

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

14. Properties located at 505, 507 and 511 Talbot Street (Z-8490)

- J.P. Thornton, Stantec Consulting, on behalf of the applicant – indicating that they produced the design of the building for Tricar; pointing out that the tower will be located at 505 Talbot Street, which is within the Downtown limit but is outside of the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District and the Downtown Conservation District; advising that we looked at various ways that we could incorporate the buildings within but the setbacks and the gaps between them, but we were unable to incorporate them into the development; advising that land Downtown is scarce; trying to create a dynamic Downtown for all people is what we all should be trying to create; getting more people Downtown, getting more activities Downtown is fundamental; outlining the context that there are a lot of large buildings; noting that the smaller buildings are almost the exception; advising that they went inside 505 Talbot Street to see if there is anything of any historical significance; noting that most of 505 Talbot Street has been gutted and replaced with a modern office; advising that Tricar has committed to retaining what is significant for a public garden or public art; indicating that 507 Talbot Street has been converted into office space some time ago; reiterating that Tricar has committed to retaining what is significant; pointing out that 511 Talbot Street is currently a pub and was built at approximately the same time as the church; indicating that it blocked the south elevation of the church for the last one hundred years; intending to open that view up that has not been seen for one hundred years; outlining that their proposal is a twenty-nine story building with one hundred ninety-nine suites; advising that it is architecturally split into three portions, being the base podium, the middle and the top; advising that the base podium is street related and contains seven and a half floors of parking with three of them underground; giving a total of two hundred forty parking spaces; indicating that it is all screened by street fronted activities which are all active retail uses such as a small commercial area and the main entrance which turns the corner between Dufferin Avenue and Talbot Street; locating the building closer to the lot lines than the original buildings gives a greater sense of security and gives people walking by a greater sense of security by providing eyes on the streets; trying to retain the setback from the church so that it was not overpowering; allowing for sidewalks that, at the narrowest, are eighteen feet, canopies, significant street furniture and tree plantings to really add to the pedestrian experience at this corner; outlining that the design of the podium itself is intended to capture and reflect Talbot Street in times past; pointing out that the brick arches representing the mass of the building with the gaps between them indicating lanes, the brick cladding itself reflects on the traditional residential construction and a similar colour to that of the church will be used on the entrance corner, a more contemporary darker colour will be used for the remainder, the glazing above the canopies, in the arches, will be lit at night to give a warm, active feel and with the tower setback, walking by, you will probably only see the mass of the podium; outlining that, in the tower above, or the middle, there are ten units per floor for the first nine floors, eight units per floor for the next thirteen floors; advising that suites range from one bedroom and den at approximately eight hundred thirty-three square feet to a two bedroom, the largest of which is approximately eight hundred fifty square feet but generally most suites are in between; indicating that a typical floor plate is approximately thirteen and a half thousand square feet; advising that window wall and pre-cast concrete will be the material for the tower itself giving a contemporary yet ageless feel; advising that the top floor largely contains the buildings amenities with a seven thousand five hundred square foot inside area and a four thousand square foot outside area; noting that the remaining twenty-four hundred square feet of remaining area on this floor is devoted to mechanical; untypically, the amenity and the tower cladding has been extended up to screen the mechanical penthouse so that you do not see the top hat effect; advising that we have architecturally treated that because it is going to create a new landmark, it is a tall building and it is going to be seen from great distances; discussing the original submission; indicating that, following the comments of

- the Urban Design Panel, they have substantially reduced the size of the podium and included the cut-out by the church; undertaking shadow studies during the spring and winter solstices and the Fall equinox and wind modeling to ensure that the pedestrian experience was not adversely effected; indicating that a model was built and put in a wind tunnel; noting that they reviewed the results both in the summer and the winter; requesting additional height and density; offering four design elements; and, providing additional lighting to add to London's growing nightscape. (see attached presentation).
- Adam Carapella, Tricar Group – believing that the project will benefit the Downtown and London as a whole; acknowledging the hard work that the City staff have undertaken throughout this development; noting that it has truly been a collaborative effort; advising that Tricar is a real estate development firm specializing in high rise developments throughout Southwestern Ontario; providing a major commitment to customer service; indicating that that has garnered them the Tarion Builder of the Year for all of Ontario for the past two years in a row; indicating that London is their home; knowing that the heart of the city is the Downtown; realizing that although the development of the project requires the demolition of some buildings that do have some value to the Downtown, we are confident that the benefits that this development will bring with it from economic to environmental to social and cultural will far outweigh the benefits of the current buildings in their current state; indicating that this is an infill development where infrastructure, transit and roads already exist; increasing the tax base and the number of people going to restaurants and businesses in the Downtown; noting that there have been many development applications for the Downtown but nothing yet to get in the ground; pointing out that they have the track record and the expertise to get this done; indicating that they will be starting construction within one month of receiving approvals; believing in the Downtown and want to see it prosper; indicating that this project is not in either of the Heritage Conservation Districts and the three buildings proposed to be demolished are not designated heritage properties; raising the bar in terms of urban design, with the point tower, the streetscape, the podium, the heritage garden and a better orientation; and, looking forward to the public art competition for this building.
 - Alex Aiken, 500 Talbot Street – indicating that he has not heard anything about the traffic volumes on Talbot Street or Dufferin Avenue; enquiring as to whether this is going to be a rental unit or a condominium unit; indicating that he looks northwest from his window and the traffic is sometimes backed up almost to Oxford Street and he can only see this building and the traffic that it is going to create making that situation much worse; indicating that when he comes out from his underground parking lot, it is sometimes five minutes before he can make a left hand turn; and, indicating that this is not going to help the situation on the Talbot Street and Dufferin Avenue area for parking.
 - Mark Tovey, 205 Sydenham Street – indicating that he is on the Stewardship Sub-Committee of the London Advisory Committee on Heritage; advising that in Eldon Excursion, which is the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario's 37th journey house tour in 2010, on page 6, it says of the property located at 505 Talbot Street; quoting from the Eldon Excursion "This house by a Justice of the Peace as a residence for his family was regarded as one of the finest of its day"; in the Historic Heart of London published by The Corporation of the City of London in 1977, referring to the 1988 edition, on page 26, it describes 505 Talbot Street as (quoting) "a splendid example of Italianate architecture" and, more specifically, on page 28, it says (quoting) "rivals 505 Talbot Street as one of London's finest Italianate mansions"; advising that, in the Heritage Places document, in the description of potential Heritage Conservation Districts in the City of London, on page 13, which describes the potential Talbot North Heritage Conservation District, there is a photograph of the Baptist Street Church along with 511 Talbot Street; and, advising that the photograph is showing those two structures as being emblematic of the proposed Heritage Conservation District.
 - Matt Wilson, Lerners, on behalf of Lerners, Eight-0 Properties Limited and Embers Realty Limited – indicating this his clients are located directly west of what is being proposed; and, requesting that he be informed of any future circulations or appeals.
 - David Winner, 555 Talbot Street - indicating that the height and scale of this building is truly disproportionate to all of the other buildings on the west side of Talbot Street; advising that on the block where his building is located there are approximately three apartment buildings that run between seven and nine stories in the case of two of them

and the other one is three stories; pointing out that, unless you go across the street, you have to go a long way to find tall buildings; expressing concern with the wind effect; noting that Talbot Street can be like a wind tunnel, even with the tall buildings just being on one side of the street; advising that the podium itself is going to be above-ground parking, maybe three or four stories, but he thinks that above-ground parking in front of a building, whether it is under a podium or not, was frowned upon in terms of principles of urban design; expressing caution with respect to promises made to incorporate original materials or features of demolished buildings into the new design; pointing out that when the City of London approved the construction of the John Labatt Centre as it was then, in the early 2000's, he voted against it, but it was a fifty million dollar project; advising that they were promised that bricks from the original Talbot Street block would be incorporated into the building; noting that Council approved it on the basis of that; advising that they were subsequently then told that the bricks from the old Talbot Street block were useless for the purposes of the new construction; indicating that the new building will not fit into the Talbot Street streetscape like the new building does; and, urging the Committee to vote against the rezoning application.

- Sandra Miller, 32 Upper Avenue – advising that she is a champion of built heritage and infill in the Downtown; indicating that this does not need to be done at the expense of the best examples of heritage buildings; pointing out that London is lucky that we have so many open spaces where high rises and mid-rises can be built; noting that mid-rise developments seem to have been forgotten in London's development conversation; believing that London would be an amazing place to do mid-rise infill; expressing fear for design in London if this is the result of a lot of back and forth and extensive design consultation; noting that it is not a great looking building; advising that she is a champion of modern design; feeling that the heritage garden or courtyard is tokenism at best and would prefer not to have the heritage garden labeled as such; expressing concern for the top of the building being lit up as it may attract more birds and cause bird deaths, which is a growing issue; wondering if consideration has been given to light pollution; and, reviving the Downtown is a great idea but it does not have to be done at the expense of heritage.
- Bob Usher, CEO and General Manager, Covent Garden Market – advising that someone taught him a long time ago that as much as you might want to keep certain things, you cannot flog a dead horse; indicating that the current owner of the property has put a lot of money into the restoration of the property; indicating that the investment in residential units in the Downtown has made an incredible difference to the Covent Garden Market; noting that, in 2004, we were doing approximately 4.4 million in retail sales; further noting that, at the end of this year, they expect to close at close to 16.5 million in retail sales; advising that the increase in residential units in the Downtown has increased the feet on the street; indicating that Tricar has been tremendous at putting feet on the street; and, expressing support for the development.
- Janette MacDonald, CEO and General Manager, Downtown London – indicating that they are the umbrella organization for the London Downtown Business Association which promotes the merchants and the businesses within the Downtown and MainStreet London, which is in charge of revitalizing the Downtown; acknowledging Board members and Staff members who are attending the meeting; expressing support for residential development in the Downtown; advising that they are proponents for a vital Downtown but they are also stewards of heritage; indicating that since the MainStreet London organization was created by the Millennium Plan in 1998, we have invested over one million dollars in heritage preservation and restoration in the Downtown, with the assistance of the City's Heritage Planners, with the assistance of builders in the Downtown and we know how difficult and expensive it is to do this; pointing out that every project that we have contributed money towards, we have very thoughtfully thought it through, was it worth the levy that we have spent on it and we believe that it was; pointing out that, unfortunately the see things like Mr. Campbell has gone through where it is not always possible or feasible and where is the return on some of the investments when you try to save a heritage project that, like a person, has sometimes lived its life; indicating that they are about to contribute another million dollars to the Fanshawe/Kingsmill's project on Dundas Street and that is directly tied to the preservation of that building's heritage; indicating that we thoughtfully examine each one

of these development applications, along with the demolition of heritage, because we are stewards of heritage but they are also stewards of the economy and this is good for this City; pointing out that we are building a City, we are building a Downtown; outlining that these are condominiums, they are not rentals, so these are people that are going to make a significant investment in the Downtown like they have, they are going to stay there for a long time; and, expressing support for the proposed development.