

Church Street Junior Public School - Impact Statement in Relation to Proposed Development Application at 411 Church Street

Prepared by Major Capital Projects & Building Partnerships, Toronto District School Board

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1.0 Context:

1.1 On May 11th, Centrecourt Developments submitted to the City of Toronto Planning Department revisions to their Original Development Application. These changes included:

- Height reduced from 142.8 m to 116 m.
- Gross Floor Area (GFA) reduced from 38,030 m² to 36,540 m² with a Floor Space Index (FSI) reduced from 17.64 to 16.95.
- Tower floor plate increased from 750 m² to 890 m².
- Podium height reduced from 7 to 6 stories.
- Retail has been reduced from 2,770 m² to 515 m². No second story retail. Smaller retail units on Ground Floor.
- Main entrance relocated to central location on Wood Street face. Development to the east of the main entrance changed to two-storey townhomes.
- Vehicle parking spaces reduced from 160 to 104.

Accompanying the Revised Development Application was an explanation of the rationale behind the revisions and how they addressed community concerns voiced during the two Public Meetings hosted by the City of Toronto. Excerpts below are from the letter dated May 11, 2016 to Mark Chlon, City Planner, from Michael Goldberg, Goldberg Group (Land Use Planning and Development Consultant)

‘The revised plans propose a reduced overall height and density and refinements to the design at grade level and to the podium to address input from City planning staff and the community in a manner that will increase the compatibility of the project with the existing and proposed area context.’

‘These revisions result in the reduction of the shadow length without any perceptible expansion of the width of the shadows, when compared to the original proposal.’

‘At the streetscape level, the reduction of the GFA (Gross Floor Area) of retail units resulting into smaller retail spaces will accommodate more boutique-sized retail units, as opposed to the potential for much larger format tenants, was desired by the residents in order to be more in keeping with, and sensitive to, the smaller-scale village character of the Church-Wellesley village.’

'The revisions to the streetscape along Wood Street, comprised of reducing the amount of retail along the frontage, positioning the residential entrance centrally along the frontage ... and providing two-storey townhouse units that can be utilized for live/work purposes, serve to further enhance the pedestrian experience and residential character along the side street of Wood Street.'

'In our view, the revisions to the plans maintain the compatibility of the development with the existing and planned context of the site. The lower height of the building is slightly lower than the settled development to the south and reduces the length of the tower's shadow without any perceptible widening of it. The design revisions at grade level will contribute to an enhanced streetscape and potentially a better fit with the neighbourhood character.'

'The revised proposed development represents an appropriate intensification and site design for this site. The development will be consistent with, and conform to, Provincial policies and conform to City OP policies, as well as acceptable design guidelines.'

A copy of the Revised Development Application was handed off to Jeff Latto, Senior Manager at the Toronto District School Board by Mark Chlon, Planner on May 19, 2016. During this meeting, The TDSB committed to reviewing the Revised Development Application with the Church Street PS community and prepares an Impact Statement. It was agreed with Mark Chlon that this Impact Statement would be included in the Final Planning Report.

1.2 On June 2, 2016, the TDSB hosted a Public Meeting at Church Street PS with the school community with a purpose to:

- To review 411 Church Street Revised Development Application
- To hear from the school community of impacts on school community that would result if this Application is successful
- To discuss next steps

During the course of the Public Meeting, concerns were voiced over the potential shadowing on the school yard and facility that would result from this Revised Development Application, as well as concerns on traffic and student safety, as well as growth in the school's enrolment.

2.0 Impact Statement

2.1 Shadows:

- With the changes incorporated into the Revised Development Application, the impact of shadowing will be worse than the Original Development Application.
- The Planning Guidelines for this site indicate a height range between 15 – 25 stories. The reasons for this are very specific. The shadow impact of a 25 story development ensures that its shadows do not fall on the Church Street PS building at the time of the Equinox. This recognizes that while some shadowing

can be accommodated on the playground (a child's time in the playground is a minimum of 15 to 30 minutes at any given time), shadowing on a classroom has a longer impact where children reside for hours at a time. The Revised Development Application will clearly add a shadow impact to the school facility and classrooms within. It should be noted that this position of the TDSB is consistent with negotiations on the 70-72 Carleton Street development where the height of the building was reduced to 37 stories to ensure that shadowing impact (at Equinox) would not fall on the school building.

- While height is of concern with respect to shadowing, so too is the shape and size of the floor plate. The proposed floor-plate exceeds the Tall Building Guidelines recommended maximum floor plate area (890 whereas the guideline is 750 sq. ft.) as a result of the need to make up density that was lost by the reduced building height. This larger area, and the orientation of the wider dimension in the east-west direction, will create a 'slab' effect with a wider shadow on the school grounds. At times of the day this will compound with the shadow of the 70-72 Carleton project to effectively completely shadow the school property.
- The Church Street Jr PS playground has been impacted for many years from other adjacent developments, such as the two condo towers at Radio Towers development to the east. The shadow impact of this new development at 411 Church Street needs to be understood within the context of previous developments and their impacts on the school property.
- The students at Church Street Jr PS are outside much more than the mandated 3 times a day (morning recess, lunch, and afternoon recess). The playground is often used for gym time on any day that it's suitable because they're gym is too small to accommodate all students/classes.
- Health Canada notes that "positive effects of sun include warmth, light, and vitamin D3 synthesis to the body. Sunlight also enhances people's moods and kills pathogens" (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/sun-sol/index-eng.php>). Loss of sunlight and associated vitamin D in childhood is a critical setback to one's long-term health. Research has linked Vitamin D deficiency to inability of bones to absorb Calcium, avert heart disease, breast and colorectal cancers and osteoporosis in later life.

2.2 Traffic and Safety:

- In the Revised Development Application, the entrance to the garage is off Wood Street which sits directly south of the Church Street PS playground; it would sit directly across from the school's south entrance gate to the playground, where many of the families enter/exit during the rush-hours of the day. This design will therefore increase the risk to student safety by adding vehicles to an already congested street. As with the 70-72 Carleton project, the exit should be onto

Church Street which is twice as wide as Wood Street and thus able to accommodate the additional load.

- Working with researchers from York University, University of Toronto and the Hospital for Sick Children, the TDSB has recently completed a study looking at child safety within the context of increased vehicle traffic at schools. The results show that a decrease in vehicle congestion around schools will result in a safer environment for students with a reduced number of pedestrian collisions.

2.3 Community Space:

- The community is experiencing a shortage of space for community services. There may be an opportunity to seek community space as provided in the Revised Development Application. From the perspective of the Church Street PS community, enrolment growth is expected to require up to two portables to be brought to the school property in the coming years. There will be a challenge to accommodate these portables on the small playground area.
- The TDSB's Planning Department has a number of tools available to respond in the short term to unexpected rises in school enrollment. It is important to note that the Ministry of Education does not fund for future growth: it only funds current enrollment. With unexpected growth the school can:
 - a. Implement Portables: these don't require a change in boundaries and ensures kids can still attend the school in their area:
 - b. Undertake a Grade Change: send higher grades to other schools that have capacity and include higher grades
 - c. Undertake a Change a boundary: reduce the catchment area
 - d. Recover space from child care facilities: this is the least favoured resolution and done only when there are no other alternatives.
- As there is a need to increase the school's capacity by at least two classrooms in the coming years, and a desire to not remove the existing child care in the school from the community, one solution would be to negotiate within the Revised Development Application the accommodation of the child care from the school. This would free up classrooms to accommodate expected enrolment pressures at the school while maintaining the child care in the community.

2.4 General

- In general, the planning rationale does not pay particular concern for the impact of the proposed development on the Church Street PS operations. In the City of Toronto Official Plan, there is specific language that speaks to protecting the operations of public schools; "council recognizes that schools are an integral community resource that serve not only as learning institutions but also as social-cultural centers and a source of valuable community open space" (Policy 3.2.2.4). The Official Plan also speaks to the importance of children's health, safety and development. For example, there are requirements to create

environments that include “safe walking routes to schools” (Policy 2.4.8) and “safe, stimulating and engaging play spaces for children” (Policy 3.2.3.2c).