

145 St. George St.

Project Name: 145 St. George St. ¹	Date of Application: 17 May 2021
Application Number: 21 155923 STE 11 OZ	Date of ARA Board Approval of this Position Statement: 10 September 2021
P+D² Draft recommended to Board on: 7 September 2021	P+D Review Group: David S., Elizabeth, Blake, Ron, Sandra, Lynne, Rita, Gillian, Henry, Edward

Project Status: planning and zoning			
pre-Application	application submitted	Project Review Mtg. proposed early October, 2021	community meeting
TEYCC ³ pending	Council pending	Toronto Preservation Board: n/a	OLT ⁴ appeal: none to date
Project Status: Site Plan Control			
application submitted	Staff-led Working Group (WG)	'bumped up' to Councillor	Councillor-led WG
What the Developer Wants Now:			
Official Plan Amendment	Zoning Bylaw Amendment	Site Plan Approval	Heritage approval

This version of ARA's Project Position Statement will be updated after the Project Review Meeting in October 2021 and subsequently as the City processes the development application. This Statement, and the views expressed in it, are presented by ARA 'without prejudice' to any legal actions arising in the course of the City's review and possible appeals.

Brief Description of Project:

Zoning By-law Amendment application to facilitate the development of the site for a 29-storey residential apartment building (92.15 meters; 98.15 meters to top of mechanical penthouse) having a gross floor area of 23,076 square metres. A total of 341 residential dwelling units are proposed, of which are 130 rental replacement dwelling units. The existing mid-century mid-rise building would be completely demolished.

Chronology

4 May 2021	half-hour presentation by developer and discussion at May meeting of P+D Committee
17 May	TenBlock submits application to City for Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Site Plan Approval
June	telephone call with Councillor Layton (Edward, Henry, Elizabeth) opposing project and asking for a Project Review Meeting
19 July	ARA attends City meeting with tenants on tenants' rights
26 July	ARA holds Town Hall with tenants to discuss application review process and how to participate

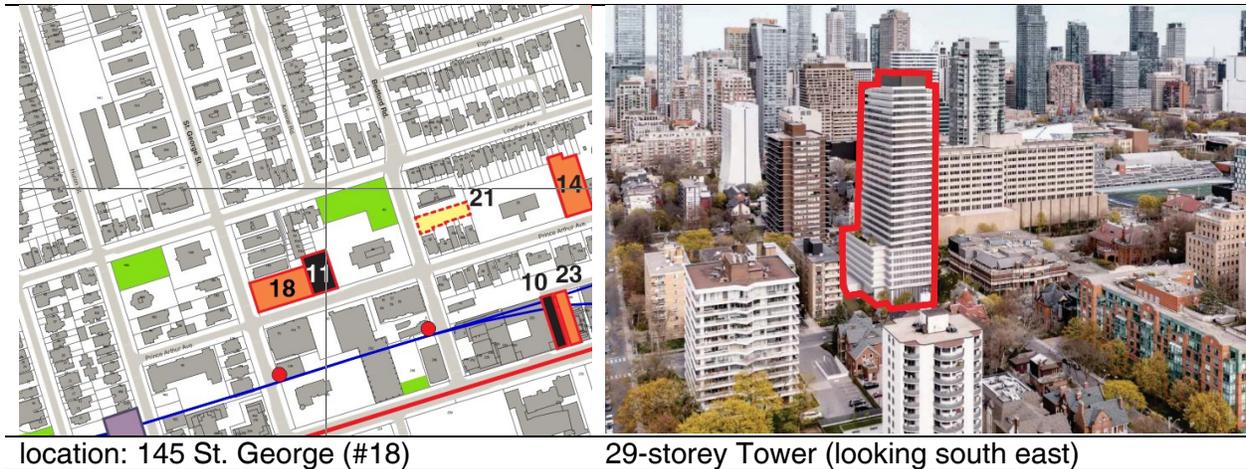
¹ Note: City Planners on this file are: Jason Tsang, Jason.Tsang@toronto.ca, 416-392-4237 and Corinna Prior, Corinna.Prior@toronto.ca, 416-392-5651

² ARA's Planning and Development Committee

³ Toronto and East York Community Council

⁴ new Ontario Land Tribunal, formerly Local Planning Appeals Tribunal and, before LPAT, Ontario Municipal Board

10 Aug	P+D Co-chair (Leman) telephone conversation with Oren Tamir, Manager – Midtown (Planning) on reasons for objections and need to reset relationship with TenBlock
16 Aug	P+D Co-chair (Leman) ZOOM conversation with new Planner, Corinna Prior on timing of Preliminary Report
24 Aug	P+D Co-chair (Leman) telephone conversation with TenBlock VP (Stephen Job) on need to reset; purpose and scope of Project Review Meeting
29 Sept	planned ARA Neighbourhood Town Hall
mid Oct	tentative: Project Review Meeting
late Oct	tentative: City's Community Consultation



location: 145 St. George (#18)

29-storey Tower (looking south east)

ARA's Issues:

ARA has six major concerns with the proposed project:

1. Demolition of a Viable Building
2. Tenants' rights: ensuring that all existing tenants are treated fairly;
3. Affordable housing: ensuring that 1) existing affordable units are retained; and 2) that, if the site is redeveloped, sufficient affordable housing units IN PLACE are designated and committed to by the developer as a condition of application approval;
4. Sustainability: that the embedded energy in the existing building is fully calculated and accounted for; that future energy consumption is minimized and powered from a sustainable source;
5. Heritage: that heritage attributes of the surrounding streetscapes and buildings are fully addressed in any redevelopment;
6. Planning and Design: that the built form, public realm, and circulation of the project are fully compatible with the neighbourhood and wider community.

1. Demolition of a Viable Building

- The existing building was constructed in 1959 and consists of 12 storeys accommodating 130 rental units.
- Many current tenants have been residents for over 20 years (in some cases, 40+ years).
- The building and site appear to be in good condition that would enable its continued operation as a mid-rise rental building for many years to come.
- As discussed below, the embedded energy in the existing building's materials and construction are already significant: demolition will add to the life cycle energy costs and all will be wasted once the building is demolished.
- Demolition of a viable building is a growing concern across Toronto; Policy # 9 in Chapter Two of the Official Plan specifically states that: "*The owners of existing apartment buildings will be encouraged to renovate and retrofit older apartment*

buildings in order to: achieve greater conservation of energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;”

The rationale for demolishing a viable building has not been provided by the developer. Implicit in the application is that replacement of the existing building with an incompatible 29-storey structure is warranted because it is economically a ‘higher and best use’ that will generate profits for the developer but give back nothing to the community and our commons.

2. Tenants’ Rights

At this time, the landlord/Tenblock has entirely complied with the Province’s [Residential Tenancies Act](#) and the City of Toronto’s Residential Rental Property Demolition and Conversion Control by-law. That is, if the application were to be approved, the landlord/Tenblock appears to be prepared to comply with the following accommodations for tenants:

- the landlord must provide at least 6-months’ notice;
- the landlord must provide at least 8-months’ rent worth of compensation (*plus more depending on the length of tenancy*);
- the landlord would likely have to provide relocation support in the form of additional compensation for moving and an agent to assist in finding temporary accommodations, and;
- the landlord would provide the right to return to a similar rental replacement unit post-rebuild.

To reduce the chances of mixed signals and given that the City’s Housing Office is working closely with tenants, ARA will not get involved in tenants’ rights issues unless specifically asked to do so by tenants.

3. Sustainability

We have done rough calculations of the embedded energy in the existing building and new building as follows:

1. Carbon emissions for construction of the existing building.
 - existing building area = 12,645 m²
 - carbon emissions 12,645 x 500 kg* = 6,322,500 kg
 - equivalent car emissions** 6,322,500 divided by 4600 = 1,375 cars.
2. Carbon emissions for construction of current building proposal.
 - new building area = 28,635 m²
 - carbon emissions 28,635 x 500 kg* = 14,317,500 kg
 - equivalent car emissions** 14,317,500 divided by 4600 = 3,112 cars.
 - The total embodied carbon emissions is the equivalent of the emissions of 4,487 cars over a period of one year.
 - ** This figure (4600 kg or 4.6 metric tons) is from The United States Environmental Protection Agency. This figure represents the average annual emissions of a typical passenger vehicle.
 - The building areas are estimates based on a review of drawings of both the existing building and the current building proposal.
 - The energy embedded in the existing and proposed buildings are significant and need to somehow accounted for, perhaps in holding any redevelopment to a much higher green standard than currently required. ARA will explore this issue further and raise it at the Project Review Meeting with the developer, City staff, and Councillor in October.

4. Affordable Housing

- Council has still not decided an Inclusionary Zoning policy but is expected to do this year. The site falls within a Protected Major Transit Station Area and will be subject to Inclusionary Zoning after the City’s current Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Official Plan is completed in 2022 and sent to the Minister. The current application

will be legally exempt from the policy at it was not in force at the time the application was filed.

- However, the principle of affordable housing provision has been pursued on several projects in the Annex over the last 15 years.
- ARA will push hard for ON-SITE affordable housing in this project at levels of Inclusionary Zoning to be agreed by Council later this year.
- At this point, there is no certainty on whether the building will be rental or condominium. This will affect the amount of affordable housing provided through inclusionary zoning.

5. Heritage

- Scale is an issue. The current streetscape of low to mid-rise buildings contributes to the community's established - and cherished - character. Moreover, low and mid-rise buildings are conducive to building stable and supportive communities, especially in inner-city areas.
- The City cites a lack of mid-rise development as a problem. If that is the case, why reduce the stock of mid-rise buildings that exist and instead look at this building and even more historic buildings such as the recently Heritage Designated 41-45 Spadina Road as examples of mid-rise, multi-unit dwellings, from two different historic eras of building
- The West Annex Heritage Project is underway and scheduled to provide a final report by the end of August 2022. In it the mid-rise building will be considered as a typology and for that reason the scale should be preserved.

6. Planning and Design

1. Uses

- type(s) of use: proposed uses (residential) and street-level commercial are consistent with the area
- unit mix is still in flux

2. Massing + Form

- In the current Official Plan the site is located at the southerly edge of an Apartment Neighborhood designation⁵. That boundary at Prince Arthur with the abutting Mixed Use area on the south side of Prince Arthur is critical in providing a finite limitation on the northward incursion of tall buildings into the distinctive character of the St George Street Apartment Neighborhood. The accessibility enabled by the St George subway station provides strong impetus for intensification there, but the argument for carefully counter-balancing neighbourhood impact is compelling.
- The key variable here is building height. The A.N. designation precludes tall buildings by limiting height to mid-rise (11 stories). The proposed 29 storey tower would be almost double the height of any existing building on St George St. and also taller by far than any other existing building in this Apartment Neighbourhood. As such it would be a seriously disruptive and de-stabilizing precedent there.
- Many opportunities exist close to the subway station in the Mixed Use area,

⁵ The subject site is designated Apartment Neighbourhoods in the City's Official Plan as are adjoining properties on St. George and on the north side of Prince Arthur. The lands to the north east are designated Neighborhoods and Taddle Creek Park is designated Open Space. The lands on the south side of Prince Arthur and on the north side of Prince Arthur west of St. George are designated Mixed Use Areas. TOCore (Official Plan Amendment # 406) differentiates Mixed Use and identifies type and scale: Growth, Intermediate, Main Street and Local. Prince Arthur Avenue west of St. George Street is designated Mixed use Local which comprises house form buildings embedded within the neighbourhood fabric, low rise - four storeys or less to be compatible with the existing physical character of the neighbourhood. The south side of Prince Arthur Avenue east of the subject site is designated 'Intermediate', it's built form meant to respond to tall buildings and mid-rise and be 'in-between' scale of development. The south side of Prince Arthur west of the subject site is designated 'Main Street' allowing for mid-rise buildings, some low-rise and tall buildings based on compatibility. St. George Street is designated Apartment Neighbourhood to Dupont Street. Development in Apartment Neighbourhoods that are adjacent to Neighbourhoods is to be comparable with these Neighbourhoods, provide gradual transition of scale and density and maintain adequate light and privacy.

particularly on Bloor Street, to accommodate tall buildings. The nearby One Bedford development provides a good example of how the significant block-depth can be used to create a comfortable transition between Bloor and the Apartment Neighbourhood fronting on Prince Arthur.

- While significant growth is not intended in Apartment Neighbourhoods any such development must be compatible with the scale, including height and massing, of the existing apartment buildings adjacent to the site.
- Residents of Lowther Mews, to the northeast of the site, have not been consulted at all and their concerns over massing and form have been ignored in the preparation of the current design.

3. Streetscape + Public Realm

- Streetscape: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- utility infrastructure: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- ground cover: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- landscaping: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- lighting: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*

4. Environment + Resilience

- shadows and shade: under review (discuss with Lowther and Lowther Mews residents)
- noise avoidance and mitigation: under review (discuss with Lowther Mews residents)
- air: quality and circulation: under review (discuss with Lowther Mews residents)
- tree cover/shade: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- permeability and drainage: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- wind, rain, snow and ice protection and mitigation: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*
- bird-friendly measures: *to be reviewed at Site Plan Control stage*

5. Movement

- parking (car + bicycles): *under review*
- vehicular circulation: no issues
- pedestrian and bicycle circulation: no issues
- garbage: no issues
- pickup + deliveries: *major issue – e-commerce not addressed in applicant's traffic study*
- emergency vehicle access: no issues
- transit: no issues

6. Community Benefits: P+D will discuss with neighbouring residents, the Councillor and Planning and update in Version 3 of this Statement accordingly.

- affordable housing: see above
- facilities for
 - children
 - teenagers
 - seniors
 - families
 - vulnerable persons
 - newcomers
 - i. parks and open spaces
 - ii. community environmental and resilience improvements

ARA's Position:					
	negotiate 1-on-1		mobilize neighbours		request Project Review Meeting
?	request Working Group		support: with conditions		support unconditionally
	oppose		appeal		no position yet

Summary:

1. ARA opposes the application as filed as it is an egregious dismissal of Official Plan policies on numerous fronts – sustainability, destruction of a viable building and community – but especially on the role and characteristics of Apartment Neighbourhoods.
2. Allowing a tall building in an Apartment Neighbourhood abutting Neighbourhood and Open Space uses would become a totally unacceptable precedent for remaining Apartment Neighbourhood areas along St. George, Spadina, Walmer Road, and elsewhere in the Annex. This would be an unacceptable precedent for Apartment Neighbourhoods abutting Neighbourhoods across Toronto.
3. ARA will continue to push for changes to address all six issues of concern:
 - a. Demolition of a viable building
 - b. Tenants' rights
 - c. Affordable housing
 - d. Sustainability
 - e. Heritage
 - f. Planning and design.
4. ARA is concerned that the developer has not sought to hear the views of immediate neighbours along Lowther Mews. This is not acceptable and must be remedied immediately.

ARA will reserve judgement on whether to ask that a Working Group be formed after the Project Review Meeting, depending on the tone and content of that meeting and willingness of the developer to negotiate in good faith.

To comment on this interim Project Position Statement, please email Henry Wiercinski, Co-chair, Planning and Development Committee at: info@theara.org.