

February 18, 2025

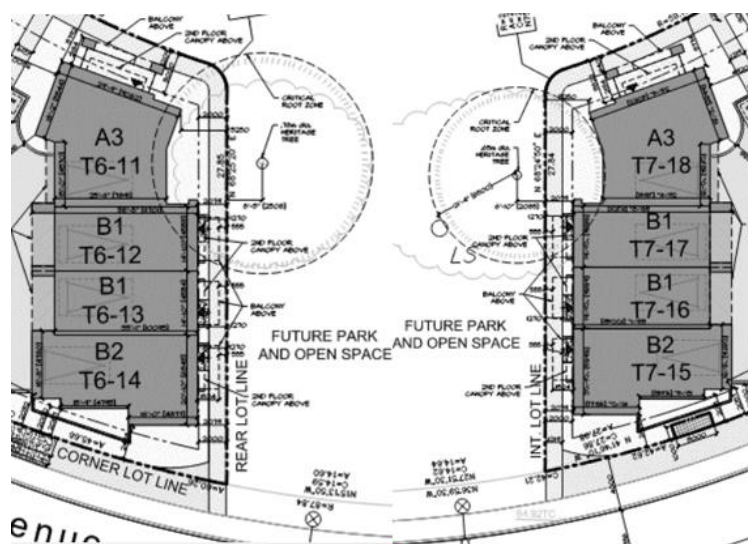
Jack Smith
Development Review, Central Planning
Development and Building Services Department (PDBS)
City of Ottawa

Dear Mr. Smith:

D02-02-24-0062 - 295 and 355 Deschâtelets Avenue: Zoning By-Law Amendment

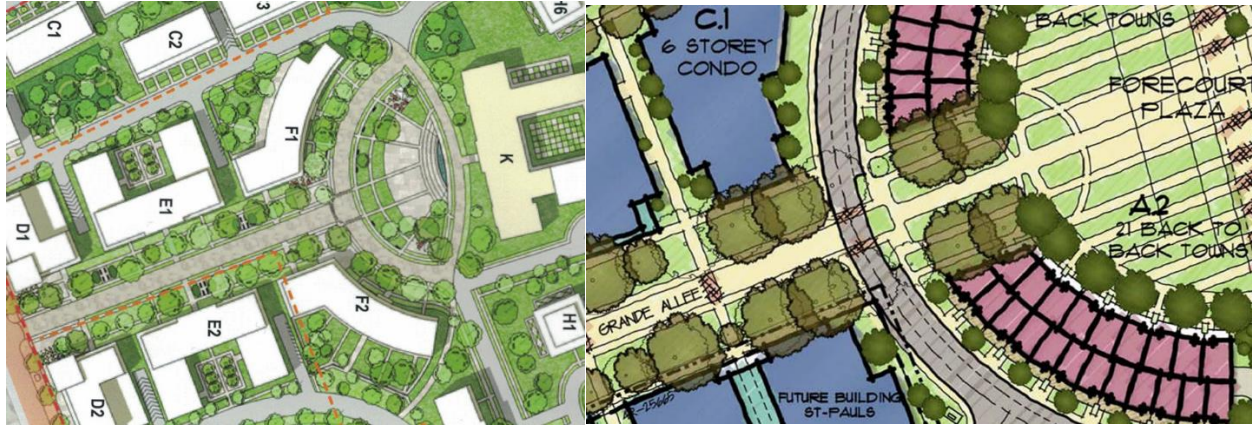
In response to the many rezoning provisions that The Regional Group seeks for the above-noted application, we have only ***one request: push back the units bordering the Grande Allée so that the full viewscape of the Deschâtelets Residence and critical root zones are continued*** as established by the southern facades of the Milieu and Ballantyne apartments and by the northern facades of the yet-to-be-built-but-comparable buildings on the southern, Saint Paul University side of the Grande Allée.

Specifically, we ask that units T7-17, T7-16, and T7-15 be shifted southerly so that their northern facades line up with the northern facade of T7-18; and that units T6-12, T6-13 and T6-14 be shifted northerly so that their southern facades line up with the southern façade of T6-11. A rough estimate is that the six units in question would have to be shifted 2.2 meters.



Proposed Units Bordering the Grande Allée

Our request is based on the original 2011 plan for the redevelopment of the Oblates lands and the subsequent Oblate Redevelopment Concept Plan of 2015 that The Regional Group created and had approved. ***Both of these plans show the continuous viewscape along both sides of the Grande Allée***, as per images below, rather than being constrained by the proposed units along the Grande Allée.



3. Back-to-back Townhomes

Framing the proposed festival plaza, these 3½-storey structures will serve to reinforce the existing heritage landscape and architecture while providing a more urban housing option.

With high visibility on all sides, each building facade will be designed as a front. Cladding materials will be selected to harmonize with the heritage Deschâtelets Building.

The design of each unit will be flexible to facilitate a single unit to be converted to a live/work unit or a duplex with a ground floor income flat.

A common underground garage will serve each building with discrete access from the ends. These units will be developed as condominiums.

Images of Original Plan (2011) and Regional's "Oblates Lands Redevelopment" (2015)

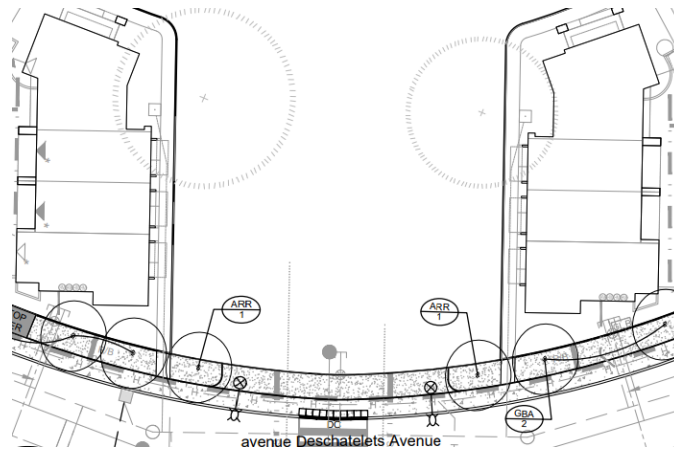
In our video meeting with City and the Councillor's staff February 14, 2025, City staff suggested that the existing canopy trees were already limiting the viewscape so the proposed location of the Forecourt units bordering the Allée really wouldn't have an effect. This perspective ignores several realities. The first is that for half of the year, foliage doesn't exist so it doesn't block the view. Secondly, and of greater importance, as one walks along the Grande Allée towards the Deschâtelets Building, the view should be opening up, not closing down, so that the new Forecourt Park and the full face of the Deschâtelets Building come into view.

The design brief of the rezoning application notes, "Great care was taken when configuring the footprint of these blocks [T7-18 and T6-11] to accommodate the critical root zones of the

heritage trees near the intersection of the Grande Allée with the Forecourt Park.” This is excellent but ***we are seeking the above-described shifts of the other Allée-adjacent units so that new trees opposite them can have comparably-sized critical root zones that will allow the new trees to grow to be massive “heritage trees”*** like those that are being protected and that line the rest of the Allée to the west.

The “Heritage Impact Assessment, Addendum H, Greystone Forecourt Townhomes” states, “To ensure the viability of new trees planted in line with the two existing trees, consideration should be given to limiting the footprints of three B1 and B2 Units to the west, fronting onto the Allée. “(p18). But this advice has been ignored by Regional.

Specifically, at least two more trees should be planted on each side of the Grande Allée and these trees should be of a species that is one of the those that compose the rest of the Grande Allée and that will, with time, be massive canopy trees. The current plan seems to envisage one additional tree (“ARR/1”) on each side of the Allée but these trees seem to be more in line with other proposed trees for Deschâtelets Avenue rather than with the Grande Allée. Further, the proposed species, “Redpointe” maples, have a maximum height of only 45 feet, considerably less than the established trees of the Allée. The proposed plan should be enhancing - not diminishing - the Grande Allée.



The application’s lack of new “canopy” trees along the Allée, as shown above, is contrary to the original plan.



The “Urban Design Brief” (p51) gives a sense for where additional trees should be planted along the Grande Allée, however, these trees are not shown in the “Planting Plans.”

Regional's response to the OOECA planning committee on its request has been that their engineers say that such a shift of these units would result in inadequate turning radii for vehicles entering the garages off the paved courts. We find it highly ironic that the City may be willing to let parking and driveways be a dominant factor in the layout of this final phase of Greystone Village. Elsewhere in Old Ottawa East and in the City, parking provisions are being greatly reduced.

Also, the approved concept for the Forecourt area had 42 units of back-to-back towns with underground parking with minimal driveways. But now Regional is proposing 28 percent fewer units with lots of surface parking and driveways. We acknowledge Regional's explanation that the underground parking would have been uneconomical, however, their greatly changed and less attractive plan should not come with the added disadvantage of a reduced Grande Allée provision.

For the most part, The Regional Group has worked well with the community over the last decade. Greystone Village is a notable success on numerous counts. Along the way, the community association has supported many rezoning issues as Regional has sought changes to the approved plan and zoning. Also, in considerable part because of the community association successfully advocated for major infrastructure improvements like the Flora Footbridge and a rebuilt Main Street, Old Ottawa East has become a more desirable community, something that has enhanced the value of all of the new residences in Greystone Village and, undoubtedly, the profitability for The Regional Group. On this Grande Allée issue, ***we feel that Regional is not respecting their original plan or the sole request of the community association in regards to ensuring there is a full corridor all along the Grande Allée.***

The proposed units encroaching on the viewscape and on critical root zones for new canopy trees is shortsighted and a betrayal of the original plan, all for the sake of making previously-unplanned parking and driveways slightly better for a few new residents.

Surely the City can persuade Regional to value the overall impact of the new Forecourt development on the heritage-protected Grande Allée over making it easier for a few new residents to park their cars. It will be interesting to see if PDBS and the heritage experts of the City of Ottawa side with the developers or the community on this issue.

The community's request will not reduce the number of critical housing units. Indeed, as mentioned, Regional is proposing to build 30 rather than the originally planned 42 dwelling units. ***It's rather a question of whether a few residents will have better parking rather than whether the full community will have a glorious Grande Allée being fully supported as an essential part of Old Ottawa East for the next century or longer. Let's not be shortsighted about this.***

John Dance
A/Chair, Old Ottawa East Planning Committee, OOECA

cc Councillor Shawn Menard
Bob Gordon, President OOECA
Josh Kardish, eQ Homes / The Regional Group
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