



Partners

Barry J. Hobin
OAA, FRAIC, Hon. Fellow AIA
Founding Partner

Wendy Brawley
OAA, MRAIC, Associate AIA

Douglas Brooks
Arch. Tech.

Marc Thivierge
OAA, MRAIC

Reinhard Vogel
Arch. Tech.

Rheal Labelle
M. Arch.

Dan Henhoeffler
Arch. Tech.

Melanie Lamontagne
OAA, MRAIC

Patrick Bisson
OAA, OAAQ, MRAIC

Hobin Architecture Incorporated

63 Pamilla Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1S 3K7

t 613-238-7200

f 613-235-2005

hobinarc.com

Committee of Adjustment

Received | Reçu le

Revised | Modifié le : 2024 - 08 -23

City of Ottawa | Ville d'Ottawa
Comité de dérogation

August 23, 2024

Committee of Adjustment
101 Centrepointe Drive
Nepean, ON K2G 5K7

Dear Committee Members:

RE: 290 Holmwood Avenue (Lot 89 & 90 of Registered Plan No.108654)

Please find the attached revised application for Minor Variances and consent at 290 Holmwood Avenue in the Glebe Neighbourhood. This urban property is located in the R3P[1474] zone and currently consists of two legal lots with one, single-detached dwelling that straddles both.

This is an underutilized urban lot with enough area and width that can accommodate 4 semi-detached dwelling units, as-of-right, in place of the existing single detached house. It was originally proposed to demolish the existing dwelling, to sever the lots into a total of four parcels, and construct two 3-storey, semi-detached dwellings; however, we encountered a road-block at the original hearing (October 2023):

On Part 3 (see site plan) there is a grouping of mature trees along the East lot line, some of which were within the proposed building footprint. One of these trees straddles the property line and therefore is jointly owned. The neighbour to the east, with shared ownership of this tree, has not agreed to its removal. Dendron Forestry services, who prepared the TIR for this file, has advised us to keep the whole grouping of trees to help maintain the stability of the shared tree. For this reason, we have changed the scope of our application.

We now propose demolishing the existing dwelling, severing the lots into a total of three parcels, and constructing one 3-storey, semi-detached dwelling on the lot 89 (Parts 1 & 2 on the draft R plan). Lot 90 (Part 3) will be left open for potential future development.

The design of the proposed semi-detached dwelling responds to challenging site conditions, notably a significant grade change of more than a full storey from the front of the property to the rear, and overhead hydro lines along the front of the property.

To date we have engaged with city planning staff, forestry staff, the ward councillor's office, the Glebe Community Association, and our immediate neighbours.



The proposed variances are:

- a) To permit a reduced minimum rear yard setback that is 25% of the lot depth (6.9m in this case) whereas the bylaw requires a rear yard setback of 30% of the lot depth (8.24m in this case). [Zoning By-law #2008-250: Section 144, Table 144A(iii)]
- b) To permit front steps/landing to extend to within 0.25m from the front lot line, whereas the bylaw requires that front steps be no closer than 0.6m, when at or below the first-floor level. [Zoning By-law #2008-250: Section 65, Table 65(5)(b)(i)]
- c) To permit a front-facing garage within the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay, where such a garage is not the dominant pattern of the Streetscape Character Analysis. The bylaw requires that within the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay, no such garage or carport is permitted except subject to the Streetscape Character Analysis and Table 140A [Zoning By-law #2008-250: Section 140, Table 140A].

Each of the proposed variances responds to the challenging site conditions and context.

For variance a) the discussion begins with the placement of the front yard setback. Due to the overhead hydro lines along the front, we set the front wall of the proposed dwellings at the maximum 3.0m front yard setback (rather than the 1.5m minimum). This allows us to meet the hydro clearances and allows enough front yard depth for the length of stair run needed to access the front entrance. The 3m front setback also more closely reflects the streetscape context. As the proposed front yard setback is 1.5m greater than the bylaw requires, the proposed reduction of the rear yard setback, by 1.34m, roughly corresponds with this. The purpose of the variance is to respond to context rather than to increase the buildable area of the proposed homes. The grade continues to rise towards the rear (south) lot line in the backyard with the help of an existing retaining wall. The grade elevation of the neighbouring rear properties is significantly higher than that of the subject property. This, as well as the presence of existing trees along the rear property line, helps to minimize the impact of this variance on the rear neighbors.

Variance b) is proposed to address the challenge of stair access to the principal entry on the steeply sloping site. The main living level is one storey above the street to allow for at-grade access to the higher rear yard. In addition to shifting the dwellings towards the rear (as per variance a) discussion above), we lowered the front entrance and den from the main living level by 3', but still require that the stair extend to 0.25m to the property line to allow enough room for all necessary steps and landings.

Variance c), to permit front facing garages, is also a response to the topography of the site. Where on a flat site it might be considered to provide a shared driveway to rear yard parking, the steep slope makes this impossible.



When looking at the character of the street, although not the majority, many dwelling units nearby have front facing attached garages. It is also worth noting that the existing house on this property has an attached, front-facing garage. To diminish their presence on the streetscape, we have recessed the garage doors under the front terraces (and further back from the front setback line). The garage door wall is also setback 0.6m from the edge of the front entrance landing (see site plan).

The proposed development meets the criteria in section 51 (24) of the Planning Act and further, we believe that the proposed application meets the four tests for minor variances:

- The variances are minor in nature.
- The variances are a desirable and appropriate use of the property.
- The general intent and purpose of the Zoning by-law is maintained, as the proposed variances are compatible with the existing pattern of the neighbourhood.
- The general intent and purpose of the Official Plan is maintained, as the proposed dwelling contributes to the development of a diverse urban neighbourhood.

As mentioned above, a challenge of the site's condition is the presence of many mature and aging trees. We have carefully considered the impact this development has on the site's existing trees. As it's currently an oversized lot with only one detached dwelling, there is a lot of vegetation on the site filling the vacant space. Our objective is to develop an underutilized urban site to a level of density that is reflected in the broader neighbourhood and the R3 zone. While this does require the removal of several mature trees, we have gone to great effort to retaining as many trees on site as possible. The reduced scope of the proposal, to one semi-detached dwelling, responds to feedback we've received and results in the retention of the group of trees along the east lot line. A replanting plan will bring several new trees to the site and in the community. We have engaged a professional arborist (Dendron Forestry Services), with city forestry staff and with our neighbours, and will continue to work with all parties to address the challenge of optimizing tree coverage, through as much tree retention and replacement as possible.

I trust the documentation submitted sufficiently demonstrates the rationale to require these minor variances.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Jennifer Adams
Hobin Architecture Inc.