

PRESENTATION TO THE OFFICE DE CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE DE MONTRÉAL
ILOT SAINTE-CATHERINE OUEST
BY CAROLINE NABOZNIAK, RESIDENT

While attending the virtual information session on August 10, 2020 and the Question and Answer period on September 15, 2020, the word “coherence” was often used by the representatives of both the Ville de Montréal when explaining the reasoning behind the requested zoning derogations and Placements Sergakis when describing their project. While this buzzword was used frequently, there is little evidence of coherence in the decision-making process.

Before a residential project is built the community’s needs must be understood. Any zoning change should benefit the neighbourhood. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of our City representatives to ensure that our city is more livable, more sustainable, more resilient and more equitable. There is no coherence behind the reasoning to increase the permitted height from 25m to 45 m on the South side of St. Catherine Street between du Fort and St-Marc Streets and to reduce the permitted height from 25m to 16m on the North side of St. Catherine Street east of Tower. The project abuts an area of equally, if not more important, historical significance as that area where the height reduction is proposed. These buildings will dwarf the houses backing onto the project, take away their sunlight and create more traffic in the narrow lane and surrounding streets. There seems to be no justification for this proposed height increase other than to accommodate this particular project, and accordingly this proposed zoning change request should be denied.

The presentation by Placements Sergakis and their responses to the very precise questions submitted by the citizens were often vague. Much more detailed information should be provided on the effect of this project on the surrounding neighbourhood and engineering studies should also be conducted to monitor the impact of the heavy-duty construction on the nearby residences. The residents on the North side of Tupper Street whose lanes abut the project will be directly affected by a number of factors that must be taken into consideration. Where will the ventilation system be installed and what noise mitigation factors will be taken to ensure the system does not increase the level of noise for the surrounding residents? There is concern as well about the greatly increased traffic in the lane where the Tupper Street residents also enter their garages. How will the removal of garbage, both residential and commercial be handled? What about commercial deliveries? What type of commercial establishments will be permitted to occupy the premises? It should be noted that there is a serious problem in this densely populated area with the garbage from restaurants that is left to accumulate in the lanes, attracting rats and all manner of vermin, and from the food exhaust fans without efficient filters that pollute the air. With the number of restaurants already operating in this neighbourhood, only less nuisance causing businesses should be permitted to occupy the commercial premises.

The building phase of the project will create a great deal of disruption to the surrounding residents due to noise, vibration and dust as well as reduced pedestrian and vehicular mobility around the site. In order to minimize the impacts on the neighbourhood, we request that Placements Sergakis implement mitigation measures. One would be to have a representative(s) who will meet with the neighbours on a regular basis during the course of construction to deal with any issues or concerns that may arise. Placements Sergakis should also set up a telephone information line to maintain regular communication with residents in the neighbourhood and to enable residents to direct questions to the construction team on the nature of the work being carried out on the site, as well as to deal with complaints, in order that problems are solved in a thorough and timely fashion.

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Placements Sergakis should include a more balanced mix of housing options, keeping in mind a diversity of population, and ensuring accessibility both in the apartment units and the building in general. The Developer has indicated that their target rental market are persons 55 and over, however, the proposed sizes of their apartment units do not provide an adequate number of larger sized units. Developers often use the refrain, “there is no demand for larger units” which is not borne out by the fact that the largest units in residential highrises recently built in this area were the first to be purchased or rented. Furthermore, with the proximity of two Metro stations and ample bus service, the number of parking spots to be built should be reduced by 50%.

In conclusion, we respectfully request that the recommendations of the OCPM include the following:

1. Denial of the request to increase the maximum height from 25m to 45m.
2. Insistence that this project comply with the highest standards with respect to noise and air pollution.
3. Assurance from the developer to implement mitigation measures to minimize impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.
4. A request for greater diversity in the types of housing being offered, accessibility in the building in general and units in particular and reduction in the number of parking spaces.
5. Request that the commercial space at the ground-floor level be occupied by professional businesses rather than restauration.

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