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August 31, 2023

**Committee of Adjustment**  
Received | Reçu le

**2023-09-06**

City of Ottawa | Ville d'Ottawa  
**Comité de dérogation**

Committee of Adjustment  
101 Centrepointe Drive  
Ottawa, ON K2G 5K7  
[cofa@ottawa.ca](mailto:cofa@ottawa.ca)

Dear, Committee of Adjustment

**RE:** 360 Laurier Ave W, Ottawa -Committee of Adjustment Application

### **Background**

CLV Group Developments Inc., is pleased to submit an application to the Committee of Adjustment on behalf of the owner OTT A360 LAURIER PROPERTY FUND LIMITED PARTNERSHIP, by its General Partner, OTT A360 LAURIER PROPERTY GP INC. (OTT 360 GP) for the property municipally known as 360 Laurier Ave West.

The property is located in Ottawa's downtown. 360 Laurier Ave West is within a mixed-use neighbourhood known as Centretown. This is well established neighbourhood comprised of residential, retail and office uses with a strong focus on Federal office operations

Downtown Ottawa is rapidly changing, there has been a shift in workplace dynamics since COVID-19, making the work from home or hybrid working model increasingly popular. The Federal Government has made it clear that it will be disposing of a large chunk of their office inventory in Ottawa. Many of these buildings are currently vacant, while others are mostly vacant with some commercial uses still in operation. The predominance of impacted buildings by this workplace shift are older office buildings constructed some time between the 1950s-90s that are not typically seen as desirable office spaces for new businesses.

There is a growing concern for the number of vacant buildings and what this will mean for the downtown as time goes on. As a solution the City of Ottawa is embracing office to residential conversions and a SWAT team has been created to assess ways to speed up these conversions. In an effort to revitalize the downtown OTT 360 GP is looking to convert 360 Laurier Ave West from office to residential.

### **Proposal**

Currently there is an active Site Plan application (File # D07-12-23-0055) for this property. The proposal is for the adaptive reuse of the existing 11-storey commercial/office building located at 360 Laurier Avenue West. The 11-storey building will remain on site and undergo a renovation to



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convert it into a residential building. The mechanical penthouse area is proposed to be enlarged for rooftop amenities bringing the height to 12 storeys. A new mechanical penthouse, improvements to the façade, streetscape and interior of the building are also proposed.

The conversion will consist of 139 residential units and commercial space at grade to activate the frontage along Laurier Ave West. The unit mix will include studios, one (1) bedroom, one plus den (1.5), two (2) bedroom and two (2) plus den units. The objective for this proposal is to utilize as much of the existing building to make the project as sustainable as possible by reducing waste. The majority of the existing precast concrete panels will be maintained, lessening the architectural intervention while still adding subtle touches to add visual interest. As noted above, an additional level will be added which will strictly be used for amenity purposes. No residential units will be located on level 12. Amenities will be provided on the ground floor and rooftop level in the form of interior and exterior spaces.



Figure 1 - 360 Laurier Ave West Proposed Elevation

### **Official Plan**

The subject property is designated Downtown Core on Official Plan *Schedule A – Transect Policy Areas* and both Hub and Evolving Neighbourhood on *Official Plan Schedule B1— Downtown Core Transect*. This area is recognized as a main tourist destination within the City. The Downtown Core designation strives to create a vibrant community combining employment, government, retail, housing, entertainment, and cultural activities. It is a mature built environment with characteristics of high-density mixed uses, which are to be maintained and enhanced. Important objectives include improving the pedestrian environment, preserving character neighbourhoods, enhancing active transportation and providing a mix of uses. Sustainability and environmental features in the downtown are also encouraged to ensure climate resiliency.

The Hub designation is planned around existing or future rapid transit stations. Hubs include lands that are within up to a 600-metre radius or 800-metre walking distance from an existing or planned rapid transit station or major frequent street transit stop. Hubs are concentrated around higher density development with mixed uses to support public transit ridership. This designation is identified as a Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA). As noted, appropriate densities are critical to make transit (The LRT, bus routes) viable in this area. Residential and commercial are supported uses in a Hub designation.



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## **Secondary Plan**

The subject property also falls within the Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan. It is classified as Core on *Schedule A – Character Areas*. The Core's main objective is to promote activity in the City and within the downtown. Development should be designed to maximize activity by including lively and dynamic street frontages.

360 Laurier Avenue West is designated Downtown Mixed-Use on *Schedule B – Designation Plan*. This area requires a mix of uses, including residential and commercial which will contribute to the animation of the neighbourhood. This designation also supports lively and dynamic street frontages to ensure each property is contributing to the goal of keeping and encouraging activity in the downtown.

## **Zoning**

The subject property is zoned MD S25 (Mixed-Use Downtown), which permits a wide range of residential uses including high-rise apartments and commercial/retail. Conforming to the Official Plan, the intent of the Mixed-Use Downtown Zone is to support the Downtown Core, facilitate vibrancy and to activate the downtown with a variety of uses while protecting the visual integrity and symbolic primacy of the Parliament Buildings.

The conversion generally meets the intent of the By-Law, variances will be required to facilitate the conversion.

## **Variances Requested**

CLV Group Developments Inc. has pre-consulted with committee of adjustment staff in advance of this application. Comments were provided and have informed the variances noted below. The following variances will be required to facilitate the proposed conversion:

1. Section 193(2) – To permit 15% of the ground floor of the building to be occupied by one or more of the uses listed under Section 193(2), whereas the Zoning By-Law requires that at least 50% of the ground floor of any building must be occupied by one or more of the uses listed under Section 193(2).
2. Section 107(1)(a)(iii) - To permit a driveway providing access to a parking garage to have a minimum width of 4.4m metres for a double traffic lane, whereas the Zoning By-Law requires that a driveway providing access to a parking garage must have a minimum width of 6.0 metres.
3. Section 107(1)(c)(ii) - To permit a minimum aisle width providing access to parking spaces within a parking garage to be 4.4m metres, whereas the



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Zoning By-Law requires a minimum width of an aisle providing access to parking spaces angled at 90 degrees within a parking garage to be 6.0 metres,

4. Section 106(1) – To permit motor vehicle parking space size to be a minimum of 2.3 metres wide, whereas the Zoning By-Law requires motor vehicle parking spaces to be at least 2.6 metres wide.
5. Section 106(3)(c) – To permit a parking space with a minimum width of 2.3 metres when abutting a wall or column, whereas the Zoning By-Law requires a minimum width of a parking space abutting a wall or column to be 2.6 metres.
6. Section 106(3) – To permit 65% of the parking spaces in a parking lot or parking garage to be reduced to a minimum of 2.4 m wide, whereas the Zoning By-Law requires that up to 50% of the parking spaces in a parking lot or parking garage may be reduced to a minimum of 2.4m in width.
7. Section 107(1)(b) – To permit a minimum vertical clearance in a parking garage of 1.88m whereas the Zoning By-Law requires that all driveways and aisles providing access to or located within a parking garage must have a vertical clearance in accordance with the *Building Code* as amended of 2100mm (2.1m).
8. Section 111(9) – To eliminate the requirement for a 1.5 metre access aisle for bicycle parking spaces in the underground parking garage when it is located in front of a vehicle parking space, whereas the Zoning By-Law requires that all bicycle parking spaces must have access from an aisle having a minimum width of 1.5 metres.

### **The 4 Tests as Prescribed by Section 45(1) of the Planning Act:**

#### *Is it in keeping with the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan?*

The requested variances are in keeping with the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan (OP). The property is designated Hub and Evolving Neighbourhood in the OP and Core and Downtown Mixed-Use in the Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan. As noted above these designations strive to create a vibrant community inclusive of various uses such as residential. An objective of these designation is to focus on residential uses within walking access of rapid transit stations or major frequent street transit stops, both of which are nearby the subject property (bus routes Bank/ Slater Route, Parliament/ Bayshore Route, Carleton/ St-Laurent Route and LRT stations Lyon and Parliament).

360 Laurier Ave West is an existing building that will be converted from office to residential, it will still meet the vision outlined in the Official Plan

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but in different ways as it will now have a focus on the residential objectives. It will still achieve the vibrancy and animation that the Official Plans sets out for this neighbourhood by creating all day activity, something that is lacking in the downtown with the heavy office focus. Residents will be entering and exiting the building at all times of the day, instead of only during business hours.

The variances are required to bring the building into compliance with the current By-Law triggered by the change of use and evolving Zoning By-Law. Therefore, the variances requested meet the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan.

### Is it in keeping with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-Law?

Under the current By-Law the property is zoned MD S25 which permits a wide range of residential uses. The intent of the MD zone is to support the central area in the City for employment and shopping while complementing it with residential, cultural and entertainment uses.

Variance 1 is seeking relief on the required percentage of retail at the ground level. The intent of this section of the By-Law (Section 193(2)) is to enhance and activate the pedestrian-oriented environment at street level. The reduction of retail on the ground floor is a result of the change of use from office to residential. The existing footprint of the building is not changing therefore, all the important necessities needed to support a rental residential building must fit within this area. Some of these are required under the By-Law such as indoor bicycle parking spaces (that must be located on the ground floor), others are things such as a lobby, amenity, staff room, mail room, storage etc. which are crucial to support the residential use but may not have been needed when the building functioned as office.

The intent of this By-Law will still be met, as the frontage along Laurier Ave West will continue to be active. There are two proposed retail

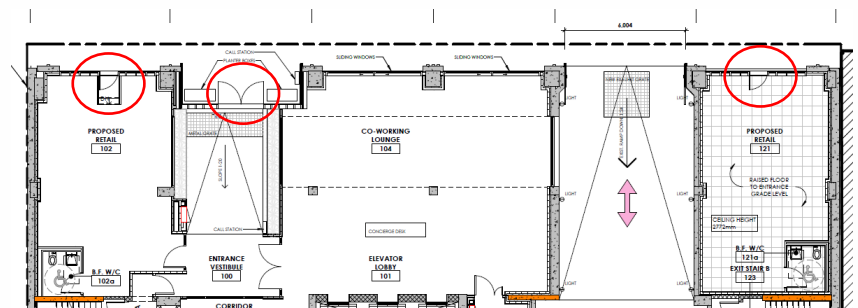


Figure 2 - Active frontages along Laurier Ave West

spaces on either end of the building, in between the retail will be amenity area and the front entrance. The amenity area will be well lit and visible to pedestrians walking along Laurier Ave all day. Additionally, all entrances

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into the retail spaces and building are located along Laurier Ave West, ensuring a fluid connection with the street front.

Variances 2-7 are related to existing conditions (drive aisle width, parking space minimums, drive aisle minimums, vertical clearance etc.), the underground parking garage is already built and has existed since the building was constructed in the 1960s. The changes required to meet the current By-Law would be significant, costly, and likely not possible with a conversion. As noted above, the proposed conversion is currently underway the site plan process, as part of this, a transportation engineer has been hired. They have provided some recommendations that will help to improve the conditions of the parking garage, these include convex mirrors for better visibility, bollards and appropriate signage.

Lastly, variance 8 is seeking relief of the 1.5 metre access aisle that is required for bicycle parking spaces, specifically in the underground parking garage and only for spaces

located directly in front of a vehicular parking spaces (Figure 2). It is important to note that the proposal is providing the minimum required bicycle parking spaces adhering to all the By-Law provisions. As part of the site plan application process staff advised, if possible, they would like to see an increase to the bicycle parking rate beyond the By-Law requirement of 0.5 spaces per unit. In an effort to achieve this and promote active transportation in Ottawa's downtown, 24 proposed bicycle parking spaces are contemplated in front of vehicular parking in the underground garage, with the potential for more. While these spaces do not have the 1.5 metre access aisle, we would ask both staff and the committee to consider these spaces acceptable as it will help to increase the overall count. It should be noted that these bicycle parking spaces will only be given to the residents parking in the vehicular space they are located in front of.

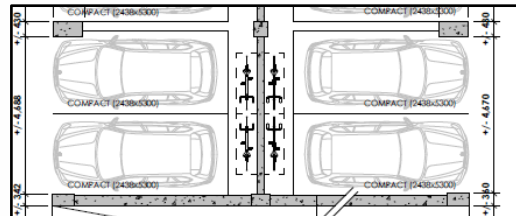


Figure 3 Example of bicycle parking located in front of vehicular parking space in the underground parking garage

possible, they would like to see an increase to the bicycle parking rate beyond the By-Law requirement of 0.5 spaces per unit. In an effort to achieve this and promote active transportation in Ottawa's downtown, 24 proposed bicycle parking spaces are contemplated in front of vehicular parking in the underground garage, with the potential for more. While these spaces do not have the 1.5 metre access aisle, we would ask both staff and the committee to consider these spaces acceptable as it will help to increase the overall count. It should be noted that these bicycle parking spaces will only be given to the residents parking in the vehicular space they are located in front of.

For the reasons noted above the proposed variances meet the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-Law.

### Is it desirable for the appropriate development or use of the land, building or structure?

The variances requested are considered desirable and appropriate for the building. The proposed change from office to residential will introduce much needed rental housing into a well-established neighbourhood, providing vibrancy and animation to the community. Residential uses are

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important for Ottawa's downtown to provide a mix of uses, and to ensure that there are eyes on the street at all times of the day and not only during business hours (9-5pm).

The variances will help to facilitate the adaptive re-use from office to residential. The building is already situated within the community, as such residents are familiar with the built form and there will be no adverse impacts therefore, the application is considered desirable and appropriate.

### *Is the application minor in nature?*

The variances requested are considered minor in nature as 360 Laurier Avenue West is an existing building that has been functioning for many years without any issues. The variances needed to facilitate the change in use from office to residential are mostly required to legalize existing conditions. The footprint and elevations of the conversion will not create any issues for abutting neighbours related to loss of sunlight, privacy, or views. All elements of the building will generally remain the same apart from some minor beautification of the building itself. The conversion will not change or create any negative impacts to access, parking, drainage, traffic, or noise beyond what was previously experienced when the building functioned as an office. It is an excellent way to add housing into the market with little impact. Therefore, the application is considered minor in nature.

### **Summary**

The proposed variances are a direct result of the existing building conditions and its change in use from office to residential. It was originally introduced into the community in the 1960s and is a familiar sighting for many. This conversion will be an asset for the neighbourhood and will offer much-needed rental housing to the Ottawa market.

We ask that the Committee please consider the above noted variances for 360 Laurier Avenue West. They are in keeping with the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan the Zoning By-Law, are desirable for the appropriate development and use of the building and are minor in nature.

Sincerely,

**Josie Tavares, MPI**

Senior Development Planner/Project Manager

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