



The Seniors' Home of Choice

January 6, 2025

ABC Residents Association  
Belmont Street Neighbours  
Councillor Saxe

Re: Belmont House FAQs on the Belmont House Expansion

Belmont House is committed to working with our neighbours on Belmont St., and the ABC Residents Association to ensure transparency and collaboration as we expand to add more long-term care and assisted living beds on our site.

As a follow-up to the December 4, 2024, Community Consultation, and letters from Belmont Street neighbours and the ABC Residents Association, we have created a frequently asked questions document on issues raised (attached).

The addition to Belmont House will provide publicly funded and publicly allocated Long-term Care beds to ensure that members aging in this community can stay in this community, easing the travel burden of their loved ones and providing recognized and top-quality care.

Belmont House is located in Toronto's downtown core, and nearby buildings reflect this context. Existing building heights range from 3 to 38-storeys between Belmont Street, Yonge Street, and Davenport Road. The existing Belmont House buildings have heights of 5 and 7-storeys. The proposed addition of 11-storeys is appropriate and compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood including from a shadow, built form, landscape area, and urban design perspective.

The proposed building is located at its proposed location on the site because alternative locations on the site would: (i) disrupt existing residents; (ii) not comply with Ministry of Long-term Care standards; (iii) be far more costly to construct and which additional costs would not be funded by the Ministry; and (iv) result in a proposed project that is not feasible.

Existing traffic issues in the neighbourhood are unrelated to the expansion at Belmont House. The addition will have a negligible increase in traffic as confirmed by the transportation studies completed. Belmont will, through consultation and a construction management plan, address any temporary traffic impacts it may cause to the neighbourhood through the construction process.

We propose creating a working group of representatives from Belmont St. neighbours and ABC Residents Association to maintain lines of communication on construction progress and issues.

Yours truly,

  
Chris Morgan, Chair, Board of Directors

  
Maria Elias, C.E.O.

**Belmont House**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**January, 2025**

**1. Why do the new beds have to be in a large tower?**

- Given the urgent need for Long Term Care (LTC) beds in Toronto, the Ministry of Long-term Care (MLTC) has directed Belmont House to provide as many new LTC beds as possible on this existing site, without displacing existing residents. Belmont House is providing this in a form that is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood and also complies with MLTC requirements for a Long-Term Care Home.
- The basic planning unit of a Long-Term Care Home is the Resident Home Area (RHA) which, in a multistorey building, is a floor. Each RHA must be self-sufficient and contain all the needs of daily living including, sleeping, living, dining, activities, bathing, nursing and other support functions.
- The MLTC funds the construction and operation of each facility based on the number of residents. RHA's are permitted to house a maximum of 32 residents. The available land on Belmont House is not large enough to accommodate floorplates with a 32 person RHA. Hence the proposed addition is for 21 person RHA's
- The MLTC requested Belmont to build a 15-storey building to maximize the number of residents. Belmont determined that this would be too much density for the site, create too much shadow for the neighbours and not be in the spirit of the mid-rise guidelines for the area. Belmont therefore proposed to build an 11-storey building that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood while meeting the MLTC objective of adding as many new LTC beds as possible on the existing site.
- The MLTC has approved the license, construction funding, and operation of 168 LTC beds in the proposed 11-storey addition. The remaining proposed 32 beds are Assisted Living beds for people waiting for government-subsidized Long-Term Care at Belmont.

**2. Why does the building have to be in this location on the Site?**

- Unlike many development applications in the City of Toronto, this development is governed by design regulations established and controlled by the MLTC. These regulations constrain the planning of the addition (refer to above) as well as the way it integrates into existing facilities.
- Of particular concern to the MLTC when considering the construction of additional facilities at an existing site are:

- Existing residents cannot be displaced or moved offsite during construction.
- Services essential to the continued operation of the existing facility (e.g. kitchen, dining, laundry, loading, and waste facilities) cannot be disrupted.
- The proposed addition on the north side of the property (south side of Belmont Street) addresses these concerns. There will not be a requirement to temporarily relocate residents. Its construction will not disrupt existing services and will not compromise service or resident flows.
- Of particular note is that access to water and electrical utilities is from Belmont Street, making the north portion of the site a logical and economical choice for the new addition. Connecting these services to the new addition will be straightforward, and these services will remain fully available to the rest of the facility throughout construction, without interruption.

**3. Alternative Locations on the Site Have Been Proposed by Members of the Local Community for the New Building. Are Such Proposed Locations Viable?**

- In addition to the MLTC requirements for building additions described above, an addition must also provide for:
  - Adequate separation distance between buildings, as a zoning matter and an MLTC requirement for adequate light and air for residents.
  - Outdoor amenity space with secure access.
- A building in the southwest parking lot and stretching east would be severely limited by the required zoning setback from the building at the corner of Davenport Road and McAlpine Street. It would also contravene MLTC requirements for adequate separation from the existing west wing and east wing. It would eliminate the required secure outdoor garden at the east wing. It would also disrupt the operation of existing kitchen, dining, laundry, loading and waste facilities. The MLTC will not permit the disruption of such facilities, the narrow separation of the new and existing buildings or the elimination of the secure outdoor garden.
- A building with a north-south orientation over the existing kitchen, dining, loading and waste facilities would suffer from the same facilities disruption issues to an even greater extent than the southwest corner proposal. It would preclude access to the east wing secure outdoor garden during construction and suffer from similar narrow separation of buildings issues.
- The service disruptions associated with the proposed alternatives would require temporary relocation of residents and tenants, which the MLTC would not permit,

especially given the non-disruptive alternative available at the proposed location. Also, each of the other alternatives would take much more time to construct, and would be significantly more expensive than the proposed location, given the need to tear down existing facilities. Ministry funding is based only on the number of long term care beds provided by the development. The Ministry would not provide extra funding to cover these additional costs, thereby making the project unviable.

**4. Why isn't Belmont House considering the shadow impact on neighbours on Belmont St., since Belmont House had similar objections to the 100 Davenport Rd. development? How has this proposed development considered shadow impacts?**

- Long-term care residents do not have much ability to leave the nursing units/home and so their principal access to sunlight must be from inside the home, through the windows.
- The shadow impact caused by 100 Davenport Road was opposed by Belmont House because the shadows will fall on resident spaces such as the west building dining rooms on all floors; the retirement main floor dining room; the east building interior courtyard; the east building long-term care dining room; and the windows of retirement assisted living apartments in the east building.
- Belmont House is in an *Apartment Neighborhood* area. As a consequence, notwithstanding our objection to the 100 Davenport Avenue development for the important reasons above, Council and the OLT permitted the development. We regret the impact on our residents.
- Belmont House did consider a Ministry request for up to a 15-storey addition. However, we determined to reduce the height to 11-storeys to limit shadows on adjacent properties.
- In addition to the reduced building height, the proposed addition includes a front yard setback of 11.4 meters, which preserves green space and tree canopy. The building's mechanical penthouse is also set back approximately 5.5 meters from the north elevation. In combination with the building's height and floorplate, these design decisions limit the shadow impacts to nearby properties, including in particular their rear yard amenity spaces.
- We acknowledge that in spite of these reduced size and design efforts, shadows will be present on properties on the north side of Belmont Street for a few hours each day at certain times of the year. Just as we are disappointed that our residents and tenants will have their access to sunlight limited by the 100 Davenport development, we similarly regret that these shadows will exist as a result of the new addition.

**5. Traffic is already bad, so what is going to keep it from getting worse during construction and after?**

- The current traffic challenges on Belmont St. are not related to operations of Belmont House. Belmont St. is used as a throughfare to access the Don Valley and the east end of Toronto.
- The new building for 200 seniors will not add significantly to the current traffic, since the additional seniors will not be driving. The Transportation Impact Study prepared by Nextrans (dated August 2024) found that 11 two-way morning vehicle trips and 10 two-way evening vehicle trips will be generated by the new addition at peak travel times. Most visitors see their loved ones during off-peak travel times, such as evenings and weekends. This limits the traffic impact on Belmont Street.
- The proposed parking is for visitors. Staff are strongly encouraged to take public transit to work.
- Belmont House has hired a construction management consultant to look at the possibility of having construction access to the property from Davenport Rd. This possibility will require further discussions with the City of Toronto and our general contractor, which will be engaged in early 2025.
- Belmont House commits to having further discussions with the City and neighbours to address traffic during and after construction.

**6. Big buildings have an impact on the community. What is Belmont going to give back to the neighbours?**

- The addition to Belmont House will provide publicly funded and publicly allocated Long-term Care beds to ensure that members aging in this community can stay in their community, significantly easing the travel burden of their loved ones and providing recognized top quality care.
- There is generally a paucity of community-level programs for seniors in the City of Toronto. These programs are needed to address the social isolation of and need for programs by seniors in our community.
- Belmont House will do its part to address this issue by creating community programs within our main floor amenity space. For example, exercise programs; social clubs (bridge, book club, etc.); and educational health & wellness programs for seniors.
- We are also creating a larger auditorium space which will be made available to community groups as meeting space or to run programs.

- Belmont House is a non-profit charitable corporation, and all surpluses that may be generated are re-invested to provide more hours of care, maintain buildings and open spaces, and provide programs for the community.

**7. How will Belmont House ensure that neighbourhood concerns are promptly listened to and addressed when problems arise during and after the construction?**

- Belmont House proposes to create a working group of representatives from Belmont Street neighbours and the ABC Residents Association to maintain lines of communication on construction progress and issues.
- Belmont House has already offered ABC and the neighbours the opportunity to work together on the landscaping for Belmont Street; and has informed the neighbours that further meetings will take place to discuss the construction process.
- Communication will be an important part of the Construction Management plan, which will be included in our Site Plan Control application to the City.

**8. Can Belmont House reduce the number of proposed parking spots to create more green space?**

- Belmont House currently accommodates 13-14 cars in our front entrance on Belmont Street.
- Our original proposal for the new building called for 20 parking spots at the front entrance.
- In order to accommodate more green space on the northeast corner of our site, as requested by the Belmont Street residents, Councillor Saxe and City Staff, the number of parking spots has been reduced to 10 with the proposed building.
- Regarding the location of the exit of the parking lot, close to McMurrich Street, we are open to discussions with the community and the City to resolve the issue as part of the site plan application process.

**9. Can a phased construction approach allow Belmont House to relocate the proposed addition to the centre of the site?**

- During our December 4<sup>th</sup> community meeting, a member of the public suggested that Belmont House consider the north-south orientation by means of a phased construction approach that would involve first constructing a kitchen and dining facility at the north end of the property, and then constructing the new building over the centre of the Belmont House property. The argument is that this will mitigate the disruption to residents and tenants. Apart from the fact that the north-south

orientation proposal has fatal limitations as described above, this approach is not feasible for many reasons, including the following:

- The funding for Belmont House's addition is primarily met by MLTC. The Ministry allocates funding for construction based on the number of Long Term Care beds provided by the development. The Ministry would not fund the separate construction of a temporary kitchen and dining facility. The full cost of such an addition would be borne by Belmont House.
- The redesign of an addition for Belmont House would add 1-2 years to the project timeline. Redesigning the addition would require restarting the approvals process with the Ministry of Long-Term Care. While funding is available now for the proposed project, there can be no assurance that funding will be available for such a project in the future.
- A phased construction approach would add 2 years to the construction timeline, resulting in longer disruption to the surrounding community.
- A phased approach would add an expected \$10 to \$20 million in construction costs.
- If Belmont House pursued a phased approach, construction would start in late 2026 or 2027 at the earliest, with a total construction duration of 4 to 5 years and an opening in 2031/32. A later start could jeopardize the funding allocation by the Ministry of Long-term Care, removing the opportunity to provide 200 beds in this community thereby contributing to the availability crisis in Long-term Care.

## **10. Other Issues Raised:**

### **Trees**

- Belmont House will endeavor to save as many trees as possible during the construction. Fifty-one trees will not be touched.
- Although 21 trees will be eliminated (many of which are old and would need to be brought down in the near future anyway), Belmont House will be adding 39 trees on site to replace trees lost.

### **Construction Management**

- Belmont House will work closely with the general contractor and the City to minimize construction disruption for both the neighbours and the residents living at Belmont House.
- Further discussions will be required once we have further meetings with the City and the newly contracted general contractor.