

**Planning Advisory Committee
SCAOPI/1100 Atwater Avenue
Public presentation meeting held on Tuesday, March 12, 2019**

PRESENT AT FRONT TABLES

Planning Advisory Committee members: C. Peart, Councillor, District 4
J. Gersovitz, Chairman
E. Marosi
G. Soiferman

Assisted by: Tom Flies, Urban Planning Director

Applicants: Sebastien Hylands, 1100 Atwater Investments Inc./Kevric
Richard Kaplin, GKC architectes

AGENDA

1. Introduction, by C. Peart
2. PPCMOI/SCAOPI application procedure, by Tom Flies
3. Summary of public meeting procedure, by J. Gersovitz
4. Presentation of proposal by applicant
5. Questions by PAC members
6. Questions and comments by the public

5. DETAILED MINUTES OF THE QUESTIONS BY THE PAC MEMBERS

- Q E. Marosi:** How many portions/where are the portions of the building that are being lowered to the sidewalk level; are they only on Atwater?
- A R. Kaplin:** It's the corner of Atwater and Tupper; it's about 15% of the ground-floor area that is being brought down to ground floor level, so it includes the entrance lobby to the elevators and the area where we're hoping to put a café.
- Q E. Marosi:** And is there another major portion apart from the corner that is also being lowered along Atwater?
- A R. Kaplin:** Just the strip where you see on the drawing, where we see the red umbrellas and the patio area in front of the café; therefore, two bays of 60 feet along Atwater and the rest remains at the existing level.

Q E. Marosi: So because of those areas where you're making a connection with the sidewalk, and removing berms and green areas to have hard surfaces, will you now have more hard surfaces on the site?

A R. Kaplin: The terrace will be an additional hard surface compared to what's there now, but we're also eliminating the vertical hard surfaces—all those walls that are about 5 or 6 feet high, that create a canyon feeling. But with the new design it will now feel a lot more inviting.

Q E. Marosi: As a characterization of the landscaping (apart from the trees which are obviously larger scale), because the building is very massive and monumental, what kind of character does the landscaping have?

A R. Kaplin: The primary thing is that the landscaping will bring in a lot more colour, because right now there's very little, it's basically all just green. It will be a mix of flowers and flowering shrubs.

Q G. Soiferman: I'm just wondering about the parking structure: what are your future plans? I'm aware that when it was originally built, there was a concession made at the request of the City to accommodate parking as well as to create a bit of a park-like setting because of the residential characteristic of the area. What are your future plans?

A S. Hylands: At this stage we're keeping the parking structure as it is. So there's no change to what is it is right there now.

Q C. Peart: In your table you mention a height of 99.5 meters; I think that's probably a mistake...

A R. Kaplin: Yes, it's 99.5 feet.

Q C. Peart: The current parcel is a single parcel that includes the parking structure? So there's no cadastral operation in the plans?

A *(Inaudible.)*

Q C. Peart: On the Dorchester side, where there's currently a down ramp to the basement that will be returned to grade and covered with grass, will it remain just a patch of grass or will there be any kind of program in place to make it accessible to the public?

A S. Hylands: Right now there's nothing planned because to cover it we do need to build a concrete roof, so it's not like we can put any large plants or trees on there because of the roots. It is going to be open to the public, but it will not necessarily be an interesting area. There is currently an open area between the parking structure and the building that is

completely separate from the ramp area, and which is a pedestrian connection with the area to the south that is more interesting, and that will remain. That space is more interesting to the public than the little ramp area.

Q C. Peart: Is there an adjacency between that transverse connection so that somebody could go across that patch of grass laterally?

A R. Kaplin: There is a hydro transformer between these two spaces so it's a bit of a barrier for a pedestrian.

Q C. Peart: The roof plan shows a roof terrace. Can you talk about your program for that terrace? Is it going to be a terrace that is going to be available to the offices, do you think it could be a restaurant one day...?

A R. Kaplin: It is for the use of the building tenants.

Q J. Gersovitz: I have 3 sets of questions, one about signage, some about the landscaping and one about the benefits to the city and the citizens. Mr. Flies, could you give us a statement about what is permitted for signage under the zoning regulations? Right now it is proposed to have 4 signs on Atwater and one on Tupper, is that correct?

A T. Flies: This is a unique case because the building is located in a residential zone, which means that only one sign would be permitted to identify the building; commercial signs as proposed would not be permitted in a residential zone.

Q J. Gesovitz: But if commercial signs would be permitted?

A T. Flies: Then it would be two commercial signs per commercial occupant.

Q J. Gesovitz: And then there would be size restrictions and other restrictions?

A T. Flies: Yes, that's right.

A S. Gadzinski (urban planning technician): For commercial signs you're allowed to have two signs per occupant, regardless of type; the only derogation that exists in this proposal is the blue sign as shown, because you're not allowed to have any signs above the sill of a second-storey window; so that blue sign is proposed to be much higher than what is permitted in our zoning by-law. But the other signs conform to our zoning regulations, so if this was a commercial building in a commercial zone, everything else conforms, it's just that blue sign which is located too high.

Q J. Gersovitz: There are also questions about primary tenant and the such, so not every single person who has an office in this building can put up their own sign.

A S. Gadzinski: Yes, this is for ground floor commercial occupants.

Q J. Gersovitz: Who do you have as ground floor commercial occupants? You are hoping to have the café, and that is it; is that correct?

A R. Kaplin: Yes

Q J. Gersovitz: The second group of questions has to do with the landscaping. You have been very modest in not mentioning the name of the firm of architects who are doing this project; for the record, who is it?

A R. Kaplin: It's GKC Architects.

Q J. Gersovitz: And what is the name of the landscape architect?

A S. Hylands: It's GMAD, they're a firm based downtown, and they work under GKC.

Q J. Gersovitz: Because I think we're having a bit of difficulty understanding what is there now and what you are replacing it with, for example the diameter of the trees that you are cutting down and what you are replacing and whether or not that conforms to the zoning by-law for tree placement in Westmount; Mr. Flies, am I right in saying that if the trees are of a certain diameter you require more than one replacement tree?

A T. Flies: I don't recall if the diameters of the trees are under the acceptable limit for a tree cutting permit/certificate requirement. But indeed, if you remove a tree we will generally request that the tree be replaced, but we have no obligation through zoning to request a tree replacement, it is generally the Planning Advisory Committee that asks, through their review, that a tree be replaced.

Q J. Gersovitz: Thinking back to civic design courses taught by professor Drummond, one of the questions is if you leave a large expanse of lawn untouched in a commercial area you're going to end up with virtual paths defined by the users around the area and I think there is a general questioning of the landscaping proposal to the west of the building as being rather green without much intention. Could you speak to us about that?

A R. Kaplin: But there is nowhere to take a path to. That area leads to basement garage doors which will no longer exist—you're talking about the west side of the building, right? [J. Gersovitz: we're talking about your lawn]. So, there's, at the upper end of the slide, the big white block is just the back wall of the loading dock, so we don't really expect people to be walking there regularly, but [jokingly] they may use it to play volleyball some day or something, but because we're building a new roof over that ramp—we didn't design that roof to carry trees or heavy weight, it's designed basically just a green roof—it's there to look at it and appreciate the green.

Q J. Gersovitz: I think that what we would ask is that there be a response to this in terms of the fact that as part of the proposition you have indicated, and I don't think anyone disagrees, that the area is changing, and so as the area changes, what is your vision for that landscaping rather than being kind of status quo space? We'll leave this as a question to ponder on for now.

Then the last question I have to ask you is: As you know with this S.C.A.O.P.I. process, the benefit to the City or the citizens has to be described. We understand that to some extent this is a regularization of an existing condition—you're not actually asking for more building than you have, we understand that—but I think that the benefits need to be better described than they have been and we're wondering if you'd like to give it another kick at the can.

A S. Hylands: In terms of benefits to the citizens and to the City is really what I would describe very briefly as a reconfiguration of the landscaping on Atwater Avenue so that it's more inviting for the general public and to actually change the building which has been a very concealed building and hidden away building, and to actually make it part of the neighborhood and the community that is developing around there. Really, the community that's developing is mainly across the street along Atwater Avenue, which is with the redevelopment of the Children's General Hospital site which will be a mixed use site, and that's why we are concentrating much of the changes along Atwater Avenue because that's where the change is being seen. On the other end of the neighborhood isn't seeing much change: it's a residential neighborhood and it has been for quite a while, there's the City of Westmount parking, and there's also the YMCA and the parking lot structure.

A R. Kaplin: The other benefit is the elimination of the truck access off Dorchester.

Q J. Gersovitz: Mr. Soiferman has just passed me a note saying the original landscaping was done by Ron Williams and we wonder if you looked at what the original landscaping was and if you have done anything to recapture any of it.

A R. Kaplin: Quite frankly we don't think it relates to today or to the proposed use of the building. The landscaping is not inviting, in my view, as it's got all these walls along the sidewalk that separate the passersby from the landscaping, and it appears that its primary goal was to hide the building, and we just honestly don't feel that there is any merit in reproducing that. It's a different era, a different occupation of the building, and there are different goals.

6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Kathleen Kez, 4144 Dorchester:

Regarding the retail/service area, will it only be on the ground floor?

S. Hylands: If there are any uses on the 1st floor, their visibility will be fronting on Atwater Avenue and their access will be fronting on Atwater. There will be no access from Dorchester, the only access on Dorchester is an emergency exit door for emergency exiting only, and there are no plans to ever turn it into an entrance door. *(The question seems to have been misunderstood.)*

K. Kez: Does that *(space)* allow for an eventual restaurant, or will it only be used for a café? And what guarantees that there's not going to be a big restaurant in there one day?

S. Hylands: We are asking for retail, which does include restaurants, but what we have seen is, because of the size of the space—it's not even 1500 square feet—it's a small space that wouldn't really attract anyone more than a café in terms of food uses. However, zoning would allow for a restaurant, and if a restaurant were to be there, and if there was a chance for odours, we would always require for tenants to have an ecologizer unit, which essentially is a filter that filters out greases, filters out odours and filters out whatever else would be coming out of there. But, yes, there is a possibility for a restaurant.

K. Kez: I know that the building has changed with the new windows facing Dorchester. With regards to light pollution toward residents on Dorchester, are there any mitigation measures?

S. Hylands: There are blinds on the windows, but they are more to block sunlight, and in the daytime there shouldn't be any light pollution. In the evening, light is not likely going to be spilling out of the building. At most all of you would see is that the lights are on inside the building, but they will not be shining out...

J. Gersovitz: It is important to explain that the permission to put in the windows has already been granted and that is not a discussion point on the table today.

K. Kez: When looking at the picture/drawing of Dorchester, it looks a lot more green. I understand the landscaping on the bottom, but why is it looking more green and lush compared to what was there?

S. Hylands: On the rendering, to be able to see the building, we have shaded out the trees that we are replacing on the sidewalk. So the trees you do see along the building and hiding the building, on our landscaping plan we are relocating them to the sidewalk so that they be integrated into the sidewalk path. So in terms of quantity of vegetation, in terms of large trees, there is no reduction in number, they are simply being relocated so that they are part of the public domain.

K. Kez: In terms of the detached parking structure, there is no guarantee that it will disappear in a few years?

S. Hylands: That is not in our plans.

Jason Prince, 222 Redfern:

I want to draw attention to the green space, where you referred to the possibility of playing volleyball on that space, what kind of precedents are there in cities to have public use on private land, and if there's an opening there, how far can we take that in the negotiations?

T. Flies: In general, those types of requests could be formalized through an agreement between the city and the owner of the site for certain uses, certain activities that could take place in an area of a site; so it could indeed be done through an agreement.

J. Prince: Would there be an opening on the part of the owner to such an agreement?

S. Hylands: At this stage, we're not proposing it. It's not a site that has been interesting for that use up to now. Historically, I don't think the neighbourhood has seen that site as being an area where you would want to play. Westmount has a large number of parks already, which I think are more interesting than going to play between a parking structure and an office building.

Ken London, 445 Prince Albert:

First off, in full disclosure, Kevric has been a client of mine for the last several years.

J. Gersovitz: I don't think an audience member could be in conflict of interest.

K. London: I don't understand why the existing signage by-laws of the City of Westmount cannot be respected for all the signs, except for the one at the top of the building, which is exceptional in its own right.

R. Kaplin: I believe they are. If we can have commercial signs, I understand that all the signage conforms, except for the one at the top of the building.

K. London: The signs will not be illuminated boxes?

J. Gersovitz: The design of the signs must be reviewed by the Planning Advisory Committee and then must be recommended to council for approval. So we're a little far down the line with that question because at this point we need to decide whether or not the signs will be permitted. Questions about design will come later.

(Clarification about S.C.A.O.P.I. process provided)

K. London: There was one more question about the future mechanical grills and ventilation on the façade of the building. Will that be subject to a separate application?

S. Hylands: There's already garage ventilation, and if needed for the retail use, we would put it in a concealed location on the east facade (*pointing at screen*) concealed within the reveals so that they are not facing the street and be out of view. (*Question seemed misunderstood*)

K. London: So if I understand correctly, the retail spaces will be coming back for a separate permit? For the retail plans, and details of their signage, will that be at a later date?

T. Flies: The application presented today requests certain derogations to the applicable regulations—for example, to have a certain number of signs—and once those things are reviewed favourably and accepted by the council, then building permits and occupancy certificates must be obtained—for example, if the applicant has a tenant that would need some interior work to be done—those will require different applications and will be treated under separate permits. And if the tenant were to change over time, that would also require separate permits.

K. London: My question had more to do with the details of the signage.

J. Gersovitz: The first step is for the process to go through to decide whether or not the signs will be allowed; that is really the point of the meeting. If the public and then the PAC, while taking into consideration the public's sentiments believe that there should be signs, then the PAC will review those signs. If the public and the PAC decide at the end that there shouldn't be signs (other than those that are authorized by regulation), only the signs that are allowed will be reviewed under the current regulations. The question on the table is "are the number of signs and their placement allowed?" but then the design of the signs will be decided separately. For the record can you clarify your question?

K. London: Other than the signage that is at the top of the building that all the signs comply to the existing bylaws of the city of Westmount, especially with respect to the lighting and that they're not being any like boxes.

J. Gersovitz: I don't think that the PAC has any intention, if they were to agree with the number of signs, to vary from the sign regulations or guidelines for signage.

K. London: But the way to word it in the proposal, it makes reference not to the bylaw but to the industry standards for commercial signs.

J. Gersovitz: Industry standards for commercial signs always have to be coordinated with Westmount.

S. Gadzinski: I'm a technician with the urban planning department. For clarification, this is a residential zone based on the zone number and you're not allowed to have commercial signs in a residential zone. The derogation that we are asking here is to allow commercial signs. In the zoning bylaw, there are different criteria for commercial signs, so if we were to allow commercial signs in this residential zone, then we will make sure that everything conforms to the commercial requirements for signs.

K. London: So the standards are fixed?

S. Gadzinski: Yes the standard is fixed in the zoning bylaw; it's not discretionary. Lit up boxes are not permitted in our zoning by-law.

Theodora Samiotis, 4274 Dorchester:

In the spirit of transparency, I'll tell our guests that I'm the former commissioner for urban planning; I was sitting in Conrad Peart's chair when the project came up and I reviewed it along with the members of pack, and I think you've done a very good job in bringing a building that was very inward-looking to the street. And I think today's discussion is about the next phase, and probably what should have been discussed in an overall plan for the southeast, but I'll save those comments for my last point.

So two quick things since we have this up and we're talking about benefits—everyone is focusing on the entrance that has been eliminated from Dorchester, which is a benefit, as a resident of Dorchester I can admit that any traffic that we can get off Dorchester is a good thing, so grassing that up is good. But you did make a reference in terms of the green space between your building and the parking lot, and if there were to be any benefit to the residents on Dorchester, it would be to make that space even more accessible. You had picnic tables there before. It is a passage that people like to take to go across to Tupper, which unfortunately, if you go through the parking lot it is not as welcoming of a place, something that I mentioned on many occasions, so I think if there were to be a benefit that's why I would put a focus. You can't really do much with that patch—it's a patch—but you can do a lot with the space beside it; so that's one area I wanted to comment on.

With respect to Atwater, as I mentioned, the area is in flux, the area is changing, the area has been through some difficult times, and I'm sure that if Lynn Bergman were here from the Atwater library she would tell you that that strip has not been a very welcoming area, and anything you can do to engage the building and to make it more inviting I think is a plus; I think it's very much a benefit so I would agree on that point. And I'm sure—Mr. Flies you could confirm this that you've been working with Public Works to ensure that the landscaping and the streetscaping is redone by you, which I think as a city we need to do more of. I think this idea of just looking at the building without looking at all the other factors is something we should no longer be doing, that's why I commend the department for working with the developer to make sure that we get a wholesome development that takes into account all these other things; that were not left with as a city afterwards, cleaning up, so that's a very good thing. And ultimately overall I think it's a positive contribution to the area; it is a square peg in a round hole because it is a commercial building on the edge of a very residential area, that has always been residential, and it is a building that was created when the north part of Dorchester was destroyed in the '60s.

My last point would be that we should have an overall vision of the southeast because otherwise we're just condemned as a city to be reactive instead of proactive. So here we are again having a discussion about a specific site, thankfully S.C.A.O.P.I. is there so we can treat this site individually and that speaks about the role that S.C.A.O.P.I. plays within our bylaws and

within our zoning requests, but I think ultimately overall we need a vision for the southeast. Thank you.

J. Gersovitz: Thank you.

Giao-Pham Quynh, 4104 Dorchester :

J'ai deux questions. Premièrement, comment peut-on rendre le bâtiment plus vert et réduire les îlots de chaleur ? Comme, par exemple, ajouter plus de vert sur le toit, ajouter plus d'espaces de vert.

R. Kaplin : Nous avons créé un toit blanc, qui est bon aussi pour la réduction des îlots de chaleur. Lors de la réfection du toit, nous avons mis une membrane blanche.

G.P. Quynh : Ma deuxième question : Vous avez demandé de réduire la quantité de stationnements. Présentement, souvent les utilisateurs des tours à bureaux se stationnent près de chez moi. Ils ont égratigné ma voiture, ils laissent des déchets dans la rue, etc. En réduisant la quantité de stationnements, ça va créer plus de demandes de stationnements dans les rues. Donc, est-ce que vous avez fait une étude de l'impact ça va faire en réduisant la quantité de stationnements ?

S. Hylands : Oui on a fait l'étude. Le document soumis est disponible en ligne. Il y a une lettre qui résume très bien c'est quoi la situation en termes de changement à la circulation et de volume de stationnement. Qu'est-ce que je veux noter c'est quand on dit qu'on veut réduire le minimum de stationnements de la tour, c'est vraiment pour dire pour être de plein droit, la tour aurait un minimum de 47. Par contre, je dois noter que, au net, on ajoute 47 places de stationnements sur le site. La structure de stationnement existante, que je cois à environ 213-216 places, qui est là depuis 1975, continue d'exister, a été entièrement rénovée et à l'air flamboyant neuf. On ajoute, sur le site en entier, 47 places qui sont dans le sous-sol de la tour. Donc il devrait avoir besoin pour moins de stationnements sur la rue. Je veux ajouter qu'il y a déjà beaucoup de stationnements dans le secteur ; il y a, autre que les stationnements sur notre site, un stationnement ici (en montrant la carte) qui est accessible au public, et ici aussi. On ajoute à tout ça un autre 47 places de stationnements.

G.P. Quynh : Alors pourquoi vous demandez une dérogation pour réduire le nombre minimal de stationnements ?

S. Hylands : C'est simplement pour permettre à ce bâtiment d'exister de lui-même. En autres mots, de ne pas avoir besoin de s'étendre sur d'autres bâtisses pour rencontrer ses besoins de zonage, parce qu'en ce moment, le bâtiment, à cause du règlement de zonage, a besoin de la structure de stationnement pour exister. Si on peut réduire le minimum de stationnements à même sa superficie, qui est la norme en développement — normalement, un développeur qui construit un nouveau tour, ne va pas construire une structure de stationnement à côté, il va construire un stationnement sous-terrain. Nos utilisateurs, dans qu'est-ce qu'on voit, surtout dans le type de locataire que ça attire ici, c'est des utilisateurs qui vont venir autant en vélo —

vous devez voir la quantité de racks en vélos que nous avons en sous-sol — qu'en métro. Donc la structure de stationnement qui est là et qui reste, va vraiment être pour le bénéfice du monde qui est dans le secteur.

G.P. Quynh : Est-ce que vous avez l'intention de changer la structure de stationnement extérieur ? Parce-ce que si vous demandez que le stationnement soit soutenable à l'intérieur même du bâtiment, vous avez sûrement un plan futur de changer le stationnement extérieur.

S. Hylands : À cause du zonage, on ne peut pas développer plus notre site.

G.P. Quynh : Mais si vous êtes conforme, je pense que votre demande est futile au niveau de changement de stationnements. Je ne comprends pas votre concept d'autosuffisance de stationnements.

Denis Biro, 36 Burton :

So you're adding 47 spots; is that the maximum you can have in that building? Is there no other room?

R. Kaplin: We put in as much as we could. The basement itself is on two levels, we had to create a ramp between the two. Originally, there was never any parking in the existing building.

D. Biro: When former councillor Samiotis was talking about the overall vision for the Southeast, and when we talk about the Westmount parking lots and their redevelopment, there's always the question, "where do these cars go?" I'm just concerned that one day in the future, the parking will be potentially reduced to just these 47.

Closing of session