

MILESTONE STRATEGY

PLANNERS AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

January 29, 2019

Mr. Brad Clifton, RPP, MCIP
Senior Development Manager
Greenwin Inc.
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Mr. Clifton,

**Re: Parks Issues related to Development Site located at 26 Grenville Street
and 27 Grosvenor Street**

On your behalf, we undertook an identification and analysis of the parks related issues related to the proposed development at 26 Grenville St and 27 Grosvenor St, Ward 13-Toronto Centre, Toronto. This letter summarizes our observations, analysis and conclusions.

The Development Proposal

The subject property is 3,846 m² (41,396 ft²) located at 26 Grenville St and 27 Grosvenor St., mid-block between Yonge and Bay Streets. It is located in Ward 13-Toronto Centre (formerly Ward 27-Toronto Centre-Rosedale for the 2014-2018 Council term).

The development application proposes to amend the zoning by-laws to permit two buildings; a 35 and a 50 storey mixed-use, purpose-built, rental residential building with 844 rental residential units and 1,091 square metres of ground floor retail space. The proposal will have an overall density of 16.27 times the site area.

The development will also include 30% (34.58% as measured by GFA) affordable housing under Toronto's Open Door Affordable Housing Program.

Local Parks

There are several parks in the vicinity of the proposed development. In particular, there are three parks immediately north, specifically:

- Opera Place Park (aka East of Bay Park) including the linear park to south of Opera Place Park, west of the YMCA
- Breadalbane Park
- Dr Lillian McGregor Park (aka Bay Clover Hill Park)

Given their proximity, the three parks offer planners and designers the opportunity to create a complementary relationship to each other.

Opera Place Park (aka East of Bay Park)

Also known as "East of Bay Park", Opera Place Park is a small park on Breadalbane Street, near Yonge Street and Wellesley Street West adjacent to the Central YMCA.

The park has:

- a water feature
- walkways, benches
- ornamental gardens
- electrical building

An extension of the park extends to the south beside the YMCA building giving access to Grosvenor.

The creation of the park at Opera Place was a partnership between the City of Toronto and East of Bay 1997 Development Corporation. The Toronto Urban Development Services and Economic Development Culture and Tourism departments collaborated to integrate a public park with public art.

Breadalbane Park

Breadalbane Park is a small, undeveloped open space with no amenities and is used for dog walking by residents of the neighbouring developments.

City of Toronto operations staff were unaware that the park was a City-owned park as it is not part of their maintenance schedule. They postulated that maintenance is likely undertaken by the neighbouring co-op building.

Future Dr. Lillian McGregor Park (aka Bay Clover Hill Park)

Also known as “Bay Clover Hill Park”, Dr. Lillian McGregor Park is currently under construction and will be a 1.6-acre public park planned alongside Lanterra’s Wellesley on the Park development, located north of Breadalbane Street along Wellesley Street between Bay and Yonge. It is planned to contain:

- children’s play structure
- walkways and benches

Shadowing

The City of Toronto policy regarding shadowing onto parks is contained in Site and Area Specific Policy 382,

“6.2.9 It is the objective of Council to ensure that development/redevelopment will not cast any new net shadow on Opera Place Park Street between 12 Noon and 2:00 PM on March and September 21st, and should the opportunity arise to expand Breadalbane Park, for a period of 6 hours generally between the hours of 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM on March 21st and September 21st.”⁵

As a component of site planning, a Shadow Study was undertaken to determine the extent of incremental shadowing that the proposed building would cast onto the City of Toronto Opera Place Park during the dates and times cited in the Toronto policy. Figure 6 (below), shows that the incremental shadow would be negligible, marginally increasing the shadow cast from the 30m high, as-of-right YMCA1 by 1% at 12:18 (Toronto’s ‘Solar noon’) and by 6.5% at 1:18pm.

1 The OMB Minutes of Settlement dated June 17, 2017 for the ‘Halo’ development at 480-494 Yonge Street and 475 Yonge Street specified that it is accepted practice to consider the 30m as-of-right height for the YMCA site to be the deemed height for purposes of measuring existing shadows cast.

Figure 1, March and September 21st Shadow Impact Table

*DIFFERENCE FROM EXISTING TO
PROPOSED*

Mar/Sep-21	AREA OF SHADOW CAST FROM EXISTING BUILDING (SM)	PERCENTAGE SHADOW CAST FROM EXISTING BUILDING (%)	AREA OF SHADOW CAST FROM PROPOSED BUILDING (SM)	PERCENTAGE SHADOW CAST FROM PROPOSED BUILDING (%)	AREA (SM)	(%)
9:18 AM	1616.6	100%	0	0.00%	1616.6	0.00%
10:18 AM	1616.6	100%	0	0.00%	1616.6	0.00%
11:18 AM	1616.6	100%	0	0.00%	1616.6	0.00%
12:00 PM	1488.57	92%	16.54	1%	1505.11(+16.54)	1%
12:18 PM	1432.27	88%	94.1	5.80%	1526.37(+94.1)	6.50%
1:18 PM	1215.3	75%	0	0.00%	1215.3	0.00%
2:00 PM	999.44	62%	0	0.00%	999.44	0.00%
2:18 PM	1340.08	83%	0	0.00%	1340.08	0.00%
3:18 PM	1275.69	78.90%	0	0.00%	1275.69	0.00%
4:18 PM	1616.6	100%	0	0.00%	1616.6	0.00%
5:18 PM	1616.6	100%	0	0.00%	1616.6	0.00%
6:18 PM	1602.7	99%	0	0.00%	1602.7	0.00%

Source: Sweeney&Co Architects

Some general observations regarding the Shadow study and the specific shadows cast on Opera Place Park are:

- Almost entirely, shadows cast by the proposed 26 Grenville and 27 Grosvenor site are coincidental with the shadows cast by the YMCA as-of-right building
- The two hour period cited in the Toronto policy is not a significant length of time to affect the utility of the park
- Reflected light is significant in this area such that there will be adequate illumination
- Shadowing does not in any way restrict the public's unfettered use of the park
- the complementary nature of the three parks in the area provides options for park use in the unlikely event that shadowing caused concern for them
- The number of mature, deciduous trees on Opera Place Park currently shade the park extensively. I would estimate that 75% to 80% of the park area is shaded under tree canopy for April to October.²
- The City has been inconsistent in its position regarding the acceptability of shadowing on parks. For example, for the development at the northeast corner of St. Clair and Foxbar Road, the staff report called the shadowing acceptable.

² It has notable that in recent OMB decisions of similar circumstances the OMB considered the effect of existing trees.

"We are satisfied that this small park would be in considerable shade given the abundant existing tree canopy at that park. Furthermore, the impugned shadowing of the September month peaked at noon and in a highly urbanized setting such as this, it is not a situation that is so unconventional. Finally, we have viewed the video evidence presented as well as examining the shadow studies in an overall seasonal basis and have concluded it is not at all unacceptable." (OMB decision re 155 St. Clair Ave W.)

Any concerns regarding utility of the park can be addressed through park design and location of park amenities and programming, such as

- Providing seating opportunities in both sun and shade
- Movable chairs and benches (to let park users decide if they want sun or shade)
- Using areas not covered by the existing tree canopy

Generally, shadowing upon parks has two types of effects:

- Effect upon the vegetation of the park
- Effect upon the utility of the park

Effect upon the Vegetation of the Park

One concern of shadowing is that vegetation will not have sufficient sunlight for photosynthesis. That is not necessarily correct. The proposed development's effect upon vegetation growth will, in my opinion, be minimal because:

- trees and plant materials will be chosen to be hardy to shade
- other adverse conditions that urban parks contend are more significant than shade and shadows (e.g. issues such as: wind, poor soils, vandalism, disease, salt from roads and sidewalks, air pollution, insect infestation, etc.)

Effect upon the Utility of the Park

The operative element of this Toronto policy is that the "utility" of the park must be maintained. Rarely does shadowing detract from the utility of the park; in fact, shadowing can be, and often is, a benefit to the utility of a park. Furthermore, it is useful to note that the City's Official Plan's test for shadowing's effect is the "utility" of the park, however, there are no criteria to test if utility is diminished. In my opinion, the utility of a park is dependent upon a number of factors (shadowing relatively minor consideration) such as:

1. Location and access
 - a. Is it conveniently located within walking distance from places of residence or employment?
 - b. Is it in a visible location?
2. Programming
 - a. Is there the provision of structured or unstructured opportunities for participation?
 - b. Are there things to do (structure or unstructured)?
 - c. Are there opportunities for socializing? People use parks to be with people; a park is a meeting place. Even someone going by themselves to a park, do so to watch other people.
3. Design
 - a. Are there park amenities (natural and man-made) to support the types of activities desired by users (e.g. seating, shade, vegetation, access to drinking water, etc.)?
 - b. Does it have a layout that allows for individual and group use?
4. Safety (very important)
 - a. Is it designed for "eyes on the park"?
 - b. Are there no hidden areas?
 - c. Is it well lit for evening use?
 - d. Is it easily monitored/policed from the street?
 - e. Is there a perception of safety?
5. Maintenance
 - a. What is the condition of amenities? Are the amenities modern and well maintained?
 - b. Are they hazard free?

- c. Is the park kept clean - cleanliness and collection of waste?
- d. Does the grass cover or is it mud?
- e. Is it free of vandalism and graffiti?

Conclusion regarding Shadowing

In my opinion, the incremental shadow cast is not significant enough, nor enough of a duration, to undermine vegetation growth nor the utility of the park.

Other Issues Regarding Parks in the Area

We held several conversations with operations staff of the Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation with regard to the parks and open spaces in the area. Some of the pertinent points raised by staff were:

- the main problem is loitering in the park and an active drug trade.
- needles, etc. are hidden in the shrubs
- reported to be well known as location for sex trade
- overnight sleeping in park
- wind tunnel effects can be severe
- too many ornamental "hiding areas"
- shadowing is not very high on the list of concerns

I would be pleased to discuss the contents of this letter at your convenience.

Milestone Strategy



Ed Newhook, MCIP, RPP

Principal
