



**THE ANNEX
RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATION**

This Week in the Annex:

April 19, 2023

Rental Upheaval

It was truly heart wrenching last week to watch the parade of tenants depute at Toronto East York Community Council (TEYCC) as they pleaded for the preservation of their homes at 25 St. Mary Street – the sister to our own Annex apartment building at 145 St. George.

In the end, councillors said that they felt the pain but that the motion before them was a take-it-or-leave-it affair. Feeling they couldn't risk a refusal, an OLT appeal, and almost certain loss that would result in no tenant protection at all, they metaphorically held their noses and voted to largely accept the demolition according to plans detailed in item [TE 4.13](#). Next step – a final vote at full City Council on May 10.

The screenshot shows a real estate listing on the Viewit.ca website. At the top is a dark blue navigation bar with the Viewit.ca logo and links for Search rentals, Add my rental, VIT List, Info, Blog, Create account, and Sign in. Below the navigation bar is a gallery of images showing the interior of a unit (living room, kitchen, bathroom), a view of the building, and a map. Below the gallery are social media sharing icons and a 'View gallery' button. The listing details include the address '25 St. Mary' and 'VIT 1161', the location 'Toronto ON' and 'YONGE-BLOOR', and the unit type '1 Bedroom' and '1 Bathroom'. The rent is listed as '\$2000' with a note 'And up. Utilities Extra'. The listing is managed by 'Briarlane', a 'Rental Agent', with a 'View Phone Number' link. A 'Full description' link is also present.

Briarlane management [continues to advertise units](#) for rent at 25 St. Mary. This junior one bedroom boasts “major renovation, inside and out.” What a terrible environmental waste to demolish a perfectly sound building!

It's Not Just the Money

To be fair, there are many provisions in the [TE 4.13](#) motion designed to ease the financial pain for current St Mary's tenants and guarantee them right of return to an equivalent space – as long as the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, follow through on enforcement.

But that can never compensate for the upheaval of lives that have been lived – in some cases for decades – in familiar homes. Many of the tenants are older, on fixed incomes, and dependent on nearby social supports (like lifts to the doctor). They are often lacking in resilience and may slip from the middle class to low-income as they wait years for a return to a home that is nothing like their old place.



Councillors were anxious to ensure that St Mary's tenants had the right of return. That said, the proposed regulations around renoviction still do not ensure that agreements to return will be enforced. This relates directly to the plight of several tenants from 11 Walmer Road who are still waiting to move back in.

And Then Comes Bill 97

There's no doubt the current provincial government is determined to push forward with its housing agenda – one that encourages sprawl and environmental neglect. Witness Bill 97.

It's never a good sign when a government announces legislation in the late afternoon of the day before a long weekend. So those still keeping watch on the eve of last Good Friday steeled themselves as they read the latest Provincial legislation dropped on Thursday just before 5:00 pm – *Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*. (For the full text, [click here](#).)

Experience has long taught us to understand that such titles from Ford often disguise counter-intuitive moves. And there is legitimate fear that this will be the case with Bill 97 once its associated regulations are articulated.

There is the promise of financial provisions made to protect tenants facing demoviction from affordable homes. The worry is that such protections already offered by the City of Toronto may well be watered down in the government's attempt to establish a universal level of compensation across the province.



Similarly, while the bill ensures tenants' rights to install air conditioners in their units (with some exceptions), the tenants are then subject to higher rents attributable to increased electrical consumption. This smacks of giving with one hand and taking with other – mixed with a dose of clear unfairness: big screen televisions and super high-speed computers have never been similarly targeted.

Overturning Moves

Of most concern, the government continues to amend and override pieces of existing legislation that stand in the way of developers. For example, Bill 97 empowers the Province to override the powers of a local municipality to prohibit and regulate the demolition and conversion of residential rental properties (read, for a start, 145 St George).

There's clearly lots to unpack in this bill. And there's time to weigh in on the legislation. To send written comments, [click on this link](#) and scroll down to the blue *Comment on this proposal via email* link near the end. For more information, our own MPP and Opposition Housing Critic, Jessica Bell, has produced [a digest of critical points](#).

Key facts to bear in mind – 50% of Ontario residents are renters. That rises to 70% in the Annex. So certainly 100% of us need to care.

St George Has His Day

Were you planning a noon-day feast for this coming Sunday that features roast beef, peas, and Yorkshire pud supplemented later in the afternoon by high tea with scones, jam & clotted cream? A hah! Those traditional foods are an appropriate nod to British ancestry – for April 23rd is the date annually observed by the English in honour of their patron saint – the dragon-slaying martyr, St. George.



Photo Source: Wikimedia Commons / Artist: Edward Burne-Jones

To learn more about the crusader saint, check out [this article in the Encyclopedia Britannica](#).

An Adopted Name

You'd be forgiven for thinking that this Christian icon is the one being commemorated courtesy the name of our Annex thoroughfare. But that's only by proxy. Turns out that St. George Street is actually named for an 18th century French Royalist originally baptized Laurent Quetton who fought against Napoleon during the revolution, landing fortuitously on England's shores on April 23, 1796. In gratitude for this sanctuary, Laurent tacked the saint's name on to his own.

In 1798, Laurent Quetton St. George found himself at sea again – this time bound for the New World together with a group of aristocratic French exiles who planned to establish a colony on Yonge Street near present-day Richmond Hill.

His fellow exiles proved faint of heart and soon returned to England. But the enterprising Laurent decided to stay and made enough money in the fur trade and later prospered sufficiently as a merchant to gain prominence in Upper Canada society and the friendship of the Baldwin family.



FIRST BRICK HOUSE IN YORK (TORONTO) BUILT IN 1807, BY HENRY QUETTON ST. GEORGE. AFTERWARDS OCCUPIED BY JOHN SPRENG BALDWIN. THE CANADA COY (1851) NE. COR. KING AND FREDERICK STS. PHOTO TAKEN ABOUT 1880.

City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, F1231_jt0001


Quetton St. George built the very first brick residence in Toronto near present day King and Frederick Streets. Owned later by the Baldwin family, the home was demolished in 1901.

Return to France

Once Napoleon was deposed in 1814, Laurent returned to France, leaving behind a natural daughter and son in the New World. But he wasn't forgotten by his friends and colleagues in Toronto with whom he continued to have business dealings.


When William Baldwin developed the lands around Spadina Avenue in the 1830s, he named one of those insignificant lines drawn on the plans after Laurent, his good friend and partner. Little could he know the prominence St. George Street would enjoy centuries later.

For more on the remarkable life and career of Laurent Quetton St. George, read the entry in [the Dictionary of Canadian Biography](#). It seems he never quite fit in to Upper Canada society, struggling as he did with a French accent and irrepressible *joie de vivre*. Yet he was a British loyalist at heart, once writing *"Revolution deprived me of my motherland, hence I will have the same devotion to the [land] that adopted me."*


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70 ST. GEORGE'S DAY RECIPES


Our pick of the best St. George's Day recipes for you to impress your friends and family. Think heartwarming pies, tender cuts of meat, classic British puddings and way more.



⌚ 15 MINUTES ⚡ NOT TOO TRICKY
Whitebait & dill mayo



⌚ 3 HOURS 50 MINUTES 🍴 SHOWING OFF
Ham & peas



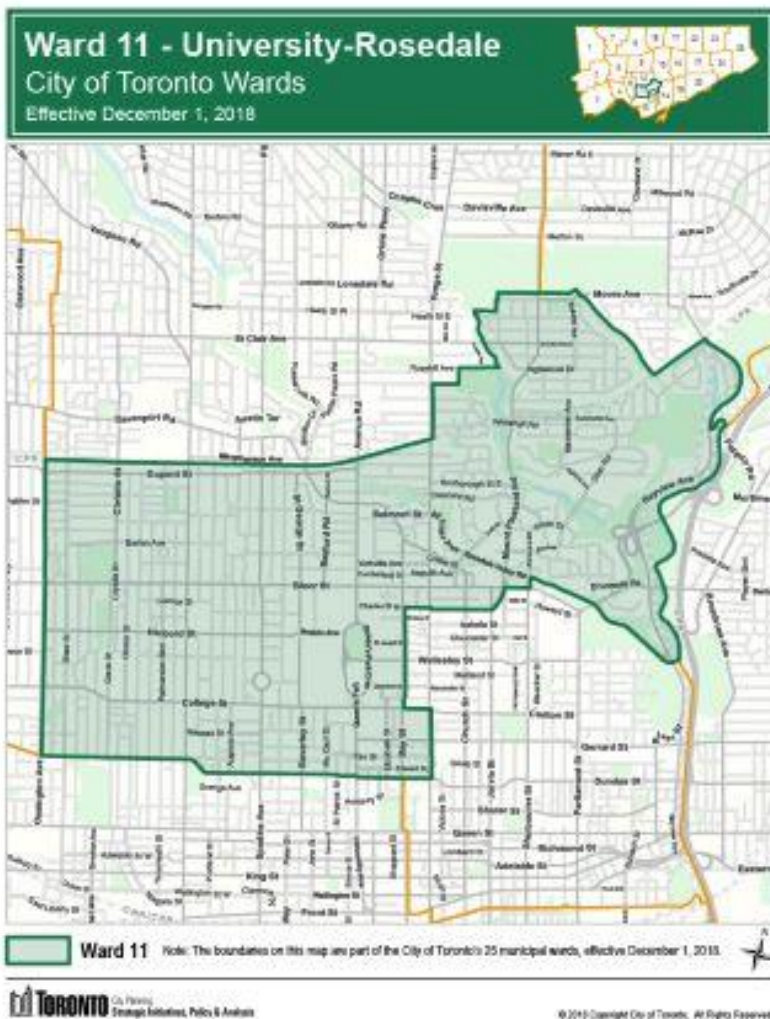
⌚ 2 HOURS 55 MINUTES 🍴 SHOWING OFF
Pheasant stew with chestnut dumplings

And if you decide to get into the spirit of things this Sunday, you can find [culinary inspiration on Jamie Oliver's website](#). Tempted, anyone? Ah. We see. Possibly not.

Notes and Queries

Ward 11 Town Hall

Councillor Saxe won't be available at the ARA's Annual General Meeting this year, but she is holding a Town Hall for the whole ward **tomorrow evening, Thursday April 20, at 7:00 pm**. The session will be hosted virtually through Zoom and is billed as an opportunity for the Councillor to provide valuable insights into our Ward's current issues and future plans. Register for the meeting [by clicking here](#).



AGM Thursday April 27 at 7:00

Our own AGM is fast approaching, and your Communications team is hard at work to put the finishing touches on the program. Of course, there's the legally required business to take care of at the beginning – approval of the agenda, the minutes, and the financial statements ([all of which are now available online](#)). But once that's done, we promise you an interesting evening featuring keynote speaker Ellen Valter from the Estonian Cultural Centre (KESKUS), as well a final presentation on the West Annex Heritage Project, a review of *The Annex by Numbers* with Alex Topp, and more.

To register, just go to <https://www.theara.org/events> Looking forward to seeing you there.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



GET INVOLVED!

Indigenous Youth Shelter

The City of Toronto is opening a new shelter this month to support Indigenous youth experiencing homelessness. Located right here in the Annex, the program will provide emergency shelter and wrap-around support services for up to 15 Indigenous youth ages 16 to 29. The site will be staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week, and will provide food and laundry, as well as one-to-one case management that focuses on housing and cultural support and care. Everyone involved is anxious to ensure the shelter program's success. Should you have any questions, concerns or offers of support, or would like to explore potential partnership opportunities, please email:

IndigenousYouthShelterAnnex@gmail.com





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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The Annex Residents' Association