

From: Ali Manji

Sent: Saturday, March 20, 2021 1:08 PM

To: Clerks Richmondhill <clerks@richmondhill.ca>

Cc: brian; David West <david.west@richmondhill.ca>

Subject: Proposed Development at Major Mackenzie West and Arnold Crescent

Dear Sir/Madam

The proposed high-density, high-rise residential development is an assault on our heritage community. I am writing to object to the proposed development at Major Mackenzie West and Arnold Crescent. I am a resident on Arnold Crescent and own a house here.

The scale of the development will essentially ruin the character of this part, if not the whole of the olde village. The developer wants to build almost 800 residential units (apartments or condos) mostly in towers up to 19 storeys (210') high with over 800 parking spaces. According to the city staff report, the developer makes questionable claims about the proposed density and designation of subject lands (Local Development Area or Neighbourhood zone which permits limited, low density, locally sensitive developments). The density of the proposed development is disproportionate with what is adjacent in the village that if it comes to fruition then the area will suffer permanent harm and irrevocably change the character for the area. Almost half the houses on Arnold Crescent are heritage houses. There has to be transition space between this village core and the proposed new development. The massing and the scale of development should gradually transition from something that is in keeping with the village core and gradually rise as required by the Village Core Urban Design Guidelines. This proposal is suddenly imposing a massive development with 10-19 storey towers on 4-storey podiums right next to two storey houses, many of which are of historical and architectural significance just down the street.

The amount of traffic that the development will introduce on Arnold is unacceptable. At the junction of Arnold Crescent and Major Mackenzie Drive, the sight distance to the west is limited due to the elevation of Major Mackenzie Drive at this point and should be a cause for concern if there is any increased traffic on Arnold. All the gains made due to changes in the Viva Next's plan to scale down its infrastructure from Major Mackenzie to Crosby Street by removing the rapidways, the buses only lanes, will be lost by this development. The proposed development will make Arnold Crescent a regularly trafficked route and a major thoroughfare creating unacceptable adverse traffic and safety impacts on Arnold Crescent and at both ends of the road.

This massive development is short-term focused and is unsustainable in the long term, introduces great uncertainty in the tax base, would have significant impact on walkable areas in the village core, will reduce the pedestrian and bicycle friendly nature of the area today, will reduce the range of housing choices in the area, have a negative impact on the quality of life, the livability and unique sense of community and place that exists today. This huge development is unlikely to help protect our natural and cultural environment or make our village core more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse. This development ignores the architecture and landscape design that celebrates the local history of our village.

This monstrosity is an affront to the good natured people of Richmond Hill. It is difficult to understand our system which entertains developers who snub their noses and propose such egregious developments and the city has to waste its limited resources to evaluate such application. This is a heritage area and the development is not only not in keeping with the Official Plan but the Village Core Urban Design Guidelines for this area. If such piecemeal changes and encroachments to the Official Plan were permitted, none of the heritage areas in the Province will be secure. I believe the fundamental issue is that the Official Plan can be amended in piecemeal fashion and as a result neighbourhoods like ours are slowly being killed by developments characterised by unsystematic partial measures taken over a period of time. Neighbourhoods are not given the time or the resources to prepare and mount a coherent opposition. Unless the system is changed such that neighbourhoods are provided with time and resources to organise and the Official Plan cannot be amended in a piecemeal manner, development by development fashion, we will destroy the character of historic neighbourhoods like ours. Redeveloping underutilised sites within and near historic neighbourhoods is desirable and inevitable but should be addressed in an intentional, considered and comprehensive way through the periodic review of the Official Plan resulting in a more nuanced and sensitive development that takes into account the character, the scale, the art, architecture and landscape of the area.

I urge the Council to reject this proposal.

Sincerely

Ali Manji

109 Arnold Crescent