

Memo – Toni Bramley & David Kendall

March 3, 2008

Office de Consultation publique de Montreal
1550 Metcalfe Street
14th Floor
Montreal, Quebec

Re: 1800 Rene Levesque development proposal

To whom it may concern,

We live in downtown Montreal and are proponents of a vibrant, densely populated city centre. We believe in a city that has residents using its facilities 24 hours a day, not a city that empties out at night when its workers go home to the suburbs.

We are also pleased when our empty, graffiti-covered heritage buildings find new life and are developed in a way that is appropriate to the development of our 21st century city.

However, not all density is appropriate; not all development is desirable.

Any rebirth of the 1800 Rene Levesque site must give primary consideration to its location and proximity to other heritage buildings -- the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the Grey Nuns, the residences across Rene Levesque and throughout Shaughnessy Village. These buildings should not be thrown into shadow and diminished by a massive tower. The gradual gaining of height (with the exception of the ugly blemish from the 1960s on the corner of Rene Levesque and St. Mathieu) from low and medium at the Atwater end to the towers of downtown proper further east, is rational and pleasing and should be respected.

Remember the Montreal of Mayor Drapeau and remember what we gained during those years and the huge cost – not only a dollar deficit but a loss of much of the elegance of Sherbrooke Street and the loss of significant heritage buildings.

It is exactly this heritage that has made Montreal a great city to live in and to visit. It is a big part of the reason why conferences and tourists chose to spend their money here. It mustn't erode further. We must nurture it the way successful European cities do.

Our climate is another consideration. Many other winter cities, eg. Stockholm, have regulations limiting building heights and positions so that streets and neighbouring windows aren't thrown into frigid shadow during the long cold months.

We appreciate that taller buildings can pack in more density with a smaller footprint. This could potentially leave more ground space for parks and sculpture gardens both of which would be appropriate on the west side of the site given its proximity to the adjacent parkland and its role as a gateway to the city from the Guy Street exit from the Ville Marie Expressway.

However, we strongly believe that the density being proposed is too high. The height of the proposed buildings should be in keeping with the Oasis apartments directly to the east and their configuration should leave the existing heritage buildings clearly visible.

We understand that developers need to make a profit. But not at the cost of the city we love.

Sincerely,

Toni Bramley

David Kendall

cc. Mayor Benoit Labonte, Councillor Karim Boulos, Councillor Katherine Sevigny, President Roger Peace (SVA)