



## This Week in the Annex:

December 14, 2022

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## The Continued Fight Against Bill 23

We're not alone in being preoccupied with the devastating impact of Bill 23 passed so hastily last November 28. You can find articles daily in the mainstream press exposing the harms caused by this scurrilous piece of legislation. The impacts are widespread, but there are three areas of particular concern to those of us in the Annex.

### Supporting Tenants

As one ARA member aptly commented, Bill 23 is basically feeding renters to the wolves. Current market conditions dictate that not everyone can own property, so treating renters like third-class citizens seems like a poor strategy for growth.

But throwing up our hands in the face of Bill 23's anti-tenant measures is decidedly not the way to go. Instead, we need to take heart from MPP Jessica Bell's inspirational words last week when she addressed the community gathering for tenants in the Annex and spoke confidently about People Power.

In that vein, ARA member Elizabeth Carman alerted us to a petition currently in circulation sponsored by the [Canadian Centre for Housing Rights](#) and addressed to the federal government. [Click here to do your part](#) in helping to champion vulnerable renters.



## Heritage and Rental Go Hand in Hand

The fact that Bill 23 guts the protections previously enshrined in Ontario law for heritage properties is equally significant for those who rent. Contrary to common public perception, many historic buildings in the Annex are not private palaces for the moneyed elite. Rather they provide the only affordable housing in the neighbourhood. They need to be recognized and preserved as such through open-ended heritage listing.

Consider the houses that parade along Spadina Road north of Bloor. They were expropriated back in the day to make way for the aborted Spadina Expressway. Most are now owned by government entities and provide affordable housing and space for social service agencies and multiple residents.

The entire streetscape is tantamount to a heritage zone that provides affordable housing for hundreds of people. But the provisions in Bill 23 voiding heritage listing after two years' duration would endanger these models of gentle densification that have served our diverse community so successfully.

## Protecting the Environment

Finally, there is the issue of the environment. As we've stressed time and again, one of the defining features of the Annex is our mature trees. Heavens, even developers who propose buildings that stretch lot line to lot line and brook no vegetation but a few anemic saplings boast our "leafy neighbourhood" in glowing sales brochures.

So while it's not in the 'hood, we need to amplify the importance of century trees in the city by joining the fight against axing the venerable grove on the grounds of Osgoode Hall. We are grateful to ARA member Yuen Chua for forwarding notice of a rally to be held tomorrow, **Thursday Dec 15 at 1:00 pm at University and Queen**. [Click here](#) to read the full notice posted by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario.



## Discarding Used Batteries

The tips came rolling in within a matter of hours last Wednesday in answer to Marcia Cuthbert's query re a convenient place to dispose of spent batteries. Charlotte Mickie reported the newly launched service at **Weiner's**, and Marty himself chimed in soon after [to confirm](#). Elizabeth Carman alerted us to the presence of a facility at **OISE**. And Micky Fraterman told us of the dark blue drop-off barrel outside the front door of **Huron Street Public School**.



Fiona Groening, the Huron PS parent who coordinates the school's battery recycling program, told Micky it is sponsored by [Raw Materials Company](#) (RMC). RMC used to pay a quarter for each pound of collected batteries, but with the withdrawal of government support in 2020, the company has reduced that rate to a nickel. (For the rationale behind the withdrawal, you should check out the website of the [Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority](#).)

## **Every Battery Matters**

At Huron PS it's not the money earned that's so important as is the social and environmental impact made by this program. The school has so far collected over 790 lbs of batteries – hazardous waste that has been diverted from landfills, that is recycled by workers employed right here in Ontario, and that saves the earth's finite resources by reusing precious materials. As the school's newsletter says, the program has "shown our children we can make a difference when we try."

So here's the thing. There's absolutely no excuse now to be smuggling those batteries into regular household waste. (Go on. 'Fess up.) The solution is a matter of minutes away. Thanks to Marcia for putting us all on the case.



Pictured above is the collection bin located in the OISE concourse. But whichever location you choose – Wiener’s, OISE, or Huron PS – all three are securely and conveniently in the ‘hood.

## In Memoriam

We’re blessed in the Annex to count rather more than a handful of famous Canadians as our neighbours. But we’d be remiss not to mention the passing last week at age 95 of celebrated composer and long-time Annexionian John Beckwith. Mr Beckwith had cause to correspond with your faithful reporter on several occasions over the past few years, particularly to express his dislike of our using the term “hood” in reference to the Annex. But he and we managed to come to a quiet understanding about the affectionate tone with which the expression was used, tempered by the fact that he was on our minds each and every time the abbreviation emerged from our keyboard.

## On the Road

Former ARA Board member, Albert Koehl, has equally fond memories of the maestro. “He was such a delightful man, and he had a good sense of humour. I often saw him riding his bike along Howland where he lived. Slow but steady. ‘It’s easier than walking,’ he once told me. But he didn’t get any more respect from motorists parked in the bike lane than the rest of us. When he pointed out that they shouldn’t be parking there, he told me the responses that he got were

sometimes 'unprintable.' You'd think a man in his 90s might get more deference."

You can find the online obituary for Mr Beckwith [by clicking here](#). While we mourn his passing, we can be grateful that at least his music lives on.



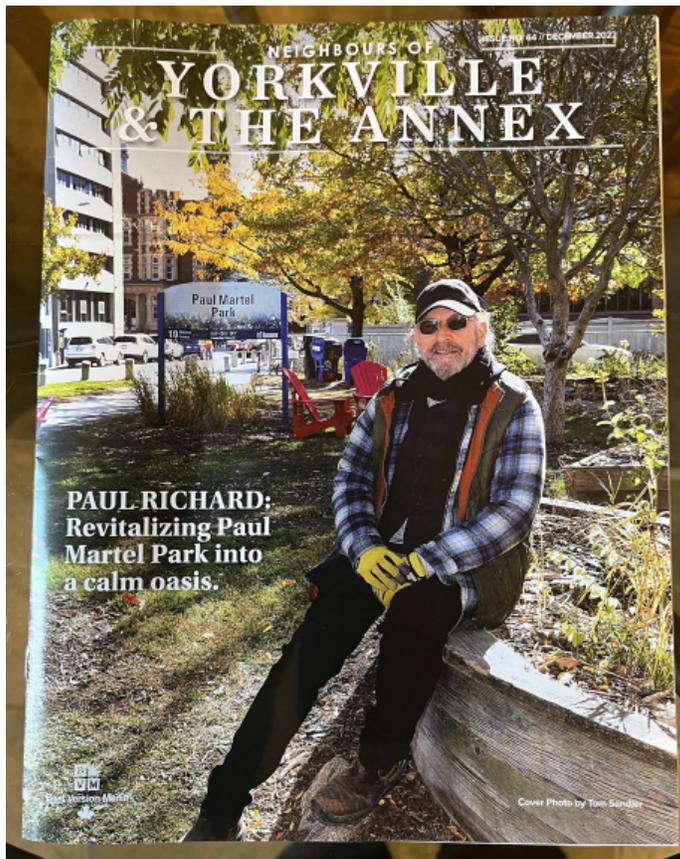
*Photo courtesy Toronto Star*

## Notes and Queries

### Paul Martel Park Gets Exposure

We were delighted to catch the article in this month's issue of the advertising mag *Neighbours of Yorkville & the Annex* featuring Paul Richard and Co. who have done so much to revitalize Paul Martel Park. As we read on, however, we were bemused to find that a good half of the article was an unacknowledged lift from our own newsletter of [October 5](#). Instead, authorship was ascribed solely to one Perri Blachowitz, the magazine's content coordinator.

You can be sure we followed up and have been promised an apology in the next issue of the mag for this outright plagiarism. Also pledged is a donation to compensate for the misdemeanour. That's one creative way to augment the ARA's coffers!



## Gifting Your Neighbours

It's that time of year when you might want to reach out to a neighbour with a small gift to let them know how much you appreciate their friendship. And what could be more perfect than a membership in the ARA that brings Annex news directly to their in-box and keeps them connected throughout the year?

Or, for that matter, why not give them an official ARA T-shirt? In fact, if you buy a membership this month, you can purchase a T-shirt at the same time for half price. All the more reason to give your neighbour or friend the gift of both!

Okay. Okay. We know. It's shamelessly opportunistic of us. But, seriously, the ARA is all about neighbours and building community. So, if you want to give your neighbour either or both of these gifts, then write to [info@theara.org](mailto:info@theara.org) with the subject line "Membership Gift" and we'll help you get it done. And if you want to check out T-shirt sizes beforehand, you can find the information by using the [Donate button](#) on our website. Scroll down that page and you'll find all the info you'll need.

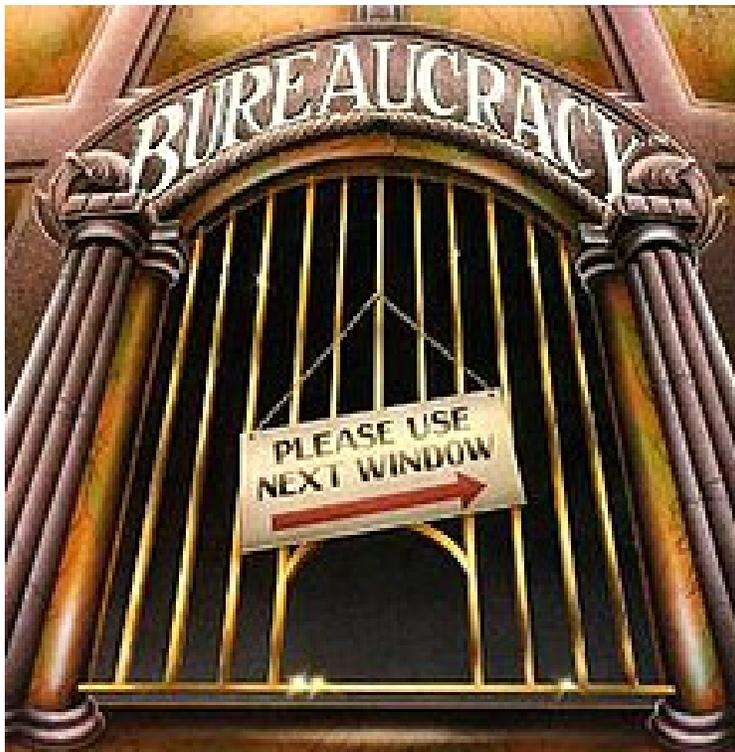


*All residential property owners in Toronto will be required to submit a declaration of their property's occupancy status for the previous year. The deadline to declare a property's 2022 occupancy status is February 2, 2023. The online declaration portal will open in mid-December 2022.*

Turns out that this is the bureaucratic consequence of Council's 2022 bylaw imposing an additional tax on vacant Toronto residences, payable beginning in 2023.

In obedience to the dictates of Murphy's Law, the yellow forms may have come in the mail, but as of press time, the website was not yet ready to handle declarations. Apparently "security and privacy testing continues" and property owners are told to "check back later." Sigh.

For your convenience, [click here to check on the portal](#). And if anyone finds that the site is up and running before we do, please let us know and we'll spread the word.



## **KESKUS**

It's been some time since we brought you updates on the state of construction at KESKUS on Madison. According to the centre's most recent newsletter, deep foundation work is now finished pending a period of curing and testing. After

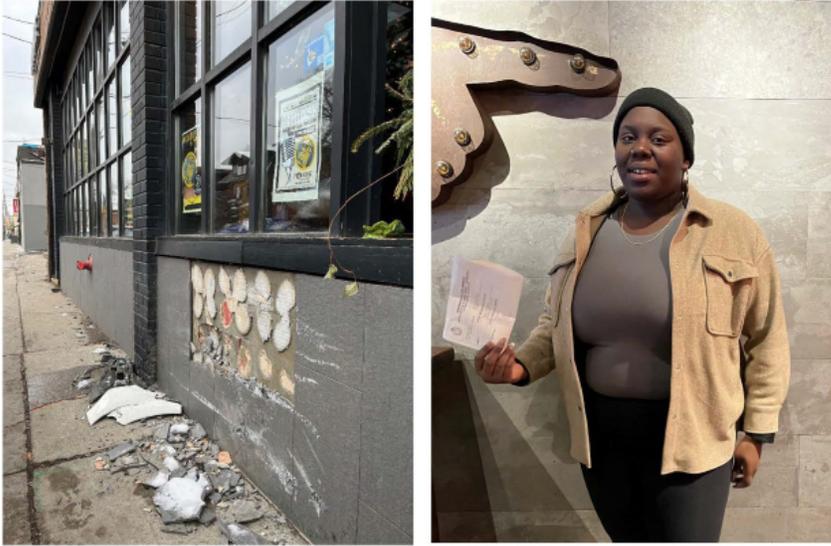
this necessary hiatus, the engineering pad over the subway tunnels will be removed so that excavation can start in earnest.

For those of you interested in the engineering feats involved in this project, [click here to watch a two-minute video overview](#) of the three kinds of structural support that have been prepared on site. But whether or not the mechanics of the build are of interest, you can be assured that 2023 is gearing up to be pretty exciting for the KESKUS project!



## Whodunnit?

ARA Board member Henry Wiercinski tipped us off to the telltale signs of a driver who'd had too much to drink (or perhaps felt in desperate need of one?) and sideswiped the wall of the Pour House on Dupont last weekend. According to Djenné, manager of this local watering hole, no one was present at the time of the collision. But the remaining detritus attests to the miscreant vehicle as a Mercedes. Sure explains why the façade suffered such damage.



*Pour House Manager Djenné (aka DJ) holds a copy of the police report she filed soon after discovering the damage. May the finger of accusation soon point the way to the errant driver!*

## **A Positive Outcome!**

There was chaos on St George between Lowther and Prince Arthur yesterday afternoon as a phalanx of first responders descended on the property at 151. At least two dozen personnel, from the emergency response squad to tactical officers to fire fighters to police attendants to paramedics swarmed the scene in search of a person in crisis. To everyone's relief, the incident ended safely with the individual wheeled into a waiting ambulance for the run to hospital. It's comforting to know that our City can deploy such strength in the event of an emergency – and that such incidents can end peacefully and well.



## Meeting Tonight re 914 Bathurst Street

Just in case you don't already have plans, this is a reminder of tonight's community consultation meeting regarding a proposal for the site at 914 Bathurst. Full details of the official application for this project can be found on [the City website](#). But, in brief, the proposal is for a 10-storey residential building with 124 dwelling units situated at the northwest corner of Bathurst and Barton with plans for accommodating 79 vehicles underground.

[Click here](#) for the registration link for this consultation meeting scheduled for 6-7:30 pm on Webex.



*Architectural rendering of proposed building at Bathurst and Barton.*



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.

This email was sent to [gillianbartlettara@gmail.com](mailto:gillianbartlettara@gmail.com). To stop receiving emails, [click here to unsubscribe](#).

The Annex Residents' Association