

23 September 2014 - presentation to PEC

581/585 Waterloo; 321 Central

My name is Hazel Elmslie. I live at 42 Palace Street in East Woodfield HCD. I have lived in London since 1956, first in Old South, then in East London, before the 1960 annexation, and in the Woodfield community since 1973, 41 years, first on Hyman St at Richmond and now nearer Adelaide St. I am a member of the WCA Executive, and I sit on LACH. However my comments are mine alone, and do not reflect on the WCA or LACH.

I must say that I like this building; the design with on street entrances; underground parking; stepped roof line are very positive features. However I very strongly believe it is absolutely inappropriate for the site. Therefore I request the zoning change be denied.

So let me first review the site and its heritage connotations. We all know that this was a Supertest Gas Station for many years, destroyed in 1989. I understand the site was sold for \$10,000 in 1989. The destruction of one of the few remnants of Supertest, a London born company, with a Head Office at Richmond & Pall Mall, visible from my kitchen window for 15 years, points to the complete disregard for London's business & commercial history. This complete disregard is not only by the property owner but also, in my mind by City Council. For reasons I have yet to fathom, Council has watched helplessly as much of London's employment base has been destroyed. the most recent example being Kelloggs. How soon before we lose London Life and Labatt's?

Strike 1: disregards of history

Looking at the detailed plan and asking questions at the presentation to LACH on September 10, I discovered the following. access to the rear of Granite House is through the driveway of 581 Waterloo. This is another example of VERY POOR PAST PLANNING, which allowed Granite House to be built, with no proper rear access. I am not sure of the legal aspects of this arrangement, but was told that this plan was the only solution to the problem of Granite House rear access. It appears to me that one of the strong factors in favour of this proposal is the blending of the new streetscape with Granite House, which was an inappropriate development in the first place, due to the tricky rear access.

Strike 2: poor prior planning

Now let us look at the West Woodfield HCD. This proposal calls for demolition of 2 properties in the HCD. 321 Central is owned by Granite House and I believe is a perfect example of demolition by neglect. If Granite house did not want to be part of the HCD why did it not object to designation? Why has it allowed a handsome building to rot away? In fact why did the current owners of 585 Waterloo not object to the HCD. This property has been in the family since 1989. Surely they had some idea that what they wanted to do would be contrary to the HCD plan? This then leads to the question of why City Council has wasted so much time and taxpayer money on HCDs if they are not going to adhere to the whole purpose of HCDs: appropriate use of heritage resources, not demolition, be it demolition by neglect or demolition to facilitate parking.

Strike 3: complete disregard for the spirit and letter of the HCD Plan.

Again let us take another look at the HCD. This time in the light of setting precedent for future inappropriate redevelopment. This proposal will allow a six story building to dominate the corner of Central and Waterloo. What is to stop others from amassing parcels of land and proposing similar developments. If this rezoning is approved a precedent has been set. In fact I happen to be aware that another family has done this and as far back as the early 1980's was only waiting for the heritage diehards to die off so they could build their highrise. This zoning change is the thin edge of the wedge.

Strike 4: inappropriate precedent.

Now for my last point. The City of London spends huge resources on planning. Why then does it spend so much on allowing property owners to break the planning guidelines and standards? Why does it reward property owners who purchase properties inappropriate to their dreams. Why does it reward

property owners who purchase properties without sufficient due diligence. Who continually use the excuse "I didn't know"? What is the point of planning if it can be overruled?

Strike 5 for the City of London - if you have deep enough pockets and long enough time frame you can get whatever you want, with complete disregard to your neighborhood. I believe this is the malaise that detracts from London. I believe it needs to stop with this application and request that the rezoning be denied.