

PROJET IMMOBILIER DU DOMAINE DES FRANCISCAINS

Submission to the Office de Consultation Publique de Montreal

As a property owner and resident of historic Shaughnessy Village in the Peter McGill sector of Ville Marie for over 30 years, I attended with great interest the presentation of the Projet Immobilier du Domaine des Franciscains on May 12, 2016.

Over the years I have witnessed the evolution of Shaughnessy Village, a friendly, inner-city residential neighbourhood with an enduring community spirit. With the move out of our neighbourhood of the events once hosted at the Forum, St. Catherine Street became somewhat deserted and the empty, crumbling Seville Theatre only seemed to add to the forlorn image of this section of one of the most, if not the most, important street in Montreal.

The news a few years ago that the western sector of Peter McGill would see an increase in residential housing was eagerly anticipated. We know from our own experience that more residents out and about on our downtown streets is an excellent way to ensure safer streets. We came to realize, however, that projects like the Seville Condos would entail unwanted zoning derogations, would totally disregard the historic character of our surroundings and would not include sorely lacking public services.

As we have seen the building of one residential block after another in Peter McGill, it has become evident that our City representatives do not have a holistic vision of residential development nor the will to create neighbourhoods that are smart and green and meet the needs of multi generations.

The "Quartier des Grands Jardins" is a misnomer as those gardens in our area are not publicly accessible. Along with the lack of a community centre and other public installations, this densely populated sector of Peter McGill has no outdoor public space of any significant size that can be used by its residents for recreational purposes.

After the loss by fire of the buildings on the Franciscans' property on Blvd. Rene Levesque the residents of this area saw a unique opportunity for the creation of a park that could include sports installations and space for other outdoor recreational activities. This land, the last piece of such size in the western sector of Peter McGill, situated close to the Falaise St Jacques, the CCA park and located in a primarily low rise area, we believe could serve the need of local residents of all ages for an outdoor recreational space.

On numerous occasions and in numerous ways over the ensuing years, the citizens have expressed their wish to their City representatives, only to be firmly refused by Mayor Denis Coderre at the Ville Marie Borough Council meeting in May 2015. The Mayor's arguments against the feasibility of our proposal for the use of this site as an outdoor recreational space are very weak and could also be used against the development of the envisaged condo project at this site.

The presentation by Prevel on May 12, 2016 demonstrated clearly the incongruity of their project at this site. These two huge towers will simply dwarf everything within the surrounding blocks. Furthermore, with the inclusion of such a large number of indoor parking spots, the population densification will not be adding to the residential character and energy of the neighbourhood. The residents in these silos will

be driving to and from the highway without traversing the neighbourhood as they would if the closely located public transport were the main means of access to their apartments.

Mayor Coderre has stated on various occasions that he recognizes there is a lack of social and public services as well as outdoor recreational space for the numerous residents of the western sector of Peter McGill and he and his team keep insisting that the development of the former Children's Hospital site will provide the solution to these issues.

In order to ensure that we citizens will indeed obtain the public services and installations promised by Mayor Coderre, I propose that the OCPM recommend a halt to any development on the "Domaine des Franciscains" site until the final realisation of the development of the former Children's Hospital site. Thus, the "Domaine des Franciscains" site would remain available in the event any difficulties were encountered to provide these services and installations with the development at the Children's Hospital site.

Furthermore, I propose that the OCPM recommend the reinstatement of the residents' right to express their wishes by referendum, a right that has been denied them for no legitimate reason.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Nabozniak