

## **Proposed Development at Alvin and St. Clair Report No. 3 to Neighbourhood Residents**

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Report No. 3 was prepared by Ted Mercer and John Shepherd.

It is a supplement to Reports 1 and 2, which are available in the "Reports on Proposal to Residents" section of our blog, <http://30alvin.blogspot.com>

The Planner's Final Report was released on May 13, 2008 and will be submitted to Community Council on June 10th. A link to it may be found in the "City of Toronto Documents" section of the blog.

### **Density and height remain the principal objections that we have to the project.**

We support densification but are disappointed that the Planner has capitulated, and has accepted the Developer's proposal. We disagree that the density and height values in the Final Report are justifiable for the Yonge and St. Clair neighbourhood. Indeed, the Planner is recommending that the Official Plan be amended "substantially" in order to accommodate the project. How and why has this happened?

The City Planner is recommending that Council accept the Applicant's proposal to erect a 37 storey condominium building on the Alvin Street parking lot. It will be 40 percent taller than the adjacent Weston tower. It will also be the tallest building on Yonge St. between Bloor St. and Eglinton Ave., except for the north tower of the new development at Eglinton Ave. and will match the height of its south tower.

Under Section 37 of the Planning Act, a 13 m. wide parkette will be built on Yonge St. next to Shoppers Drug Mart. The trees in the park will be a welcome addition to our neighbourhood but we question whether the high maintenance waterfalls and expensive finishers are worth it to this neighbourhood. They are in exchange for the high density and excessive height that the Developer wants. In actuality, their primary benefit will be to increase the value of the condominium units.

### **Density:**

Except for the two new condominiums at Yonge and Eglinton, the 37 storey South Condominium tower will be the tallest structure between Bloor and Eglinton. Moreover, it will not be on an arterial road, such as St. Clair, but will be on an inside lot, and adjacent to 3.5 storey townhouses on the lot.

We're disappointed that the Planner has accepted the Applicant's density. The rationale is a consultant's study commissioned by the Applicant. Seven buildings on St. Clair Ave. and one on Delisle Ave. were included in the study, but no buildings on Yonge Street. The average density for the eight is 8.15.

The average density for the seven buildings on the arterial street, St. Clair,, is 8.6, while the density for the Delisle site is 5.0. The buildings on St. Clair are a combination of rental apartments, condominium buildings and office buildings. The Delisle site is a new condominium building, like many others on that street. It is closest to what is proposed for the Alvin site. Why did the study not include more condominium buildings on Delisle? The consultant's selection might be appropriate for a new project directly on St. Clair, but the Applicants project is not on St. Clair, but is on an interior lot.

Our study area was centred on the project site and encompassed the 15 tallest buildings within a 400 metre radius of the centre of the site. The median density was found to be 4.7 times the site area. Based on this, we support a maximum density of 5.5X, which is a 17 percent increase of the median density

We note that the Applicant is appealing "*an inadvertent re-designation by the City (at the time of the approval of the current Official Plan and Secondary Plan documents) of a portion of the subject lands...*" (Quotation from page 8 of the Final Report). It is claimed that areas on the property now designated as *Neighbourhoods* should really be called *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, and that these areas should be permitted a higher density.

We wonder how much of a part did this play in the City's ready acceptance of the Applicant's proposal of the 6.28x density. What part has the the threat of litigation by the Applicant cause the Planner to accept this density? Readers can refer to the Final Report on pages 8 and following. for details on the matter.

Has the blended "as of right" density across the site, of 2.4 times lot area, now been increased to 4.0 times lot area? Even so, why has the Planner gone beyond this and acquiesced to an excessive density, especially for an inside lot, very little of which fronts on Yonge Street?

The original application was filed on December 22, 2006, just ten days before Provincial legislation came into effect that would have required the OMB to "have regard to municipal decisions"?

The Planner's Final Report is silent about the Applicant's additional payment to the Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) for having achieved this higher density. We have commented before, on page 6 of our earlier Report #1, that this is clearly a case of a board of the City making a deal with a developer that works against the interests of the residents. The City should forbid this practice.

### **Height:**

The height of the South Condominium tower remains 1.4 times taller than the Weston Tower. We recommended that this tower be approximately the height of the Weston tower, 85 m.

The Planner does not explain why he supports a height of about 121 m., which is the height of the 37 storey South Condominium tower

The height appears to be quite arbitrary and derived solely from the recommended Density. Why has he not compared this recommended height to the buildings studied by the

Applicant's consultant and provided a justification for the increase? The tallest of the buildings on the consultant's list is 22 St. Clair, Weston Tower, which is 85 m. high. The South Condominium tower will be 1.41 times taller than that building.

For our study, we selected the 15 tallest buildings, whether residential or commercial, within 400 m. of the centre of the project site. It included the two tallest apartment/condominium buildings in the entire Yonge-St. Clair area. They are located on Pleasant Blvd. and are 104 m high. Therefore, the South Condominium tower will be 1.16 times taller than Pleasant Blvd. buildings. The latter were built in recent times and their heights must have been approved with a consideration of densification because of their proximity to the subway station.

#### **Visitor Parking:**

At the Working Group meetings we were given to understand that a number of free parking spaces would be provided for visitors, in order to encourage condominium visitors from clogging the residential side streets. Illegal parking across residents' driveways is already an ongoing problem for many residents. The Report confirms that there are 56 visitor parking spaces (for 470 units) in the public garage, but it does state that these will be free of charge.

#### **Public Park:**

We're pleased that the Developer is committing to quality landscaping in the Park and that the City has required financial guarantees for completion of park and other civil works.

The park is about 13 m. wide and will be a pleasant and welcomed addition to the neighbourhood. It will ensure that the public walkway that now exists between Yonge and Alvin will remain. But, in our opinion, its greatest benefit will be the value added the condominiums units.

We expect that expensive finishes and flowing water are being accepted in trade by the City for increased tower height.

#### **Traffic**

Current traffic congestion will remain. The additional turning lane at Yonge and Heath and the widening of Alvin at St. Clair are good improvements. We also welcome the relocation of the queuing, from Alvin to ramps on site, of the commercial vehicles serving the buildings on St. Clair and the cars waiting to access the parking garage.

#### **Construction Issues**

There are a number of specific construction issues that we raised at the Working Group meetings that are not addressed adequately. We had asked that:

- Dump and ready-mix trucks be forced to access the site only from Yonge Street, through the proposed "park" area and not queue on Heath, Alvin, Glen Elm or

## Ferndale

- Contractors not be permitted to park their vehicles on these streets.
- New temporary public parking be found until the new PTA garage is available. We suggested that consideration be given to the TTC lands at Davisville and Yonge and gave recommendations as to how it could work.

The Final Report has sidestepped the issue of inadequate public parking by stating that there are two adjacent parking garages that can be used. These are already well used. We doubt that they will be able to accommodate also the regular patrons of the Alvin car park and the contractors' work force.

We assume that the City will have reviewed our full list of construction issues and found that they adequately covered under City By-Laws

The Final Report describes Construction Mitigation Plan and Resident Communication Strategy. It states that the Owner will be required to work with the City Planning Department, the Ward Councillor, local residents, etc. to establish area specific guidelines and restrictions for construction activity. It also states that a resident liaison committee will be established consisting of representatives of, local residents, the two neighbourhood churches and local business people, the owner and their construction team, and the Ward Councillor's office.

We are pleased about these arrangements, but can we count on enforcement? For instance, what will happen if the contractor, as required, meets with the liaison committee to discuss issues, but the dump trucks continue to proceed east along Glen Elm, down Alvin and queue on Alvin opposite the site? The Final Report spells out what will happen if there is non performance under the landscaping contract but is silent on this time dependent issue that is more important to the residents.

### **Time is running out**

Residents are reminded that time is running for them to make their views known on these or other matters about the project. Last scheduled events are:

May 21	Councillor Walker's Public Meeting at Christ Church Deer Park
May 22	DPRG Annual Meeting at Christ Church Deer Park
June 10	Toronto Community Council Meeting at City Hall

### **Deer Park Residents Group**

We are disappointed with the DPRG Executive for not having developed a position on the Density and Height issues. This has been discussed elsewhere on the blog.

Ted Mercer and John Shepherd.