



September 2014

Dear Neighbour,

We wrote you this spring to alert you to development proposals coming to Sandy Hill and to ask you for your financial support to ensure that ASH could represent your views effectively before the City, the University of Ottawa and the Ontario Municipal Board. Let me update you on what has happened since then.

### **Fund-raising**

Thanks to your generosity and the work of many volunteers in organising our May dance, we now have \$25,900 in our reserve fund. This may sound like a lot but it is not. Our participation at the upcoming Ontario Municipal Board hearing on the Viner proposal (see below) will cost some \$18,000 – even after receiving a discount from our lawyer as a community association. We need to continue raising money.

### **Viner Assets Inc.**

As you will recall, this proposal involves the demolition of 6 low-rise brick residential units on Laurier Ave E. (at the corner of Friel) in favour of a nine-storey student residence whose height, massing and form are out of scale and incompatible with the neighbourhood. When Council turned this proposal down in March, the developer appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) which has the power to overturn Council's decision. The hearing is scheduled to begin on October 6 (it will take place in the Keefer Room at City Hall) and is expected to last 5 days. It will take several weeks before the OMB renders its decision. As a result of recent successes by community associations at the OMB (e.g. Roosevelt Ave in Ottawa) we are confident that we can win!

The developer has hired a lawyer with extensive OMB experience and will likely call an urban planner, an architect, a heritage specialist, a student housing administrator and a member of the City's planning staff (because staff supported the proposal before Council turned it down) as its witnesses. The City, who will be defending its decision, has hired Dennis Jacobs as its urban planning witness. Dennis has worked for ASH before, notably in helping us formulate our position on the Viner project earlier this year. As a result, ASH will not have to pay for Dennis' services. The City may also call a heritage specialist as a witness. ASH has hired a lawyer, Emma Blanchard, also with OMB experience to present our arguments and cross-examine witnesses. At this stage, we are looking at presenting two witnesses; a community witness to testify about the building's impacts and an ASH member who can speak about our concerns, our approach to development and our history of engagement on this issue.

### **Other development proposals**

The Viner proposal is important because of its material and symbolic importance: if it goes ahead, it would represent a major change to the character of Laurier Ave E.; it also implies that a similar building could go up virtually anywhere in Sandy Hill. But it is not the only development proposal we have to worry about:

- The University will start building a student residence on Henderson Ave this autumn (behind the new Advanced Research Centre).
- A developer is converting the former St. Clement's Church at the corner of Russell and Mann into 58 micro-suites. This involves demolishing the existing manse and replacing it with a four storey building.
- Several houses (e.g., on Blackburn, Sweetland, Nelson, Henderson) have been and continue to be converted into three or four apartments with 5 to 6 bedrooms each. Developers are appealing

the new City by-law to control such developments.

- A nine-storey student residence is under construction at 45 Mann (next to the University sportsplex) and a ten-storey apartment building at 85 Range Rd.
- High-rise towers are proposed at 545 Rideau, 560 Rideau, 594 Rideau and 400 Stewart. The City is conducting a community design plan for Rideau St between King Edward and the Cummings Bridge that is likely to lead to much greater permitted heights than currently.
- The City will launch a review of the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan, likely next year. It will be important to set clear boundaries on what kind of intensification it allows in the future.

**We value Sandy Hill's diverse population and its heritage**

Sandy Hill currently contains six Heritage Conservation Districts but our built heritage remains threatened by uncontrolled development. Sandy Hill is a diverse community and we need to preserve that diversity; that requires maintaining a balance of families, singles, seniors and students in the area. The proposed construction of several new high and mid-rise buildings as well as the conversion of individual homes to de facto rooming houses are resulting in unbalanced development that is eating away at the streetscape and social fabric of our neighbourhood.

This is why we need to continue our fundraising efforts. We need to ensure that we can present our interests effectively and that we can hire expertise when we need it. While we think that a win at the OMB on the Viner proposal may lead some developers to re-think their projects, we clearly have a long road ahead of us and we need continued community support to protect the Sandy Hill we love.

Please make a donation to ASH to support this fight. We have created a special fund, administered by ASH's Treasurer Pat Archer. We will continue to update the community regularly on our activities through letters such as this one and articles in IMAGE.

Together we can protect our neighbourhood more effectively. Please make your cheques payable to "Action Sandy Hill" with the notation "Save Sandy Hill" on the memo line. Cheques should be sent to:

Pat Archer  
192 Marlborough Avenue  
Ottawa (ON) K1N 8G4  
Email: [savesandyhill@gmail.com](mailto:savesandyhill@gmail.com)

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely yours,



Chad Rollins, President  
Action Sandy Hill