

Re: Minor Variance Application – Section 45(1) Planning Act 1837 Maple Grove Road –  
Stonehouse Café & Lounge

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am the owner of the property located at 1837 Maple Grove Road, a historic limestone building dating to approximately 1886. The building is currently being restored and adaptively reused as Stonehouse Café & Lounge, a small-scale café and restaurant intended to serve the surrounding community.

I am seeking relief from the City of Ottawa Zoning By-law to permit a restaurant use with 9 on-site parking spaces, whereas 17 spaces are required based on the applicable parking provisions. This request reflects the physical constraints of the existing property and is necessary to enable the viable reuse of this historic structure without compromising its character or requiring disproportionate alterations to the site.

The proposed use will include indoor seating. While final detailed interior layouts will be refined following the approval process, the intent is to provide a modest amount of seating consistent with a low-intensity café and lounge environment. The concept does not include a drive-through component or high-turnover fast-food operation, and is instead designed to support moderate, staggered patronage.

The subject property is located within an established area of the city and contains an existing standalone building on a constrained lot that predates modern zoning requirements. A total of 9 parking spaces are proposed on-site, representing the maximum feasible parking supply without removing important site features or negatively impacting the heritage character of the property.

The property is situated within a dense suburban neighbourhood, where a significant portion of patrons are expected to be local residents arriving on foot. Walk-in traffic will form a meaningful component of the customer base. In addition, there is available street parking in the immediate vicinity that can accommodate overflow demand. The site is also located within a private street network, and a letter of support from the condominium board responsible for this private street has been included with the application, confirming no concerns with the proposed parking arrangement.

The requested variance meets the four tests under Section 45(1) of the Planning Act.

The variance is minor in nature. While there is a numerical reduction in required parking, the actual impact is limited. The scale of the building inherently restricts occupancy and parking demand, and the proposed use is not designed to generate high volumes of traffic. A portion of customers will arrive on foot due to the surrounding residential density, and available street parking provides additional capacity. The inclusion of support from the condominium board further demonstrates that no adverse impacts are anticipated.

The variance is desirable for the appropriate development and use of the land. It enables the adaptive reuse of a historic building, which is strongly supported by sound planning principles and municipal policy. The proposal preserves and activates a heritage structure, introduces a small-scale commercial use that serves the local community, and enhances the character of the area. Strict adherence to the parking requirement would either prevent the use or require site alterations that would negatively impact the property.

The variance maintains the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law. The intent of the parking provisions is to ensure that adequate parking is provided while minimizing impacts on surrounding properties. In this case, that intent is maintained through a combination of on-site parking, available street parking, walk-in patronage, and the modest scale of the proposed use.

The variance also maintains the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan. The proposal supports the adaptive reuse of an existing building, contributes to the development of a complete

and walkable community, and introduces a neighbourhood-serving commercial use within an established area. The Official Plan encourages context-sensitive development and recognizes that flexibility may be required to accommodate older buildings that cannot reasonably meet modern standards.

In addition, the building predates current zoning regulations and cannot reasonably accommodate the full parking requirement without significant and undesirable site changes. Expanding parking to meet the by-law would negatively impact the property and undermine its historic character. The proposed café and restaurant use is not parking-intensive relative to typical restaurant formats and is expected to generate a mix of walk-in and staggered visits rather than concentrated peak demand.

In conclusion, the requested variance to permit 9 parking spaces instead of the required 17 is minor, desirable for the appropriate use of the property, and maintains the intent of both the Zoning By-law and the Official Plan. The proposal represents a thoughtful and context-sensitive approach to revitalizing a historic building in a manner that benefits both the site and the surrounding community.

I respectfully request that the Committee approve the application.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Zachary Rodier Owner, Stonehouse Café & Lounge