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M. Gilles Vezina
L'Office de consultation publique de Montréal
Cours Mont-Royal
1550, rue Metcalfe – Bureau 1414
Montréal (Québec)
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Re: PPU - Quartier des grands jardins

Dear Commissioners,

As the owners of the properties located between 1915-1933 Ste-Catherine Street West, at the corner of Towers, we have mandated Robert Libman, Architect of Libcorp Consultants to submit a memoire regarding the more global urban planning perspective on the issue that we wish to raise. In addition, we would like to express our concerns directly to the commissioners about the fact that our properties are not being included in the area that will increase the allowable building height from 25m to 44m. Albeit that the objectives in the PPU – “Quartier des grands jardins” are very encouraging and will most definitely aid Ste-Catherine Street immensely, it is our belief that the PPU should go a little bit further in order to accomplish its mission and better achieve its goals.

As previously mentioned, the boundary set forth allowing 44m stops abruptly at our property, and we thus question the arbitrary reasons why the boundaries have been established as such. As our properties seem to have been excluded without any ascertained rationale, we consequentially request that the boundary be extended further east, past Towers to at least include our site.

Our properties on Ste-Catherine, corner Towers, offer the ideal opportunity to respond to the objectives of the PPU, and as such we have met with the City to explore the possibilities of an important project for this block. It is our intention in the near future to realize a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment which would greatly improve the site. The existing buildings are well over 100 years old and in terrible condition. If we were able to benefit from an additional height passing from 25m to 44m, it would be a major incentive for us to move forward with the redevelopment of the property.

Some reference to the preservation of properties along Sainte-Catherine having a certain Victorian allure has been alluded to. However, in our particular case it's of significant note that although our buildings were initially built in 1885, they were renovated about 50 years later, and even though the buildings may appear to possess a charming Victorian character from a distance, they in fact are of no such authentic Victorian construction, architecture, or design. Upon closer examination, it is evident to the naked eye that the architecture is somewhat of a collage of materials with replica faux Victorian details applied to the façade, with corrugated metal and stucco. A vast majority of the quality, authentic Victorian buildings in the area are on the streets perpendicular to Ste-Catherine, further up or down Saint-Marc, Saint-Mathieu or Pierce. They are not the heads of lots actually fronting on Ste-Catherine.

Moreover, the existing height or scale of the surrounding buildings has been vaguely suggested to as a possible reason for the set boundaries. However, we adamantly question how this can be the case when you consider that immediately to the east, on the other side of Sainte-Catherine is already an existing 14 storey high rise building, and the scale of the Concordia campus at Guy also dominates the area. When you consider these factors in conjunction with others, there does not appear to be a reason to stop the strategy of densification at Towers for reasons of existing height or scale, and we feel that we are being prejudiced against by not benefitting from the same incentives.

As one of the major objectives of the PPU is to encourage current property owners to improve their properties with the possible redevelopment and densification of residential use, the increase in height from 25 to 44 meters will have a positive effect. By stopping the line at Towers, the City risks having our property remain in its current state, despite its obvious need to be improved. It is just not economically viable to redevelop it as per the existing zoning.

Incentives for property owners are an important part of encouraging the private sector to work with the City for the benefit of both parties and to accomplish the City's goals. Including our property in this sector will most certainly be a decisive factor in our plans and would most definitely be a strong motivating factor to move forward with a possible redevelopment.

We thank you for your understanding.



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Per: Mr. Justin Reinglas