

Citizen politics, unlike party politics, does not seek to change government, but to improve it by watchfulness, oversight and advice.

—Ursula Franklin



Stay in touch with your neighbours by joining the Huron Sussex Residents Organization Google Group

The Google Group is a way to keep in touch via email, share resources (information and otherwise), and provide a network of support to our neighbours. To join, please email Corinna Li, HRSO Board Member and organizer of the Google Group at corinna89@gmail.com.

HRSO Herald

www.huronsussex.org



Holiday Issue

November 2020

Food Drive

December 1–15

One in seven Canadians are experiencing food insecurity during the pandemic. Please consider donating non-perishable food items to St. Thomas's Church, which hosts Friday evening meals for those in need. To minimize the number of deliveries the Church receives, please leave your non-perishable items in the marked boxes on the front porches of 10 Glen Morris St. and 36 Sussex Ave.

Donations of funds can be made on the Church's website here: www.stthomas.on.ca/givings-friday-food-ministry



The Huron-Sussex Community Garden

The Huron-Sussex Community Garden had a great 2020 season. The garden closed at the end of October 2020.

But dig In! Campus Agriculture ordered mulch to be shared between their organization and the Community Garden. It was delivered to the Garden and members are making good use of it.

We have a number of returning gardeners, as well as new gardeners who have expressed interest in membership for 2021.

Several of our members will be planting vegetables to overwinter, which will be harvested in late spring.



Ghoulies and Ghosties

On October 31, you may have seen kids and grown-ups looking high and low throughout the neighbourhood for cardboard pumpkins in windows, doors or stuck to various outdoor objects. They were taking part in the first ever Huron-Sussex Halloween scavenger hunt. After dark, real pumpkins lit up porches while kids in costumes roamed the streets and collected treat bags at two designated houses. Thanks to everyone who organized and participated in the Huron-Sussex safe Halloween.



New Developments in Huron Sussex

You have probably noticed a lot of ongoing construction in the neighbourhood. The Huron Sussex neighbourhood accommodates a number of uses - residential, institutional and commercial. This mix is a strength of our neighbourhood and we are pleased to see the new developments in Huron Sussex accommodating all types of users with new space for small businesses, modern rental housing for students and faculty, and improved study spaces at UTS and Robarts Library. Behind these projects, the HSRO is advocating for the overall interests of the neighbourhood by reviewing proposals, engaging with developers, and consulting with our City Councillor. Here are just a few recent updates:



University of Toronto Schools (UTS) Modernization

A multi-year modernization project is taking place at UTS (corner of Huron & Bloor), which includes creating new learning and activity spaces for this heritage school, as well as making rentable space available to the community for events.

For many years, the City supported a children's playground on this site—the only publicly accessible one in the neighbourhood. The UTS plan originally put the playground

out of commission for the duration of construction. In 2019, HSRO advocated for the relocation of the playground to a vacant lot across the street until construction is complete. With City Councillor Mike Layton's support, a temporary playground at Washington and Huron opened last fall. The playground will return to its original location when construction ends.

HSRO and our former City Councillor Joe Cressy also successfully negotiated with UTS and U of T to move the entrance to the parking garage and loading docks from Huron St. to Spadina Ave. This will reduce the amount of car traffic lessening traffic flow and enhancing the safety of our neighborhood streets.

409 Huron St.



A private re-development has been proposed to this property near Bloor St, which would expand the building in the back to create more rental housing units and restore the building brick walls and roofline.

HSRO has raised several issues with the developer and has engaged with the City of Toronto's Planning Department which is reviewing this proposal. Since the developer wants to have 90 rental units in the building, we want to ensure that the units are of livable sizes i.e. include bathtubs, full kitchens—rather than kitchenettes—and adequate storage.

Also, HSRO has been and will continue to be supportive of the existing residents on the site, making sure they are aware of any part of the

proposal that may negatively affect them, and helping them advocate for modifications to the proposal. We have flagged this issue with our local Councillor and MPP as well.

HSRO has also told the developer that it views the coach house at 100 bpNichol Lane as a significant heritage resource in the neighbourhood. The developer has responded by increasing the distance between the coach house and its development as well as by re-orienting windows that look out over the adjacent property.



New Graduate Student Residence

The University wants to build a new graduate student residence on Harbord St. HSRO participated in a Working Group with the City and the University. As a result, the University agreed to reduce the numbers of beds from 203 to 187 and to reduce the building height from 10 to 9 stories. At its Board meeting on September 9, 2020, HSRO endorsed the revised proposal.

HSRO will continue negotiating with respect to the impact on the public realm, outdoor space, public art and the development of the "Living Lane". HSRO Co-chair Julie Mathien noted that both the University's architects and the City Planning Department referenced the "Huron Sussex Neighbourhood Planning Study", developed by HSRO and the University, as a benchmark for development in our neighbourhood.

Huron-Sussex: Then & Now — 329 Huron St



February, 1911



November, 2020

Collaborating with Neighbouring Residents Associations: 78-90 Queen's Park



Together with neighbouring Residents Associations (RAs), HSRO is opposing the University's proposal for redevelopment at 78-90 Queen's Park. HSRO is not opposed to a new building at

this site but wants to see a building that is smaller in scale and complimentary to the heritage buildings surrounding it. HSRO is also advocating for better landscaping and a pedestrian-friendly connection between University Avenue and Philosopher's Walk. The RA coalition petitioned the Toronto Historical Board and the Toronto and East York Community Council to conduct a cultural heritage landscape study on the building site and the area around it. The study will go forward, and any TEYCC and/or City Council decision on the application is postponed until the study is complete. UofT has appealed to the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal. The hearing will take place in late 2021.

Ursula Franklin Street

HSRO is pleased to report that the portion of Russell Street which falls on U of T's St. George Campus was renamed after Dr. Ursula Franklin, a pioneering scientist and feminist. The effort to recognize Dr. Ursula Franklin was spearheaded by Michael Valpy. Mr. Valpy advocated for the celebration of Dr. Franklin, her values, research and contribution to the University of Toronto and broader academic community. Further, Mr. Valpy encouraged the University of Toronto, local Residents' Associations and the Toronto East York Community Council to reckon with the history of Peter Russell, for whom the street was originally named. Peter Russell, an official of Upper Canada, staunchly fought against abolition. Mr. Valpy presented his proposal for renaming this portion of Russell Street to the HSRO Board. HSRO wrote a letter of support for Mr. Valpy and petitioned the University of Toronto to consider the name change. The Toronto East York Community Council voted in March, 2020 to change the name of Russell Street. In June 2020, Russell Street was officially renamed Ursula Franklin Street.

The Kwong Centre for Mental Health and Wellness, 407 Huron St.



The Kwong Centre, developed by the Kwong Foundation and affiliated with Mt. Sinai Hospital, is almost ready to open. HSRO welcomes this Centre to our neighbourhood and supports the medical and social services it will provide for senior citizens.

For many years, 407 Huron functioned as a fraternity house and was in a serious state of

disrepair. The current development project has restored the house at the front of the building. Originally known as the "Thomas Wilson House", it was built for and originally occupied by a Toronto contractor and retailer of building materials. It is a rare example of Queen Anne revival design of the late 19th century.



Laneway Housing in Huron-Sussex

Huron-Sussex is the site of a new approach to housing in Toronto—two laneway houses and an infill house just north of Huron and Glen Morris. This pilot project is one of the recommendations of the Huron-Sussex Neighbourhood Planning Study to learn how this type of housing might work in the neighbourhood. Over time, the university may expand laneway housing as a way of providing intensification of an appropriate size and scale.

The houses are designed to be both net-zero energy and not-zero carbon. Solar panels produce electricity which is fed into the provincial grid, and heating and cooling is partially provided by geothermal energy through earth tubes buried under the buildings. Now complete and ready for occupancy, a new faculty family will move into the Huron St infill house within the next few months. They will be followed by student families in the laneway houses.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has interfered with the University's planned Open House. However, residents may take virtual tours of the buildings via links on our web site www.huronsussex.org. HSRO is looking forward to an online "lessons learned" community consultation on the new housing, which is planned to take place in 2021.

🌿 Mary Harpur 🌿



At the end of August, Mary Harpur, one of our long-term residents, moved from 39 Sussex Ave. to Nepean, Ontario just outside Ottawa. Mary and her dog "Mickey" now live in a one-storey house

with a garden, a short walk from where her youngest daughter lives with her family. Sadly for our community, we have lost another of the amazing and diverse artisans who populate our neighbourhood during the 1970's, 80's, 90's and into this century. Mary was an accomplished water colour artist; she also worked in a variety of other mediums. Mary's friends and neighbours in Huron-Sussex wish her happy times in her new home. We miss you Mary!

Are You New to the Neighbourhood?

Welcome to Huron-Sussex. We are the Huron-Sussex Residents' Organization (HSRO). Since 1968, we have advocated to keep Huron-Sussex, bounded by Harbord, Spadina, Bloor and St. George Streets, a viable residential neighbourhood in downtown Toronto. HSRO works with other local residents' organizations, the University of Toronto, and our city and provincial governments on community planning and tenant support. With the University, we developed the "Huron Sussex Neighbourhood Planning Study", which provides the foundation for the long-term future of Huron-Sussex.

Most buildings in Huron-Sussex were originally developed in the 1880s and are now owned by the University of Toronto; fourteen houses are privately owned. Residents of Huron-Sussex, most of whom rent, are a mix of long-term residents (many of whom have lived here for over 40 years), new or guest faculty and students. The balance between long-term and short-term residents is critical to the health of the neighbourhood.

Huron-Sussex is a social community. HSRO organizes community events. 2020 has been a challenging year, but we have had two family scavenger hunts, at Easter and on Halloween. These events allowed us to celebrate safely. This holiday season, please consider donating food or money to the Friday meal program at St Thomas's church.

We are particularly proud of our community garden at the corner of Huron and Glen Morris.

We welcome your participation in the neighbourhood by:

- Joining HSRO: Individual memberships are \$15.
- Volunteering to help with social events.
- Working on the community garden.
- Honing your journalism skills by working on our newsletter.
- Joining our Board of Directors and fully participating in the interesting and important things that we do.

If you are interested in joining, volunteering, have questions or have ideas for additional activities, please contact any of:

- Julie Mathien: jm@juliemathien.ca
- Zoë Newman: znewman@yorku.ca
- Danae Engle: danae.enge@gmail.com
- John Lang: langjb@sympatico.ca
- David Worts: dwords@jama.ca

Our government representatives for Huron-Sussex are:

- Government of Canada: Chrystia Freeland, MP
- Province of Ontario: Jessica Bell, MPP
- City of Toronto: Mike Layton, City Councillor