

## **This Week in the Annex:**

**October 25, 2023**

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### **Basking in Glory**

Wow. You likely won't be surprised that our inbox has been flooded with gleeful emails ever since news broke last Tuesday of the Annex's apotheosis having been named by the British media company *Time Out* as #38 of the coolest 40 neighborhoods in the world.

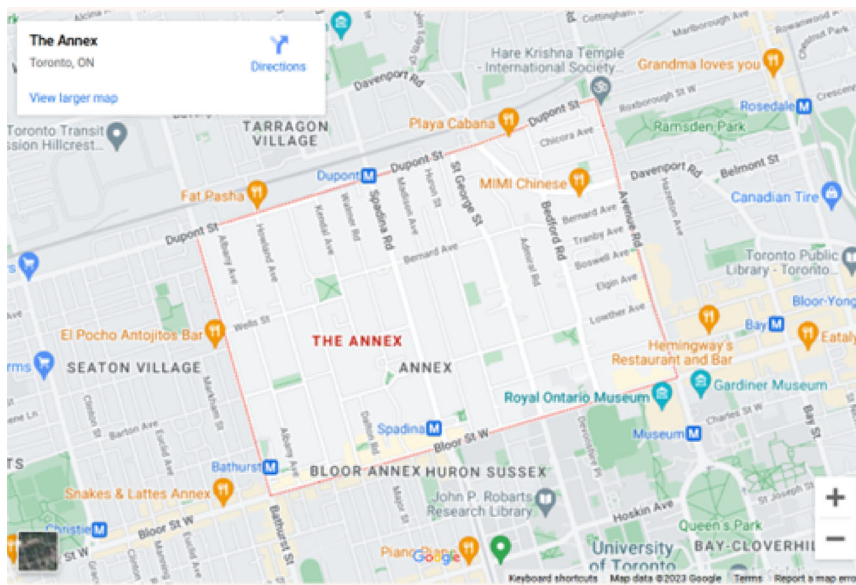
Let's repeat that. Number 38 in the world!

We were all agog wondering just how the Annex got the nod. But it was ARA member and sleuth Mimi Tompkins who solved the mystery by identifying the author as freelancer Lydia Hrycko, officially dubbed "Canadian Contributor" for *Time Out*. You may have seen her byline in places like *Food Network Canada*, *PartnerStack*, *HGTV Canada*, and *Slice*.

You also probably first heard the news in spin-offs from the *Time Out* story in *BlogTo* and the *Toronto Star* and even the *Globe and Mail*. But why don't you go back to basics and read the entire entry [by clicking here](#) and scrolling WAY down, almost to the bottom?

### **A Matter of Definition**

Purists (among whom we usually count ourselves) will quibble with some of the sites featured in the article, beginning with the opening nod to the completion of the Mirvish Village hub which is officially outside the hard stop of our border at Bathurst and Bloor though admittedly a huge influence on life in the lower west quadrant of the Annex.



***Google maps gets our boundaries pretty much right – though it really should grant us that sliver of land along the rail tracks north of Dupont.***

Also mentioned but not technically in the 'hood are the Lab pub (on Brunswick just south of Bloor) and Coffee Pocket (on Bloor – but almost at Christie). On the other hand, we can take parochial pride in the shout outs to [Hot Docs](#), the [Writer's Room](#) in the Park Hyatt, and the newly Michelin-approved [Mimi Chinese](#) on Davenport.

Just in case we get too puffed with pride, you should know that Mimi Chinese promotes its location as being “on the outskirts of Toronto’s vibrant Yorkville neighbourhood.” No mention of the Annex there.

But then, we don’t see Yorkville on *Time Out’s* list, do we?

## **A Neighbourhood Treasure**

We were delighted to see the emphasis in *Time Out’s* citation on our beloved Hot Docs. In this age of Cineplex and Netflix and Crave and all manner of streaming services, this art house cinema is something of a local miracle – testimony to the dedication of its owners and members who work to keep the cultural experience alive.

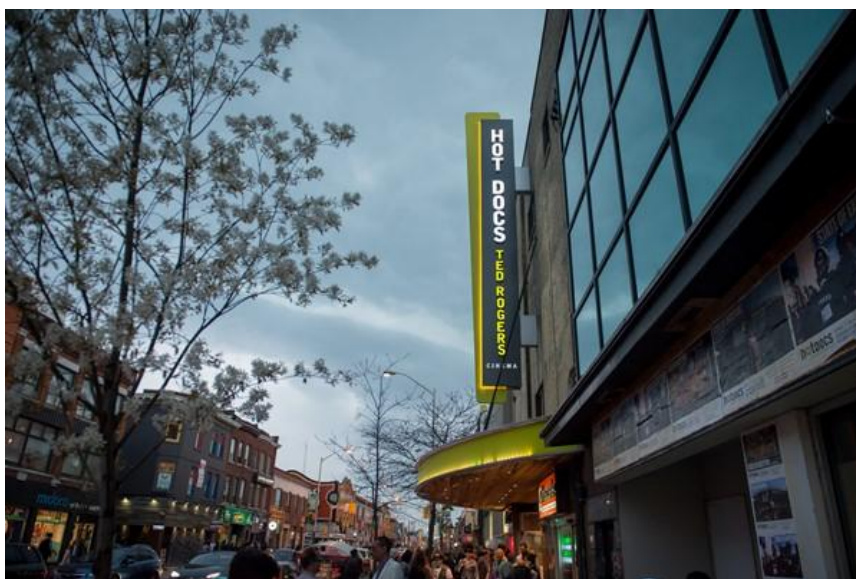


Image from [RealScreen article](#) by Andrew Tracy

According to the [Hot Docs website](#), the cinema opened as a film house on December 23 1913 under the name *Madison Theatre*, making it one of the first picture palaces in Toronto. Poised to enter its second century, the property currently bears the official name of Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema in acknowledgement of a generous donation from, you guessed, the Rogers Foundation.

## A Miracle or What?

There's the Eglinton Crosstown – no end date in sight. Mizrahi's *The One* at Bloor and Yonge – no prospect of a finish. The Scarborough subway? Don't hold your breath. But in a unicorn feat for this city, we received a report last week that the construction on Bloor Street is **ahead of schedule** (bold face inked by a City staffer clearly just as surprised as we).

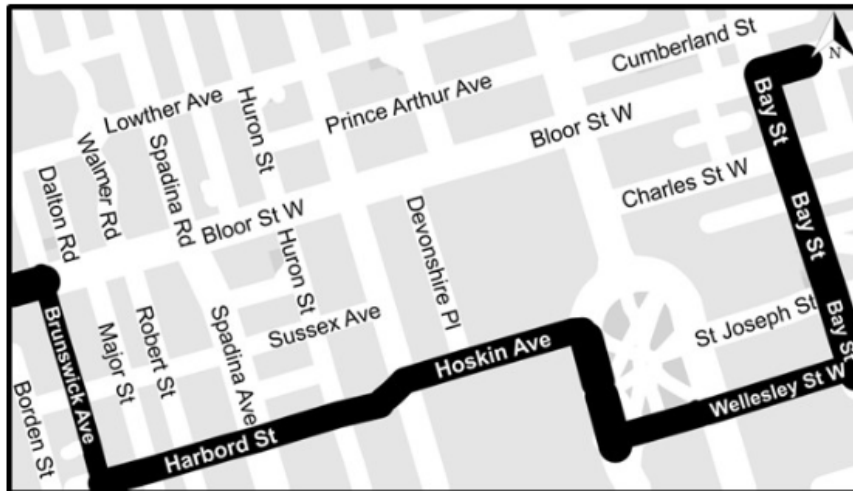
By the end of next week when the last details of reconstruction of the south side of Bloor have been tidied away, the City's contractor will immediately shift focus to the north side. This phase of the work was originally not planned to begin until next Spring. But now it is expected to be **fully complete** (our bold face this time) by the end of this year! Amazing!

## A New Wrinkle

How is this miracle possible? Well, it's inevitably a case of short-term pain for long-term gain. Starting November 3 or so, drivers and cyclists will be accommodated on the Bloor stretch between Spadina and Avenue Road for **eastbound travel only** – a separate lane for each. That's way safer than the

current configuration of bicycles mixed in with vehicles. But it means they'll both have to take alternate routes for westward journeys.

Cyclists will have an official detour that will be signed according to the following map. Drivers, on the other hand, will be given free rein as they scramble to find alternate westbound routes.



Thankfully this blockage won't last long. Westbound traffic will be restored to normal for both drivers and cyclists by year end because construction is being halted over the winter.

That's enough info for now. We'll let you know about the final phases a little closer to their disruption dates.

On the other hand, if you're greedy for details, full information is always available [on the City's website](#). And at the bottom of the Bloor Street Construction page you'll find a link that allows you to subscribe to email updates if you want to be in receipt of any breaking news.

## Notes and Queries

### Warming Centre on Spadina

While we've enjoyed many unusual days of sunshine and warmth these past few weeks, there's no denying it – winter is on its way. And that's why the City is working to prepare warming centres for our more vulnerable residents to come inside during extreme cold weather.

This year, a new warming centre is proposed for 136 Spadina Road. Although it's hard to credit given the current state of the house (pictured below), plans are



that by November 15 it will be ready for business, offering shelter, snacks, and washroom facilities to those in need whenever the mercury drops to -5 degrees Celsius.

If you want to learn more about the project, you're invited to attend a virtual community information session next **Wednesday November 1<sup>st</sup>** between **6:30 and 8:00 pm**. The link to the online Zoom session is available [on this page](#). You can also sign up to receive e-updates on warming centres, including notifications as to when they open and close.

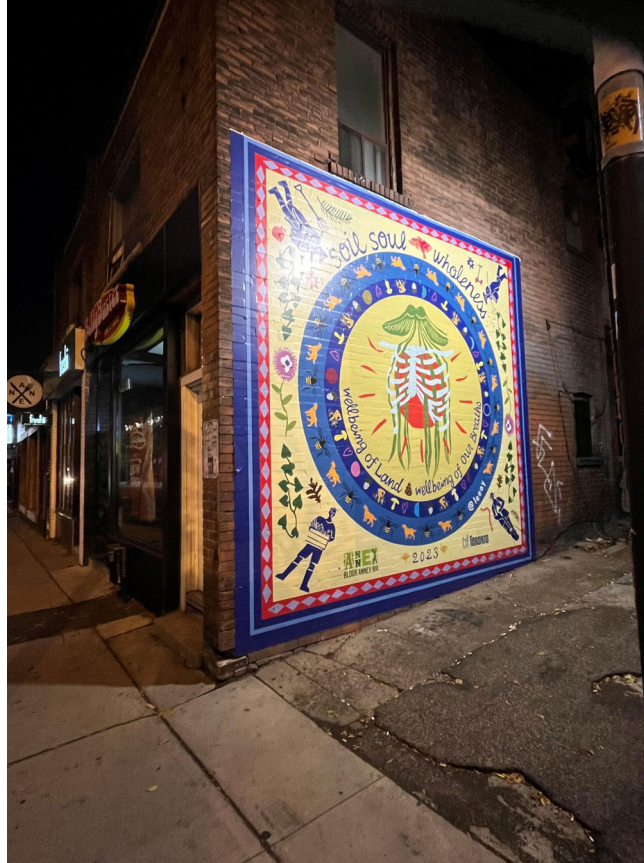


## Spotlight on Bloor

Hats off to the Bloor Annex BIA for its continuing efforts to humanize and enliven the street. As promised in the BIA report that we referenced in [our September 20 newsletter](#), yet another colourful mural has appeared, this one tucked away on the north side just inside the alley sandwiched between *Belly Buster Submarines* (380 Bloor) and *Vietnam Lovely Noodles* (378).

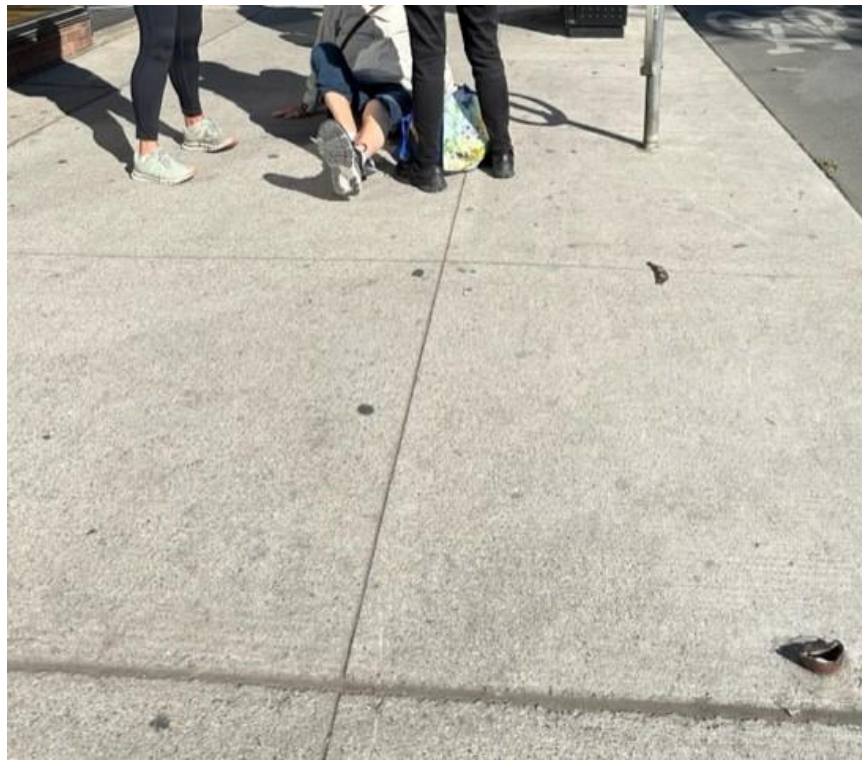
What was once a rather forbidding gap to pedestrians out for a nighttime stroll has now become a welcoming beacon along the route. You can read more about

local artist Leeay Aikawa's intentions for the work by going directly [to the BIA's website](#). Congratulations to all involved in the success of this latest enterprise.



## But Watch Your Step

ARA member Terri Hawkes was running some errands along Bloor when she was caught unawares by a sidewalk hazard that tripped her up, sent her down, and left her with a livid black eye, mere moments after the same fate had befallen a fellow pedestrian who happened to be a few steps ahead of her. The peril? The jagged stump of a bicycle hitch rack (to use what is apparently the technical term for those circular devices embedded in the pavement).



Passersby hurried to their aid, helping both injured parties to hobble intact away from the scene while others secured the site with a temporary warning. Soon after, an anonymous soul placed an official orange cone over the offending hazard. But by Saturday the cone had disappeared (as they are sadly wont to do), so in the spirit of public service, Terri secured a cardboard box from the folks at *So Famous* to alert others to the danger.



As Terri reports, "It was gratifying to experience the kindness of Annex residents when I unintentionally joined the sidewalk gathering ahead of me." She herself showed a similar civic thoughtfulness by immediately reporting the hazard to



311. Her second call to the line five days later yielded a written response that the offending protrusion "would be removed within 30 days."

And so to pedestrians on Bloor near 362 – consider yourselves warned. And thanks to Terri for sending us the alert accompanied by some sobering images.

PS: Jack Lakey, "The Fixer" in the *Toronto Star*, wrote [in yesterday's issue](#) about a similar sidewalk hazard – this one a sawed off remnant of a traffic sign on Eglinton near Bayview. Apparently that particular stub has been plaguing pedestrians for more than two years despite frequent calls to 311. Doesn't breed confidence, does it?



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