

Notes from Q&A session following development proposal presentation

Address: 170 Spadina Avenue

Date: May 4, 2015

Presenting: Plazacorp

Status: This application has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB)

NB: All answers are from the developer team unless otherwise noted

Q: I understand that what you purchased is the parking lot. How much height is already approved by the City?

A: No, our site is to the south of the building beside the parking lot. There's an existing sales office on our site. It goes all the way through from Spadina to Cameron.

A: (City Planning) The existing permitted height is 28 metres. The developer has applied for 60 metres of height. The application is before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to consider because the previous applicant appealed. City Planning still has to write a report to advise City Council.

A: (Joe Cressy) This is before the OMB so the question here is: is there an acceptable resolution or do we leave it to the Board to make a decision?

Q: I am completely opposed to this proposal. The height would completely block our building at 188 Spadina. We have a beautiful Chinese garden in our atrium that would be completely obliterated by the proposal. Our building is 10 storeys tall. It's also almost impossible today to make the left turn from Cameron on to Queen Street eastward, and this proposal will just increase the traffic further.

A: (Planning) At 270 Spadina, up the road, City Planning staff supported 10 storeys for a new development there. We must have regard for the context and as part of the review we have to figure out what is the context here.

A: (Joe Cressy) There is no rule in place for a fixed height on Spadina from Queen to College, but we do have plans for a Spadina Avenue Study to determine our vision for the street. We may attach heights to the study, but we have more work to do. We hope to get started next year.

Q: Can you describe the impacts of an extra 50 cars per day on Cameron Street and Queen Street? On the north end there is congestion of a different type because of parents dropping off and picking up kids at the community centre.

A: We are aware of the issue at Queen and Cameron. We are required to do a traffic impact study and so far we are just at the preliminary stages. In terms of magnitude of traffic, relatively speaking, it's a low trip generator. In the peak hour the expectation is for about 35 peak direction trips which disperse on the network. But we have to take a closer look at it.

A: (Planning) The most recent transportation study submitted by the applicants is still being reviewed by the City's transportation engineers and planners. I'm not an expert so I can't provide the City's position right now but if you email or call later I can provide it.

Q: One of my concerns is about setting a precedent. Once you get one building with permission for 17 storeys – 2.5 times the height of a normal building – then it's a free for all for the other developer in the area. This is too high. From a pedestrian point of view, the sidewalks are too narrow. A pedestrian can't move on Saturday or Sunday at

Spadina and Queen. Now you're going to add another complexity to an area that's already overcrowded with pedestrian traffic.

Q: This proposal has been an eyesore from the very beginning. It just doesn't fit here. The building will be a fire hazard and increase traffic congestion.

Q: We have a survey that disagrees with the plan showing property lines and lanes. We ran into problems trying to renovate with the past owner of this site trying to access their building. We want to make sure the radius is enough for a fire truck to go in, and if we have to do future maintenance we want to be able to access the lane.

Q: The Queen Street West BIA has some concerns with the proposal. Queen and Spadina is one of the City's busiest intersections and also the centre and focal point of the Heritage Conservation District. We have concerns about developments that show residential units starting only a few metres above street level because they will have issues with street noise, which is a potential problem for both Spadina Avenue and Queen Street. This should be a priority to address in retail commercial areas. The fashion, restaurant, and hospitality industry is very lively. This current development only shows one retail space at ground level.

Q: Can you tell us a little more about the access to the lane that was raised by others?

A: (Planning) This issue was a subject of the last meeting we had with the previous applicants for this site. There is a piece of building blocking access to the buildings further east. Emergency services staff review these applications and will make sure they have access to the building. We have had discussion with the applicants about the possibility of opening up access to other units. There is no solution at this time but there is ongoing discussion.

Q: I think that the method of getting traffic off Cameron Street is good. And I like that garbage is off the street too. The block to the north will make the streets more permeable to traffic with the Alexandra Park revitalization – but will this development increase traffic in that neighbourhood full of children?

A: (Planning) That is a good comment. More details about the transportation impact will emerge through the transportation study. Families in Alexandra Park are a very important consideration.

Q: The proposal is creating a lot of density here but we're already getting a lot of density with Alexandra Park. We don't know how that will impact the neighbourhood. To increase the density to 17 storeys at the crossroads when we don't know what the traffic impact will be or how the neighbourhood will develop is perhaps taking a chance. Because there's a lot of street and sidewalk traffic already, I think there's a lot of incoming density and population coming into the area in the next few years and to increase this to that level I think is excessive.

Q: I am wondering about the pedestrian mews on the north side of the building. Is there a parallel driveway on the neighbouring property? It looks like there is a pinchpoint on the plans. Could the neighbour put up a fence and create a bottleneck?

A: (Planning) Today's presentation is the most detailed proposal of the mews that I have seen so far. We will have to look at safety and other details. The pinch point is a good comment that deserves more attention.

Q: This meeting is too short. We have much more to say.

Q: This is a big improvement over the previous version of the proposal. Consider offices on the second floor. The BIA raises a good point – I'm afraid of losing employment space here.

A: (Planning) We have made that comment to the applicants as well.

Q: I agree that this is much improved over last time. Could you knock three storeys off the building? Would it still be economically viable? I think that would address a lot of concerns.

A: We can't answer that question right now. We need to take all the feedback into consideration, both public and City, before considering possible revisions to the proposal.

Q: Access between Spadina and Camden is a safety issue. Between Queen and Spadina and Richmond and Spadina, we had to put up a fence to deal with drugs, graffiti, and people pulling fire alarms.