

Growing Responsibly, Organically, and Well

23 June, 2026

To: Toronto East York Community Council (teycc@toronto.ca)

CC: Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of Toronto City Council

Subject: Formal Opposition and Request for Deferral:
Item TE32.7 – 221-227 Sterling Road Demolition Application

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Toronto City Council,

I am writing on behalf of South Junction Triangle Grows (SJTG) to express our formal opposition to the Rental Housing Demolition application for 221-227 Sterling Road (Item TE32.7). We urgently request that City Council **defer or reject** this permit at the upcoming June 24–26 session. The public trust has been severely compromised, and this demolition *must not be approved while critical issues of municipal transparency, heritage erasure, and tenant exploitation remain unresolved.*

To help Council understand how this crisis developed, we ask that you review the following chronological breakdown of the planning history on this site:

Chronology of Heritage Reversal & Community Exclusion

Date	Planning and Legal Events
2021 & 2022	<p>City Council voted twice to advance and officially enact a full heritage designation for this building under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act via By-law 1130-2022.</p> <p>Political Support Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter from Ana Bailão: https://tinyurl.com/y2fcrhx3• Letter from Marit Stiles: https://tinyurl.com/yfcd94zz
2023	<p>A secret, in-camera Preservation Board meeting—conducted with no Heritage Planning staff evaluation—effectively reversed those protections behind closed doors.</p>
2023–2025	<p>Our community sought a judicial review to challenge this closed-door process, but the City's own legal team fought it's own residents all the way to the Divisional Court. When we subsequently sought a necessary adjournment at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) to sort out these deep structural issues, the community was removed as a party from the proceedings entirely.</p>

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2026 (Current)	The Rental Housing Demolition permit (Item TE32.7) is brought forward. A massive community-led push successfully forced Council to defer the vote from May to June 2026 due to unresolved issues regarding tenant displacement, heritage erasure, and outstanding Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
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1. A Secret Settlement that Erases True Heritage

As the timeline indicates, the City of Toronto previously fought rigorously to protect this 1912 factory complex. City Council defended the property on all three legal grounds in direct opposition to the initial condominium proposal. The City's own 2021 Staff Evaluation Report explicitly detailed the non-replicable industrial architecture, including its 18-to-20-foot vaulted ceilings, timber beams, and original sawtooth skylights.

Yet, *only a few months later*, City Solicitors issued a confidential memo to the Toronto Preservation Board. Without making a single reference to the City's own comprehensive heritage evaluation reports, a secret, in-camera agreement was made to allow the developer to flatten the complex, saving only a single exterior wall. This deal flies directly in the face of the spirit and depth of the Heritage Designation. *True conservation was never merely about the brick; it was about protecting the unique cultural ecosystem that spawned within those walls.*

Reducing a 114-year-old three-dimensional historical structure to "in-situ retention of the east wall" and cutting the south facade into panels to be glued back onto a concrete condo base is an absolute mirage. Furthermore, promising "restored" ceilings in only 16 units inside a brand-new condo tower—severed entirely from the original warehouse space—is a marketing gimmick, not heritage retention. Detailed mapping of this visual misrepresentation can be reviewed in the developer's [Heritage Impact Assessment](#).

2. Severe Flaws in the Tenant Assistance Plan (TAP)

This particular demoviction represents a devastating blow to Toronto's artistic community. This building is not an empty shell; it is a thriving, 35-year-old self-sustaining incubator housing a circus school, ballet school, master woodworkers, and dozens of working artists across 56 rental dwelling units.

The current Tenant Assistance Plan (TAP) is fundamentally broken:

- **Inaccurate Bedroom Counts:** City Planning's current enumeration fails to accurately reflect the true layout and size of the spaces. By undercalculating live-work functionality, the City is reducing fair tenant relocation compensation, effectively forcing displaced artists to subsidize corporate development.
- **Eradication of Volumetric Space:** Working artists are losing irreplaceable industrial attributes. Shuffling these creators into standard condo blueprints strips away the 18-to-20-foot vertical volume and natural skylight illumination required to operate their creative businesses.

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- **Stripping of Essential Amenities:** Basic residential and operational infrastructure—including parking, in-suite laundry, and balconies—is being actively stripped from the replacement unit guidelines.

3. An Utter Lack of Municipal Transparency and Accountability

When confronted with these outstanding issues, City Planning staff appear to be rewriting the narrative by declaring the discussion closed and refusing to meet further with the community. City Planning staff do not have the legal authority to shut down public discourse; *final planning and demolition determinations belong solely to the elected members of City Council, not municipal staff.*

The City's Freedom of Information office is still refusing to reveal the details of the agreement regarding the 2023 closed-door settlement. Compounding this severe lack of accountability, SJTG sent formal emails directly to Ward 9 Councillor Alejandra Bravo's office on June 9 and June 19, 2026, explicitly flagging our community's outstanding MFIPPA request for Confidential Attachment 1 to the April 6, 2023 Report for Action from City Solicitor Wendy Walberg. To date, we have received absolutely no response. *Council must not vote to greenlight a demolition permit while the legal justifications and backroom reports remain actively withheld from the citizens of Toronto.*

Our Direct Demands to Council:

1. **Defer [Item TE32.7](#)** until the FOI process is complete. No demolition should be greenlit while the public is still being denied access to the details of an agreement brokered three years ago.
2. **Order City Planning to halt its refusal to meet** and conduct a transparent, accurate re-enumeration of the live-work units in coordination with No Demovictions and the tenants.
3. **Protect this creative cluster *as it stands*.** As detailed in prominent architectural features—such as [Azure Magazine](#) and [The New York Times](#)—the city that was once a magnet for makers is rapidly becoming a city of glass towers with no room for the people who gave it its identity.

The [promotional renderings](#) circulated for this project depict an idealized, sun-drenched green sanctuary that completely erases the narrow layout of Sterling Road and the dense row of low-rise houses directly across the street. We urge you to look past the marketing graphics, stand up for municipal accountability, and protect the living soul of the Junction Triangle.

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Thank you for your time and your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Irmina Ayuyao, Cara Sweeny and Cristina Costa,
on behalf of South Junction Triangle Grows