



South Armour Heights Residents' Association

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City Planner
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Councillor Christin Carmichael Greb
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Reference Number: 15 133424 NNY 16 OZ
Proposed development at 250 Lawrence Avenue West

Ms. Covello:

The South Armour Heights Ratepayers Association ("SAHRA") is an incorporated non-profit association founded in 1995 that represents residents bounded by the 401 south to Brooke/Yonge Blvd and west over to Avenue Road. SAHRA was an active participant in the development at 1717 Avenue Road as well as at 1684-1704 Avenue Road. We were also a member of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) involved with the creation of the Avenue Road Avenue Study. The property at 250 Lawrence Avenue West is of great concern to SAHRA as the redevelopment of that site will have an impact on our neighbourhood and our members.

SAHRA is writing to advise that we have reviewed the preliminary Staff Report on this proposal and we have a number of concerns but see the potential opportunity for improvements.

The new Toronto Official Plan **Policy 5** in section 4.1 (Neighbourhoods) on page 4-4 states:
"Development in established *Neighbourhoods* will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood, including in particular:

- a) patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;
- b) size and configuration of lots;
- c) heights, massing, scale and dwelling type of nearby residential properties;
- d) prevailing building type(s);
- e) setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
- f) prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space;
- g) continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of a neighbourhood; and
- h) conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes.

No changes will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of the neighbourhood."



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This application seeks

- to re-designate the site under the Official Plan from Neighbourhoods to Apartment Neighbourhoods
- to amend the former City of Toronto By-law 438-86 and new City-wide By-law 569-2013 to increase the permitted height and density on site

Initially SAHRA stated that we were not opposed to changing the designation of the site from "Neighbourhoods" (4 storey and below) to "Apartment Neighbourhoods" but now we understand that the "Apartment Neighbourhoods" designation has **no height limit** and so we must oppose this re-zoning.

Increasing height and density is against what the city has planned for this portion of Lawrence and the Upper Avenue Road area in general, as defined in the Avenue Road Avenue Study. This proposed change will serve as a new precedent, and in the eyes of the city, an inappropriate precedent that will lead to large apartments/condos in the future along Lawrence Ave, from Yonge St over to Bathurst. 11 storeys is clearly too high for this *Neighbourhood*. It is several floors higher than anything in the area and is not in character with the surrounding neighbourhood. This will be a precedent setting initiative and would be the first building of this magnitude in our area, paving the way for more development like this in the future. Presently, there is nothing in the immediate area that is above 7 storeys. Rosewell Gardens which was built around 2011, ranges from 5 to 7 storeys; 1717 Avenue Road is 7 storeys; 1684-1704 Avenue Road is 7 storeys; and the Bedford Glen Apartments range from 5 to 6 storeys graded within the ravine. All the rest of the apartment buildings are 5 storeys or less.

Using the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study as a reference, we note that the 250 Lawrence Avenue West site is on a 27m right of way. If this building were to adhere to these guidelines, it would have a max height of 27 m or 8 storeys. With regards to the angular plane, the front of the building should only be 6 storeys (80% of the 27m right of way) and the top two floors have to step-back at a 45 degree angle. The present plans do not respect these design requirements.

The proposed number of dwelling units, the housing types and the overall density (4.11 versus **3.00** on Avenue Road) also need to be reviewed and brought into line with permitted maximums.

Avenue Road Avenue Study

The Avenue Road Avenue Study (2009) requires that buildings along Avenue Road north of Lawrence can only be 5 storeys or 16.5 meters, whichever is lesser in height except for those properties that are shown in Schedule "A" where site specific height allows up to 7 storeys or 22.5 meters, whichever is lesser. As well there are specific by-laws defining the required setbacks, step-backs and angular plane requirements at the front, rear and sides.

While 250 Lawrence Ave West was not part of this Study, it is located just at the gateway to Avenue Road and it should blend into the surrounding *Neighbourhood*.

As an example, the 1717 Avenue Road condo building features a design that steps back from the neighbouring properties as it increases in height, and has a maximum height of seven storeys / 22.5 meters as per what is permitted on Avenue Road. This type of building is suited to the site and respects the housing that resides directly behind it. It has a human scale to it and fits in with the character of the surrounding buildings and needs of the area. The same principles have been applied to the upcoming development at 1684-1704 Avenue Road. This type of building design should also be applied to 250 Lawrence Ave West.



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Councillor Carmichael Greb has committed to act as the champion for the guidelines/intentions/recommendations of the Avenue Road Avenue Study. The developments at the gateways to Upper Avenue, such as Lawrence and Wilson, in turn also have to be compatible with the Avenue Road Avenue Study.

Impact on Douglas Greenbelt

There should be an appropriate building setback from the rear property line adjacent to the Douglas greenbelt (ravine). The ravine property line should be treated as any other rear lot line so the development respects a proper setback and built form step-back. A larger setback on all sides would also allow for larger trees and plantings than currently proposed by the developer.

The Shadow Study shows the Douglas Greenbelt (ravine), the homes to the East of the development and Lawrence Ave will lose sunlight earlier in the day than they do now, especially in the winter (the Douglas Greenbelt will be in shadow most of the winter (as per Shadow Study). Increased shadows and reduced views along neighbouring streets/Douglas Ravine, have lasting environmental and safety concerns, especially in the winter months.

The Avenue Road Avenue Study made 4 recommendations specific to the Douglas Greenbelt :

#1 Amend the Official Plan to designate all of the Douglas Greenbelt lands as Public Open Space (Section 3.3.5) – this was done

#7 Continue negotiations to acquire the portion of the Douglas Greenbelt adjacent to the sidewalk on the north side of Glengarry Avenue to re-establish a southern access to the ravine park

#8 Improve and re-naturalize the Douglas Greenbelt Ravine

#9 To improve the small parkette at the Douglas Avenue entrance to the Douglas Greenbelt and to consider improving the south side of Douglas Avenue between Avenue Road and the entrance to the Douglas Greenbelt through the planting of trees and creation of a sidewalk on the boulevard

In the corresponding staff report on page 11, the following is noted:

"Reacquire and Reopen the Southerly Access to the Ravine Park: The most immediate need is to reacquire and re-open the southerly access of the Greenbelt to Glengarry Avenue. Currently there is a northerly access and staircase from Douglas Avenue into the ravine, and a well-worn footpath through the ravine that ends abruptly at a fence just before the traditional exit onto the Glengarry Avenue sidewalk. In 2005, when the City sold the unopened Glengarry Avenue right-of-way to the Medical Centre at 250 Lawrence Avenue West, the sale inadvertently included the corner of the ravine lands where the only possible southerly access exists. Staff initiated negotiations with the owner to acquire the southerly access to the ravine park from the sidewalk on the north side of Glengarry Avenue. Reopening the southerly access will increase usage and provide pedestrian connections to Lawrence Park Collegiate and the Chatsworth Ravine system to the south."

A Community Meeting was held on Nov 12, 2015, hosted by Councillor Carmichael Greb, to review the status of the outstanding Avenue Road Recommendations. The Douglas Greenbelt recommendations (#7, #8 and #9) have not yet been implemented. The Planning Staff stated that the fulfilment of these recommendations would likely only be accomplished through the redevelopment opportunity at 250 Lawrence Avenue West. We therefore hope that these issues will be considered.



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As stated in the Avenue Road Avenue Study, "As this is the only park near the parks deficient east side of Avenue Road, it should be a priority to rehabilitate the Douglas Greenbelt." This is a far more valuable use of the land to the surrounding neighbourhood and community than trying to fit a number of townhomes into this small space and effectively closing southern access to the Greenbelt.

Other Concerns

Further to these planning issues, this development will have a significant impact on the surrounding community in the following ways:

- Increased traffic congestion on Lawrence in the block between Greer and Avenue Road and on Avenue Road itself which poses challenges for our residents getting in and out of our community, as well as safety issues for residents, pedestrians, school children and drivers.
- Increased pressure on aging water services infrastructure, location and design of servicing, overland flow route and trunk sewer modification. Flooding has been an issue in the neighbourhood already - increased density will be an increased negative impact at any level given the existing building use would not have same water impact as high density residential use.
- Schools of every level in the area are already well beyond maximum capacity. This is a concern on a grander scale but it should be noted that the development will make the current issue worse.

We fully support redevelopment efforts that will ensure the ongoing vibrancy of our community. However, we believe that this can be accomplished in a way that is respectful to the intentions of the City Plan, the Avenues and Mid-Rise Buildings Study as well as the Avenue Road Avenue Study in terms of respecting the community and the impact on green space and infrastructure.

We would welcome an opportunity to talk more about how this could be accomplished and we look forward to reviewing the next round of proposals from the developer.

Yours truly

Sheila Dunlop, Secretary

Email: Ron Johnson, H. Crawford, Bob Williams, Jim Sadler (SAHRA)
Joe Nanos, Ben DiRaimo (Planning)
Councillor Jay Robinson (Ward 25)
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William Roberts, Eileen Denny (CORRA)
Judy Ballard, Gerry Ronen, Sandy Gladstone, Debra Satok, William Dolan, Meg Davis