

Bold choices always offend or delight

I read with interest the letter *Condo opposition is widespread*, in the Nov. 25 edition. The writer expressed specific concerns about a development tentatively slated to be built next to High Park, as proposed by developer Howard Cohen of Context Development Inc.

According to the writer, not only is the City of Toronto opposed to this development, so are 1,000 ratepayers. In the development world, very little ever gets built as of right (without variances of height or density), and very often the city and ratepayers oppose dramatic developments.

Perhaps the writer is unaware that the park came before her and her neighbours' homes. At that time, it is most likely that there was widespread opposition to houses being built on the park.

The site in question is a former gas station. Gas stations are renowned for their contribution to neighbourhood architectural beauty and general environmental friendliness.

Any residential building is an improvement over a gas station. Cohen and Peter Clewes (the architect) are well-known in Toronto for delivering staggering

examples of new architectural design, something Toronto and the dowdy High Park area sorely needs.

If Toronto wants to be a great city, we need to take bold chances with developments. Usually these kinds of efforts either offend or delight. Controversy breeds challenges, and challenges bring out the best in humans.

I think the proposed building will enhance the area and the park greatly. Just look at how Central Park works with hundreds of beautiful buildings surrounding or attached to the park. Not everyone in New York city loves the Empire State building, but what would the city be like without it?

Ten years from now, providing the Ontario Municipal Board sees the merits to this development, park lovers and local residents alike will be proud to have such a magnificent structure anchor the park at its north end.

Let's hope that inspired developers and architects like Cohen and Clewes continue to make Toronto a more beautiful city.

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