

EDITORIAL

More Retail-Centre discussion needed

The York University Development Corporation (YUDC) must stop being so secretive about its plans to build a commercial-retail centre on campus.

The university announced last month that it was studying the YUDC proposal for the project. The centre, which would be located just east of the Student Centre, would contain 48,000 square feet for stores, 28,000 square feet for the bookstore, and 55,000 square feet for offices and related Administration use. The centre would effectively replace Central Square, as existing retail outlets — plus additional stores — would be consolidated in the new building.

Unlike other projects in the Campus Concept Plan, such as the New Academic Building or Fine Arts Phase III, this project was not discussed openly. There should be community-wide discussion over such a major change to the face of the university.

The Student Centre proposal, for example, underwent eight months of discussion in order to determine the community's needs. Although there is a different consulting process for a student-run project, this does not give the university the right to exclude campus-wide involvement in other ventures.

Two years ago, YUDC placed a series of full-page advertisements in *Excalibur* informing the community about proposed campus development. In an October 1986 advertisement — under the heading "Campus Development: Your Views Are Needed" — YUDC outlined its commitment to encouraging dialogue and debate. Questionnaires and surveys were distributed, and student leaders met with YUDC planners and its advisory council — a formal body established for community discussion about campus development.

Suddenly, campus-wide discussion has ended, CYSF President Tammy Hassfeldt said that the Advisory Council hasn't met for months. In addition, the project was announced quietly — considering its size — with a two-paragraph blurb in the September 30 *York Builds* leaflet.

The YUDC must be more open with respect to a number of issues. For example, will the building be financially viable? YUDC Vice-President Greg Spearn said the corporation conducted a preliminary study that found that the campus could support 80,000-150,000 additional square feet of retail space. Unfortunately, he won't release the results of the study.

Even if the commercial-retail centre is feasible, the Student Centre Corporation (SCC) has legitimate concerns about its effect on Student Centre operations, as the commercial-retail centre plans to house a large food outlet. The SCC fear that this could harm its food court sales.

The building's design should also be discussed more openly. Many people care about what campus buildings look like. However, it seems that most people at York will never be given the chance to voice their opinions about the retail-centre.

In essence, the retail-commercial centre is a shopping mall. Is this appropriate for an academic institution?

Ultimately, is the building even necessary?

Ironically, there are a number of reasons why the building should be constructed. Moving retail outlets into another building will free up Central Square and will help deal with the university's shortfall of space. It will also help realize the Master Plan's priority of integrating the campus, as a covered colonnade will connect a number of buildings, and will draw Complex I closer to the centre of the campus. And if successful, the building will generate a substantial amount of money for the university in the long-run.

The YUDC no doubt has the university's best interests in mind, but the future of development on this campus cannot be decided by a handful of administrators. Campus-wide discussion must take place.



"Quick — put it away. They may want to talk about it."

We will publish, space permitting, letters under 250 words. They must be typed, triple-spaced, accompanied by writer's name and phone number. We may edit for length. Libellous material will be rejected. Deliver to 111 Central Square during business hours.

LETTERS

Reader still "in the dark"

The letter by C. Connolly (Oct. 13, "No church differences") shows that Connolly is still much in the dark about the claims of Christianity.

Connolly accuses religion of "playing on fear," attempting to dissipate fears about death and dying, and concurrently injecting fear in the unconscious (sic) threat that unbelief results in one not being saved.

Such statements ring of profound ignorance. I wonder if Connolly would as ardently organize a lynch mob to beseech the home of Pasteur when he offered to a population dying of varied diseases the discovery of immunization. Was he not playing on fear when he said believe me, immunize yourselves and be saved from death? Then there are the Connollys mobilizing riot squads against protesting environmentalists who claim that unless we stop polluting our environment, we will all die. Are they not playing on fear? My sympathy goes out for those such as Connolly whose unfortunate regression to the Dark Ages will ultimately contribute to the destruction of many.

True Christianity does not underscore the threat of death. Like the many who seek cures for human ailments and those who love our environment, Christianity maintains that death (both of the body, and more severely, of the soul) is a *natural* con-

sequence of our present actions. "All have sinned," "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23). Christianity defines sin as going our own way and not God's way, and seeks as its mandate to tell with compassion what God's way really is. The words of Jesus, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6) forms the basis for Christians telling others about "being saved" through Jesus, since in knowing Him intimately as a Friend, we come to have "peace with God" (Romans 5:1).

There are certainly always those who abuse that which is meant for good. Thus directing the misguided to knowledgeable sources would do them much good. For this reason, I would invite Connolly (and all who might think in the like manner) to the office of the Navigators or the *InterVarsity Christian Fellowship* (two Christians groups on Campus) in the Scott Religious Centre where much of what has been alluded to here will be better expounded.

Sincerely,
T. Quek

Supporting Dr. Holmes

Dear *Excalibur*,
As members of the York University community, we are writing *Excalibur* to bring to your attention the ongoing efforts of Dr. Holmes, and supporters, to protest his dismissal from this University and the dropping of

his courses on mystical teachings. In our view, it is essential that academic freedom be maintained at this university, and that administrators and department members recognize the needs and rights of students to be exposed to a broad minded range of subjects in our education.

Last year, *Excalibur* came out with two strong editorials in favour of Dr. Holmes, and collected a petition with almost a thousand names in support of his teaching and courses. Our hope is that the editors and reporters at *Excalibur* play an active role in following this case during this year, and again to help in supporting a petition. At least some of us have read Dr. Holmes' long letter of appeal and protest — "The Strange Case of Professor Z: On the struggle of Dr. Christopher Holmes for Academic Freedom at York University," and we feel that this case seems most important to maintaining the ideals for University life here at York.

—Sincerely,
Students concerned with the fate
of Professor Chris Holmes

Rec York responds

(Re: Letter to the editor entitled "Athletic Centre Discriminates," October 20th)

Dear Suzan:

As a female working and recreating in the Tait McKenzie building, I

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