



Starbucks café at 444 Eglinton Ave. W. on the Eglinton Way

## Planning tribunal denies tall condo tower for Forest Hill strip

The Eglinton Way strip of Forest Hill is characterized by a lot of two-storey buildings, and after surviving the Crosstown LRT's marathon construction, things were starting to get back to normal. But around the corner is a pending development boom ushered in by the completion of the rapid transit line.

One proposal stood out for its magnitude. Originally proposed at 19 storeys and featuring a distinct purple-brick design, the development team behind the proposed condo at 444 Eglinton Ave. W. informed local residents and the city of its plan to increase the height to a whopping 31 storeys.

While still in the city's development application pipeline, the developer appealed the application to the Ontario Land Tribunal for a decision leapfrogging over the city.

Among the 10 local participants at the hearing was resident Peter Danson, who attended the tribunal hearing to speak against the project.

"Just because there is a policy and need for greater urban density along the LRT (which is not disputed), that does not dictate a tall building per se, especially when such a tall structure would radically transform in a negative way the local village/high street

landscape and experience," Danson said. "Urban landscapes are first and foremost human environments and need to be properly functional and sensitive to the lived experience of a particular locale. The Developer's proposal does not meet those common-sense standards."

And it turns out Danson was right.

**"Urban landscapes are first and foremost human environments."**

The Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) struck down the developer's appeal to build a tall condominium in Toronto's Forest Hill neighbourhood, ruling that the project would be incompatible with the area's character and contrary to city planning policies.

In its decision, the tribunal concluded that the project failed multiple planning tests and would undermine both the physical and social fabric of the neighbourhood, but it left room for the application to evolve moving forward.

"Under the in-force policy environment and contextual setting of this site, the Tribunal finds 31 storeys to be too tall, while also finding valid policy and site sup-

port for a building above the existing mid-rise limit," the ruling, delivered by Scott Tousaw, vice-chair and member of the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), stated.

Among the key reasons for dismissal were concerns over height, massing and shadow impacts. The OLT found the development would overwhelm nearby properties, create unacceptable shade on adjacent homes and green space and reduce privacy for existing residents. The panel also flagged traffic and servicing issues, questioning whether the site could support the additional density without undue strain on local infrastructure.

The decision emphasized that although Toronto faces growing housing pressures, intensification must respect existing neighbourhoods.

The developer had argued the project would contribute to housing supply and align with provincial objectives encouraging higher density in urban areas. However, the tribunal sided with city staff, who maintained the scale and form of the building were not appropriate.

Unless the developer submits a substantially revised proposal, the site will remain as it is — a cluster of low-rise homes consistent with the surrounding streetscape.

—Ron Johnson

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\$4,450,000

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