

2023-09-28



MINOR VARIANCE APPLICATION

COMMENTS TO THE COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT

PANEL 1

PLANNING, REAL ESTATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Site Address: 360 Laurier Avenue West
Legal Description: Lots 28 and 29 Registered Plan 2996
File No.: D08-02-23/A-00221
Report Date: September 28, 2023
Hearing Date: October 4, 2023
Planner: Margot Linker
Official Plan Designation: Downtown Core, Mainstreet Corridor
Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan
Zoning: MD S25 (Mixed-Use Downtown Zone, Schedule 25)

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

The Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development Department **has no concerns with** the application.

DISCUSSION AND RATIONALE

At the February 22, 2023 City Council hearing, a motion was carried to support office to residential conversions to respond to challenges in the downtown and to meet residential growth targets. A cross departmental team was struck in accordance with the motion and recommendations to streamline office-to-residential conversion processes will be going to Planning and Housing Committee and Council this Fall.

Staff have reviewed the subject minor variance application against the “four tests” as outlined in Section 45 (1) of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990 c. P.13, as amended.

The subject site is located within the Downtown Core Transect policy area on Schedule A and designated Mainstreet Corridor on Schedule B1 in the Official Plan. The Downtown Core is planned to continue to develop as healthy 15-minute neighbourhoods within a highly mixed-use environment with a full range of services and high residential densities. The subject site is also located within a Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA), being less than 400 metres away from Lyon and Parliament O-Train Stations. The density target for this PMTSA is 350 dwellings per net hectare. The transportation network for the Downtown Core shall prioritize walking, cycling and transit over private motor vehicles. Having all active entrances of commercial or services uses on the

ground floor facing the Mainstreet is prioritized in order to maintain, extend, or create a continuous stretch of active frontages along a Mainstreet (6.2.2). The subject site is located within the Core Character Area and Designated Downtown Mixed-Use on Schedules A and B in the Central and East Downtown Secondary Plan. This area is the principal focal point of activity in the city and development in this area will provide continuous active uses and entrances along the ground floor frontage to contribute activity and animation to the public realm.

The subject site is zoned MD S25 (Mixed-Use Downtown Zone, Schedule 25), which generally supports the downtown area as a central place in the region for employment and shopping while also allowing residential, cultural and entertainment uses. This zone facilitates more intense, compatible and complementary development to ensure that the active, pedestrian-oriented environment at street level is sustained.

Staff have no concerns with the requested reduced commercial area on the ground floor. The general intent of the zoning provision is to have active uses and frontages along the street to help contribute to the activation and engagement directly with the public realm. This interaction will help meet the intent of the Official Plan, Secondary Plan, and Zoning By-law, as noted above. Staff recognize that this is an office to residential conversion and that a significant portion of the ground floor will be utilized to facilitate this conversion for a residential apartment building, including a lobby, bicycle parking, tenant storage, mail room, amenity area, etc. as well as the existing parking garage entrance. However, the applicant is proposing two retail spaces with entrances facing and engaging with the Mainstreet Corridor as well as a co-working lounge which, through discussions with City staff, will have sliding windows to increase interaction with the public realm. The main entrance to the residential units is also accessed from the Mainstreet, which will contribute to more foot traffic along this frontage. Staff believe that the efforts made by the applicant to maintain an active frontage meets the intent of this zoning provision.

Staff have no concerns with the requested reduced access to bicycle parking spaces for the spaces located in front of the parking stalls. The proposed development requires 70 bicycle parking spaces and provides 77 zoning compliant bicycle parking spaces on P4, P2, and level 1. Based on conversations with the applicant's agent, staff's understanding is that in order to provide excess bicycle parking for tenants given the bicycle-friendly location, 37 additional bicycle parking spaces are provided at parking stalls for the occupant of that parking stall (who can move their vehicle if required to access the bicycle).

Staff have no concerns with the requested variances associated with the vehicle parking spaces, driveways and aisles Staff understand that this existing parking garage has been used since the 1960s. Recognizing that several of the requested variances seek to address the existing conditions associated with the underground parking garage, staff appreciate the applicant's efforts to mitigate some of the potential safety issues by providing convex mirrors for better visibility, bollards and appropriate signage to support two-way vehicle movement.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Heritage Planning Branch

The subject property is located within 30 metres of a protected heritage property and was reviewed in accordance with Section 4.5.2 (2) of the Official Plan. Heritage Planning staff have no concerns with the proposal.



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