

Thoughts on the Entrepôt Van Horne

(I will write in English as I am a "historic Anglophone," and it is my right.) I strongly support the development of a mixed-use building in this space including a hotel and commercial enterprises. As a resident of Mile End for eight years, I have watched the growth of illegal Airbnbs, which have contributed to the ongoing housing shortage and have driven out lower income and vulnerable tenants. I lived next to two "ghost hotels" for three years, one of which was the site of a drive-by shooting: <https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/building-in-plateau-mont-royal-targeted-by-gunfire>. (Fortunately, no one was injured but it was still terrifying.) Both of these buildings' landlords eventually evicted the operators of the ghost hotels, but there are still problems with illegal Airbnbs in my neighbourhood. I see people carrying suitcases in and out of buildings, and outside the time it is legal to use one's primary residence as an Airbnb; operators simply claim to live there. There are very few other options for staying in the neighbourhood, despite an increasing number of tourists. A planned hotel at Laurier and Esplanade never materialized, a victim of the pandemic. The main proponents against this project at Van Horne claim we need social housing and artists' space. While I don't have anything against either option, this is not a good use of this particular building. It cannot be housing because of its location right next to the railroad, as has been repeatedly explained to them. As for artists' space, there are studios in that area already, all along Van Horne. The far more pressing need is a hotel that can be used by the tourists who visit Mile End—as well as by residents' family members from out of town!—which will help mitigate the growth of Airbnbs, which are a much bigger threat to lower income housing, in my opinion. So that is to say: a big YES from me for the current proposed plan. Thank you!