

Burke, Teresita

From: Wen Lo "s.22(1) Personal and Confidential"
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 2:08 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Rezoning Application for 4176 Alexandra Street

Dear City Clerks,

In regards to the filed by the York House School, I must insist that it not be accepted.

As a resident of the neighbourhood where the proposal has been presented, I strongly oppose the idea of extending the facility to serve even more people at the facility than it currently does. Our neighbourhood has already felt the impact of traffic from 4 different schools: Shaughnessy Elementary School, Little Flower Academy, York House School, and Granville House Montessori. The many traffic systems and suggested routes in place which attempt to remedy the problems that arise from a large amount of cars that go in and out of our area are useless, as many drivers, mostly parents, have no regard for the rules whatsoever. I myself have witnessed many incidents of cars driving much too fast in our quiet residential neighbourhood, vehicles parked illegally up and down multiple alleyways, and dropping off and picking up children where it isn't allowed. Along with concerns for traffic congestion and flow, safety is also a huge part in my opinion to oppose this proposal. The amount of commuters going through our area is already enough for our residential zone to handle, and if this proposal were to be approved by city officials, it would be much more than our area could support. In the same sense, the traffic in our vicinity has to wait long periods of time to pass through streets and streets packed with cars as far as the eye could perceive. With the expansion of the York House, it would attract yet more cars that would travel through the neighbourhood, resulting in even more serious problems of congestion.

I invite you to personally come at the peak hours of traffic in the area, to witness for your the seriousness of this traffic issue that has sprung from the many school nearby. You will most certainly see with your own eyes the problems I have mentioned of drivers flouting rules for their own convenience. After you behold these scenes, I am confident that you will at least slightly reconsider the proposal of expanding the facility.

Sincerely,

Wendy

R J MACRAE

"s.22(1) Personal and Confidential"

City of Vancouver- Mayor and Council

By email to publichearing@vancouver.ca

**RE York House Scholl ("YHS") and proposed Text Amendment CD1
re-York House School – 4176 Alexandria St. – (the "Proposed
Amendments")**

Council Meeting January 12, 2018

I write with respect to the Proposed Amendments.

I have lived directly across West 26th Ave. from YHS for twenty-five years and accordingly have considerable experience in living with YHS and the issues arising from it.

I am vehemently opposed to the expansion of land-use and increased enrolment arising from the Proposed Amendments.

The Policy Report Development and Building of October 31, 2017 (the "Report") report recommends land-use allowance which I regard as exceedingly excessive. My reasoning is set out in the body of this letter. In addition, I am opposed to the increase in enrolment, again for reasons set out in the body of this letter. Finally, I am opposed to the Proposed Amendments to the extent they remove the restriction on rental of the YHS facilities.

YHS as it sits is, in my view, fully built out or perhaps overbuilt. While the Report does not describe comparable allowances on land usage for other schools (FSR and site coverage for example), the Policy Report Development and Building of April 29, 2005 in respect of previous upzoning (the "2005 Report") does. I had

asked Mr. Bennett, Planner for the City an update of those numbers. While he was unable to provide an update, he did say that “a lot of the information from the 2005 rezoning report remains accurate “.I will thus rely upon them.

YHS is a private school. In our system, private schools are heavily subsidized. Private schools receive grants from government. Private schools are probably registered charities and donations create tax credits for the donors, often the parents of the students. Property taxes paid by YHS on 3.3 acres of land plus building are less than are paid on my garage. The charges payable to the City proposed under the Report are less than would be paid on three 500 square-foot condos on False Creek. YHS is thus heavily subsidized as is without permitting the gross increase in land use it seeks.

The student body of YHS is essentially upper-middle-class young women. I say that because the tuition is approximately \$20,000. Throw in a few of the requisite extras – uniforms – books – field trips – and if the costs are borne out of income, at the marginal rate likely paid by the parents of the students, it would take approximately \$45,000 of annual income for one, \$90,000 for two and so on. YHS often speaks loudly and proudly of scholarship students although frankly it has never been clear just how many there really are. It is safe to assume that it is a very small percentage.

This letter is not a diatribe against above-average incomes and those fortunate enough to get an elite education. The Economist Magazine recently described elite education as the new great economic and social divide. My point is simply that the fact that YHS is a school albeit a private school is not an argument for granting grossly excessive land use at the clear expense of the neighbourhood.

As an aside, I will say that my daughter attended a similar school. My grandchildren currently attend a similar school in the Red Hook area of Brooklyn, New York a hard scrabble mixed industrial and residential area. The City of New York required it to be built to a respectful scale to its neighbours which are warehouses, auto body shops metal fabrication shops and housing projects.

The proposed Amendments permit the building of 53 feet in height directly across the street from the houses on West 26th. It will be approximately twice the height of the existing houses.

The 2005 Report notes that the average space per public school student is between 100 and 140 ft.². Private schools apparently are at 200 sq ft. per student. The Proposed Amendments provides building of 413 sq ft per student (247,462 sq ft divided by 600). If the increased to enrolment is granted (and I oppose that) the number drops to 359 sq ft per student.

That is three to four times some public student spaces and approaches twice that of other private schools.

While I have no objection to YHS having as spacious and grand a school as they can afford, YHS should go somewhere and buy some land, as others have had to do. Two very similar schools- Crofton and St George's -have in the course of their histories moved to get what they need or want. Perhaps it is now the turn of YHS to move do that or live within a more reasonable comparable FSR.

I suggest there is no case to suggest that YHS be given any more square footage than it already has, that is the standard of private schools of 200 sq ft per student. The extreme building height is obviously necessitated by the high FSR. Give them a reasonable amount only and the height will be largely solved. The FSR sought is obscenely generous.

A second related land use issue is the location of the tall buildings YHS is bounded by two arterial roads – King Edward and Granville- and two residential streets – Alexandria and West 26th. The Proposed Amendments facilitates giant U-shaped series of buildings. The sides of the U would be on Granville and Alexandria with a rather broad base of the U on West 26th. By my rough measurement, 30% of the buildings face arterials and the remaining 70% are on residential streets.

I suggest that the U be flipped over, that is the broad bottom base of the U now facing West 26th face King Edward. There the effect of the height would be dissipated by the width of two 26 foot streets and a boulevard rather than merely the 26 feet width of West. 26th Ave. Mr. Bennett says that that there are technical difficulties in doing the building that way. The simple truth of the matter is that, while it will be more inconvenient and expensive for YHS, it is possible as a matter of architecture and engineering to do just that. I note that on the corner of Howe and Pender, a skyscraper office building is being built on top of vintage

office building of 12 stories or so. Surely a school could be built over the theatre and the parking. For far too long the convenience and wallet of YHS has prevailed in these discussions in the neighbourhood. Who else should bear the brunt of cost and inconvenience other than those who benefit?

Last year as a mathematical exercise, my wife calculated the value of building sought by YHS based on the neighbourhood. The number was in excess of \$105M using residential use as the basis. Mr. Bennett says that it is an unfair comparison but he is unable to provide a number. For discussion, let us simply cut it in half and using round numbers use a number of say, \$50M benefit in the rezoning. Whatever that number is, it is tens of millions of dollars.

What is it for the City? Well I guess the pleasure of knowing that YHS students who are already benefitting from a very generous land use allowance can have a much bigger, better and more palatial school. It is very clear how it benefits YHS. What is in it for the neighbourhood? For the neighbours on West 26th, a monster school across the street twice the height of existing houses. Ironically, in the 1990's, the City took steps through amendment to By-laws to reduce the size of houses. Housing is now allegedly a priority. The Report permits a monster school.

Obviously, the trend in the City of Vancouver is to more density. I assume the perceived necessity of greater density is housing, most particularly housing close to public transportation.

This is neither.

If you look for example at the Cambie corridor, you see height and density near arterial transportation. While YHS is near bus transportation on King Edward and Granville, the use of public transportation by YHS students and staff is pitifully low. It is difficult to imagine a less acceptable transportation result than every school day at YHS

YHS should not be allowed to coattail on the density increases when the underlying rationale for it is utterly and completely absent. The YHS transportation issue is laughably absent the situation. Page 8 of 20 in Appendix of the Report describes a survey conducted by YHS. If one does the math, there are approximately 385 cars a morning and afternoon to deal with 600 students. That is

a profound failure of public transit. Thus if density near arterial routes is an objective and rationale, there is no argument to permit any increase in density.

What is an appropriate scale of land use? Simply look across Alexandria Street for an appropriate scale at Little Flower Academy. Look a bit further west to Shaughnessy School. It is true that Shaughnessy School has the height that YHS seeks but Shaughnessy School is setback 150 feet or so off the street. Given the shape of York House plot, that is not feasible.

The second aspect I oppose is the increased enrolment. My opposition arises from the traffic issue. I have experienced 25 years of YHS traffic planning, committees and so on. Physically, the net result of 25 years of advances seems to be one cut out long enough for 3 or 4 cars on King Edward. The cut out to the boulevard between West 26 and King Edward on Alexandria seems to be blocked off between 8 and 4, that is, for drop-off and pickup. Yet I am invited to embrace yet more traffic planning as the answer to the traffic mess. What new invention or improvement has occurred to lead to any hope that the increased traffic will not adversely affect the neighbourhood even more?

Every school day is, to use is a technical term, a Gong Show. The increased enrolment will exacerbate the situation by 15% in the number of cars. Is there any reason to believe that situation will be any less than 15% worse? What is proposed now that has not been raised in the last 25 years? We are told the steps recently taken are state-of-the-art. Nonetheless traffic is a mess twice a day.

We were told after the 2012 round of upzoning that what was done was the best that could be done and was state-of-the-art. If one accepts that and looks at the current mess, what reason is there to believe that 15% more traffic can be dealt with in a realistic and efficient fashion?

Finally, as a third issue, I note the Proposed Amendments remove the restriction on rentals of YHS facilities. Thus in addition to the twice-daily mess on school days, the neighbours would have to put up with additional traffic from commercial rental operations evenings and weekends (hopefully not 400 cars twice a day).

As the matter stands, YHS appears to have annual fee revenues of at least \$12 M or if the increased enrolment is granted, \$13.8M approximately. They seek to augment these education business revenues by rental. I have no idea the level of ongoing donations but yet again the neighbourhood has to bear the brunt of the operations of YHS. The restriction on rental was introduced at the request of the neighbourhood in 2005. It was a very modest request. Even that mild concession to the neighbourhood is in jeopardy at the request of YHS.

To summarize, I am vehemently opposed to the doubling of the permitted land use from .85 SFR to 1.71 as it results in excessive building height, particularly on West 26th. The land use sought is far in excess of that commonly available. Increased building density and height is something to be encouraged by the City for housing. The situation could be ameliorated by causing YHS to flip the construction so that it is predominantly on arterial roads rather than on quiet residential streets. The 15% increase to enrolment will exacerbate an already intolerable traffic situation.

YHS has for far too long taken far too much oxygen out of the neighbourhood. The Proposed Amendments ought to be rejected.

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Robert J MacRae

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Castro, Maria

From: Anthony Chu "s.22(1) Personal and Confidential"
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 3:50 AM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: Public Hearing - 4176 Alexandra Street (York House School) Jan 16
Attachments: IMG_20180114_0002.pdf

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

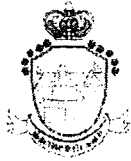
Please find attached a letter for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Chu
Vice President
Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association



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Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners' Association

January 15, 2018

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

SHPOA would like to lodge their objection to the York House School expansion project on the following grounds.

1. The change in the Southside setback and the significantly increased height of a 3 storey building along the length of 26th Ave. is highly intrusive to the privacy and destructive to the light and existing view of the residents of 26th Ave. with a likely reduction in their property value.
2. The Master plan includes multiple phases of construction each lasting 1-2 years. Most residents in the entire neighbourhood affected from Balfour Ave to West 28th Ave and Hudson St. to Pine St. object to living in a construction zone that is essentially planned for the foreseeable future. They have lived through this before.
3. There have also been objections from the residents on Alexandra St. who are unable to access their own house, let alone park outside their house, during normal school hours. During the previous construction, it was extremely difficult to navigate Alexandra St., if possible at all.
4. An increase in the number of students by 15% on such a small campus will make the traffic situation more untenable than it already is. 90 more students equate to at least 70 more cars twice daily based on the paucity of students attending that either walk, cycle or take either public transportation or the school bus in the morning. (78% arrive by car- Transportation study)

5. The Transportation study provides some useful information. However because it is based on information from 2014, much of it is now obsolete as a consequence of a new bike lane that the city has constructed along this busy artery from Granville St. to Arbutus St. along the route of 3 schools in 3 blocks. Since its construction, this stretch of King Edward Ave. is already gridlocked traffic at school drop off and pick up times (with an underutilized, empty bike lane) with spill over onto the other E-W and N-S residential streets within the school neighbourhood.

Some thoughts from SHPOA:

- Three-storey buildings along the major arteries of King Edward Ave. and Granville St. would be more desirable allowing preservation of the integrity of West 26th Ave. and allowing for more advantageous light conditions on south facing playing fields rather than a Northerly aspect behind buildings.
- Expansion of the school bus network to reduce a 78% car use among students.
- Why not demolish entire site in one single phase and rebuild rather than 15 years of construction? (Utilize one of the vacant schools for a year?)

Sincerely,

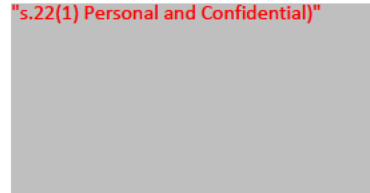
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Anthony Chu

Vice President, SHPOA

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John Wang

Vice President, SHPOA