

Dear Ms. Prejel,

I live on Major Street, south of Harbord. I have also lived on Sussex in the University area, on Spadina Circle, and Lippincott. I also published a major book on Spadina by Rosemary Donegan that was featured in the French newspaper *Le Monde* in an article celebrating the street, its diversity and marvelous character. These neighbourhoods and Spadina—their “cosmic spine” as Matt Cohen described it—are what make Toronto unique. Are the changes described here going to undermine this? I suspect they will.

The overall impression this document gives is of an increased “canyon-like” character to College. And of course Spadina will really change. The Kensington Market, which is not even mentioned in this document, is seriously threatened as well.

I could imagine accepting this plan as it applies to the north side of College, however, if it increased housing options in the area and the height limits and setbacks were actually respected. The green space is, however, derisory. The rest strikes me as very troubling.

But perhaps my greatest concern is that two recent buildings—that on the south side of College to house university students and the new building on College that juts into the Kensington Market area and contains a Loblaws—are of a scale not in any way contemplated by this or any previous plan. They are massive and totally out of keeping with this area. And yet they are being built. What else is in the works for College and Spadina that will be accepted by OMB?

Is this plan simply going to pave the way for developers to go to OMB and be given the right to build whatever they want, arguing that the street has changed, that we need more density, etc? Combined with U of T’s plans on the east side of the neighbourhood, the redevelopment of the Honest Ed’s space, the bubble at Central Tech, etc., this neighbourhood is being sort of enclosed by a substantial number of changes that will render its “heritage” status obsolete. And the combination of diversity, eclecticism, responsiveness and healthy chaos that this whole area represents will be destroyed. Look at Queen between University and Bathurst.

And surely this is just a first step toward substantially changing the nature of Spadina, thereby destroying one of the last remaining truly special features of this city. Instead of our forming and building the city ourselves we will be shaped and formed by commercial forces over which we have no control.

Patricia Aldana
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