

Action Sandy Hill

Planning Committee Meeting - Notes April 16, 2013

Present:

Planning Committee:

Sophie Beecher, Jane Gurr, Sam Almsaddi, Judy Rinfret, Larry Newman, Katherine Spencer-Ross

Community:

Yves Le Bouthillier, Karina Kraenzle, Louise Shaughnessy, Chad Rollins, Tom Laverty, Eugene Derenyi, Laurie Richards, Sam Armstrong, Ian Bekky, Martha Scott, Jeff Pulkinghorn, Camille Ainslie

Sophie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. 458 and 460 Nelson Street

Sophie provide an update and invited community members to add their comments:

- These properties are located adjacent to 466 Nelson and are being developed by the same owner, Mr. Triantafilos. He is proposing buildings like 466 Nelson for both properties, without the extra mezzanine. There are no variances required, thus no application to the Committee of Adjustment.
- Construction is scheduled to begin on May 1st. The owner will be required to pay "Cash in lieu of parking."
- ASH has issues with the aesthetics and bulk of the building; it is too big for the property, evidenced by the cantilevering in the design. The basement staircase is very close to the property line. Also, the owner is planning to cut down a large tree, which is problematic.
- Bike parking is planned for the front of the building, on the lawn. In principle bike parking is good, but ASH will object to plans for front-yard bike parking.
- There are many concerns about the possibility of a shadow effect on the neighbouring properties and loss of privacy that may arise as a result of a rooftop deck. Access to the deck appears to be via one unit.
- Eugene indicated that there has been no consultation with immediate neighbours. ASH is also concerned about this.
- Four apartments with four bedrooms in each unit are planned.
- The owner is required to go through site plan light for the project. Sophie clarified that

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while no public consultations are required for the site plan light, ASH's Planning Committee can comment. The Councillor must indicate his approval of the project and won't do so until he gets a green light from ASH. The Councillor has indicated this will be his process.

- Eugene added that the planner from the City says that technical arguments can be submitted but the deadline is tomorrow (April 17th). Eugene intends to submit comments and encouraged others to do so as well, and to include comments about the large increase in density as a result of these two developments. It is problematic that the community and ASH were not aware of the close of the comment period.
- Discussion of the two properties gave rise to a general discussion about the site plan lite process. City officials are not well briefed about the process and this is causing problems, an example of which is 45 Blackburn. Those present were encouraged to add this point to any comments they will be submitting.
- Other issues raised concerning the project: potential foundation issues pertaining to the silty clay 'soil' under the building. Will result in surrounding trees being cut off from hydration, as a result of the building coverage; the mechanical area stairs is above the 11m height limit; and, the balcony in the front does not respect the front-yard set back.
- We can question if these are real conversions or not.
- Sophie will draft the ASH comments and send them to the Councillor's office before the deadline, and will address the process issue with the Councillor's office.
- Community members present will email the Councillor independently, copying Mat Genest and ASH and the Mayor's Office. Judy will send a submission to the planner as well.

2. 560 Rideau

Sophie provided an update on ASH's position regarding 560 Rideau. Written comments have been prepared and circulated for comments to the Planning Committee. They will be submitted to the City when the comment period is open. A summary of the comments as they stand:

- The proposed front plaza and one-story podiums are positive aspects of the project though they will need to be well planned, lit and in the case of the plaza, landscaped.
- The effort to provide a diversity of buildings and heights in the project is good and the

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choice of a four storey building for the Besserer lot is appropriate and will suit the street scape.

- We also like the difference in height between the two larger buildings, and find the slim tower on the corner and the lower profile in the middle of the block to be a welcome contrast.
- The five storey podium on the two Rideau street buildings is inappropriate for a traditional main street context. A four storey podium would provide more of a human scale, the height of the podium should not exceed the height of an average traditional main street building.
- The proposed tower is too high and needs to be brought back down to be compatible with the context.
- The design of the building is too generic and does not reflect the character of the neighbourhood. Some design and architectural features are missing to make the building special to SH.
- The façades need to have period breaks in them, with various textures and many doors directly onto the street to mirror the look and feel of a traditional main street.

Community members raised a number of issues with the project, including density (it has increase to 4.4) the height of the tower that is proposed and the fact that the project does not conform to the City's traditional main street vision for Rideau Street and the Uptown Rideau Community Design Plan. They would like ASH to support the OMB decision, which the community fought for, limiting the height of the largest tower to nine stories. Sophie indicated that ASH's position is in alignment with this point of view, and that the paragraph on height would be reworded in a way that avoids suggesting an appropriate height, but that instead refers to the OMB decision, the Uptown Rideau CDP and the SH Secondary Plan.

Sophie will draft comments on the project to be voted on by ASH's Board and strongly encouraged everyone to send their own comments. Official ASH comments will be posted on the website as soon as they're ready.

3. Draft policy paper to justify the need for a Community Design Plan (CDP) in Sandy Hill

It was reported that:

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- Sophie and Christopher met with members of the Planning Department recently. They asked whether a CDP for Sandy Hill would be the proper tool to bring changes to the neighbourhood, but were told that Sandy Hill would be at the bottom of the priority list, since the City is concentrating its funding on CDPs on neighbourhoods where the LRT will lead to significant intensification. CDPs take years to accomplish and are not a legally binding documents. In addition, it is unlikely that a visioning exercising will lead to the zoning changes that are needed as soon as possible in SH to stop the flow of bad developments, and would not be done in a timely manner to address the problem. It was agreed that we should focus on getting changes to the zoning as quickly as possible in SH, and that we can complete the overall portrait with the help of a visioning exercise afterwards, when SH's turn comes up in the list.
- The Infill Study Part 2 will be starting soon and SH will be particularly engaged as a neighbourhood where new developments are often problematic. The Councillor and the City have agreed that SH should be a particular focus of the study (as a special case). The Councillor suggests that the study be the main vehicle for the study of zoning in SH and on which to base proposed amendments to the zoning. It is on a quick timeline for community consultation, probably June, with zoning changes by December of this year. Sophie and Christopher made it very clear that any results and changes from the study should equally apply to conversion in SH, since that is where the problem is.
- The ASH Planning Committee will focus on participation in the Infill Study Part 2 and try to push for desired results for SH through it.
- The Councillor is also working with City Planning on the definition of a rooming house and will make recommendations to broaden the definition, which should help with enforcement and inclusion of de facto rooming houses.
- Sophie and Christopher put forward the idea of an Interim Control Bylaw and informed the City and the Councillor that a similar bylaw was successfully imposed in London Ontario to deal with conversion in the student ghetto some years ago. They were informed by the City and the Councillor that such a measure would be extremely radical and raise the risk of liability for the City – Although they said they would look at the Court decision on the London bylaw, they didn't think that such a control measure was feasible in Ottawa.

The following was discussed:

- The consensus seemed to be that we needed the zoning to be changed to prevent both conversions and new buildings that were not compatible with the neighbourhood, to save the character of SH and prevent the exodus of families. The preference would be

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for a significant downzoning. An interim control bylaw was also discussed as a possibility that the City should consider.

- Judy, who had circulated interim control by law information and a strong suggestions to support same, said that an interim control by law had been effected in Sandy Hill (re social housing) fairly recently and she also recalls another one imposed in Ottawa South a few years ago so interim control by laws have certainly been successfully applied in Ottawa.
- Tom Lavery indicated that when he worked for the City in the 1990's that there were downzoning changes made.
- Judy agreed to do some research re zoning history of Sandy Hill.
- Many around the table expressed the desire to be involved in the ongoing work on these issues and the idea of a community committee for increased involvement and consultation of the community at large, was suggested.