

Committee of Adjustment Comments from Staff, Public and Agencies



Application Details

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| Application Number: | A-27/25 |
| Location: | 716 Gordon Street |
| Hearing Date: | March 13, 2025 |
| Owner: | 2319426 Ontario Inc. |
| Agent: | Rachel Bossie, GSP Group Inc. |
| Official Plan Designation: | High Density Residential- Site specific provision in section 9.12.3.5 |
| Zoning Designation: | Site-specific High Density Residential 7 (RH.7-4(PA)(H)) Zone |

By-Law Requirements:

The property is located in the Specialized High Density Residential 7 (RH.7-4(PA)(H)) Zone with parking adjustment and holding provisions. Variances from Table 6.34 of Zoning By-law (2023)-20790, as amended, are being requested.

The By-law requires:

- a) a maximum building length of 75 metres for buildings located within 15 metres of a street for the portion of the building adjacent to the street; and
- b) when a building(s) or portion thereof is within 15 metres of a street line, a minimum number of 1 active entrance for every 30 metres of street line shall be required for the portion of the building facing the street [total of 7 active entrances required along Gordon Street, and 4 active entrances required along Stone Road East].

Request: The applicant is seeking relief from the requirements of Zoning By-law (2023)- 20790, as amended, to permit:

- a) a maximum building length along Gordon Street of 184 metres for the proposed apartment building;
- b) a maximum building length along Stone Road East of 96 metres for the proposed apartment building;
- c) a minimum of 3 active entrances along Gordon Street for the proposed apartment building, without equal spacing between entrances; and
- d) a minimum of 1 active entrance for every 30 metres of street line along Stone Road East for the proposed apartment building, without equal spacing between entrances.

Staff Recommendation

Approval

Comments

Planning Services

The subject property is designated as “High Density Residential” in the Official Plan. The “High Density Residential” land use designation is aimed at permitting multiple unit residential buildings generally in the form of apartments. As the proposed variances would facilitate the development of a 532-unit apartment building, staff are satisfied that the proposal conforms with the intent of the Official Plan.

The subject property is zoned “Site-specific High Density Residential 7” (RH.7-4) according to Zoning By-law (2023)-20790, which permits the proposed apartment building use. Four variances are requested to two different zoning provisions to facilitate the proposal. The first two variances are to permit maximum building lengths of 184.0 metres along Gordon Street and 96.0 metres along Stone Road East, whereas the maximum permitted building length is 75.0 metres for portions of the building within 15.0 metres of a street. The third and fourth variances are to provide a minimum of 3 active entrances along Gordon Street without the need for equal spacing between entrances, and to permit active entrances on Stone Road East to likewise forgo the need for equal spacing between the entrances. The requirement is 1 active entrance per every 30.0 metres of the portion of the building facing the street line. Under this provision, the proposal would technically need 7 active entrances along Gordon Street where 3 are currently proposed, and 4 active entrances along Stone Road East where 4 are proposed. The intent of both provisions is to ensure that an appropriate transition in massing is provided to adjacent lower density buildings, as well as ensure adequate number and spacing of entrances to allow for a pedestrian-scaled building.

An Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment application for the subject property for a student housing redevelopment was originally refused by City Council and appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 2011. The OMB decision in 2013 set out a series of site-specific regulations that limited the density, heights, stepbacks, setbacks, and so on for a large student housing building with a 3-4 storey podium and four 6 – 11 storey towers. A site plan application and several resubmissions followed, but the site plan application was never finalized. On April 21, 2023, the owner applied for new Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to permit a similar, but higher density development, while generally keeping the same built form regulations and overall number of bedrooms permitted on site.

Because the applications were filed after the approval of the 2023 Zoning By-law on April 12, 2023, during staff review of the application, the applicant was advised by planning staff that despite the appeal of the 2023 Zoning By-law, the 2023 Zoning By-law would also need to be reviewed and amended accordingly, but the applicant

chose to only file amendments to the 1995 Zoning By-law. To assist the applicant, City staff recommended and brought forward those requested amendments into a 2023 Zoning By-law Amendment together with their recommendation to Council, but did not complete a review on behalf of the applicant to determine other needed specialized regulations under the 2023 Zoning By-law. These applications and by-laws were approved by Council on October 17, 2023, and no appeals were filed.

As anticipated, the 2023 Zoning By-law came into effect, save and except those regulations and site-specific properties that remain under appeal. The applicant has now identified additional regulations that need to be amended in the 2023 By-law for the applications to be able to proceed to site plan as proposed.

Through the previous Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment, the building was always anticipated to have two long facades, with additional site-specific regulations requiring a maximum podium height, and towers with specific stepbacks, floor plates and individual heights required to create variety within the facades in lieu of requiring multiple buildings and to create appropriate transitions to lower density adjacent uses. Planning staff further understand that additional active entrances were not desirable from a building programming and security standpoint, given the proposed student housing use.

While in other circumstances the proposed variances may not be considered minor, given the unique site history and additional existing site-specific regulations that shape the built form on site, the proposed variances can be considered minor and in conformity with the intent of the Zoning By-law.

Likewise, staff are satisfied that the proposal is desirable for the appropriate development of the land. The proposed apartment is a high density residential use in area that through the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, prioritize multiple unit residential buildings. Staff recommend approval of the application.

Engineering Services

Engineering has no concerns with the requested variance. We agree with the recommendations made by Planning and Building staff.

Building Services

Building Services has no concerns with the requested variances. Site Plan Approval is required for the proposed development where Building comments are provided. Building permits are required prior to any construction, at which time requirements under the Ontario Building Code will be reviewed.

Comments from the Public

None

Contact Information

Committee of Adjustment: City Hall, 1 Carden Street, Guelph ON N1H 3A1

519-822-1260 Extension 2524

cofa@guelph.ca

TTY: 519-826-9771

guelph.ca/cofa