangerous access pinch point. AVRA invited the City and the Applicant's traffic engineers through our initial letter, to join us on site to observe actual conditions and discuss any options available. That offer was never taken up.

Finally, we would comment again on the building's density and form. City planners consistently begin all public meetings by declaring that their planning framework comprised of the Official Plan, the Secondary Plans, and various guidelines including the Tall Building Guidelines, are the measures that inform their decision making. We take them at their word, otherwise why have them or bother trumpeting their importance. The design for this site as a condominium proposal has been from the outset, an oversized (above the 750 sq m recommended maximum floor plate) slab tower, a form previously approved for a very different type of floor plate use – a senior's building requiring additional service amenities per floor for the elderly. The Tall Building Guidelines understandably promote a point tower form as a building type allowing among several advantages for better separations between towers, more sunlight, better views between buildings, better street level conditions, and in fact better interior corridor and unit layouts for the benefit of owners or renters. There is no reason this recommended form of building could not have been pursued other than for the pursuit of maximizing density given the 'opening' of the previous seniors' building approval. The Application's statistics tell the story. The tower exceeds the recommended maximum floorplate on floors 9 -19 by 17%, from floors to 20 -50 by over 6%, with an even larger footprint from floors 5 -9. Beyond the obvious financial benefits to the Applicant should this clearly excessive proposal be approved; we are left coming back to and asking the pivotal question posed in the Official Plan as to what the benefits to the community would be that would warrant approval of this Application in its current form.

We at AVRA do not believe this Application should be approved under 'the cover', as has generally been the case, of a serious demand response to our affordable housing and rental crisis. Affordable family housing is not to be found in two or three-bedroom units of between

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650 sq ft (2br) and 850 sq ft (3br) starting at a million dollars and climbing. The decision that the City and this Council make on this Application and on the many similar ones before it will shape our communities and reconfigure the fabric of the City we love and care deeply about for the next 50 -100 years. We would hope that this understandably more dense, more compact, and more pedestrian oriented City emerges as a more livable, inclusive, and better crafted one as well. That is our hope.

Based on the objections we have expressed and the arguments we have advanced in our two letters we request that Toronto and East York Council not adopt or refer this Application to City Council in its present form but return it to City Planning for further consideration and consultation with the Applicant and with the Community.

Yours truly,

Paul Cravit on behalf of AVRA

B. Arch, M Arch. UD, FRAIC Principal Emeritus CS&P Architects



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Monday, October 23, 2023

City of Toronto Planning Department
Attention: Mr. Chris Pereira, Planner, Mr. David Driedger, Planner

Dear Mr. Pereira and Mr. Driedger:

Re: 1365 Yonge Street

I am writing on behalf of the Avoca Vale Residents' Association (AVRA) as a formal follow up to the public ZOOM call meeting held on October 4, 2023 regarding the new development application for 1365 Yonge Street. At that meeting there were comments from several speakers passionately expressing their emotional response to the negative impact that this proposed development, in its current form, would likely have on their individual lives as well as on the community as a whole. Their comments, which we at AVRA echo, speak for themselves. This response however from AVRA is intended to address specific planning issues raised at the meeting, as we understand that the City's response will be based on the proposal's alignment (or not) with the City's planning framework outlined in a number of documents.

TRAFFIC

At this time, we understand that the site to the north of the subject site abutting the laneway connection to Pleasant Blvd. is not owned by the Applicant. The laneway width from Pleasant Blvd. for about +/-100 south towards the subject site is +/- 14 ft wide, not wide enough as a right of way to safely accommodate even a one-way traffic lane with a pedestrian sidewalk on either the east or west side. Both sides are important for pedestrian use as there is a proposed new development at 11 Pleasant Blvd on the east side of the lane requiring its use for service and emergency vehicle access, as well as drop off and short-term visitor parking. Simply put, this laneway, which is more of a narrow back alley at its bottleneck stretch, is not wide enough to accommodate normal expected traffic., as well as pedestrian access on both sides. This traffic would be comprised of moving vans, garbage trucks, service and delivery vehicles, emergency vehicles, pickup trucks, and cars. The certain deleterious traffic impact will be felt on Pleasant Blvd and Yonge Street primarily regardless of whether or not the laneway is changed to one way, or significantly improved around the subject site as proposed by the Applicant.

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Without widening this bottleneck stretch to a legitimate right of way width, which is not possible at this time, given the ownership structure, this traffic issue as it stands, we believe disqualifies this proposal from moving towards any form of site plan agreement. This laneway issue was seriously overlooked by Planning as well for the earlier approved 17 storey seniors building. We are now discussing an exponentially worse condition – a condominium tower of over 650 units in addition to the proposal at 11 Pleasant Blvd. and the approved development across the street adjacent to the former Aroma Coffee shop. Having worked myself on many development proposals and understanding the role of Applicant retained traffic consultants hired to affirm the viability of often impossible to justify conditions, I would submit this is one such case. AVRA would be pleased to host on site yourselves as the City planners, and the City's and Applicant's traffic engineers to review the actual conditions we are describing.

DENSITY, BUILT FORM

The Applicant's architect spent a fair amount of his presentation speaking to their design intentions and detailing related to the podium and public realm, including the retail component, all very worthwhile urban design considerations. We are reasonably confident, given the experience and capabilities of the design team, that these issues can be resolved effectively through further design iterations and stakeholder feedback. The design indicates continuous Yonge Street retail which is of course desirable, and while we share the voiced concerns over the loss of local businesses in the area, replaced by banks, franchises and the like, the Applicant has provided assurances that they will endeavor to create a finer grain of a lively, animated street frontage comprised of small shops, which we support.

The primary issue for AVRA though is not the height or detailing of the podium. No amount of clever detailing can reduce the visible and physical impact of a 50 storey 'slab' tower building. This is the part of the presentation that was barely addressed – the built form and density of the proposal. AVRA fully recognizes the attractiveness of the subject site for development, given its proximity to a subway station and a major intersection along Yonge Street. AVRA is not opposed to thoughtful, well considered development proposals and will indeed support these, recognizing that the City will always require more housing and other uses and that its built fabric is continuously evolving and changing. The City's critically important planning framework (Official Plan, Secondary Plan Guidelines, etc.) is intended to provide the key principles and physical template to ensure that this evolving fabric is sensitively transformed and sustained. The central design aspects of the Applicant's proposal unfortunately directly belie key aspects of this essential planning framework, cherry picking compliance with certain Tall Building Guidelines for example while ignoring other critical ones – the form of the building (slab vs point tower) and size of the floorplate (over 900 sq m vs 750 sq m). The shape, size and height of the tower will create a 'solid 50 storey long wall' along Yonge Street with the accompanying loss of sunlight, view and other negative impacts. The design offers an additional 33 floors of extruded tower form adopted from the previously approved seniors building. That slab tower was also unfortunately approved without regard to the actual floor plans, on the rationale that the length and oversized footprint were required to accommodate seniors' support uses. No such case though can be made with this conventional residential building to justify the tower's proposed configuration.

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This form of building, limiting daylight and views, should never be permitted in a such a dense urban setting undergoing rapid and radical change - plain and simple. The proposed excessive height of the building may be the Applicant's opening gambit in a neighbourhood where each successively approved proposal stretches the limits of height and density, and in turn sets new unreasonable precedents that planning consultants use to justify their client's latest proposal. Unfortunately, the City has more often become a somewhat helpless participant in a 'game' of concession tradeoffs with the Applicant, where sound and sensitive planning and the quality of the neighbourhood are invariably the 'victims' of this process.

AVRA wants to make clear that our Association wishes to pro-actively participate in crafting a better development for this site – one which, as the Official Plan espouses, will be an actual benefit to our community and improve the lives of its residents. This is possible. We are however not prepared to stand idly by, even though, through misguided Provincial policies, the cards are no doubt stacked against us. We are prepared to work with the Applicant, and take them at their word, that they are seeking a mutually acceptable proposal. We trust the Planning Department, as stewards of our City's physical form and livability, will support our efforts, and keep us informed.

We thank you for this consideration.

Paul Cravit, President Avoca Vale Resident's Association.

cc. Councillor Josh Matlow