



PO Box 19057, RPO Walmer  
Toronto, ON M5S 3C9  
[theara.org](http://theara.org)

April 1, 2024

Dear Chair and Councillors,

**RE: 2024.TE12.5 171-175 Lowther Avenue – Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment  
Application – Decision Report Approval**

On behalf of the Annex Residents' Association (ARA), **we urge you to refuse Motion 2024.TE.12.5** regarding 171-175 Lowther Avenue **in its entirety**.

This motion seeks to amend the Official Plan to redesignate the land on which the current project is situated from "Neighbourhood" to "Apartment Neighbourhood." And it is our view that this will set a dangerous precedent for all areas in the city which currently bear the Neighbourhood designation, a designation intended for lower-scale residential buildings.

#### **Project Location**

The project in question is located at the south-east corner of Lowther Ave and Dalton Road within the Neighbourhood land use designation. The lands abutting the subject site to the south as well as the lands on the west side of Dalton Road and lands to the west on Brunswick Avenue are also designated Neighbourhood.

Neither Lowther Avenue nor Dalton Road are major streets, arterial roads, or minor arterial roads for planning purposes. Also, neither are major streets for the purposes of the City's Major Streets Study. This is an interior Neighbourhood site.

*Properties immediately adjacent to the east and north of Lowther Avenue are lands within the Apartment Neighbourhood designation. While the Staff Report states that the buildings there are of similar height to that being proposed (11-storey 39.5 metres plus mechanical penthouse), this is misleading. The area comprises a variety of apartment buildings ranging in height from four to 10 storeys. The 10-storey apartment immediately to the southeast is considerably lower. There is nothing in the area similar in height to the 11-storey project currently before you.*

The fact is, that although the site is adjacent to an Apartment Neighbourhood designation, the proposal is within the boundaries of Neighbourhood. And boundaries exist for a purpose.

## **Project History**

While the Annex currently comfortably exceeds the density targets prescribed by SASPs 597 and 598 for the Spadina and St. George MTSAs and PMTSAs and will well exceed those targets with proposed developments either now under construction or approved, the ARA supports opportunities for intensification and provision of rental accommodation, particularly sized to accommodate families.

Consequently, we were extremely pleased with the applicant's presentation to the Planning and Development Committee in April 2022, proposing a 4.5-storey, 22 rental unit infill. The project was sensitively designed and careful to preserve the scale of the existing built-form housing while allowing for additional density. The proposed landscape plan blended seamlessly with the existing streetscape and received a positive response.

*Our committee was eager to receive information about the scheme as it evolved. However, after sixteen months' silence, the applicant changed direction and introduced a new scheme that represents a total about-turn, likely condominium and unsympathetic to context or scale. It is nothing more than a direct assault on Neighbourhood and certainly nothing that is sympathetic to the inclusionary zoning contemplated by the PMTSAs.*

There are several points regarding the application that must be emphasized:

### **1. LIP SERVICE TO CONSULTATION**

*There has been virtually no community consultation. Yes, the applicant presented their proposal to the Planning and Development Committee of the ARA, however there was no consultation afterwards, notwithstanding written feed back from the Committee to the developer, City Planning, and our Councillor.*

City Planning arranged a Community Consultation Meeting on December 18, 2023, which comprised a two-hour meeting, one hour each on two projects: 171-175 Lowther Avenue and 40 Walmer Road. To our knowledge the residents along Dalton Road and nearby Brunswick Avenue and Walmer Road were unaware of that meeting. Unlike notifications required by the Committee of Adjustment to proximate residents it appears that no notice was given.

On January 29, 2024 the Planning and Housing Committee reviewed and approved item PH9.4: Improving Community Consultation in Development Review Proposals. This item intended to improve – not eliminate – consultation with local communities and councillors and the development industry.

*This current application and the way with which it has been approached flies in the face of the intent of the proposal endorsed by the Planning and Housing Committee. These developers chose to ignore the community.*

## **2. FAILURE TO INCLUDE AFFORDABLE AND RENTAL HOUSING**

No affordable housing is identified in the proposal, notwithstanding that the PPS and Growth Plan referenced by the applicant and City cite policies specifically for the provision of affordable and rental housing and that the subject site is within a PMTSA.

## **3. UNSYMPATHETIC TO CONTEXT**

Describing the lands north of Lowther Avenue as a tall building area is inaccurate. Currently, the highest point is the church spire. The planned height for 38 Walmer Road is 20 storeys and is subject to an appeal to OLT for failure to report, with the hearing scheduled for January 2025.

It should also be noted that the 35-storey proposal for 40 Walmer Road is subject to an appeal to OLT for a Refusal Report from City Planning. The hearing has yet to be scheduled. The refusal report is critical of massing and height.

For both of these proposals, there is no certainty as to what will be built, so these should not be used as reference.

## **4. INADEQUATE STEP BACK**

The built form shows a step-back from the face of the podium to the face of a thick tower along both Lowther Ave and Dalton Road that is entirely inadequate. These streets comprise multiunit residences in house form buildings, generally 3 – 3 ½ storeys tall. Interspersed are 4- and 5-storey rental apartment buildings.

## **5. LOOMING**

A tower form looms over the street, defeating the intention to create a building that respects the residential character of both streets. A 10-storey street-wall with a minimal step-back does not contribute to the notion of a transitional building. There are also no setbacks from the street or adjacent properties.

## **6. TRAFFIC UNCERTAINTIES**

Vehicle movement remains unknown. It is not certain whether maneuvering for the Class G loading dock will have vehicles go north or south on Dalton Road. There is no plan for e-commerce. There is potential conflict with planned ingress and egress from the proposed development at 38 Walmer Road.

## **7. HERITAGE**

The applicant's nod to heritage and heritage precedent is weak, and in effect a pastiche to dress the box. The expression of the tower attempts to emulate some of Uno Prii's apartment buildings in the

Annex. However, the context for this building is quite different; it is not an object building surrounded by open space that can be seen from a distance, and, importantly, it will eat into the low-rise context.

#### **8. OUTSTANDING ISSUES.**

We note that the Staff recommendation includes a Holding Provision until specific conditions are met:

- Hydrological Summary Form and a Hydrological Review, including Foundation Drainage Report
- Functional Servicing Report, Stormwater Management Report, Servicing Report and Groundwater Summary Form to demonstrate that the storm sewer system and any improvements to it has capacity to accommodate the development of the lands
- Detailed Conservation Report
- Heritage Easement Agreement

Why have these matters not yet been addressed other than due to the haste with which this project has proceeded?

#### **CONCLUSION**

If one is searching for answers as to why the City's laudable Housing Action Plan 2022-2026 and the City's Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative have been met with suspicion, if not outright hostility, you only need to look at the proposal before you.

We have all heard about gentle intensification, fourplexes in Neighbourhoods and mid-rise buildings on Avenues. We have also heard about involving the community in the planning process as recently as this past January.

However, this proposal is about as gentle as razor wire. A straight arm would offer more consultation *than this proposal has seen. Here is an opportunity for you to end this duplicity and restore some measure of public confidence in the planning process by **refusing this Motion in its entirety.***

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sisam and Henry Wiercinski  
Co-chairs Planning + Development Committee, Annex Residents' Association

Attach

Exhibit attached





## TE12.5 171-175 Lowther Avenue

Block Context Plan  
171-175 Lowther Avenue, City of Toronto

November 2023

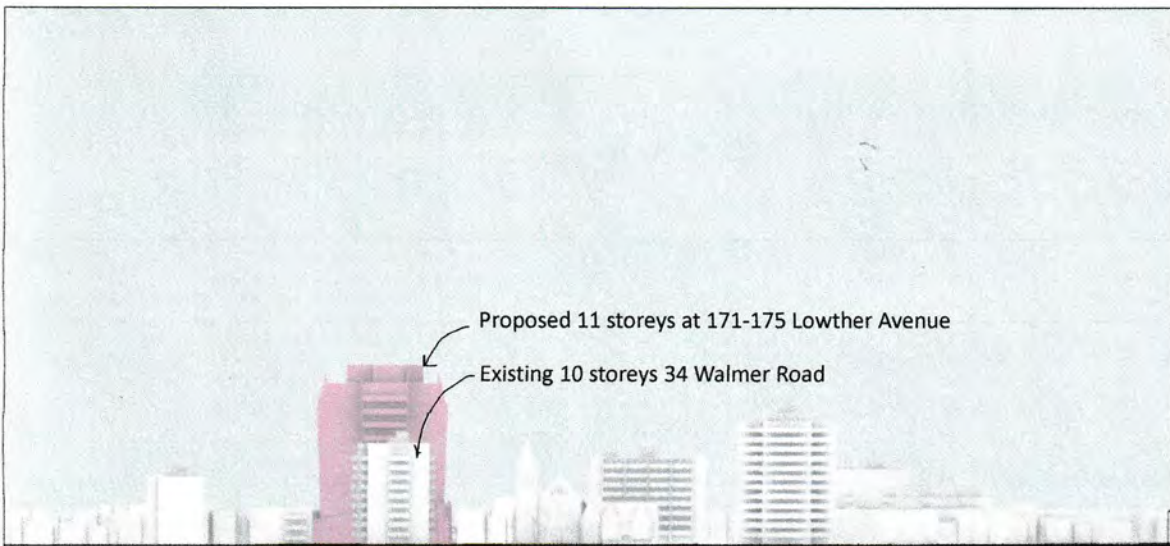
### WND Block Context Plan November 2023



Figure 10-1: Block Context Plan Study Area

Annex Residents' Association April 2/24

## TE12.5 171-175 Lowther Avenue



**Context: View West from Walmer Road**

Annex Residents' Association April 2/24