

Neville Park development has new look

by Carole Stimmell

AFTER A HIATUS of three months, the battle of Neville Park is back on. On March 6, developer Dermot Sweeney announced that, after extensive formal and informal consultations with the local community and the City of Toronto, he had submitted a significantly revised plan for a proposed residential development at the foot of Neville Park Boulevard.

Sweeney's original plans, which called for a five-storey condominium on the site, drew strong criticism from the neighbourhood and Councillor Sandra Bussin. The changes to the revised plan includes

- a four storey condo, rather than five;
- reduction of units from 16 to 10;
- only three to four trees will be removed, half the original estimated number; and
- portions of the south-facing facade will be inset to allow the preservation of two large red oaks.

"A lot of thought has been put into how to ensure this development is positive for the

neighbourhood," Sweeney said in his press release. "Not only will the project add value to the neighbourhood, it also represents a major step forward for the environment. The new design results in significantly greater tree preservation onsite and provides the opportunity for 10 families to share this beautiful site. It was important to us to listen to the community and revise the design to respond directly to the comments made and the issues raised. We feel the revised proposal accomplishes all of that."

Bussin, who met with the developer on March 7, said that she hadn't yet had time to fully examine the new proposal, however, she did say that this design is a definite improvement over the original plan.

"With one less storey, it's less intrusive and saves more trees," she said.

The proposed plan drops the number of units to 10 or less (depending on configuration), with two parking spaces per unit plus three visitor spaces.

The exterior of the building has also been redesigned so that features such as

balconies are on a smaller scale and makes use of natural materials such as limestone and wood.

Even with the one storey drop, the building is still one metre over the allowed limit. Bussin said that she is not sure at this point whether the proposed new height and density would still require a zoning bylaw amendment.

Sweeney has indicated that, if the revised plans move forward in a timely manner, that he "will commit to make major improvements to the public lands that connect Neville Park and Munro Park to the beach. [I] am prepared to replace the stairs and make landscaping upgrades in an effort to beautify the area, make it safer for residents and turn it into a real public amenity."

Because the city's planning department won't be finished reviewing the plans for a while, Bussin said that she will not be scheduling a public meeting to get the community's response to the proposal until after March Break.

