

Professor John Danahy, Centre for Landscape Research, University of Toronto

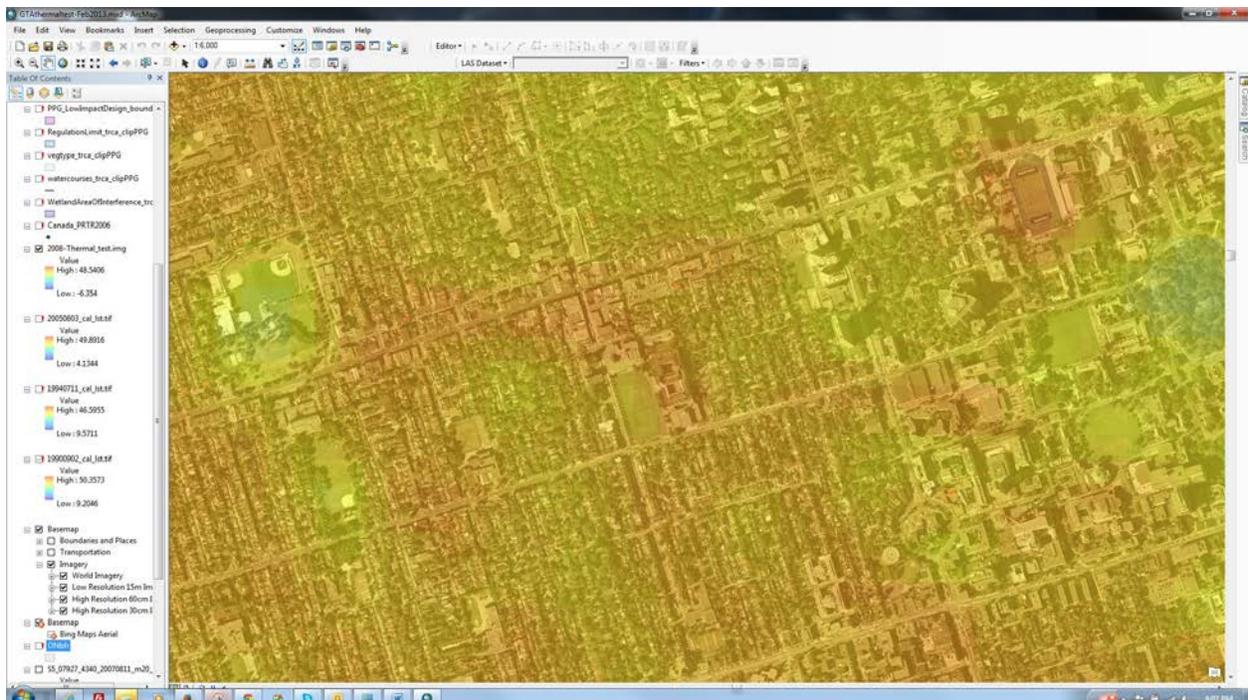
Re: file A0767/13TEY Application to Redevelop Central Tech Playing Field

I am a landscape architect, planner and urban designer. I am co-director of the Centre for Landscape Research in the John H. Daniels faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design.

The research I have done at the University of Toronto as part of the GEOIDE National Centre of Excellence identifies and visualizes those areas of the city where land use patterns and green surfaces mitigate the effects of creating large paved and synthetic surfaces associated with building roofs and urban landscape that contribute to urban heat island problems.

My analysis indicates that the urban heat island impact of removing living turf on the Central Technical School site will magnify the existing hot impact of the school's roof and paved surfaces. The existing living turf's evapotranspiration performance mitigates heat impact from the existing site. It is my professional conclusion that the artificial turf proposal works against every principle contained in Toronto's Green Standards and represents bad planning.

The image below (and larger version on page 3) is a screen image from the analysis software and model showing the hot areas in reddish hue and the cooler areas in the greenish hue. Central Tech is in the centre of the aerial image. The living evapotranspiring grass playing field shows as greenish surrounded by red from the school buildings and commercial areas to the north. In the upper right corner of the image the hot red area is the artificial turf field of Varsity Stadium. If an artificial turf field is created at Central Tech the whole neighbourhood area can be expected to become exceptionally hot and provide no relief during the increasing number of extreme heat events Toronto is experiencing.



In terms of urban design, a dome over the site denies everything important to creating and encouraging sociability and urbanity in this model urban community. Sports domes might be acceptable in an already sterile car based suburban industrial sports complex, but domes over a public realm are not reasonable in the heart of a high functioning, complete community. The overall community is a model of intensification that works. However, the area as a whole functions in spite of the absence of a generous parks system because the streets are open to everyone as is the school site. Mixed use land use planning means mixed uses and users throughout the public realm (on both public and private property).

Privatizing and effectively removing the casual aspects of active living and replacing them with programmed paid for sports activity in a community is unacceptable as good planning.

Most members of my profession are actively working on ways to retrofit other less robust communities in the Greater Toronto Region so that those other communities can function as well as the model neighbourhoods surrounding the Central Technical School site. The contemporary concept of complete communities depends on subtle mixed use of the public realm across all members of the community. The proposal is not a minor shift in land use in this context.

I encourage the Committee of Adjustment to reject the application as not minor and not good planning.

Sincerely,



Prof. John Danahy, BLA Uoft, Cert.UD.Cop., MScPI UoFT. OALA, CSLA

Annotations to the map below have been added by Harbord Village Residents' Association (the blue circles, arrows and the notes identifying the Central Tech playing field and Varsity Stadium).

