

Dear Mr. Sylvestre:

We met at the presentation at the post office building last fall 2008. I was away over the winter and per the phone message I have just left at your office, during my absence someone at Lands Canada asked me to call her so that I might see a virtual view of what you intend to construct directly across the Canal Lachine from my loft at 1689 rue saint Patrick. I have misplaced that message. I would like to see the virtual view.

I am not a fan of your proposal for at least four reasons.

1. Spin: Your project is called Bassins du Havre. It's a swell name, but where are the bassins? You did your best to insure that I understood there was an idea of "bassins", a reference to bassins or something along those lines. But no bassins. What's in a name? In this case, nothing.

Where are the bassins, the genuine historic reference? And, you had statistics on building heights on the canal opposite, justifying a lamentable periscope effect in your plan. Those median height statistics were your justification for the height of your project. Sadly, that sort of median thinking does not produce great architecture. And do remember the Corticelli and Redpath were largely pre-existing buildings with historic constraints. Your median height argument is disingenuous.

2. Distinction: Canal Lachine is a distinguished historic site for all the Americas. It is an important place. It deserves the very best. What you are proposing is a series of undistinguished rectangles. The site is worthy of greatness: a Guggenheim Bilbao, a Disney Concert Hall, a Central Park. Opposite your proposed site is the magnificent but unassuming Agmont America Building by Lemay and Associates. You are proposing BUILDINGS: no more, no less. Buildings, cum spin.

3. Open space: the "park" that borders the Canal Lachine, undistinguished as it may be in its present state is a huge source of pleasure to many people. It is a family park. It is a breathing space. I wish you could see what I see every day: how many people love that unofficial park, that simple open space. Yes, the old post office building is an abandoned eyesore and probably should be removed but the green space is a gorgeous place because it is simple and useful and local people love it. You intend to eliminate it. I know developers hate a vacuum and see all undeveloped space as opportunity, and I am sure you have arguments at the ready: bassins spin, green space spin, median height spin, usefulness spin.

4. Contribution: in my taxes I contribute to my community. I wish someone would see the area, Pte St-Charles, Griffintown as more than a dumping ground for undistinguished ideas: the casino no no, bassins sans bassins, an ugly post office behemoth, the appalling sleazy proposed redevelopment/destruction of Griffintown for example. Because most people in the area are not rich, are they/we any less deserving of beauty? Your project which I will look at for the rest of my days does not get my vote. What is your agency's contribution? To fill a void? To exploit an opportunity? This is an area that has seen for many years the ugliest face of redevelopment: St. Ann's and worse. Now you propose more of the same. Let them eat development. We deserve better.

Sincerely,
Nancy Dowd

PS As your Canada Lands Company owns the post office park, please note there has been an uncorrected water leak in the park for well over a year. I know your concern is grandiose development but how about basic maintenance?