

An Open Letter from the **Queen's Park Coalition*** to Councillor Mike Layton

*Eight Residents' Associations around U of T's St. George Campus, about 40,000 households.



① VIEW 8 - QUEEN'S PARK CRES. E STREET LEVEL

We emphatically OPPOSE the U of T proposal on Queen's Park next to the ROM!

Queen's Park as we know it is about to be altered forever. Before it's too late, **we need your support Councillor Layton, along with us your constituents NOW** - don't let City Hall rush this travesty through!

The Queen's Park Heritage District: Established in 1860, **Queen's Park** between Bloor and College streets is Toronto's most prestigious and pristine Heritage District. The **Queen's Park** landscape is integral to the identity of the Heritage District. It's a cultural landscape that frames purpose-designed harmonious historic and contemporary buildings of exceptional quality.

The Provincial Parliament buildings and the Royal Ontario Museum are pre-eminent among the many historic buildings in the north part of **Queen's Park**. The **Queen's Park** streetscape is filled with mature trees - a precious landscape legacy in Toronto. The heritage institutional buildings around **Queen's Park** are among the best groupings in the Province.

Along with the ROM's heritage East and West Wings, all these buildings were constructed between 1901-1917 at a compatible height and scale: Victoria College, Emmanuel College, Falconer Hall, Flavelle House, the Lillian Massey building, Annesley Hall. More modern, but equally respectful in scale and height are the Edward Johnson building, the Gardiner Museum, and most recently, the Jackman Law building. All historic buildings are listed or designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, or are being considered.

U of T's proposal for Falconer Hall and the Planetarium site: This proposal adds nothing to this important location - in fact, it's disruptive and out of place. It's a brash and flashy look-at-me 'starchitect's' structure that is an aggressive 2.5 times the height of the ROM's Heritage Wings. The U of T's 20-foot-tall floors equate to the size of a 14-storey slab apartment building. It would even exceed the heights of the roof peaks in most of the Provincial Legislature. Also, the U of T proposal **won't preserve a single tree** of the mature canopy on site. In short, this proposal violates the very essence of **Queen's Park**.

The first public consultation in June 2019: When U of T first unveiled its concept publicly, there was an outcry against the jarring appearance, and the height and bulk of the proposal.

The Queen's Park Coalition (eight Residents' Associations): The Coalition was formed within days to try to improve the proposal inside the City process. We held four working group meetings with the Councillor, U of T, City staff and the architects, and separately met with City planning and heritage staff. The end result of the dozen or more meetings is that U of T steadfastly refuses to reduce the height and bulk of their proposal. **The Coalition thinks that the real public interest is Respect the Quality and Character of Queen's Park.**

The Coalition's eight residents' associations are passionate advocates of excellent city building: In this case, it means that nothing should be built that is taller than the Heritage Wings of the ROM or the new Jackman Law building to the south - in keeping with every other building in the **Queen's Park heritage district** since 1901.

Councillor Layton, you will hear from us at the final public consultation online: Tuesday, July 14th, 6 pm The U of T's proposal - which City staff seem to have endorsed - has been marked by a flawed public review process. What was presented one year ago is substantively the same proposal today. City staff and the Design Review Panel showed clear support for this project despite concerns raised, repeatedly, by the public and Coalition members in the Working Group. Even the Notice for the upcoming meeting hasn't been widely circulated. It's left to Residents to get the word out. Without widespread communication from the City about the upcoming meeting, community consultation is missing from this process. This is not normal or acceptable.

Public participation is critical: We shall convince you, Councillor Layton, that sometimes the smartest people in the room are in the audience, and not those pulling the strings.

As Councillor of Ward 11 - which includes **Queen's Park - we hope you grasp that this is a watershed vote. Please Refuse this proposal, Councillor Layton - it's simply too big of a building on a too small of a site. And it's far too important a location to allow **Queen's Park** to be marred by this arrogant proposal.**

To allow this would alter **the character and streetscape of Queen's Park** forever. This proposal could become a prominent and enduring embarrassment to the City of Toronto, unless you, our elected representative, take action.

Respectfully submitted and dated July 1, 2020,

Annex Residents Association

ABC Residents' Association

Bay-Cloverhill Community Association

East Annex Condominiums Association

Grange Community Association

Greater Yorkville Residents' Association (GYRA)

Harbord Village Residents' Association

Huron-Sussex Residents' Organization