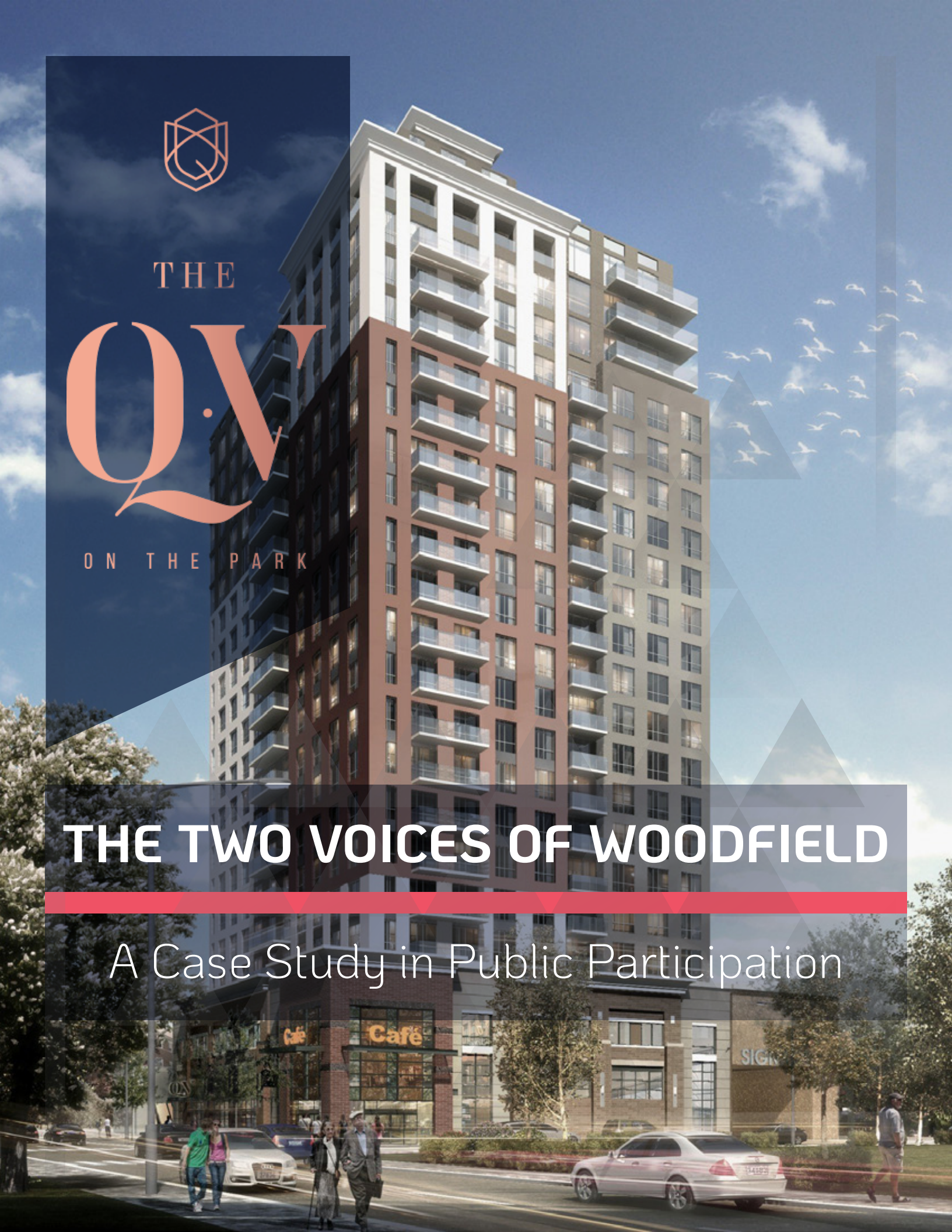




THE
QV
ON THE PARK

THE TWO VOICES OF WOODFIELD

A Case Study in Public Participation





THE
QV

ON THE PARK



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01

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of research gauging the opinions of Woodfield residents to the development of a 17-story mixed-use building with underground parking to be located at 560-562 Wellington Street in London's downtown; hereafter to be referred to as "the QV on the Park". This report includes a history and description of the evolution of the proposed development, a review of London's planning guidelines, and

the survey results. The key finding of this report is that there are two voices coming from the Woodfield community; the first is a vocal minority controlling the Woodfield Community Association who claim to speak for the rest of the neighbourhood. The second is a silent majority who do not see the Woodfield Community Association (WCA) as representative of them and do not agree with the WCA opposition to the QV



Auburn Developments Inc. is proposing a 17-storey mixed-use development, containing ground floor commercial uses and residential apartments above, on its property at 560 and 562 Wellington Street (referred to as “the site” through this Brief). An Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) are required to facilitate the development.

SUBJECT SITE









Auburn Developments (property owner) is seeking to re-designate the site from “Office Area” to “Multi-Family, High Density Residential” and to rezone the site from “OF1” to “R10-5” with site-specific regulations for increased density, building coverage, reducing yard setbacks, and landscape open space. The development of the site will provide a strong urban edge to Wellington Street, building articulation, and landscape treatments that form an attractive presence opposite to Victoria Park.

This project has went through a number of iterations in an attempt to satisfy the requirements by staff and to alleviate concerns raised by representatives of the WCA. The result has been a reduction in the number of stories from 25, to 22, and now 17. This has happened despite the adjacent property on the corner of Wellington Street and Wolfe Street being zoned for a 30 storey building and conformance to local planning policies and obvious benefits to London’s core for intensification of the property. There are a number of reasons to deem this site supportable:

- Downtown economic spinoffs through direct investment, the addition of commercial space, and the population that will reside there
- Increased downtown retail space
- Increased housing supply
- Creation of construction jobs and permanent retail jobs
- Generation of additional tax revenue
- Consistent with the London Plan’s direction to ‘build inward and upward’ in London’s core
- Intensification is an environmentally friendly form of development which limits carbon footprint impacts and counters the negative effects caused by sprawl
- Construction of a building that will help retain London’s young professionals and attract talent to the city as proximity is close to places of work and play
- Public transportation is readily available
- The increased population helps the business case for a quality downtown grocery store
- The architectural features are consistent with the West Woodfield Heritage District



SIMILAR PROJECTS



Precedents



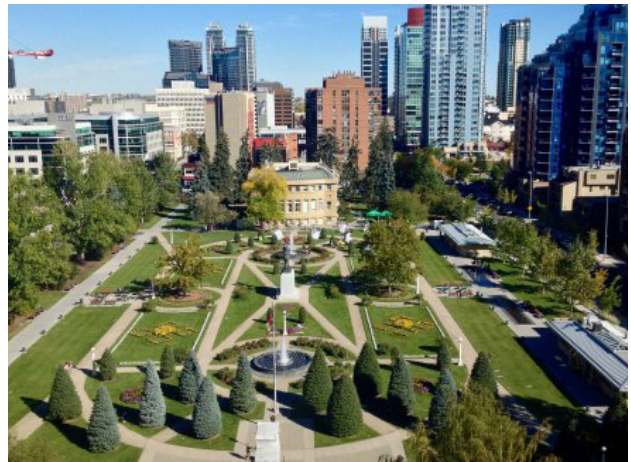
Rittenhouse Square - Philadelphia



Central Park - Winnipeg



22 Picton St. - Woodfield



Central Memorial Park - Calgary



Victoria Park - Regina



Dorchester Square - Montreal

CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS

An aerial photograph of a park area. A large red circle is drawn on the image, highlighting a specific spot in the upper right quadrant. The park features a large green lawn, numerous trees, and winding paths. In the background, there are parking lots and a building with a distinctive blue, curved roof. The text "Proposed Site" is overlaid on the image, pointing to the circled area.

Proposed Site



WOODFIELD HERITAGE DISTRICT

05

Demonstration concept for Richmond Row encouraging high-rise developments along Victoria Park located in the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District (source: a Vision for Downtown London, 2013 from a City of London document)



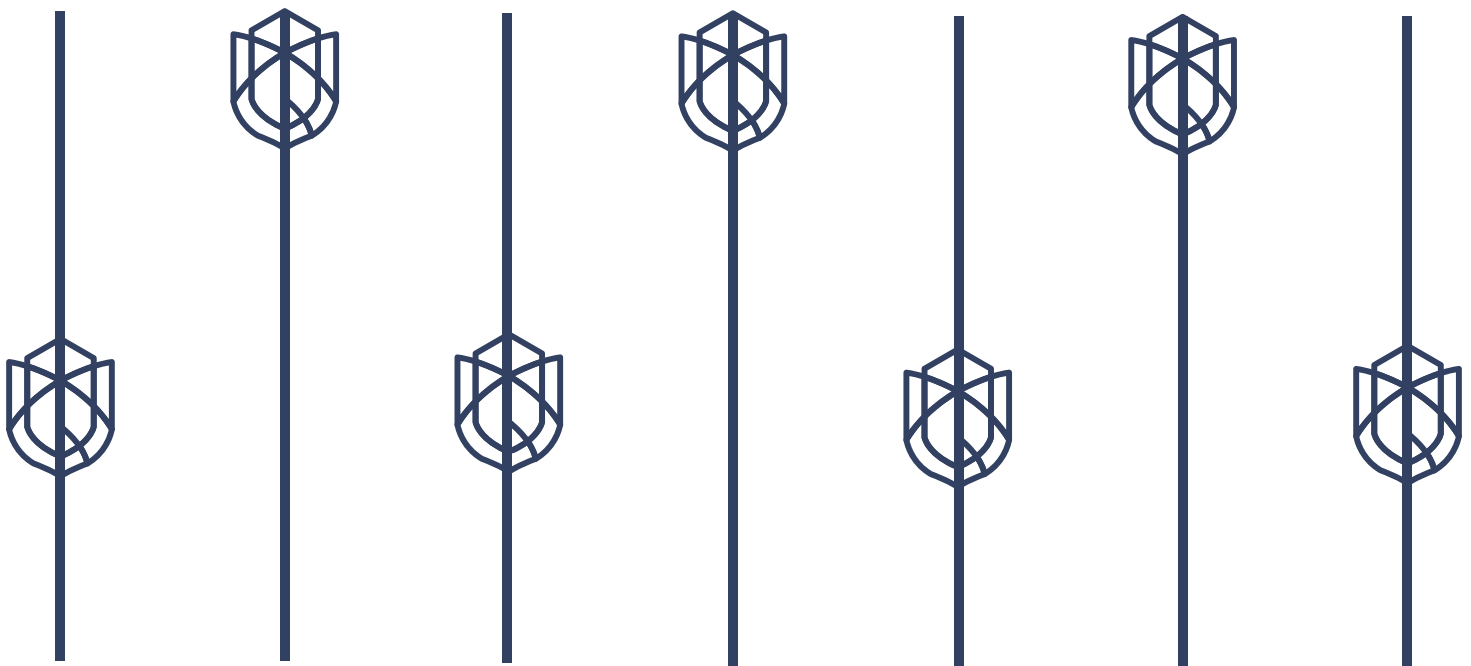
The West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District (WWHCD) Plan was created with the intention of preventing the conversions of residential and public buildings into high-rises. It should be noted that the subject properties are designated for office and commercial use, not residential.

Its overarching mandate is to “maintain the low-density residential character of the West Woodfield Heritage Conservation District as the predominant land use, while **recognizing that certain areas of the District already have or are intended for a wider range of uses [such as] non-residential or higher intensity residential uses that will protect key heritage attributes, while allowing greater latitude for potential alterations or redevelopment.**” The Q.V on the Park fits the latter half of this statement.

The WWHCD already includes a significant number of commercial/office use buildings. Some are purpose-built for commercial use and some are converted from residential use buildings. Most of them are located along the major arterial roads of Wellington Street, Waterloo Street, Colborne Street, Dundas Street, and Central Street. The recommended Heritage Conservation District Boundary within the WWHCD Plan under section 2.2 further suggests that these buildings can be removed from their limits because “commercial areas tend not to benefit from the stability a Heritage Conservation District provides. These areas require the ability to respond to marketing trends without the constraints of heritage conservation.”

The streetscape that is planned for the remainder of the **Wellington Street corridor is characterized as a Downtown Area (DA1(1)) Zone permitting high-rise development.** Existing zoning of land adjacent to the proposed development, only 6 metres away, can be built to 30 storeys in height. This streetscape continues to 22 stories closer to Dufferin Street, a mere 286 metres away. The height of the 30-storey building is approximately mid-block of the Victoria Park frontage. This height and the transition to the proposed 22 storeys at Dufferin Street is what provided the benchmark for the height of the proposed building. For the benefit of neighbourhood coherence, most buildings in the sequence should present a consistent alignment unless there is good reason for a break.

Section 3.2 of the WWHCD Plan states that, “while the intent is to preserve buildings in a Heritage Conservation District, it is also recognized that **some old buildings should be demolished to make way for new...**”



06

METHODOLOGY

The analysis in this report is based on the results of a survey conducted in north and south London in 2018. The survey was conducted in-person using canvassers who administered the survey door-to-door.

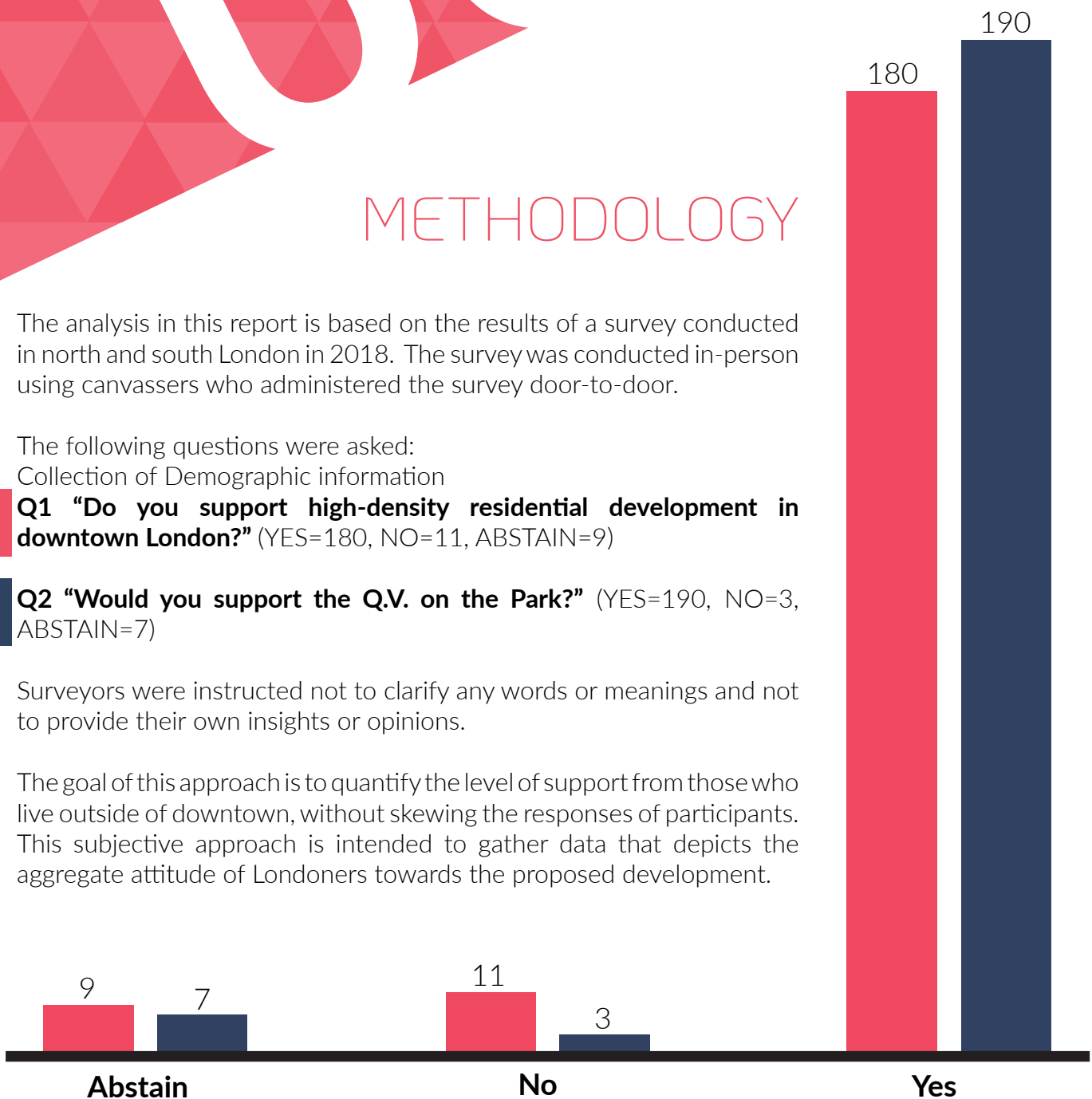
The following questions were asked:
Collection of Demographic information

Q1 "Do you support high-density residential development in downtown London?" (YES=180, NO=11, ABSTAIN=9)

Q2 "Would you support the Q.V. on the Park?" (YES=190, NO=3, ABSTAIN=7)

Surveyors were instructed not to clarify any words or meanings and not to provide their own insights or opinions.

The goal of this approach is to quantify the level of support from those who live outside of downtown, without skewing the responses of participants. This subjective approach is intended to gather data that depicts the aggregate attitude of Londoners towards the proposed development.



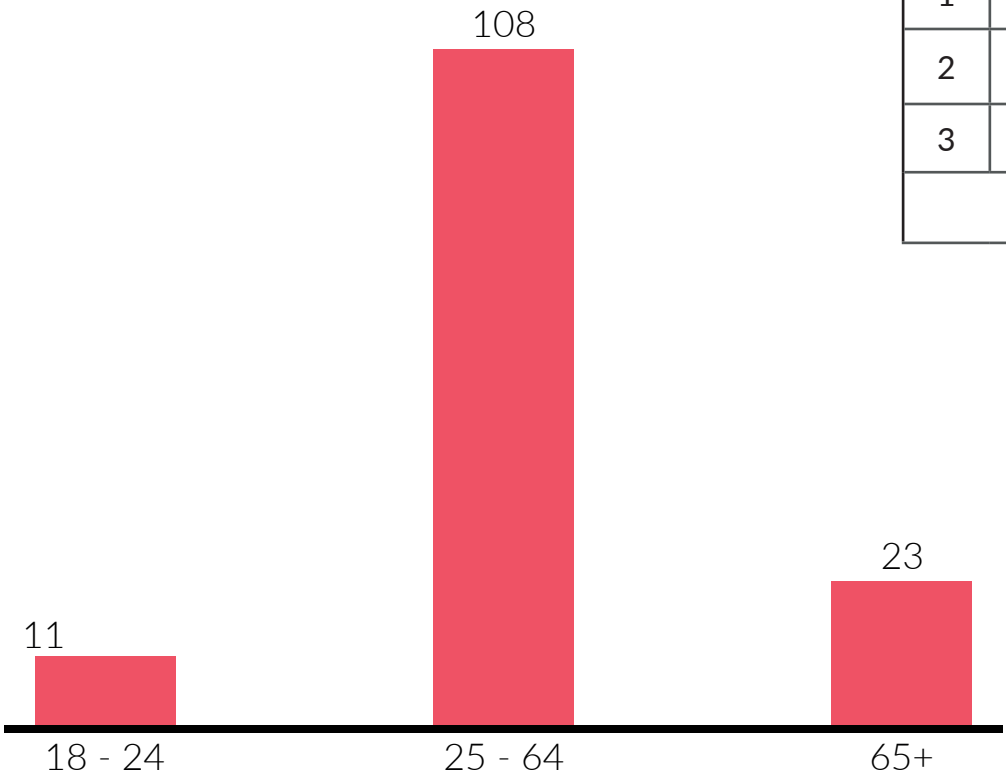
About 140 randomly selected Woodfield residents were directly surveyed on Auburn's proposal. The majority (53.52%) said they would like to see Q.V. on the Park approved. The Woodfield Community Association tends to be recognized as the voice of the neighbourhood but when we asked residents whether the community association represents them, the vast majority (69.72%) said no.



53.52%

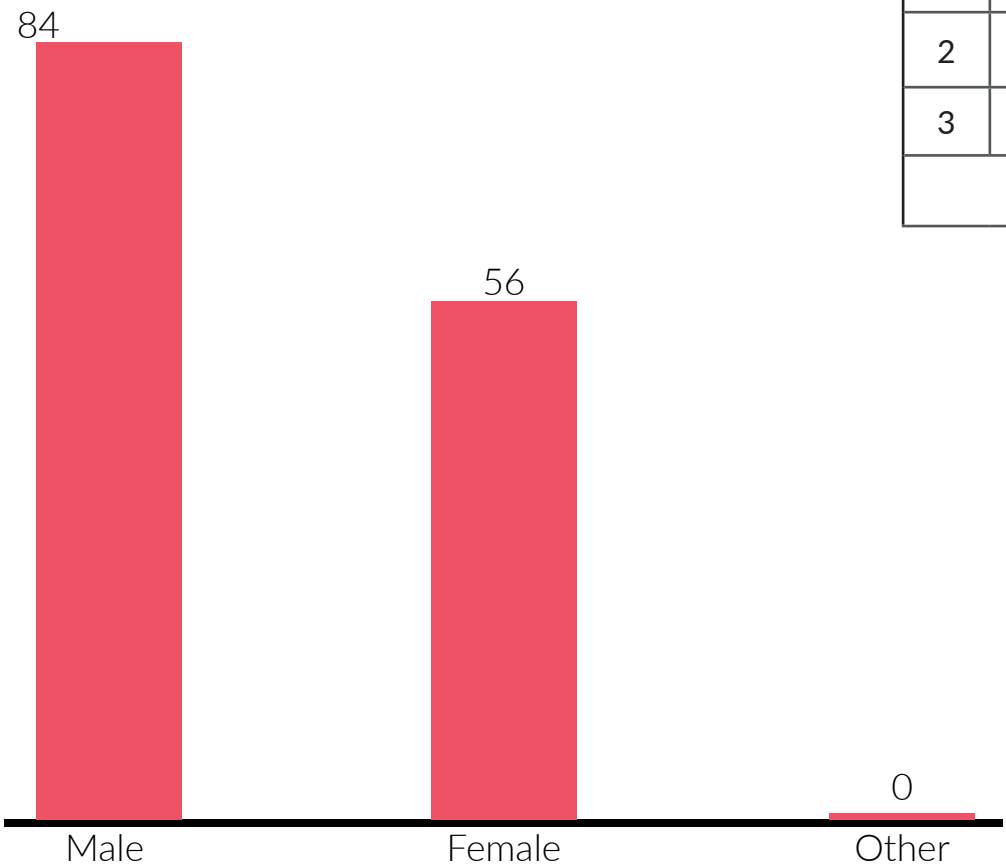
of Woodfield Residents
support Q.V. on the Park

Age Range



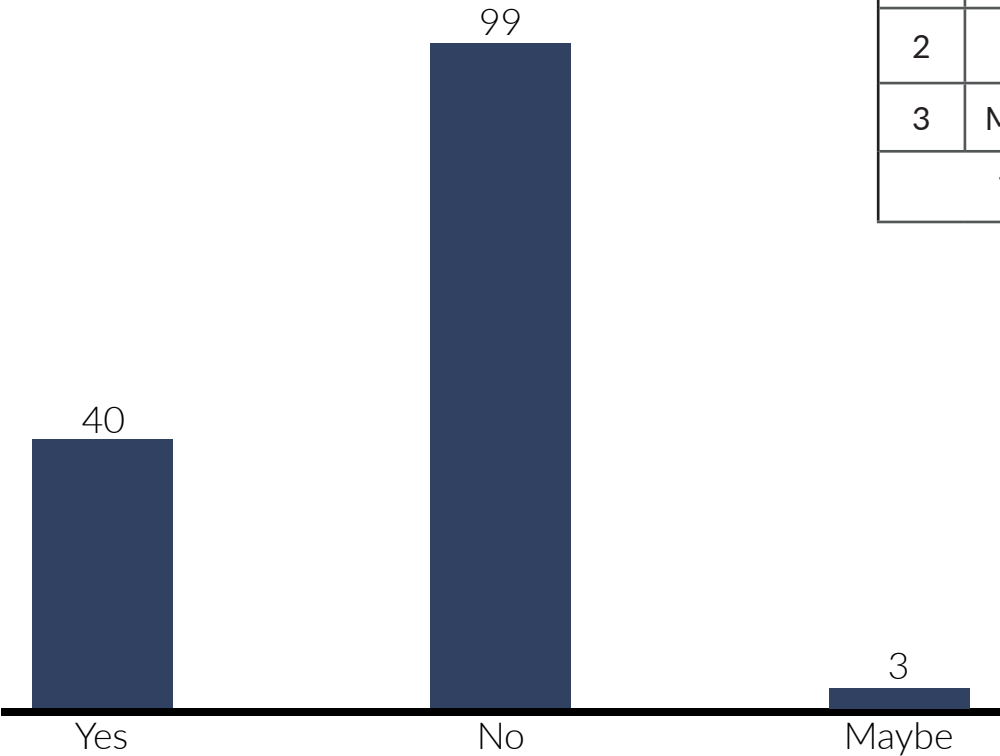
No.	Answer	%	Count
1	18 - 24	7.75%	11
2	25 - 64	76.06%	108
3	65+	16.20%	23
Total		100%	142

Gender



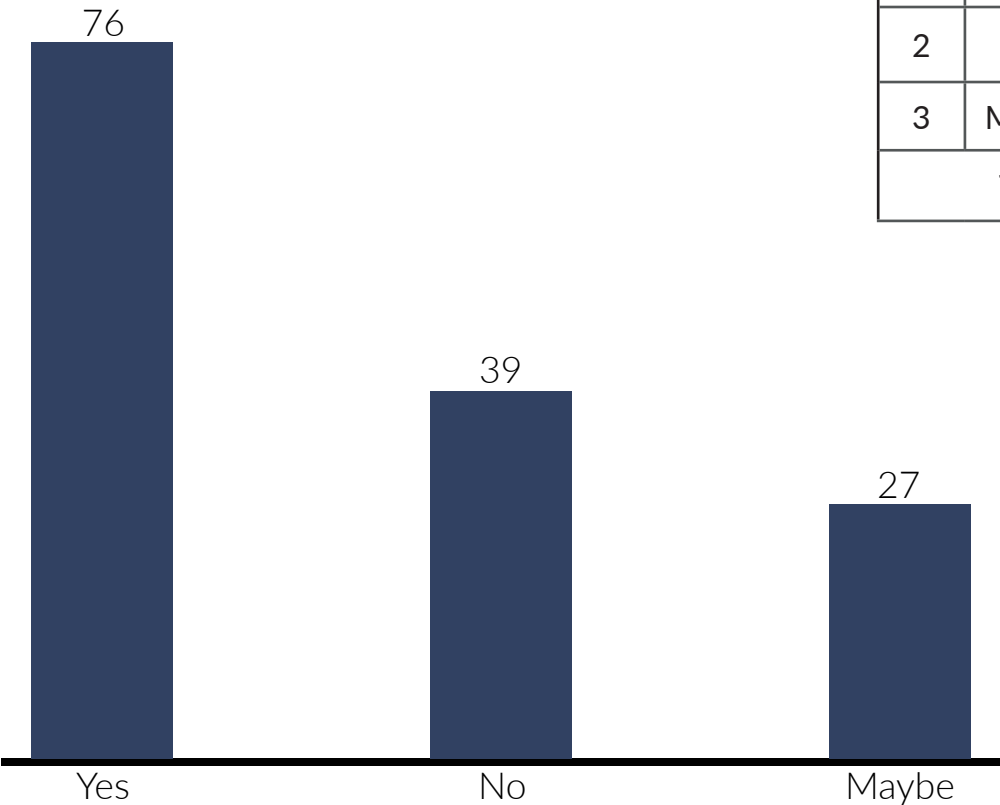
No.	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	60.00%	84
2	Female	40.00%	56
3	Other	0.00%	0
Total		100%	140

Does the Woodfield Community Association represent you?



No.	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	28.17%	40
2	No	69.72%	99
3	Maybe	2.11%	3
Total		100%	142

Do you support The Q.V. on the Park?



No.	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	53.52%	76
2	No	27.46%	39
3	Maybe	19.01%	27
Total		100%	140

Conclusions

This survey makes three significant findings:

1. The Woodfield Community Association appears to be less representative of the population than is commonly believed. About seventy percent of Woodfield residents confirm this finding.
2. Survey results backed by a database of the respondents' full contact information reveal that the majority of Woodfield residents support Q.V. on the Park.
3. The overwhelming number of Londoners living outside of the downtown favour more high-density development in the core and support the Q.V. on the Park.

These findings indicate that special interest groups like the WCA are having a disproportionate impact on the planning process because they are perceived to be representative of the broader population in Woodfield when these survey results indicate that they are not. This ought to give pause to planners and decision makers who are under this impression and to re-evaluate the wants and desires of the community especially when the special interest group is countering the obvious logic of building inward and upward in the city's core is desirable and offers numerous advantages that should not be ignored due to a vocal minority.

A Change.org petition has garnered
513 signatures
in favour of the Q.V. on the Park as of
December 2018.

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SUMMARY

Our recommendation is to grant an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment for the following reasons:

1. It conforms to the London Plan and Official Plan guidelines.
2. The mixed-use development fulfills the London Plan's directive to build inwards and upwards.
3. The development uses design elements that make it a fitting addition to the downtown core.
4. It incorporates heritage elements that are consistent with the neighbourhood character.
5. It will bring over a million dollars in annual property tax revenues, yet save billions in infrastructure and City service costs.
6. It will be an economic stimulus to the downtown core.



THE
QV
ON THE PARK

Auburn
DEVELOPMENTS