



ZELINKA PRIAMO LTD

A Professional Planning Practice

May 6, 2022

Planning and Environment Committee
City of London
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6B 1Z2

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Environment Committee (PEC),

**Re: Proposed Victoria Park Secondary Plan – St. Peter’s Cathedral
and Diocese of London**

We are the planning consultants for St. Peter’s Cathedral (“St. Peter’s”) and the Roman Catholic Diocese of London (“the Diocese”). The Diocese owns lands extending from Dufferin Avenue north to Angel Street, including both the site of the Cathedral and that of the former St. Peter’s School. With St. Peter’s and the Diocese we have been involved from the early stages in commenting on issues relating to the Secondary Plan, and have submitted three letters with comments to staff and PEC.

We have raised concerns that the Secondary Plan is overly regulatory, lacks the flexibility necessary to ensure a high quality of design sensitive to the Cathedral, and unnecessarily restricts the development potential of the Cathedral lands. Most of the concerns set out in our letters have not been addressed.

VIEW CORRIDORS AND PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS

The Plan places three of its five view corridors and one of its two physical connections across the Cathedral lands. These “unobstructed view corridors” fragment the lands and constrain even lands which historically had a rectory and seminary building on them.

We have identified that the policies of Section 3.2 View Corridors and, even more so, Section 3.3 Connections could potentially impose significant constraints on the future use and development of the lands north of the Cathedral building. A view corridor and physical connection running through the site from Kent Street could split the site and create design and functional issues.

The shadow diagrams presented by staff in Appendix J (based on the February, 2020 Demonstration Plans) show the creation of a connection from Kent Street, but also show the closure of Angel Street and its incorporation into the northerly Cathedral lands. This is something which is not addressed in any policy or on the map showing connections. The Diocese and St. Peter’s are open to the possibility of a land exchange if it would meet the City’s goals and enable the lands north of the Cathedral to be developed to their potential.

HEIGHTS AND BUILT FORM

The St. Peter's Parish Community and the Diocese have a desire to maintain the visual prominence of St. Peter's Cathedral in the area. But, this can best be achieved at the site plan and architectural design stage. The Secondary Plan's policy directions actually prevent optimal design solutions on a site as unique as the Cathedral site, and are internally contradictory.

Applying the Plan's principle of framing Victoria Park with a street wall works contrary to designs which may better meet the objective of maintaining views of the Cathedral from the Park. St. Peter's has consistently requested permission for a one-storey parish centre/rectory which would be less obtrusive than a minimum 8-metre or 2-storey building as required by the Secondary Plan. The Cathedral site, unlike most other blocks in the Secondary Plan, does not have an established building line or street wall. The site is valued, in part, for the interesting, non-standardized urban spaces the site affords.

Policy 3.6.3 requires main building entrances to front onto the Park (or onto Richmond Street). Given the significant orientation of the Cathedral to Dufferin Avenue it may be more desirable for a future building to reinforce the Dufferin orientation by having its main entry facing Dufferin, as was historically the case. Again, the proposed policy lacks the flexibility to address this special situation.

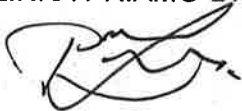
Moreover, policy 3.8.6 viii could potentially negate the height and intensity permissions of the Plan by restricting the location and height of buildings in order to avoid casting shadow on the concrete pad east of the park bandshell (a place where shade is at a premium during hot summer festival afternoons). This restriction is illogical and unnecessary.

We ask the Committee to consider these concerns and request that the Secondary Plan policies be modified accordingly.

We thank you for your consideration of these matters.

Yours very truly,

ZELINKA PRIAMO LTD.



Richard Zelinka, MES, MCIP, RPP
Principal Planner

cc: RC Diocese and St. Peter's Cathedral