

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER PHILOSOPHY COLLEGE

MEMORANDUM

Submitted by Marilyn Aitken and David Hopkins

We are currently living in a building adjacent to the property formerly owned by the Sulpicians. We are tenants, having recently sold our home of 24 years in Notre-Dame-du-Grace. We may be interested in purchasing a property in a condo development in the future, if it meets our requirements and is one in a development that is sensitive to the heritage of Montreal.

We are submitting this memorandum as concerned citizens and neighbours of the potential development. We have attended all the public consultations on this project, and listened to all presentations by the City and the developers, Daniel Arbour & Associates, and would like to present our opinions and concerns.

We expect our suggestions will be taken into consideration by the Office of Public Consultation.

Below, we make seven specific points and a brief conclusion:

1. The drafting of by-laws to change the zoning to suit developers does not protect the historic and natural site of the Philosophy College. This project, if allowed, will open the doors to many more projects within the Ville Marie borough on similar natural historic sites. These changes must be subject to referendum.
2. We do not feel that the traffic congestion and the effect on pedestrians has been properly studied. The developers have mentioned that the increase in traffic will be negligible, but 671 new parking spaces will result in more traffic on Cote-de- Neiges because there would be only one entrance and exit onto a one-way 4-lane descent on Ave. Dr. Penfield. In the past, when Marianopolis students were onsite, they were able to exit on Ramsey Road, and park below on St. Sulpice, and walk down to the Atwater metro. Condo residents will use their cars more frequently than suggested by the developer as the neighborhood is far from grocery stores and pharmacies, but a quick and easy drive to commercial establishments accessible by car. Condo residents will also drive young children to many activities, as walking in the area around Cote-de-Neiges/ Dr. Penfield is extremely dangerous for pedestrians of all ages. The pedestrian light on Cedar Avenue, crossing Cote de Neige, does not last long enough to cross even one-half of the intersection.
3. The proposed pedestrian access to the development is inadequate and ill planned. The pedestrian walkway linking the street St. Sulpice with access to Mount Royal would be placed between a planned nine-story condo building and the existing 1820 apartment building. The separation between these 2 buildings would be 13 meters, on the south-east corner, closest to St. Sulpice. This path would be directly beside the residents of 1820, infringing on their privacy, and their security. Security would also probably result in this

path being lit up by security lighting, which would be detrimental to occupants of 1820, during evening and overnight hours. The two pedestrian paths, I believe, are basically included in the plans to satisfy local residents, but these paths do not link to one another and therefore do not serve their original purpose. They do not allow for any accessibility to the property as a natural setting for recreation and community activity.

4. The construction of a nine-story building beside 1820 Dr. Penfield will obstruct the western view of the for all 1820 Dr. Penfield occupants and violates both the new code for heights and is counter to the actual lay of the land.

5. The tallest proposed building is where Cote de Neige slopes downward; this excessively tall building will jut out even more as the slope of the land drops – if it is built, why not make it level with the 1820 building and maintain the architectural consistency and flow with existing surrounding building

6. The height of the proposed buildings east of the Philosophy College (C1,C2 D) will block the views of pedestrians and city transit users on Cote de Neige. Montrealers, passing by on public transport, a mode of transportation greatly supported by the city administration, are the vast majority of the people who get a view to the river from Cote de Neige. A future belvedere to be constructed on Mount Royal is not where most commuters/people will enjoy the view offered by this former Sulpician property. The “unofficial” street level view from Cote de Neige is the “real” view of thousands Montrealers each day – the top floors of the C1 & C2 & D buildings would act as a wall obstructing this popular view.

6. The Sports complex is a perfectly good use of the existing site, it serves many people of the Montreal community and should be maintained as it is today. It provides a badly needed resource to the area of a sports field and a gym/pool facility. Ideally, the Sulpicians would have preferred their property be kept for educational & socially beneficial purposes; the demolition of these facilities should be avoided.

7. The space is an open green space – to maintain 80% of the property as green is an illusion; the proposal protects dense tree areas but does not recognize the sense of open green space that currently exists. The playing field to the east is both actively used by the community and should be protected as a refreshing exception to urban density in the area, and for the open view it provides on the architectural heritage of the Philosophy College.

Conclusion

The Sulpician site is not just another site to be developed, its’ historic and natural beauty must be saved and maintained to limit population density and preserve the historic

...2

building and all of its' important characteristics. This development project is one of many under consideration for the city to entice people back to the city of Montreal. Having more residents owning homes in the downtown core is very appealing to the City of Montreal yet the heritage of the city should not be sacrificed in the process.

In our view, the development project should include renovation and preservation of the college building only, leaving the grounds and sports facilities as they are. The green space should not be developed into formal gardens for condo owners, but should be maintained and enhanced as a natural environment, much like the greater Mont Royal mountain area, of which it is an essential part. Zoning laws must not be changed to please eager developers and city officials who prefer to develop our precious mountain vistas for a chosen few.

The mountain belongs to all Montrealers, those who enjoy it now, and those who will appreciate its' beauty long into the future.

