

1. Executive Summary

Edmond Place

The Parkdale Activity - Recreation Centre has prepared a submission that we will demonstrate achieves a number of important community and civic goals:

Supportive & affordable housing -we propose dignified, secure, affordable and supportive housing for people with mental health histories.

Commitment to the community – we have been in consultation with the community for months about this site which is evidenced by the outcomes from community meetings and multiple letters of support.

Efficient use of public funds – the proposed site development, partnership with Habitat Services and the “economy of proximity” allow for a high quality of service and support that could not be accomplished from a distance.

When we first dreamed of the opportunity to develop the site next door many names came to mind; “Phoenix Place” would have been appropriate considering the tragic event that ended the buildings chronicle as one of the largest rooming houses in Toronto but Phoenix House had been built at King & Dunn in the ‘70’s. Other names were bandied about but we kept coming back to one of the former residents who was evicted in 1996 and was tragically killed on February 20th 1997; Edmond Yu. Edmond, like many of the residents who walked through the doors of 194 Dowling or “1495” as it was known, was a regular at PARC who just needed a supportive landlord and a community where he could feel at home. 1495 was not such a place when he was evicted or when it subsequently caught fire but it can be now. It can be a place for people like Edmond Yu; and so we suggest Edmond Place.

Of course there were other tenants who perished inside 1495 on the afternoon of September 16th 1998. There were 51 units on the day it caught fire and although we knew most of the tenants it was hard to determine if all 51 rooms had been rented on that fall day. We do know that whatever plan is accepted it is fitting and right that the site be developed for people who live in similar circumstances. Imagine if former residents could return to 1495 and experience the difference of safe, secure, affordable and supportive housing.

When PARC developed its current site in 1999-2000 the management team, agency and membership learned invaluable lessons about the small and large challenges as well as the rewards of seeing a handsome but neglected building renewed before our eyes. The same management team will steward the development of 1495 with similar values of consultation, investment and commitment to renewal within the PARC membership and the community at large. It is hard to not be excited by the prospect of creating 29 units of affordable & supportive housing from the ashes of the past. Unlike the former units, these will be clean, light, secure and durable apartments that will engender a pride of possession we believe will reflect the hope and respect that people with multiple barriers so desperately require.

Furthermore, the model we propose unites affordable & supportive housing with the community building practice found in our drop-in and other of PARC’s services, supports and activities. The all too frequent experience of consumer survivors moving into foreign surroundings with few community connections often resulting in isolation will not happen with PARC next door. Similarly PARC’s proximity will mean responsiveness to tenant and community concerns.

PARC’s proposal is simply the right response to the site because it is well situated; whether the measure is appropriate services and supports, responsible use of public funds, an intimate and long standing history within the community or a sense of commitment to those most in need of decent, secure, affordable and supported housing.