



## **This Week in the Annex:**

**August 11, 2021**

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### **House Proud (And Rightly So!)**

Every single one of the scores of renovation projects unfolding in the Annex these days seems to be progressing in fits and starts punctuated by increasingly lengthy periods of inertia. But this is particularly the case with the work at 6 Admiral Road which has been a perpetual construction site for what must by now be at least four years.

We learned the answer to the snail's pace last month when we paused to commend the worker who was supervising the installation of a dramatic limestone façade. "What a magnificent design," we opined. "It's so outstanding, it was well worth the wait." And that was when he dropped his guard. Turns out we were speaking not just to one of the trades but to the man who also happens to own the property, one Nathan Schmerler.

#### **A Labour of Love**

Nathan's story is impressive. He's been in construction since he was 16 and over the years has learned critical elements of each of the trades. He even taught himself AutoCad – the architectural drafting software – in order to design and create the plans for this dream home.

He took possession of the Admiral Road semi on a lucky day – July 7, 2007 (in other words, 07, 07, '07) – and from the outset he plotted and planned to turn it into a personal palace. He completed all the structural work by himself – the framing, the plumbing, the wiring, you name it. But he left the installation of the decorative finishes such as the façade to expert stonemasons and tilers.

Delays in delivery have proven just as frustrating for Nathan as for every other builder in town. The porcelain slabs he's ordered for the main bathroom used to take just three weeks to materialize – now he has to wait a minimum of four months. And there's a particular item he needs for finishing the rear walk-out,

but that won't arrive until November, forcing him to wait until spring when there's no risk of frost to forestall the pouring of concrete.

Still, the wait is in many ways over for those of us in the 'hood who regularly pass by. Now, as well as delighting in the grandeur of that limestone, we can marvel at the skill and dedication of one man determined to achieve a dream.

### **P.S.**

We are also totally confident that the final result inside 6 Admiral will be nothing short of gorgeous. That's because sleuthing reveals Nathan's been involved with this sort of project before (*Gotta love Google—Ed*). City records indicate he was given permission in 2003 to demolish the existing structure at 115 Douglas Drive on the grounds that a new house would rise on the site within two years. And Nathan complied handsomely with the conditions. Just check out [this 2019 sales video](#) of the Rosedale property to admire the quality of the finishes.



## **Of Parks and Reconciliation**

Originally from Kenora, Megan Maloney arrived in Toronto via Calgary some eight years ago. She now considers herself a confirmed Torontonion/Annexionian. But sometimes she longs for the wild trees and lakes of her birthplace. When she's feeling particularly homesick, she is drawn to the green spaces in the 'hood, particularly Paul Martel Park.

Enchanted by the recent restoration under Paul Richard's leadership, Megan decided to create [a photo essay of the park](#). At Paul's behest she has also begun researching its history and the significance of the Indigenous references within it. Megan is clear in her motivation. As she told us, "Toronto's parks and public realm are our common grounds. For these spaces to truly bring us together, they need to reflect all of us, and they need to reflect the city's commitment to reconciliation."

## Paul Martel's Legacy

As part of her research, Megan wants to hear from anyone who knew Paul Martel and has knowledge of his original ideas in designing the park. If you fit that description and you're willing to talk, then please get in touch with Megan at [missmeganannemaloney@gmail.com](mailto:missmeganannemaloney@gmail.com).



The canoes, a distinguishing feature of Paul Martel's design, first drew Megan to the park. Today, they inspire her photography and research.

## Notes & Queries

### And Now We Wait

The Bedford Neighbourhood Coalition (BNC) reports that the gruelling OLT hearings (aka LPAT, aka OMB) regarding the proposed development at 287 Davenport have now ended. ARA's heroic co-chair, Henry Wiercinski, was present for the whole nine days, while directors of BNC sat in for substantial portions. Henry (no stranger to the bar himself) reports that BNC's lawyer and expert were stellar. "I don't think BNC could have asked for a better group to represent them." As was to be expected, the tribunal members have reserved their decision, indicating it will take some time (weeks? months?) before we learn the outcome. We'll keep you posted. But in the meantime, a big shout out to everyone in the Annex who gave their support. Once again, the 'hood definitely came through!



### **Avenue Road Safety at the Forefront**

The Avenue Road Safety Coalition (ARSC) is keeping up the pressure to improve what amounts to a speedway running north from Bloor to St. Clair. Coalition member Murray Campbell, co-president of our neighbouring Rathnelly RA, has penned a succinct history of the road and ARSC's innovative plans to make it pedestrian friendly. Called "Fixing Sam's Road" (Sam Cass, that is) the article is available on the web by [clicking here](#). Do pass the link on – with enough public pressure something might yet be done!



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, f1231\_ito868

### **Avenue Road looking north from Davenport, Jan 13, 1938**

City of Toronto Archives Fonds 1231 f1231\_ito868

### **Fancy an Evening Bike Ride?**

Perhaps you've seen them before, gathering in clusters at *The Vessel*, wheels bedecked with colourful lights. But it was a first for us. So naturally we poked in our noses to inquire. Apparently these are the Toronto Cruisers, a group of cycling devotees who periodically meet either at Taddle Creek Park or St. Alban's Square for a convivial evening's ride. The pre-determined route changes with each outing but generally takes a good three hours, ending at midnight at a convenient transit stop. If you watch [this video](#) of the participants as they leave, you'll see that they've been cautious about masks and social distancing. Check out [their website](#) if you fancy joining in.



## In Memoriam Bill Davis (1929-2021)

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't mention the passing last Sunday of Bill Davis whose bold decision to stop the Spadina Expressway at the eleventh hour saved our neighbourhood and community. The Annex as we know it is forever in his debt.



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

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