

Developer requests delay of heritage discussion

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planner as a “well-crafted example of the Neo-Gothic style” – was constructed in 1908 by “important” Toronto architectural firm of Burke, Horwood and White.

In her report to EYCC, Jennifer Keesmaat further noted that in addition to design, the property also meets the other two criteria for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act: associative and contextual values.

“The property is historically associated with the development and transition of West Toronto Junction from an independent municipality to an important neighbourhood in Toronto,” the report reads, noting it also contributes to the character of West Toronto Junction, “where it is part of the institutional enclave of churches and public buildings on Annette Street.”

While neither side of Tuesday’s designation debate contested the importance of conserving such heritage aspects of the church sanctuary itself, those who spoke against its immediate designation – namely the property owners’ representatives – called into question the integrity of the church’s complementary Sunday school, which was constructed as an addition in 1925 and is also included in the 1990 heritage listing of the property.

“In our humble opinion – and we’ve studied this with our design team consultants – we don’t believe that there are many redeeming architectural features to the school house,” said Chris Giamou, speaking on behalf of TRAC Developments Inc., the company hired to redevelop the site.

“It’s an addition that, in my opinion, looks like a prison – and to convert it into condominiums, we’d have a difficult time. We think it jeopardizes...and takes away from the architectural asset, which in our opinion, is the sanctuary.”

In addition, dealing with the heritage designation application for 260 High Park Ave., Tuesday’s meeting also saw west-end councillors tasked with considering a preliminary report outlining a zoning bylaw amendment application recently submitted for the site.

That application – which was also ulti-



The former High Park-Alhambra United Church, located at 260 High Park Ave., is now one step closer to being designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Courtesy photo

mately approved and will now proceed to the community consultation phase – proposes the re-use and redevelopment of the site into a four-storey, 77-unit residential building, with partial adaptive re-use of the vacant church.

“Our intent is to preserve the church. We view the church as important, and the church will be invested in very, very heavily to bring it back from its currently crumbling state,” Sheldon Rosen, the architect on the project, told councillors. “It’s been crumbling for about 50 years, so the intent is to preserve, repair and restore the church...we look forward to it being a grand building that will be preserved for all time.”

Likening city

planning staff’s recommendation of heritage designation for 260 High Park Ave. to a “steamroller” bent on “crush(ing) the ambition of doing a good project”, Rosen requested that EYCC defer its decision on the matter until a more “appropriate” time.

Heritage supporters in the gallery, however, disagreed – basing their argument on the fact the proponent’s proposed plans for their “grand building” do not include conversion of the Sunday school building, which they intend to demolish.

“This is absolutely the right time to designate this property because the new owner and the developer’s team have consistently ignored the fact that the current heritage listing status includes the

attached school building,” said Tina Leslie, chair of the Junction Heritage Conservation District Committee.

Leslie was joined at Tuesday’s EYCC meeting by Christopher Sears, president of the West Toronto Junction Historical Society and Etobicoke York Community Preservation Panel Chair Brian Mooney, both of whom echoed her sentiments about the timeliness of the designation application.

Contrary to Rosen’s “steamroller” argument, heritage designation of the site, Mooney further contested, will not prevent the developers from moving forward with their project.

“All a designation does is it identifies the heritage aspects that are important and should be conserved

within the building,” he said.

“It’s just a starting point to make sure that the project becomes something the whole community will be proud of.”

In a recorded vote, councillors Doucette, Cesar Palacio, Frances Nunziata, Vincent Crisanti, Mark Grimes, Stephen Holyday, Justin Di Ciano and John Campbell agreed, voting in favour of the heritage designation. Councillors Frank Di Giorgio and Giorgio Mammolitti, meanwhile, cast their votes in opposition to the designation. The matter will now go before the next meeting of Toronto City Council for a final decision.



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Hundreds of firefighters honour their own

Sara Rosen remembered as 'genuine, selfless, smiling'

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A sea of hundreds of Toronto firefighters wearing their dress black uniforms and white gloves stood solemnly with family and friends Monday morning to pay final respects to their fallen colleague Sara Rosen, whom one remembered as "genuine, selfless, smiling and full of life."

Mourners packed Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel on Steeles Avenue West near Keele Street in North York for Rosen's 90-minute funeral.

Jackie Gaistman, Rosen's partner, called her "my compass."

"Sara is the fiercest, most genuine, brutally honest, inspirational, joyful, free-spirited, soulful, generous, strong, determined, feisty, loyal, courageous person I've ever met," Gaistman said, calling her his wife. "Sara loved her parents and her brother Mark with every ounce of her heart. Mark is living testament to Sara's love, generosity, caring and courage. She was, and still is, such a hero."

Twelve years ago, Rosen donated her kidney to her brother, Mark. Since then, the siblings would celebrate an additional "birthday" every year marking the date of the transplant, said Rosen's father, Allan.

Rosen, 38, was a 15-year Toronto firefighter, who worked out of Station 443 on Islington Avenue in central Etobicoke. She had planned to take a year's sabbatical from her job this September to attend law school on a full scholarship.

Rosen died last Thursday in a mountain biking accident while out riding with a colleague at Kelso Conservation Area in Milton, Ont.

Gaistman called his life with Rosen a "magical journey" because of Rosen's "joy of life, excitement and passion. You made everyone around you laugh,



Staff photo/DAN PEARCE

The body of Sara Rosen travels to the grave site on the back of a 1939 fire truck after the funeral service at Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel Monday morning. The Toronto firefighter died last week in a mountain biking accident at the Kelso Conservation Area in Milton.

feel happy, feel worthy, feel respected. You made everyone want to enjoy life. You always fought for what was right.

"It is your strength that is helping me get through this terrible tragedy."

A strong sense of self, determination and a spirit to fight for what was right were themes woven throughout the stories Rosen's father told from his daughter's life.

"Nothing would stop Sara," Allan Rosen said.

He recalled how she stood playing with water in a sink while other children in her class gathered as per a teacher's instruction. How she pulled an astounded 240-pound male firefighter, wearing 75 pounds of weights, from a smoke-filled room during a training exercise.

How she persevered to another fire hall and was hired when the platoon chief of the first hall she approached said they weren't set up to accept women firefighters. "Do you have a lock on the door? Do you have a bunk?"

Rosen had asked.

How emotionally struck she was when she was with the first fire crew to respond to a devastating fire in two barns at Woodbine Racetrack in August 2002 that killed 31 horses. How unreservedly she had offered a kidney to her brother when his health began to fail. And how she then became a vocal advocate for organ donation.

Many mourners wept when Allan Rosen closed his eulogy by saying, "I won't hear my daughter say 'I love you' anymore. Goodbye, Sara. I love you."

Rabbi Tina Grimberg read American poet Mary Oliver's poem, "When Death Comes" because it spoke to Rosen's mark on the world, she said.

"When it's over, I want to say all my life/I was a bride married to amazement... I don't want to end up simply having visited this world," Grimberg read. "Sara Rosen did not simply visit this world. She was a bride married to amazement."

Frank Ramagnano, president of the Toronto

Professional Fire Fighters' Association, shared messages of condolence offered by Toronto firefighters.

"Sara was powerful and fierce. People like Sara make you want to do more in the world to help others," one firefighter said.

Another offered: "She was honest, caring and full of life. She was always looking to make things better."

"If we had 3,000 Saras, we would have the most successful union in the world," Ramagnano said.

Toronto Fire Chief Jim Sales, who is out of the province, also offered a message of condolence.

The chief said he met Rosen in recent weeks when she spoke with him in his office about her role as a volunteer Toronto ambassador for the Positive Space campaign. The campaign seeks to create a more-inclusive workforce for members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer and two Spirited (LGBTQ2S) communities.

"I was immediately impressed by Sara's grace, professionalism and her commitment-

ment to this project. Sara was giving and kind, it was clear to me in our all-too-brief meeting," Sales wrote.

Mike McCoy, Toronto fire deputy chief of operations, said Rosen carried out her duties with "courage and compassion." He first met Rosen in 2005 when he was her platoon chief.

"The position of a firefighter is often dangerous, thankless, and at times, pushes you to limits you never thought you were capable of. It is not an occupation for the faint of heart or something to be entered into lightly. You have to love this job to do it well. Sara did it well."

McCoy said her colleagues will remember Rosen "as a truly compassionate person, a humanitarian with a zest for life and a person with a strong, determined personality... She was generous and caring, and always eager to lend a hand."

McCoy encouraged mourners to take some comfort in the knowledge Rosen was doing what she loved when her life ended.

"On a beautiful spring day, she was living life to the fullest and enjoying every minute of it," he said.

Hundreds of firefighters stood at attention in two lines on either side of Alness Street outside the funeral home as members of the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' ceremonial unit piped Rosen's funeral procession to the cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sara Rosen Memorial Fund, which benefits organ transplants at Toronto General Hospital, mental health causes and The Positive Space Anti-Bullying Campaign.

Donations may be made c/o The Benjamin Foundation, 3429 Bathurst St. Toronto, M6A 2C3. Visit www.benjamins.ca or call 416-780-0324.

Rosen leaves her partner, Jackie Gaistman, children Frelan and Alex and her beloved dog, Brownie, as well as her parents, Allan and Ann, and her brother, Mark.



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Film editor honoured for her work

As part of the Canadian Cinema Editors Annual Awards, next Thursday, Canadian Cinema Editors will pay tribute to the work and career of film, documentary and television editor Roushell Goldstein.

Goldstein, a St. Clair Avenue West and Oakwood Avenue-area resident, began her career in Jerusalem at the newly established Israel Television Network in the late 1960s. She returned to Canada in 1973 where she worked with Hobel-Leiterman Productions creating weekly documentaries in a series called 'Here Comes the '70s' and 'Target the Impossible.'

Goldstein has freelanced for CTV, CBC, the National Film Board of Canada and many privately funded productions, creating documentaries, television one-offs and series, as well as feature films. Career highlights include, the film *Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive*, which won the Genie for best documentary feature, and was short-listed for the Oscars; starting as an original team member on the set of the TV show *Degrassi Junior High*; and co-directing and editing the documentary *Half the Kingdom*, and others.

The award ceremony takes place at The Hotel Delta, downtown. Goldstein took time to respond to our questions.

Q What does this lifetime achievement award mean to you?

A Recognition from my peers means a great deal to me for the 35 years in the film industry, especially since it has been quite a while since I retired from it.

Q When did you realize that you wanted to make film a career?

A As a teenager, excited by the "New Wave" cinema from Europe and the controversial and

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QUESTIONS WITH ROUSHELL GOLDSTEIN

The Villager speaks with Canadian Cinema Editors lifetime achievement award recipient

powerful documentaries from *This Hour Has Seven Days* on CBC TV.

Q In your opinion, what attributes/skills must a person have to be successful in a film career, such as the one you've had?

A The ability to listen and empathize.

Q What has been your philosophy/approach to your work throughout your career?

A Work unstintingly, try to get into the minds and hearts of the people in the film, present your points-of-view vigorously where there are differences of opinion with the filmmakers. Then concede to their wishes with the best of my abilities, because, after all, I am there to serve their vision in the long, complicated process of making a film.

Q Do you have a stand out career moment or project you've worked on?

A There have been many. *Half the Kingdom* – because I helped conceive it as a co-director, as well as an editor. My daughter Sarah's baby naming opens the film. As a Jewish feminist, there was much to identify with.

Raoul Wallenberg: Buried Alive, because, as a person who lost family members in the Holocaust, I deeply appreciate the courage of people who defied the Nazi regime and fought the prevailing Anti-Semitism running rampant throughout Europe at that time.

Hurt Penguins, because it is one of the funniest and best written comedies to come out of Canada. I lived with this project long before the editing: My husband, Robert Bergman, was the co-producer and co-director.

Paris, France, because it was a challenge to get into the hearts and minds of the characters, but working with the consummate director, Jerry Ciccoritti, was sheer pleasure.

Dog Guides get a helping hand and paw during High Park walk

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Gretel is Ruth and Joseph Schembri's latest puppy they're raising that is on her way to becoming a dog guide for the Lions Foundation of Canada.

The almost five-month-old pup is a wee bit of a departure for the Bloor Street West and Royal York Road-area couple. She's their eighth charge, but first-ever poodle. They've only ever raised Labrador retrievers.

"We're quite enjoying it," Joseph Schembri said sitting at a local coffee shop.

Wearing her dog-guide-in-training vest, Gretel contentedly kept busy with a chew toy lying under the table as her foster parents chatted.

"She's smart. We call her our joy incarnate," Ruth said. "She's very calm – she's not that interested in food like labs are."

Gretel has lived with the Shembris since she was seven weeks old. Their black lab, Irma, a "disqualified" dog guide – that's the term for animals who end up not suitable for the job – has been "great" with the puppies, Ruth said.

"She's the foster mother and we're the foster family," she said.

The couple was inspired to become puppy raisers for the Lions Foundation of Canada by their niece. At 15, she was the youngest person to receive a Hearing Ear Dog.

"Her dog's name is Swiss. We were invited to go to her graduation – Caroline and Swiss graduated together," Ruth said.



Staff photo/LISA RAINFORD

Ruth and Joseph Schembri share a moment with five-month-old poodle Gretel. The couple raises puppies for the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides.

That's where the couple met Swiss' foster family, which included two children, ages seven and nine.

"We thought, 'These children are giving back their dogs (around a year old, dogs begin their formal training with handlers). If they can do it, we could do it,'" Ruth recalled.

Ruth calls Swiss a "riot." If the microwave beeps or the smoke detector goes off, she'll alert Caroline.

At the end of this month, Ruth, Joseph, Gretel and Irma, will participate in the Lions Foundation of Canada Purina Walk for Dog Guides. There are three walks taking place in Toronto, including High Park, the Beach and at Purina PawsWay on Queen's Quay.

It costs about \$25,000 to raise and train each dog guide

that could go on to become a canine vision dog, a hearing ear dog, a service dog, a seizure response dog, an Autism assistance dog or a diabetic alert dog. The Lions' Dog Guides does not receive any government funding and relies solely on donations and fundraisers. The dog guides are provided to Canadians with disabilities at no cost.

That's what makes it easier for Ruth and Joseph to give up their young dogs. They know they're raising animals on behalf of those who will really benefit from a dog guide.

The Purina Walk for Dog Guides takes place in High Park Friday.

Sign-in starts at 5 p.m. and the walk begins at 6:30 p.m. Enter the park from Bloor Street West.

Visit www.purinawalkfordogguides.com for more information and to sign up for the event.



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