



# Secteur Griffintown

**Analyse pour l'Office de consultation  
publique de Montréal**

Presenté par le Comité pour le sain  
redéveloppement de Griffintown

Le 9 février, 2012

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Publique de Montréal**

Presented by the Committee for the  
Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## **The Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown and its Mission**

The Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown (CSRG) is a community organisation whose members live, work and/or own property in Griffintown. The CSRG's mission is to promote the redevelopment of Griffintown based on:

- respect for the neighbourhood's history, drawing upon it for inspiration
- respect of the existing and historically significant street grid
- respect for the architecture and construction materials specific to the neighbourhood
- respect for the environment and use of sustainable practices
- reasonable density at a human scale
- durable development for the new century

The CSRG promotes local projects and endeavours such as the Griffintown Cultural Corridor and the Griffintown Horse Palace Foundation.

The CSRG maintains the website **[www.griffintown.org](http://www.griffintown.org)**

## OCPM Secteur Griffintown 2012: Historical Context

While a complete history of Griffintown is outside of the scope of this brief, the period from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day is relevant to this discussion. During that period, the neighbourhood suffered decay from its industrial past. Expo '67-era projects contributed to the creation of parking lots rather than urban renewal. Decried an industrial area, the neighbourhood stagnated<sup>1</sup> for four decades until 2008 when major development plans were thrust onto the agenda. In the span of three and a half years since the approval of the controversial Griffintown Secteur Peel-Wellington PPU (Projet Particulier d'Urbanisme), today there are over 7000 new residential units in development (Figure 1).

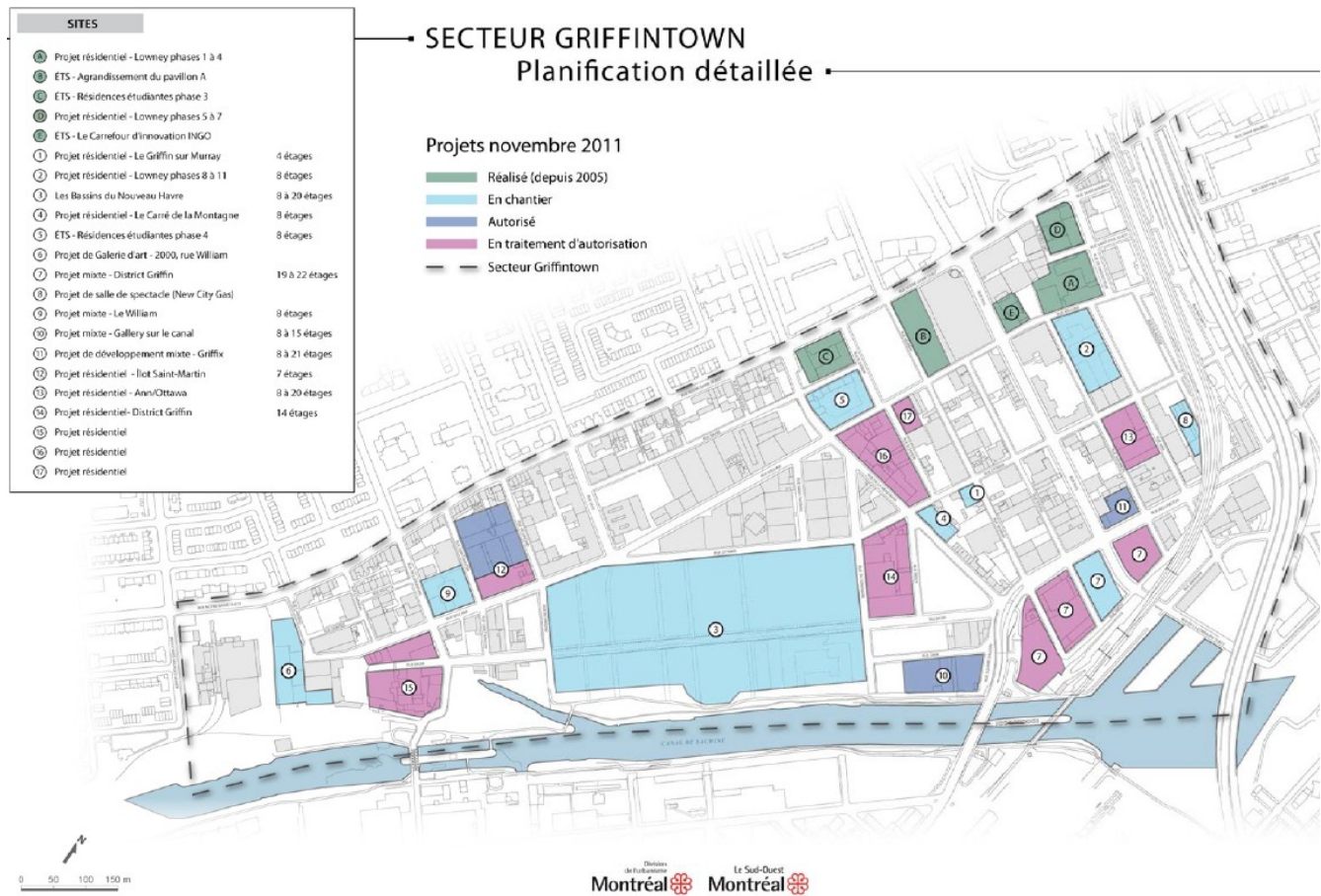


Figure 1. Projects in Griffintown (Source: OCPM)

Consider the current OCPM mandate for Griffintown:

- Step 1:
- présenter un état de situation sur le secteur et en valider les conclusions quant à un diagnostic commun
  - préciser les enjeux de mise en valeur du secteur
  - formuler et valider un énoncé de vision touchant l'ensemble du secteur
  - formuler des orientations préliminaires répondant aux enjeux retenus

<sup>1</sup> One exception is the Canada Post Triage facility megaproject constructed in 1978 and in operation for only 25 years. It is currently being replaced by another megaproject: les Bassins du Nouveau Havre.

Step 2: • tenue d'une consultation publique sur un plan de développement urbain intégré pour l'ensemble du secteur élaboré conjointement par la direction du développement économique et urbain et l'arrondissement, à partir des conclusions de l'étape précédente

This mandate is entirely appropriate for mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Griffintown. Had a comprehensive study and plan for the sector been undertaken at that time, including appropriate zoning adjustments, it is unlikely that a sector-wide redevelopment would find itself on the current agenda. Discussion of the failures in leadership and urban planning during that period are nonetheless outside of the scope of this brief.

While the OCPM did not exist half a century ago, it was indeed well established in 2008 during the major Griffintown PPU debates where, again, this mandate would have been entirely appropriate. The failure to accord this mandate to the OCPM at that time is the subject of the next section.

Griffintown is the birthplace of the industrial revolution in Canada. It is defined by one of the earliest planned street grids in North America. Its surviving treasures include the Lachine Canal, the New City Gas complex and the Griffintown Horse Palace, among others. It harbours centuries worth of hidden treasures waiting to be exploited and reanimated. Today, with the OCPM, we are discussing a vision for this fragile, historic neighbourhood only after more than 20 development projects are underway based on ad-hoc planning! How did this happen? Who is responsible?

### **Responsibility for Deferred Consultation and Planning**

This section describes why the OCPM mandate and sector-wide planning were deferred by four years and identifies the parties responsible.

In 2007, the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal gave the green light to elaborate a PPU for the Peel-Wellington sector of Griffintown to accommodate the proposed Projet Griffintown megaproject, brainchild of the promoter Devimco. The proposal was highly polarising and the Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown (CSRG) owes its very origins to this project, regrouping concerned residents, property owners and workers of the neighbourhood.

Mayor Gérald Tremblay accorded responsibility for the planning, coordination and consultation of the PPU to the Sud-Ouest borough, where fellow Union Montreal politicians including Mayor Jacqueline Montpetit held power. The choice of a PPU allowed for expropriations, and the responsibility shift to the Sud-Ouest borough avoided OCPM consultations, which activists and citizens groups such as the CSRG called for, and for which a mandate was entirely justifiable<sup>2</sup>.

Public consultations were organised by the Sud-Ouest borough, allowing public interaction with the promoter, borough elected officials and urban planners of the DDÉU (Direction du développement économique et urbain). The consultations drew unprecedented public participation with 84 briefs submitted, including that of the CSRG<sup>3</sup>. Despite the highly pertinent concerns raised, few adjustments

2 OCPM consultations were held for the neighbouring Canada Post site of inferior surface area.

3 <http://griffintown.org/projects/projetgriffintown/docs/memoireCSRG.pdf>

were made to the adopted PPU<sup>4</sup>. However, adoption of the PPU coincided with an economic downturn, and the project was stalled for lack of investment.

In the 2010 municipal election, the Sud-Ouest borough voted out the Union Montréal party in favour of a Vision Montréal contingent led by Mayor Benoit Dorais. Dorais and the Vision Montréal party were opposed to the controversial Dalhousie Corridor, an equal threat to the neighbourhood and subject of yet another OCPM consultation. Nonetheless, despite Dorais' government's authority and precedent to revisit the unpopular PPU, when developers clambered to elaborate their projects after the expiration of the Projet Griffintown reserves, they complacently issued the necessary permits. Furthermore, densification outside the PPU zone was authorised, citing the increased densities of the PPU as just cause (see Case Study: Lowney Phases 8-11).

As a result, today there are over 20 projects underway, catalysed by a dubious PPU. While politicians are habitually adept at deflecting responsibility, the facts are indisputable:

Mayor Gérald Tremblay <i>(and his government)</i>	Inappropriately accorded responsibility for the Peel-Wellington PPU, a project with area-wide ramifications, to the Sud-Ouest borough
Mayor Jacqueline Montpetit <i>(and her government)</i>	Responsible for the adoption of a PPU hostile to Griffintown's historic character and its potential exploitation in deference to popular concerns
Mayor Benoit Dorais <i>(and his government)</i>	Responsible for status quo and for the prolific issuance of building permits in the absence of a sector-wide plan or public consensus

Moreover, the civil servants of the DDÉU which have been involved in the consultation and planning of the PPU, as well as other controversial Griffintown projects such as les Bassins du Nouveau Havre, Quartier Bonaventure and District Griffin share this responsibility given their division's mission:

[La DDÉU] pilote la planification, le développement et la réalisation des grands projets urbains qui lui sont confiés.

Dans la poursuite de cette mission, la DDÉU propose à l'administration municipale des orientations, des stratégies, des projets, des actions et des outils pour le développement de son territoire, notamment en matière d'économie, d'urbanisme, d'aménagement, de design et de réalisation des grands projets.

Source: Direction du développement économique, Document budgétaire 2011

The mechanism which encourages the current unconstrained development boom under the PPU and adjacent zoning is the subject of the following section.

<sup>4</sup> <http://dungen.ca/jeff/griffintown/ppurevisions.htm>

## The Triangle of Short-Term Gain

The current Griffintown development boom can be characterised by the following relationship:

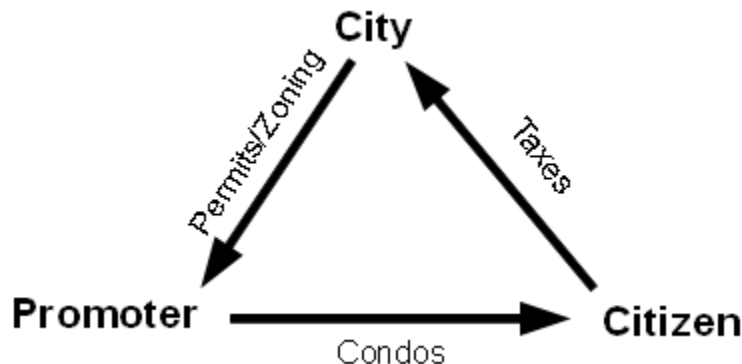


Figure 2. The triangle of short-term gain

In this triangle, each party is a winner:

- promoters build condominiums and earn profits from the sale of units
- citizens purchase units which gain in value
- the city increases its tax base

Since all participants gain in this scenario, there is no motivation for any one party to limit or restrain the cycle. In fact, there is motivation for the city and promoters to expedite projects during periods of optimal market conditions. In this brief we argue that this is indeed the case for present day Griffintown and provide recommendations to prevent this short-sighted approach.

An astute observer will question how it is possible for all parties to benefit economically from the above relationship. The answer is simple: Griffintown land values are undergoing an unprecedented upward correction after four decades of stagnation. The same astute observer will question where 2012 land values stand with respect to their fair-market value. While the answer to that question is outside the scope of this brief, *it is certainly no accident that the above triangle resembles a pyramid*. In the following section we examine a case study of an expedited project typical of this relationship.

## Case Study: Lowney Phases 8-11

The Lowney Phase 8-11 condo project is the first contemporary residential construction within the Sud-Ouest sector of *historic* Griffintown. As it would (and has) set a precedent for the many subsequent projects it is discussed here to highlight the involvement of all concerned parties, namely the promoter (Prével), the city (Sud-Ouest borough) and the citizen. The following is the sequence of events leading to project construction. Figure 3 shows the project site and neighbouring historic buildings.



**Figure 3. Site of the Lowney Phase 8-11 project including neighbouring historic buildings**

In the Spring of 2010, Prével invited owners in phases 1-7 of their Lowney project to a preliminary unveiling and feedback session regarding their proposed phases 8-11 of said project. The proposed project would double the maximum height of the existing zoning from 12.5m to 25m and occupy the majority of a city block. During the feedback session, owners expressed concern over the proposed height and density of the project, heritage protection and cosmetic features. Committee spokesperson Jeffrey Dungen, an owner in phase 2 of the project, wrote his concerns and recommendations regarding heritage, integration, light and security in a letter to Prével (Annexe A).

Three weeks later, Prével invited the owners to an unveiling of their revised project. Alterations included a 6m recess from William Street of the top two floors, modifications to balconies and improved pedestrian space and visibility on William Street. Heritage concerns were ignored. Exploiting the heritage of the site, formerly Diamond Court, a progressive, philanthropic housing project dating to 1897<sup>5</sup>, could have been as simple as either respecting the orientation of the former buildings, placing the court in its historic location or recycling the many intact original bricks buried underground. Unfortunately, Prével's architects, Cardinal-Hardy, renowned for their work on historically-sensitive projects such as Place d'Youville and even the original Lowney lofts, did not include any of these elements into the design, perhaps at the request of the promoter. A second letter was sent to the developer (Annexe B, C) which, as in the case of the former, did not elicit a response.

One week later, the project was subject to a public consultation at the Sud-Ouest borough. Citizens raised the following concerns to the elected officials: excessive building heights, lack of green spaces, lack of respect for the history of the neighbourhood, impact on current residents and lack of family-oriented units, among others. Councillor Véronique Fournier concluded that there is still much work to be done with the promoter in order to arrive at a better project<sup>6</sup>. This conclusion was reiterated at the following borough council after citizens refined their concerns with the project.

Following the borough council meeting, residents of the sector collected and deposited a petition with the necessary signatures to force a referendum concerning the change in building heights. However,

<sup>5</sup> <http://griffintown.org/sites/diamondcourt/>

<sup>6</sup> Procès-verbal du consultation publique Lowney, 3 mai 2010

simultaneously, Prével collected 50% of the eligible signatures renouncing their right to said referendum, voiding the petition. Residents of the Lowney Phase 2 submitted two additional petitions directly to the Sud-Ouest borough along with a reminder of the elected officials' mandate to represent their constituents (Annexe D).



**Figure 3. Final Version of Lowney Phase 8 with Phase 9 in Background**

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Prével held a pre-sale for Lowney Phase 8 more than two weeks before the zoning could even be adopted! Clearly they were confident that the borough would adopt the zoning unchanged. Buyers lined up, many spending the night outside in order to reserve the most valuable units. At the July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 borough council, the zoning change was indeed unanimously adopted despite the CSRG's request to defer, pending consensus with the citizens. The modifications imposed on the project by the Sud-Ouest borough as a result of the public consultation and council questions: increased vegetation for the pedestrian space on William Street and analysis of the problem of garbage collection for dense projects. In other words, all but the most cursory concerns were dismissed. The CSRG followed up with a final letter to the elected officials (Annexe E).

In early 2011, the CSRG was contacted by an architect chartered to create a plaque commemorating Diamond Court, requesting pictures of the historic buildings. Lowney Phase 8, which as of February 2012 is in the masonry-work stage, will, despite the efforts of so many citizen-activists, dominate the neighbouring historic buildings and commemorate the heritage of the site with no more than a simple plaque.

This case study highlights the triangle of short-term gain. *Clearly, the parameters of the project were agreed upon by the promoter and the borough before any public consultation.* Were the case otherwise,



certainly the borough would have exacted more changes to the project than the promoter themselves, and, critically, the promoter would never have held a pre-sale pending adoption of the required zoning! The threat of a delay caused by a referendum on the zoning pushed the developer to resort to extreme means as, according to the Quebec Municipal Affairs Department, renunciations are not intended for the benefit of private developers<sup>7</sup>. Nonetheless, the project's rapid, unchallenged approval results in expedited gains for the developer, its clients and the city.

In the following section we argue that a revised, improved project would equally satisfy all three parties with significant gains over the longer-term.

## **Collaboration for Long-Term Gain**

Assume for the previous case study that, via some form of collaboration, the city, the promoter the architects and the citizens had achieved consensus. The resulting construction would benefit from the following:

**Table 1: Benefits of Consensus-Based Sustainable Development**

Heritage conservation:	Emphasis of the history of the site increases the land value of the construction and neighbouring sites. Contributes to a unique and prestigious offering.
Constrained density:	Heights limited to that of surrounding historic buildings improve integration, highlight the surroundings and contribute to better light penetration. Density consistent with the two-century-old street grid alleviates congestion problems.
Mixed offering:	Improves diversification of the sector to improve resilience against demographic shifts and turnover. Allows local couples to raise families locally and establish an enduring community.
Sustainable building practices:	Reduce energy and maintenance costs, contribute to affordable housing over the long term.
Public infrastructure and services:	Public green spaces and pedestrian-friendly construction improve health and alleviate congestion problems.

Clearly, reduced density equates fewer units which promoters and the city will argue translates into reduced profits and tax base. However, it can easily be argued that the increased *value* of the offer, both initially and over the long term, outweighs any reduction in short-term gains. The following section discusses the key points of Kenneth Greenberg's presentation which corroborate this reasoning.

<sup>7</sup> *Developers exploiting legal loophole*, Linda Gyulai, The Gazette, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010

## **Quartiers authentiques, denses et agréables à vivre : des stratégies, des arbitrages**

At the OCPM conference of January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Kenneth Greenberg presented “Quartiers authentiques, denses et agréables à vivre : des stratégies, des arbitrages”. Consider the following key points of his presentation:

- the public sector is responsible for guiding development, not promoters
- it is imperative to build real neighbourhoods, not just condos
- redevelopment should not proceed as isolated projects, but rather as a music of their ensemble
- redevelopment requires flexibility to permit evolution and feedback

The previous sections highlight the failure on the first point, while the very fact that we are holding OCPM consultations on the high-level vision of redevelopment at such a late stage exemplifies the failure on the remaining points. Stated differently, the fact that there are over 20 projects in progress, representing over 7000 residential units almost exclusively of the single-bedroom type, in the absence of a coherent plan or vision for the sector, is completely at odds with Mr. Greenberg's recommendations!

Renowned architect Phyllis Lambert asked Mr. Greenberg if it was too late to change the fate of Griffintown to which he replied that it's never too late. Interestingly, in 2008 at a press conference organised by the CSRG concerning the Projet Griffintown PPU, Ms. Lambert was asked the very same question to which she also replied that it's never too late. While many of the uncoordinated projects across the sector are now too far along to change, it is the opinion of the CSRG that positive change is still possible, as treated in the recommendations section. First, we conclude on the current situation.

## Conclusions

First and foremost, the present OCPM consultation should have taken place by 2008, before any PPU or zoning change was effected. Mayors Tremblay, Montpetit and Dorais, their governments and the DDÉU bear the responsibility for this failure. Under existing zoning, the current condo construction boom will continue to be fueled by the speculation of increasing value. The city and promoters achieve short-term gains by expediting projects under these conditions. Citizen-activists have proposed viable alternatives with long-term benefits that have been systematically ignored by the officials elected to represent them. Griffintown redevelopment fails on all of Kenneth Greenberg's recommendations due to the absence of a plan or vision for the sector and the exploitation of short-term gains. And, finally, the current situation is exacerbated by the continued issuance of construction permits despite these critical failures!

## Recommendations

The Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown urges an immediate moratorium on the issuance of construction permits and changes to zoning throughout the sector. As we have shown in this brief, the public sector has consistently demonstrated its inability to promote sustainable redevelopment, and maintaining status quo threatens to erode all the remaining potential of this historic neighbourhood.

The current mandate of the OCPM, despite being at least four years overdue, is especially pertinent and the process should be completed in its entirety under said moratorium.

Following the OCPM recommendations, the City of Montreal should prepare and present an urban plan for the sector, dignified of a UNESCO City of Design, employing the assistance of an international body of urban planners experienced in the redevelopment and conservation of world-class heritage neighbourhoods, with the collaboration of local groups<sup>8</sup> and citizen-activists.

Based on this urban plan, construction permits would be limited only to the winning proposals of an annual contest (Figure 4). This contest would include a conservative, fixed limit on the surface area permitted to be developed annually and encourage promoters and their architects, by means of their proposals, to maximise the potential of their sites. Moreover, it would mitigate the current boom-bust cycle by encouraging long-term, steady, organic redevelopment of the neighbourhood. Note that this recommendation was previously made to Luc Gagnon, head of the DDÉU's urban planning division in 2010 by Jeffrey Dungen in a study by the firm Acertys. Mr. Gagnon's letter of acknowledgment is included as Annexe F. No follow-up was made.

Finally, the lessons learned from the redevelopment of Griffintown, both positive and negative, must be archived by the SMVTP (Service de mise en valeur du territoire et du patrimoine) and dutifully applied to the redevelopment of other sectors in the greater Montreal community.

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<sup>8</sup> The CSRG redevelopment proposal can be found at: <http://griffintown.org/redevelopment/csrg01.htm>

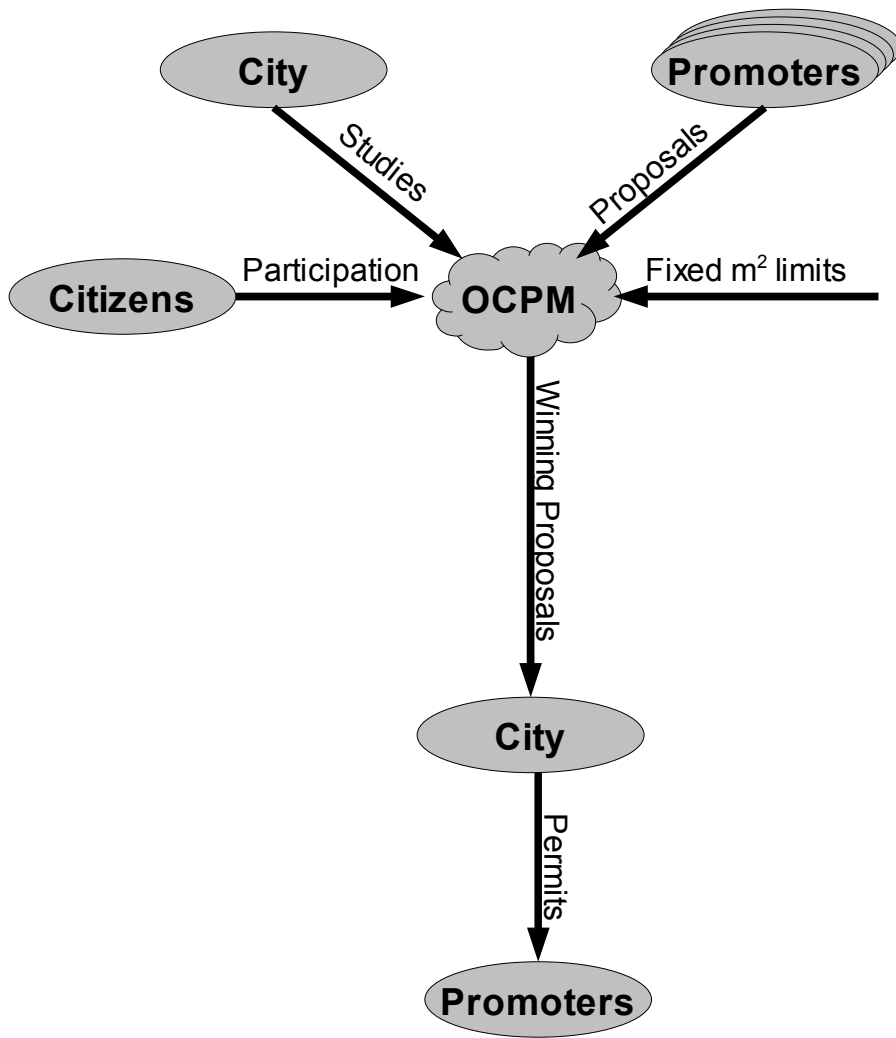


Figure 4. Annual Redevelopment Contest Flowchart

Jeffrey Dungen  
501-1015 rue William  
Montreal, QC  
H3C 1P4

Prével  
32 rue des Soeurs Grises  
Montreal, QC  
H3C 2P8

Le 9 avril, 2010

**Objet : Lowney Phase 8**

Monsieur Vincent et l'équipe de design du Lowney Phase 8,

Merci pour l'invitation à la présentation du Lowney Phase 8 mercredi, ça m'a fait plaisir d'assister. Je suis très satisfait que Prével continue à développer le quartier, mais par contre je suis persuadé que la première proposition de la phase 8 pourrait bénéficier de quelques ajustements. Dans ce lettre je vous énumère mes craintes et mes suggestions alternatives dans le but de pouvoir trouver, avant le 3 mai, le compromis idéal entre les besoins des résidents futurs, courants et, évidemment, Prével. Je vous félicite fortement de prendre le temps et l'effort de consulter les résidents actuels au début de la conception. Vous êtes un des rares promoteurs dans cet égard. Bravo !

Je vous rassure que le redéveloppement du quartier est attendu et bienvenu. Les résidents des phases 1 et 2 savaient toujours qu'ils allaient éventuellement perdre leur vue vers le sud. Bien que le célèbre « Farine Five Roses » va sûrement me manquer, c'est quand-même rassurant que c'est une construction résidentiel de Prével, à l'intérieur des limites d'hauteur actuelles, qui prendra sa place.

J'espère, par contre, que vous êtes conscient que votre proposition d'un mur solide collé sur William et s'étendant de Shannon à Ann sans interruption à l'hauteur maximale permise allait certainement solliciter une forte réaction des résidents des phases 1 et 2. Ces derniers sont les pionniers qui se sont embarqués avec vous au tout début de votre rêve qui arrive maintenant à une huitième phase. Comme résident de la phase 2, j'étais fortement insulté qu'aucun effort n'a été pris pour donner le moindre concession aux résidents des « vrai » bâtiments Lowney. Mais j'imagine que ce n'est pas un geste de mauvaise foi de votre part plutôt qu'une proposition calculée pour vous laisser le maximum de marge de manoeuvre pour des concessions.

Certainement vous savez que Griffintown est le premier faubourg en Amérique du Nord avec une trame de rue planifiée, le site qui a permis la naissance de la révolution industrielle au Canada et un quartier avec un fort héritage ouvrier. La phase 8 sera le premier nouveau développement résidentiel dans le secteur à l'ouest du viaduc CN depuis presque un siècle. Vous avez une forte responsabilité quant à ce précédent dans un quartier doté d'une riche histoire de plus de 200 ans.

## Les aspects faibles de la proposition initiale (6 avril) :

- Héritage et patrimoine :
  - La proposition n'évoque aucun héritage du site ni du quartier
- Intégration :
  - Le projet, tel que présenté, domine le bâtiment original Lowney ainsi que la phase 1 et le garage Dow avoisinants
  - Les matériaux de construction sont en forte contraste de ceux des bâtiments avoisinants
- Ensoleillement :
  - Le projet, tel que présenté, coupera gravement l'ensoleillement des phases 1, 2 et la rue William, même si ceci est à l'intérieur des normes
- Sécurité :
  - La rue William est empruntée par des camions, des autobus, la congestion du pont Victoria, des calèches, des résidents du secteur et les étudiants de l'ETS. Le projet, tel que présenté, rendra claustrophobe la rue et contribuera à de graves angles mortes, notamment à l'intersection avec Shannon.

## Les améliorations conseillés :

- Héritage :
  - Mettre en valeur plutôt que de dominer les bâtiments centenaires avoisinants sur la rue William
  - Orienter les bâtiments touchant sur la rue William dans un axe nord-sud pour faire appel aux bâtiments précurseurs : le Diamond Court (1897)\*
- Intégration :
  - Respect des hauteurs des bâtiments de la phase 1, 2 et la garage Dow (environ 20m)  
Tout bâtiment qui touche sur la rue William ne devrait pas les dépasser. Les phases plus vers le sud de l'îlot pourraient chercher le maximum de 25m.
  - Utilisation de matériaux de construction complémentaires aux bâtiments avoisinants, encore, exigé seulement pour les bâtiments touchant sur la rue William
  - Aucun balcon sur la façade William ne devrait dépasser le bâtiment
- Ensoleillement :
  - Les hauteurs de 20m sur William et l'orientation nord-sud des futurs bâtiments permettra beaucoup plus de lumière à tomber sur la rue et les bâtiments en face
- Sécurité:
  - Le fait d'avoir des bâtiments écartés dans l'axe nord-sud contribuera à plus d'espace et d'ouverture sur le trottoir sud de la rue William et encouragera les déplacements actifs en tout sécurité
  - Un rez-de-chaussé commerciale reculé du trottoir permettra plus d'espace pour la circulation piétonnière et évitera les angles morts à l'intersection avec Shannon

Une proposition alternative qui comprend tous ces améliorations complète cette lettre.

\* Une description du Diamond Court se retrouve sur l'internet :

<http://griffintown.org/sites/diamondcourt/>

## Commentaires supplémentaires :

- Bien que le quartier n'est pas encore adapté aux familles typiques, on peut également sortir l'argument que le quartier était mal adapté pour les premiers résidents des phases 1 et 2. Pour garder la porte ouverte aux familles « innovateurs » sans rester pris avec des grands unités difficiles à vendre, considérez d'établir un plan, en avance, pour faciliter l'intégration de deux petits unités en un seul (l'inverse de ce qui a dû être fait pour les phases 5-7).
- Bien que les acheteurs de condos à 200 000 \$ ont une phobie d'habitations sociales, la phase 8 se retrouvera quand-même en face des résidences pour étudiants dans un quartier présentement défavorisé. Il serait néanmoins possible d'intégrer des habitations sociales sur le site.
- Je vous conseille de discuter avec Roland Hakim (roland@hakimconstruction.com) le potentiel d'intégrer des systèmes géothermiques dans le projet. M. Hakim remarque que Griffintown est un endroit très favorable pour ce genre de système qui récupère ses couts en à peine quelques années. Son bâtiment sur la rue Wellington incorpore un tel système avec grand succès.
- Des espaces pour petits commerces seront très bienvenus. Incluant ce projet, il y aura près d'un millier de condos dans le voisinage qui pourraient certainement supporter un boulangerie, une boucherie, un fruiterie, etc.

Jusqu'à date, Prével ont réussi à attirer autour de 750 personnes dans un quartier que peu voyaient propice pour l'habitation résidentielle. C'est autant la qualité de votre offre qui les a attiré que l'intrigue de ce voisinage unique et plein de potentiel. J'espère que vous allez continuer à offrir des produits de qualité qui rendent leurs habitants fier de s'intégrer dans le quartier. La fierté des résidents actuels a déjà contribué en grand part à :

- une importante implication locale dans le dossier du Projet Griffintown
- un changement radical au niveau de l'arrondissement lors de la dernière élection
- une forte résistance, avec grand succès, contre le corridor d'autobus Dalhousie

Sans les développements Lowney et ses habitants, ces derniers seraient inimaginables.

Il me ferait plaisir de vous rencontrer pour discuter en plus de profondeur le dossier du Lowney Phase 8 avant la consultation publique. Vous pouvez me rejoindre au 514 510-6924 ou par courriel à [jeffrey.dungen@griffintown.org](mailto:jeffrey.dungen@griffintown.org).

Sincèrement,

Jeffrey Dungen

c.c. Les résidents du Lowney Phase 2

La suite est une proposition alternative pour des phases donnant sur la rue William.

## Une alternative pour les bâtiments donnant sur la rue William



Voici une proposition de quatre bâtiments de 6 étages (20m) orientés dans l'axe Nord-Sud sur la rue William. Cette configuration rappelle celle du célèbre Diamond Court qui occupait le site antérieurement. Elle supporte également tous les recommandations énumérés dans cette lettre. Des projets plus contemporains cherchant les limites d'hauteur de 25m pourraient compléter le sud de l'îlot, derrière ces bâtiments.



Les hauteurs étant presque identiques, les résidents des nouveaux phases ont une vue non-obstruée du centre-ville depuis leur terrasse. Les résidents des anciens phases gardent plus ou moins leur vue actuelle depuis la terrasse sans sentir encombrés. Les nouveaux phases vers le sud de l'îlot profitent d'une vue encore supérieure vers le centre-ville grâce à leur hauteur de 25m.



L'espace entre les deux bâtiments centraux de la phase 8 est alignée avec l'espace entre les phases 1 et 2. Ceci permet aux résidents de ce premier de profiter d'une vue vers le centre-ville depuis un aire commun au niveau de la rue ainsi que depuis plusieurs unités. Cet alignement contribue également à un ensoleillement plus continu et étendu.

Des balcons intégrés dans la structure sur la façade donnant sur la rue William remportent une meilleure intégration avec les bâtiments avoisinants et créent un espace plus aéré. En plus, les balcons sont mieux protégés des éléments que s'ils pendaient à l'extérieur du bâtiment. Et, finalement, ces genres de balcons vieillissent mieux que ces derniers qui souffrent inévitablement de la rouille et la dégradation visible.



Les commerces de rez-de-chaussé reculés du trottoir créent un espace agréable et sécuritaire pour les piétons.

L'angle de la rue William fait en sorte que les bâtiments sont légèrement écartés, ce qui produit un effet visuel intrigant et intéressant autant en regardant vers l'est que vers l'ouest.

Cette proposition se retrouvera prochainement sur le site web Design Griffintown : <http://griffintown.org/design/>

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Hello,

On April 9th I addressed a letter concerning Lowney Phase 8 to Prével. Although I was unfortunately unable to attend the Prével presentation of April 28th nor the public consultation at the borough on May 3rd, my neighbours inform me that several of the suggestions made in that letter had been taken into consideration and included in the revised proposal. I was of course very pleased to receive that news and thank you for your consideration.

If I understand correctly, the new proposal reduces the height of part of the building facing William Street. While this is an improvement over the initial proposal, I continue to insist that any future buildings facing the centenary factories of Lowney Phases 1 and 2, and the Dow Brewery Garage should not exceed these in height.

In the hopes of clarifying my reasoning, I have included a document entitled Reflections on Scale, Architecture and Longevity. I have repeatedly asked myself "How is it that in 2010, we risk building a modern housing complex of inferior architectural quality than an eighty-year-old garage for beer trucks? Why must it be taller than the neighbouring buildings to be economically viable? And is it even likely to outlast the neighbouring garage and centenary factories?" The goal of this document is simply to raise the important questions, not to point blame. The Quartier Bonaventure, Projet Griffintown and Bassins du Nouveau Havre developments all raise at least as many similar questions.

As I stated in my first letter, I am pleased that the site of Lowney Phase 8 is being developed by Prével. However, in order for myself and the Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown to support any eventual plan, it is essential to understand all of the underlying issues and compromises. I would be pleased to meet with you informally to discuss. Do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey Dungen  
Lowney 2 Condo Owner  
Spokesperson for the Committee for the Sustainable Redevelopment of Griffintown

# Lowney Phase 8+

## Reflections on Scale, Architecture and Longevity

In the Spring of 2010, Prével unveiled Lowney Phase 8 (likely phases 8 through 11) which would be the largest instance of their successful condo project in Griffintown. The following are reflections on questions of scale, architecture and longevity.

### SCALE

The site of future Lowney phases 8 through 11 is currently occupied by a light industrial building of no more than three stories (12.5m) and an adjoining surface parking lot. Before Expo 67, the parking lot was the site of the Diamond Court housing project, itself standing no taller.

Lowney phases 8 through 11 are presented as 8-story buildings (25m), a scale necessary for economic viability, according to the developer, Prével.

Across William street are phases 1 and 2 of the Lowney project, occupying recycled centenary factories of five stories. These phases, completed but a few years prior, were clearly an economically viable use of only five floors. Were it otherwise, it is extremely unlikely that an eight phase would be in the planning today!

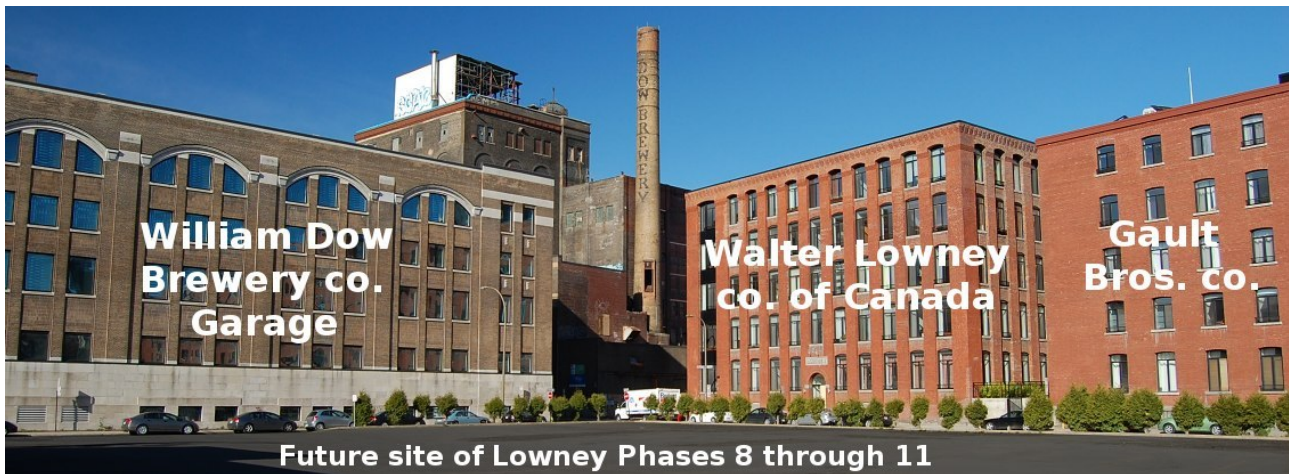
This raises the following questions:

- If light industry and parking lots were a reasonable use of the site until 2010, wouldn't almost any modern residential development represent a more suitable occupation? Should scale not be of secondary concern?
- If the neighbouring phases 1 and 2 proved to be economically viable with only five stories, what has changed in less than five years to increase this threshold to eight stories?
- If 113 years ago, philanthropist Herbert Brown Ames was able to successfully build a complex of 39 affordable units on the site (Diamond Court), why today are 500 units (only 15% of which represent affordable housing) a challenge to build and market?
- If one-third of Griffintown consists of vacant lots and surface parking lots, why such impetus to build higher than the neighbouring buildings, all of which stand around the 20m mark?

## ARCHITECTURE

The site of future Lowney phases 8 through 11 is immediately bordered by three historically significant buildings:

1. Gault Brothers co.: Garment factory built in 1901, now recycled as the first phase of the Lowney condo developments
2. Walter M. Lowney co.: Chocolate factory built in 1905, now recycled as the second phase of the Lowney condo developments
3. Dow Brewery Garage: Garage for beer trucks built in 1929, now recycled for use by the École de Technologie Supérieure



These buildings were constructed during an era when external appearances conveyed the strength of the contained enterprise. As a result, each is of superior architectural quality and detail which would ideally be complemented and enhanced by any adjacent development.

It is unusual to find a cluster of three such examples in an outstanding state of preservation within a sector still reeling from the demolitions of Expo 67.

This raises the following questions:

- How is it that eighty years ago, a garage for beer trucks was bestowed with a stoic architecture of stone, brick, arches and sculpture, while today, with all of our advances in technology, a modern housing complex is unlikely to match, let alone surpass, this level of architectural affinity?
- How is it that over a century ago, the factories that are today Lowney phases 1 and 2, were constructed, with human and horse power, to a level of architectural finesse exceeding that seen on most modern exterior-clad condo-boxes such as the subsequent Lowney phases?
- How is it that in Old Montreal, new constructions must meet rigorous criteria for integration while in Griffintown, the two centuries of rich history rooted in the birthplace of our nation's industrial revolution are given but cursory consideration?

## LONGEVITY

The future site of Lowney phases 8 through 11 is located adjacent to:

- A brewery complex which has been converted to accommodate an educational institution
- A chocolate factory and a garment factory which have been converted into residential lofts

While the designers of these early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings certainly could not envisage their current configuration at the time of conception, the durability and versatility of their constructions permitted their recent repurposing rather than demolition.

This raises the following questions:

- Will Lowney phases 8 through 11 be constructed in a manner conducive to eventual repurposing to meet the inevitably changing needs of the neighbourhood?
- Will Lowney phases 8 through 11 enjoy similar longevity as their counterparts? In fifty years or one hundred years, will phases 8 through 11 represent better candidates for repurposing than the already reconfigured early 20<sup>th</sup> century factories?

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In summary, **there is surely a way to construct Lowney phases 8 through 11 at a reasonable scale, of a dignified, befitting architecture, and built to last well into the next century.** The same applies to every subsequent development within Griffintown and the whole of Montréal.

If these simple criteria cannot be met, then we must clearly identify the problem(s) before proposing solutions. There are many actors including the developer, the architects, the clients (future residents), the city, the construction industry, and the financial sector, among others. If we want sustainable redevelopment of Griffintown, and if we intend to build the Montreal of tomorrow today, we must seriously question the status quo!

Jeffrey Dungen  
for the  
Committee for the Sustainable  
Redevelopment of Griffintown

See also: <http://griffintown.org/projects/lowney/phase8.htm>

Griffintown, le 23 juin, 2010

Chers élus de l'arrondissement Sud-Ouest,

Cette lettre porte sur le projet Lowney Phase 8 de Prével et le bureau d'architectes Cardinal-Hardy. Je m'exprime en tant que résident de l'ancienne usine Lowney avoisinant et au titre du porte-parole du Comité pour le sain redéveloppement de Griffintown (*griffintown.org*).

Plusieurs de mes voisins et moi-même, nous partageons les préoccupations suivantes concernant la présente proposition de la phase 8 :

- le projet dépasse en hauteur les bâtiments historiques avoisinants (Gault Bros. Co. (1901), Walter M. Lowney of Canada (1905), Garage Dow (1929))
- le projet ne met nullement en valeur ces derniers qui représentent le meilleur ensemble de bâtiments industriels du début du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle à Griffintown, et qui se retrouvent dans un état de conservation supérieur
- le projet ne fait aucun appel à l'héritage du site, ni les matériaux de construction et l'architecture typiques du quartier
- les logements sociaux se retrouvent hors-site dans le futur ghetto du triangle Montagne/Murray/Ottawa (là où Devimco n'ont pas réussi à obtenir, en 2008, les hauteurs qu'ils désiraient pour leur Projet Griffintown)
- l'espace pédestre sur William est inadéquate pour supporter et encourager des déplacements actifs des centaines de futurs résidents et les étudiants de l'ÉTS dont le campus est en pleine expansion (en hiver il est même impossible de déneiger entièrement le trottoir du côté nord de la rue !)
- et, finalement, le promoteur ose pré-vendre les unités du projet avant que les changements en zonage nécessaires soient approuvés !!!

Les résidents de la phase 2 du projet Lowney, qui habitent dans l'ancienne usine Walter M. Lowney dont le projet prend son nom, ont évoqué leurs inquiétudes dans les deux pétitions suivantes qui vous seront remises en main propre :

Pétition : Nous apportons notre soutien à la construction du Lowney Phase 8 sur les lots 1 179 698 et 1 179 730 en autant que celle-ci ne dépasse pas une hauteur de 20 m, ce qui correspond à la hauteur des bâtiments historiques avoisinants.

**24 signatures**

Pétition : Nous apportons notre soutien à la construction du Lowney Phase 8 sur les lots 1 179 698 et 1 179 730 en autant que l'arrondissement prenne le temps nécessaire pour étudier et bonifier le projet, afin que celui-ci s'intègre harmonieusement dans le quartier qu'il est sensé desservir sur plusieurs générations.

**19 signatures**

Quant à la deuxième pétition, on se demande comment est-ce que l'arrondissement puisse étudier et bonifier le projet, et ensuite apporter les changements nécessaires, si le promoteur vend déjà les unités comme si l'adoption du projet dans son état actuel soit un fait accompli ?

Les résidents de Griffintown, tant les nouveaux que les anciens, contribuent énormément à la direction du redéveloppement de leur quartier :

- ils vous ont élu (M. le Maire, je vous rappelle que les quelques votes qui vous ont donné une marge de victoire pourraient être attribués aux résidents du Lowney qui supportaient votre position sur le corridor Dalhousie)
- ils s'impliquent dans les projets tels que Projet Griffintown, les Bassins du Havre et le Quartier Bonaventure pour exprimer leurs préoccupations et partager leurs opinions
- ils s'opposent fortement et de manière bien organisé au corridor Dalhousie
- ils ont été responsables pour l'événement spectaculaire de la Nuit Blanche au New City Gas que vous avez eu le plaisir de visiter vous-mêmes
- ils travaillent pour établir un corridor culturel à Griffintown
- ils plantent un jardin communautaire et contribueront également à la transformation du cul-de-sac de Dalhousie

Les résidents donnent leur temps ainsi parce-qu'ils croient dans l'immense potentiel de ce quartier historique.

Depuis Expo 67, la ville elle-même bloquait presque toute initiative de développement dans le secteur. Présentement, la ville continue à empêcher les petits développements, encourageant plutôt les méga-projets. Mais malheureusement, les promoteurs et leurs architectes s'intéressent au développement de profits plutôt que d'un quartier. Jacques Vincent, co-président de Prével a exprimé à ses clients à la consultation de la phase 8 que «*Griffintown n'est pas une place pour des familles*». Michel Hardy (de Cardinal-Hardy) nous a expliqué que le site du projet méritait un architecture contemporain en contraste avec son périmètre. Contrairement, son collègue, Aurèle Cardinal, a raconté à The Gazette en janvier que "*as an office, we always look for the thing a site offers us that you cannot find somewhere else*". Comme indiqué tantôt, le site représente le meilleur ensemble de bâtiments industriels du début du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle que l'on puisse retrouver à Griffintown. Il est inconcevable que ce bureau d'architectes renommé soit incapable d'en profiter du patrimoine et de la valeur intrinsèque du site.

Puisque les promoteurs n'ont qu'une vision de profits, la ville n'encourage que des méga-projets, et ni l'un ni l'autre s'apprentent à exploiter l'énorme potentiel de ce quartier riche en deux siècles d'histoire, nous les citoyens, nous devons placer nos espoirs entre les mains de nos nouveaux élus. Vous êtes nos représentants et il est votre devoir d'assurer que le projet du Lowney Phase 8 soit dans l'intérêt à long terme du quartier et de ses résidents. Ce projet doit contribuer réellement au quartier et non seulement à la croissance de sa population et la base de taxes. Le quartier a déjà perdu des pionniers qui se sont écoeurés par le processus d'adoption du Projet Griffintown. Le quartier risque de perdre davantage de ses résidents les plus actifs si on établit un précédent dangereux par l'adoption du Lowney Phase 8 dans son état actuel. En l'absence de ces bénévoles et activistes, on n'aurait plus d'initiatives comme la Nuit Blanche, le jardin et le corridor culturel, et on perdrait la contre-balance populaire aux projets dérivatives au voisinage comme le corridor Dalhousie. Dans ce cas, Griffintown ne serait qu'une agglomération de condos sans familles, sans culture, sans âme, sans espoir.

Les résidents présents et futurs de Griffintown comptent sur vous, leurs élus, de suivre les démarches qui assurent qu'on ait un projet et un quartier dont on peut être fier pour des générations à venir.

Sincèrement,

Jeffrey Dungen

Résident du Lowney Phase 2

Porte-parole du Comité pour le sain redéveloppement de Griffintown

c.c. Les résidents du Lowney Phase 2 et le Comité pour le sain redéveloppement de Griffintown



Griffintown, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Mayor Dorais, Councillor Fournier and Councillor Thiébaud,

This letter concerns the process of adoption of the Lowney Phase 8-11 condo project in Griffintown. As you are aware, this project represents the first non-institutional residential development in decades within Griffintown, the birthplace of the industrial revolution in Canada with over two centuries of rich history.

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, promoter Prével took an excellent initiative and presented the project to their clients from other Lowney phases, receiving their feedback, both positive and negative. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, they returned to their clients with a new project which responded, at least in part, to some of the concerns raised.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Sud-Ouest borough held a public consultation on the project, where many significant concerns were raised. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, Councillor Fournier visited the site to discuss the preoccupations of residents for over an hour. Concerns were equally raised by area residents at the borough council meetings of April 6<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup> and, July 6<sup>th</sup>. On this final date, with the final project slated for adoption, no fewer than six citizens presented troubling concerns regarding Prével projects (Lowney and Impérial). When asked what changes the borough had imposed on the project since the public consultation, Councillor Fournier enumerated:

- building heights reduced by 5m on the first 6m of frontage on William Street
- revisions to balconies
- greenery/vegetation on William Street increased
- logistics of garbage collection for large projects to be investigated

However, the first two points had already been obtained during the client consultations with Prével. In other words, the only changes to the project imposed by the borough involve the addition of a few plants on William Street and the study of garbage removal!

The elected officials of the Sud-Ouest have failed in their duty to represent the population, ignoring their valid and pertinent concerns. Fortunately, the disenfranchised parties were able to take the matter into their own hands and demand a referendum, as they did, collecting more than the required number of signatures indicating their preoccupation with the zoning heights. However, Prével equally took matters into their own hands and collected 277 signatures (more than 50% of eligible voters) from Lowney residents renouncing their right to demand a referendum. While it is Prével's right to take such action, it is doubtful that the signatories understood the petition, given its legal language. Only 12 of these signatures came from the renovated centenary factories adjoining the Lowney 8 site while 265 came from the non-adjoining "new" constructions (an astounding participation of 264 signatures from 235 units!). Moreover, the Prével representatives collecting the signatures argued that this would allow for an accelerated process. However, at the council of June 1<sup>st</sup>, both Councillor Fournier and Mayor Dorais stated precisely the opposite in response to my question about the promoter's petition. The end result: Prével avoid a referendum on zoning heights and they anticipate beginning construction in the autumn of 2010\* despite the fact that the borough documents specify Autumn 2011.

Nine days after collecting their last signature, Prével announced a pre-sale of Phase 8 to their clients. The pre-sale took place on June 19<sup>th</sup>, the day after their petition was deposited and stamped by the borough. Plans for all units and a rendering of the exterior, detailed to the colour of the brick, were

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\* Personal communication with Robert Rosenberg, Lowney Head of Sales

shown. Most curiously, the pre-sale took place more than two weeks before the required zoning changes were adopted by the borough, and premature to the PIIA architectural assessment! Are Prével taking an unprecedented risk or are they simply confident that the borough's indifference and inaction regarding residents' concerns will continue through the PIIA process?

In summary, Prével have taken an unconventional approach to the Lowney Phase 8 project, to the potential detriment of their reputation and integrity. They are free to make that choice. However, the duty of our elected officials is to represent and defend citizens, not promoters, and to plan for the long-term benefit and success of neighbourhoods and communities. As it stands, you have failed on both counts.

I would like you now to imagine an alternative scenario. Imagine that Prével asked their renowned architects, Cardinal-Hardy, to design a project that would integrate architecturally with the surrounding historic industrial buildings, equalling them in height, emphasizing the Lowney factory from which the project continues to draw its name and the Diamond Court\* which formerly occupied the site. Imagine that the social housing component was integrated on-site along with a simple playground for young children (visiting and hopefully eventually residing in the neighbourhood). In this scenario, Prével would have a better product to sell to their clients and could avoid the pitfalls of proceeding in a controversial, albeit legal, manner. The borough council would retain the confidence of its citizens. And, most importantly, the residents of Griffintown, present and future, would benefit from a project truly conducive to long-term neighbourhood development (rather than just an increase in the tax base and the number of citizens).

Unfortunately we can no longer act out this scenario according to the above script, but we may still achieve the end result via the PIIA and the actions of our elected officials. All eyes are on you.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Dungen  
Spokesperson, Committee for the sustainable redevelopment of Griffintown  
[www.griffintown.org](http://www.griffintown.org)

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\* Ironically (as it currently stands), Diamond Court was an innovative residential development that brought progress and hope to Griffintown when it was constructed in 1897 (see <http://griffintown.org/sites/diamondcourt/> )

Direction du développement économique et urbain  
303, rue Notre-Dame Est, 6<sup>e</sup> étage  
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 3Y8

Montréal, Le 12 janvier 2011

**Monsieur Jeffrey Dungen**  
Comité pour le sain redéveloppement de Griffintown  
1015, rue William, app. 501  
Montréal (Québec) H3C 1P4

**OBJET : Planification du secteur Griffintown**  
**Votre participation aux entrevues menées par la firme Acertys**

Monsieur,

Nous tenons à vous remercier d'avoir accepté de participer à une entrevue portant sur le processus de planification détaillée du secteur Griffintown. Votre apport à cet exercice a été précieux et fort apprécié.

La firme Acertys, mandatée pour mener ces entrevues, a récemment complété son rapport de recommandations. Nous serons en mesure d'assurer un suivi avec vous à ce sujet au cours des prochains mois.

En vous remerciant à nouveau de votre participation, veuillez agréer, Monsieur Dungen, l'expression de nos sentiments les meilleurs.



Luc Gagnon  
Chef de division - urbanisme

LG/se