

## Notes from Q&A session following development proposal presentation

Address: 543 Richmond St W

Date: May 4, 2015

Presenting: Quadrangle Architects for Muzzo Group

Status: A re-zoning application was submitted to the City in December, 2014.

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

Q: Portland Street has a certain affinity with the neighbourhood and it's not this proposal. This brings the retail from Queen Street down to Portland completely changing the ambiance. Portland is a small street. We've been seeing buildings in this presentation that are on Queen, Richmond, Bathurst, Spadina but nothing about Portland. Portland has a certain character. We talk about saving Queen Street but Portland is just as important to the neighbourhood ambiance. This is a big box store dumped in the middle of Toronto, the same as the store on the north side of Richmond. The building to the east is half this size. This is just greedy, egregious. I can't understand why the City is even entertaining this.

A: (Joe Cressy) They have put in an application and have a right that the City will review their proposal. That's why we are all here tonight.

Q: 533 Richmond across the street was reduced in height by the City when it applied. The glass façade – do you have a potential retailer? That's an enormous retail space.

A: No question it is a lot of retail. We don't have a specific retailer in mind right now. We want it to activate the street. We haven't discussed limitations on the retail size yet.

Q: This is such a big box and you've attempted to articulate it by breaking it up to give the appearance of a couple buildings. That long run of glass at street level that all of us in the neighbourhood are going to encounter – in terms of streetscape, it's boring. Can you break it up like you've done with the podium? The rest of the neighbourhood is narrow frontages. All the proposal that come forward at midrise scale seem to suck up the blocks. These factory blocks are much larger than typical City blocks.

Q: A bunch of us live directly across the street at 533 Richmond. We had to wait a long time (as purchasers) because they pre-sold at 14 and were cut down at 9 or 10 and the whole thing was reconfigured. The scale of this building dwarfs ours. I work in real estate and knew something would be built there but the scope will shade everybody. It seems out of proportion for that corner. It takes the soul out of that part of Portland Street.

A: (Joe Cressy) These are issues that we've already told the applicants, from a planning point of view, need to be addressed. It is very helpful to hear this from the community as well.

Q: I also live at 533 Richmond. This is the same size as the "Vu" at Jarvis and Adelaide. That project faces Jarvis, which has three lanes – it's a much wider street. With bike lanes and parking on Richmond, during rush hour it's hell. For two or three hours you can't move. If a fire engine tries to come down, there is no way because it's gridlock. People are going to have cars in this building. Trying to get in and out of that corner is going to be hell. Portland is a single lane with parking on the side. It's essentially two

streets that have a single lane of traffic. There's a lot of car congestion. Such a large building – this is a big box building – I'm surprised at any amount of height.

A: (Joe Cressy) To clarify, nothing that has been presented tonight has been approved by the City. A property owner can apply for anything, and we will have a meeting like this one tonight to hear your feedback. City staff have already raised concerns about this proposal, and we've brought the applicants here to hear from you. I'm hearing clear concerns about density and transportation.

A: We have to file a transportation impact study with our application and that will be reviewed by the City transportation and engineering departments. We agree with you about the important of looking at access to the site. We think that the access should be off Richmond because it is the more major road and likely the one that is best able to accommodate the traffic. The City has told us they would like to see it on Portland instead, and that an important consideration going forward.

Q: I think everyone agrees that they can't put the access on Portland. You said 296 parking spots? That's more than The Harlowe and Queen-Portland combined for residential. Trying to leave in the morning is very difficult with the bike lane and parking on one side. Out of common, it sounds like it's not feasible. Of course, we know that something will be built on the spot, but it's so big.

A: There are 262 parking spaces in total: 208 for residents and 54 for visitors and commercial. The building is larger than The Harlowe on a much larger property, so the scale is different. I would be surprised if this development will generate as much traffic as Queen-Portland because that other development has such dense retail.

A: (MMM Group, traffic consultant for applicants) In the context of this site, one of the things to keep in mind is the existing uses that we will be displacing. In this context, we're looking at a net increase in traffic that is lower than you might expect, and we are of the belief that the traffic can be accommodated.

Q: The main issue for me, since congestion and traffic are unavoidable, is the massing and the architecture of this proposal. It is incompatible with Portland Street. The Bousfields study is diversionary – it doesn't point out building heights on Portland Street. The City talks about the block but it's the street that's the issue. Portland Street is an entity. It is a very important pedestrian route from Queen to the railway lands. We know that Adelaide and Queen are traffic sewers, but Portland is very different. Also, the single door is puzzling given the size of the retail block.

Q: Considering the amount of retail space, which a lot of us would like to see reduced, we have to honour what has been recognized internationally on Queen West: supporting local artists and retailers. I know we have Joe Fresh and Winners and Loblaws across the street. I think we should honour the spirit of the neighbourhood by ensuring there is a percentage of local retail, artists, galleries, and community members who are looking to start their own businesses. That is the international appeal of Queen West. I also want to echo everybody's sentiments about the height on a street the size of Portland.

Q: Can you speak more about shadow studies and light on the block? Will we be in shade all day every day? I live in the Queen-Portland building.

A: We can provide copies of the shadow studies that were submitted as part of the application.

A: (City Planning) Unfortunately, our urban designer wasn't able to attend today to speak to this issue. The overall height has been identified as an issue and a reduction would reduce shadows. If there is a reduction in height, a new shadow study must be submitted.

Q: I appreciate the increased sidewalk width. The rest of the proposal is pretty hostile to pedestrians. Six floors of balconies hanging over where people walk is a hazard because people drop things and sweep things off balconies. Retailers like Shoppers put the backs of their shelves to big expanses of glass like that. There should not be such long stretches of blank glass dominated by one retailer. I'm not against box box stores but the frontage should be narrow. Don't kill such a long stretch of sidewalk.

A: (City Planning) We have identified that we would like to see more retail entrances in addition to the current two. We are still looking at the set-backs and step-backs which affect balcony overhang. We have to balance this with the weather protection that is offered by an overhang.

Q: What is the area of the retail space?

A: About 25,000 square feet of retail.

Q: I would like to suggest that you consider reducing the number of parking spaces further. There are situations like the building on University where there is no parking at all. That would help to reduce the traffic impacts. And is there any possibility of putting a park on the corner?

A: (City Planning) We would like to see a park on the site because it is a big property. We are still discussing this with the applicants.

A: (Joe Cressy) The City requires a certain amount of parking in its by-laws but we frequently go way below this requirement in Ward 20 because people tend to walk and cycle. It is important to provide some spaces for visitors, but less so for residents in the building.

Q: Since this is a formal application, can you break down the unit types?

A: 6 studio, 171 one-bedroom, 187 one-bedroom-plus, 174 two-bedroom. There are no three bedroom units at this point.

A: (Joe Cressy) Every development in Ward 20 should have a minimum of 10% three-bedroom units.

Q: Richmond and Portland are not good for retail that depends on pedestrian traffic. The Icon buildings on Wellington have grade-level storefronts and none are retail that depends on pedestrian traffic. The Morgan's Richmond Street frontage, only 30 feet from Spadina, has a nail salon, a barber, and a dry cleaner.