

2011-12-21

Councillor Sarah Doucette
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West – Suite C46
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Daniels HR Corporation (proponent)
1844-1854 Bloor Street / Oakmount / Pacific Development Proposal

Dear Councillor Doucette;

It is with mounting concern that I write to you today, on behalf of the High Park Residents' Association's (HPRA's) Executive, members of the HPRA, and hundreds of area petition signators.

For the record, the Executive of the HPRA has always supported a change in zoning of the subject lands from single-family residential to multi-family. In fact, we expressed to you resident support for ground floor commercial/retail space, and daycare as necessary amenities.

The Executive also supports a multiple-storey built form, in solidarity with densification potential identified by the province of Ontario within its Places to Grow Act, and the City of Toronto's continuing efforts to grow its municipal property tax base.

However, we do not support heights/densities on Bloor Street West between Clendenan and Keele beyond those recently defined as acceptable by both the local community and the City for Bloor between Keele and Dundas West, within the City's completed Bloor/Dundas Avenue Study.

Moreover, we do not support walls of glass neighbouring High Park, due to inherent inconsistencies with the City's own guidelines and statutes including its Official Plan, in addition to energy efficiency, environmental reasons, media-documented reporting, and the likelihood that these and other factors would result in a far more transient nature of local residency in the future.

Nor do we support the City's squandering of resident taxes (paid by owners or via rent).

Extending the existing Bloor Dundas Avenue Study guidelines beyond Keele to Clendenan will save future time and resources of the community, the City, and developers. This is a far better proposition than the status quo. All parties benefit from a known set of objectives; a predictable set of results. We skip years of acrimony having to debate individual proposals.

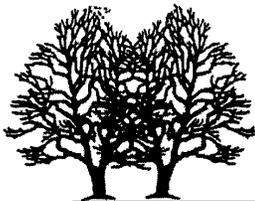
The City's demonstrated inability and/or unwillingness to recognize its own foibles is instructive.

We agree with residents who express a desire that City staff and elected officials do more than merely seek a public perception of community engagement/consultation.

When asked about these concerns, you're quoted as saying "*a lot of this was done before me.*" ('Condo too high for street' - *Bloor West Villager*, Thursday December 15th, 2011)

You might be interested to know that residents who attended a June 2010 'blue-sky' presentation by the proponent, facilitated by the former Ward 13 councillor, noted no City Planning staff being present. It is possible that minutes from this meeting weren't taken, or shared with you.

On February 7th 2011, at a meeting between members of the HPRA Executive and members of City Planning staff responsible for overview of the proponent's initial proprietary study and plans,



staff openly admitted that when such proposals were deemed to be precedent-setting in nature, they were referred to the City's Design Review Panel (DRP) for consideration and input.

On February 23rd, 2011, City staff issued its first Preliminary Report re: the subject proposal, including directions for notification of community consultations to area landowners and residents.

On April 19th 2011, the DRP voted 6-0 for refinement of the proponent's [initial] proposal with one abstention, stating "*the Panel expressed concerns about the bulk of the overall massing and how it responded to its context [in this significant location across from High Park]*".

The City's May 4th "Community Consultation" with City Planning staff was its first.

Thus, the proponent's first study/design, HPRA's consult with City Planning, DRP deliberations, staff report, and first resident consultation have all occurred since the time of your election.

In the same Villager article, you're quoted as saying that "*I've only received 3 emails concerned about height*"; "*most concerns have come to us after the third community consultation*"; and that "*in the eleventh hour, it doesn't really help.*"

Taxpaying area residents have been engaged. More than 150 attended the first "Community Consultation" meeting on May 4, 2011 to express concerns. It was only after the November 9th meeting that those who had attended one or both "Community Consultations" realized a pattern in the City's arbitrary decision-making, abandonment of its own guidelines and Official Plan, and clear choice to enable the proponent's presentation/bulldozing methodologies over consultation:

"It was decided that this site isn't adjacent to High Park." – City Planning staff

"We're moving the mechanical penthouse west." "It will be taller than the first design." – proponent responses to residents with respect to built form height across from High Park

"We're looking to deal with the loss of 28 affordable rental housing units in a report to be released January 10th." – the City isn't seeking public scrutiny prior to the proponent's proposal being tabled for a January 10th *fait accompli* vote at Community Council

On behalf of the HPRA's Executive, I am seeking a stepped-back building - with a podium no higher than 6 storeys ... of a height including mechanical penthouse no greater than 75% of that in the November 9th proposal ... with 40% per-floor facia on all sides consisting of brick or stone.

Such a built form complements the existing character of this unique area next to High Park.

Further, our members welcome your decision to show leadership by proactively engaging with us, City Planning staff, and the proponent in the form of a working group.

Most importantly, area residents and members of the HPRA look forward to establishing an acceptable precedent for all development neighbouring High Park, Toronto's crown jewel.

Sincerely,



Jeff D. Derksen

Chair, High Park Residents' Association (HPRA) 217 Grenadier Road, Toronto ON M6R 1R9

cc: Chris Ganowski (HPRA Vice-Chair); E. L. Cramp ('This Is My Park' HPRA Committee head)

