

Brief History of the Coxwell Streetcar Barns Master Planning

Prior to 1900 the lands upon which the Coxwell Barns sit was owned by the Grand Trunk Railway being used as a railyard.

The Toronto Civic Railways company purchased the lands around 1912 and constructed a streetcar maintenance building in 1915. An expansion around all sides of this original carhouse was constructed in 1921. In 1966 the facility was adapted for bus maintenance after the Bloor Danforth subway was constructed and streetcars were removed from Dannforth Avenue. In 2002 the bus facility moved to Scarborough. The building and lands have since then been used for storage and warehousing and subway staff dispatch offices. Portions of the original structure and particularly the skylight framing from 1915 remains in the centre of the complex and is considered the second oldest building in this part of the city.

In 2001, the TTC included the property in an initiative that identified TTC properties that might optimize revenue through the development of transit sites. No development happened because the property was used intensively for offices and storage.

In 2016, the local councillor, Mary-Margaret McMahon, initiated The Danforth Avenue Planning Study between Coxwell Avenue and Victoria Park. This study, which included heritage analysis and urban design guidelines was approved by City Council July 23, 2018. Further detailed urban design guidelines were approved by Council in June, 2019. In the study, the conclusions included future development height limits along the Danforth of 6 to 8 stories and that the Coxwell Barns should be a vibrant, multi-use community hub and an office employment priority area. Detailed information can be found at danforthstudy.com.

Following on the heels of the Danforth Study was a masterplanning exercise for the Coxwell Barns, initiated in early 2018. Many public meetings were held between July and December 2018. The master plan was presented to Council in June 2019. This master plan included potential building massing and uses including office, retail, residential and a future Toronto Police Services station. Detailed information can be found at danforthgarage.com.

In May, 2020 the property was included on a list presented to Council of potential affordable housing sites under Phase Two of the Housing Now initiative.

Architects were selected in early 2021 who are currently studying built form, mix of uses including an expanded library, office and residential, possible interim uses, scheduling, etc for future public presentations.