

# Letter of Objection and Request for Deferral PH28.2.21 Proposal for the Redevelopment of 21 Windermere Avenue (1 – 154 Swansea Mews)

February 2026

Having read many of the 55 entries prepared as Supporting Documentation for this site, I am shocked by how some of the most important studies to me largely down play the significant risks to health and safety, plus the necessary effort & cost to properly mitigate. Ground Water, unstable ground (land fill) toxic materials in the soil and shade projecting across ecologically sensitive areas are all concerns. As someone who lives in this area and as a taxpayer desiring responsible development this is all troubling. Alternative designs that fit into the community and consider former Swansea Mews residents need to be considered.

## A) Ground Water and Land Fill

The hydrogeological study shows there are metals near the surface, some known to be toxic and posing a health risk, are at concentrations that exceed the guidelines. The water flowing underground will necessitate deep foundations adding to the construction cost. This study is mistaken when it states **“no areas of natural heritage & scientific interests, creeks, lagoons, wetlands or surface water bodies are located at the site”**. Historical maps (1890 - see Karen Munro’s submission & Early 1900’s - see Appendix) show part of this site was a pond referred to at the time as as Centre Pond. Historical Accounts report it was filled in with land fill from flattening the Camel’s Back Hill, garbage and waste materials from the STELCO Steel Company across the street. Interestingly, the Methane Gas Study does reference these?

My home on Coe Hill was built 1947/48 on this land fill and like many homes on the street has suffered from settling. When the Swansea Mews was vacated and closed as deemed structurally unsound, some wondered if ground settling had played an unreported role?

## B) Shadows

The Swansea Mew Shadow study minimizes the impact of shadows that the proposed towers would cause. **“...there will be no incremental shadow impact from the proposal on surrounding Parks or Open Space Areas. With respect to Natural Areas, shadow impact from the proposal is limited to the southern portions of Catfish Pond and Grenadier Pond at the spring and fall equinoxes.”** The proposed towers will cast shadows at certain times across both Catfish and Grenadier Ponds. The study reveals that shadows will, using the 37 time period illustrations (4 dates representing each season across 10 daily times, except December 21<sup>st</sup> with the shorter day only has 7 times), cover in part Catfish Pond 32.4% of the time and Grenadier Pond 13.5%. It is incongruous that the City who is entrusted as stewards to protect this designated ecologically sensitive land, own proposal threatens to endanger vulnerable ecosystems. See the Shadow Illustration in the Appendix.

High Park is a natural treasure with its many users grateful to John Howard and others who long ago had the foresight to protect this land. John Howard in donating eventually 165 acres, stipulated that the

land forever be used as a park. The City of Toronto has a responsibility to maintain High Park's land and water as natural as possible.

### **C) Accommodating Interests of Former Swansea Mews Residents**

Residents I have listened to do not want to live in a tower. Many are afraid to speak up publicly as they fear it could adversely affect their future housing choices. Where they have agreed to accept new accommodation, they mention they felt pressured with very limited options. What they said is they really liked the original Swansea Mews was design as it was family friendly. Living with close access to outside space, exiting their door at ground level or onto a large podium. Children play areas were readily and safely accessed. The now vacant Swansea Mews fit well into Swansea neighbourhood and provided residents with housing that made them part of the community. Not isolated in a large tower where most would use an elevator to connect with the ground.

### **D) Aligning with the Surrounding Community and finding an Alternative Design**

The local residents support a sensible development on the Mews site that will provide needed housing, yet consistent with the character of the community. When Swansea was amalgamated into the City of Toronto it retained many of the qualities it had as an independent village. Through planning and an active community advocacy, high density development has largely been well integrated, avoiding the destruction of the areas character. Existing tall buildings in the community are on the south side of the Queensway, Southport, Ormskirk and South Kingsway. There are new towers under construction on west side of Southport. Other than the Queensway these high-rise structures are situated on a lower elevation which makes them less obtrusive. None directly abut individual houses or walk-up apartments, or cast shadows across ecologically sensitive areas. Other multi-story buildings on Coe Hill, Windermere, Runnymede and Lavinia are limited to 4 or 5 stories fitting into the community of detached and semi-detached dwellings. It is ironic the proposed Swansea Mews site development, which is neighbourhood destroying, is on City owned land.

There needs to be a balance between building new housing that protects the integrity of a community, and maximizing density. Other recent City led developments seem to be following the same model build high density, tall buildings. Is this the only approach? Build them high and pack them in, with quality of life, especially for children a secondary consideration? Having attended a few meetings on this redevelopment there seems to be little interest in considering other proposals.

The **Swansea Park** design by local architect David Peterson, seems to a reasonable alternative. Adding many more units to what is presently on site, while not overwhelming the surrounding community with tall buildings and being better aligned with the challenging building environment.

## Appendix

### 1. Map of South Swansea early 1900's



Original Name	Status Today	Today Known as
Catfish Pond	Part of High Park	Lower Duck Pond
Harvey's Pond	Settling pond on the boundary of High Park & Swansea	Wendigo Pond
Grenadier Pond	Went through a period of development for recreation and returned in last 30 years becoming more naturalized with a focus on aquatic health.	Grenadier Pond
East Pond	Renamed limited housing mostly at south end.	Catfish Pond (aka West Pond)
Centre Pond	Buried with land fill, today occupied by housing on Coe Hill Drive and Swansea Mews site.	No longer exists
Brownie's Pond	Buried with land fill, today occupied by land near 45 Southport.	No longer exists
West Pond	Buried with land fill, today occupied by Condo's at 20 -24 Southport Street.	No longer exists

2. Illustration: Shadow Study Analysis Swansea Mews, p. 45

December 21<sup>st</sup>  
3:18 pm

Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



Legend

- Subject Site
- Approved/Not Yet Built Development
- Existing Buildings
- Development Proposal
- Shadows Cast by As-of-Right Massing
- Shadow Cast by Existing and Approved Developments
- Shadow Cast by Development Proposal
- Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Areas
- Water Bodies

Shadow Study  
Swansea Mews

