



This Week in the Annex:

August 24, 2022

Community Meeting Tonight!

This is the point at which the proverbial rubber hits the road. Finally, TAS's official application for the development of the Baptist Church at 38 Walmer Road has been posted on the [City's website](#). Now everything we need to know is available for public discussion. And there is much to talk about.

Of course, the immediate neighbours of the target site will have a particularly personal interest. But the importance of this property, its significant history in the landscape of the Annex and life in the city as a whole, will also generate much discussion: witness this week's [article in BlogTO](#).

How to Join in

As we told you in our last newsletter, the ARA has arranged with TAS to hold a general community discussion. And it's happening this very evening from **6:00 to 7:30 pm**.

So, first things first.

Here follows all the information you need for logging in online (or dialling in by telephone if you've got dodgy internet wherever you happen to be):

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81328916675>

Meeting ID: 813 2891 6675

One tap mobile: [+14388097799](tel:+14388097799),,[81328916675](tel:+14388097799)# Canada
[+15873281099](tel:+15873281099),,[81328916675](tel:+15873281099)# Canada

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kbB3EyNA1S>

Why You Should Care

Preserving Heritage Properties

If it goes forward as planned, this development will establish critical precedents. Foremost is the treatment of listed heritage properties. In this case, the signature sanctuary building is slated for preservation and adaptive re-use. However, the other two parts of the complex – the Sunday School and the Annex Link – are destined for the wrecker's ball: only the school's façade has been spared.



While such action is sometimes necessary, it should never be taken lightly and requires a proper analysis.

To that end, the developers have commissioned and submitted a full heritage report, a compressed version of which you can [access by clicking here](#). Even though it's 176 pages long, don't be put off by its bulk. The document makes for fascinating reading, especially the pages on the history of the church and the dozen or so historic images included.



"A Church on the Common", photographed in 1892 looking north from Lowther Avenue, prior to construction of the 1913 Link addition (Source: Donald Goertz, Walmer: A Century for the City).

Limiting Height

Inevitably the height of the building will be of concern, especially given that the site sits in an area designated "apartment neighbourhood." This zoning is defined by the City as comprising mainly residential buildings up to 11 storeys in height.

The tallest nearby structure is Uno Prie's 15-storey Vincennes. At first encounter, the proposed tower of 20 storeys seems to be within comparable range of Prie's building. But because the TAS developers are planning exceptionally high ceilings for their condo units, the tower will ultimately reach skyward well above its neighbours. In fact, if you want to find a comparator, you need to look south to the towers on Bloor Street.



The TAS condo tower doesn't appear exceptionally tall in this artist's rendering as viewed from the far sidewalk.



But TAS's architectural drawing reproduced above gives a more accurate sense of the building's height. The driving factor appears to be the proposed condo ceiling heights of almost 12 feet. Here we have taken the liberty of outlining the sanctuary building in green to make it more visible.

Designing in Context

Early public commentary and preliminary discussion amongst members of the ARA's Planning and Development committee has also focussed on the proposed design and materials of the structure. While the streetscape along Lowther Avenue blends in well, there is some concern that the architecture of the tower fails to embrace and celebrate the church.

The use of red brick is definitely sympathetic to Annex style. But the structure with its two-tone colour scheme and protruding balconies dominates rather than collaborates.

Creating Transitions

Similarly, there is concern for the impact of the project on immediate neighbours. Abutting the site to the north is the Loretto complex on Brunswick. This particularly sensitive heritage development converted a former private school into high-end condos and filled the property's footprint with townhouses scaled to match the existing housing stock to the north.

By contrast, the TAS proposal makes no attempt to accommodate the townhouses on the other side of the property line, instead pushing boldly close at full height. This of course raises concerns of overlook and shadow.



The church parking lot next to the townhouses behind the Loretto is the site of the proposed tower.

Impacting the Neighbourhood

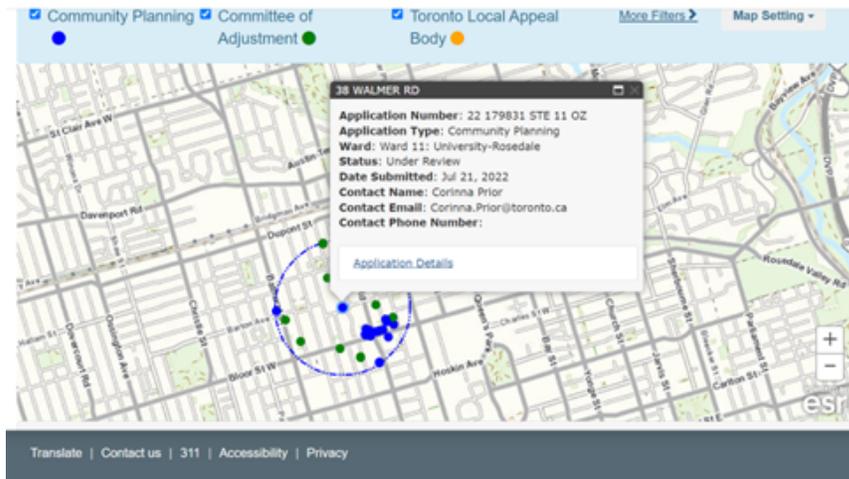
The final significant concern for the ARA is the overall impact of the venture on the surrounding community. TAS seeks to enhance the development with a commercial community hub on the second floor of the sanctuary building. This, in addition to the 162 new dwelling units in the condo tower, is likely to generate significant foot and road traffic. Residents who know the area well will likely have much to say about traffic flow and parking and servicing – the usual Annex grievances!

If You Want to Prepare

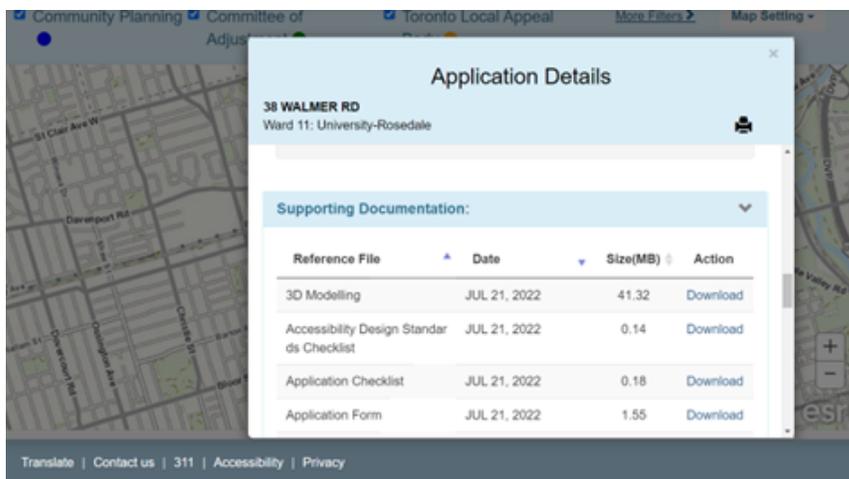
In other words, there is much to be discussed this evening, and it's time to have your say.

Wading through formal applications is never an easy process, especially if this is your first go at it.

Those who've done it before know to access the City's [main development application webpage](#), key in **38 Walmer Road**, and they're off.

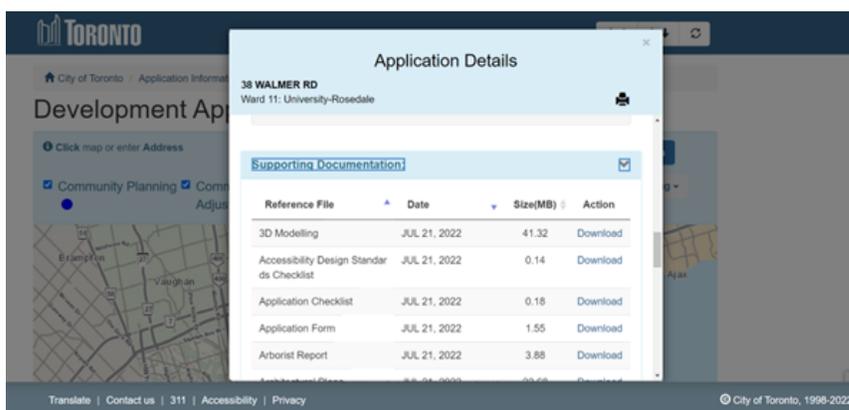


But to help newcomers get started, we've included [the direct application file link here](#) that should lead you to a page that looks like the following.



Once you're on this page, go to "Related Applications" and highlight the first locator – the one that ends in **OZ**. Then scroll down the page until you find a blue bar that reads "Supporting Documentation."

Clicking on this bar's down arrow will give you access to all 33 individual pdf files related to the proposal.



Most of the pdfs will likely be of minor interest to you unless you're really concerned with the wind study or the civil and utilities plans. But you may well want to download one or two – perhaps the architectural drawings or the heritage or arborist reports – for easy reading.

Keep in the Know

Finally, back on that initial landing page titled “Application Details,” we urge you to scroll down until you reach the blue bar “Public Consultation.” If you give your name and (snail) mailing address, the City will send you notice of the mandatory public consultation meeting that is to come.

There's no need to leave a comment unless you wish. Just make sure that you get on the mailing list so that you can keep abreast of developments. (Though of course we also promise to keep you in-the-know through these newsletter pages.)

Looking forward to seeing you tonight as TAS makes its first general presentation and opens the floor for questions and discussion. And again:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81328916675>



The Annex Residents' Association is a volunteer organization of residents committed to improving and preserving the distinctive character of our neighbourhood. Our strength depends on our base of support in a well-informed community.

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