



June 25, 2019

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296 Somerset St. - D07-12-18-0113

M. Renaud:

ASH has reviewed the subject proposal and offers the following comments and suggestions.

1. On the block of the subject property, there are 3 apartment buildings and 1 townhouse of three storeys, and the remaining 9 properties are 2 storeys high. Therefore, contrary to the statement in para. 2 on page 2 of the Planning Rationale, this area of Somerset Street does not comprise “predominantly of two to three-storey buildings”, but of two-storey buildings. This also means that the statement on page 3, “The development represents an opportunity for intensification through redevelopment in a manner which is compatible with the existing scale of development along Somerset Street, particularly in terms of density, building height and overall massing” is false on all three counts. The same applies to the statement on page 5 “The development responds to design and compatibility objectives of the Official Plan by proposing a three-storey apartment dwelling which is compatible with the surrounding low-rise development in terms of scale, form and use.” It is impossible for the scale and use to be compatible when the majority of buildings in the near area are not the same scale and none is used for commercial purposes. The same comment applies to the statements “the proposal supports the policies of the Secondary Plan regarding site development which aim to ensure new development is compatible with existing adjacent development in terms of scale, form, proportion and spatial arrangement ...” and “The proposed three-storey massing is consistent with the built form along Somerset Street and will not adversely affect adjacent development.”
2. Also incorrect and in fact contrary to the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan, is the statement “The proposal conforms to the policies of the Secondary Plan which support the preservation of Sandy Hill as a primarily residential neighbourhood, while also providing for a complementary small-scale commercial use to serve the immediate residential area.” The Secondary Plan does not treat small-scale commercial use. Further stating that “The development contributes the variety of housing options within Sandy Hill to accommodate a broad range of socio-economic groups.” is another complete exaggeration as the sizes of the bedrooms proposed in this development barely fit beds, never mind other furniture or supplies typically used by families, for example.



3. The quantity of brick proposed is in no way equivalent to the cladding used on nearby properties, and therefore token. None of the other materials proposed is evident in neighbouring design. On the contrary, the architect has ignored common and interesting architectural elements including window and door frame design, and roof edge decoration. No attempt has been made to complement the existing design fabric of the street. Therefore the statement on page 6 "... the selection of materiality is responsive to adjacent buildings and includes accents to create interest along the façade. The proposal supports the policies of the Official Plan relating to both land use and urban design objectives." is not substantiated in any way.
4. We fail to see how "The building incorporates key streetscape, landscaping and built form design elements to enhance the development." Nothing in this building design reflects any element of the streetscape, and makes no attempt to do so. Further, a statement such as "Emphasis is placed on the street façade, particularly the ground floor commercial space, and accessible pedestrian walkways are provided to create an inviting environment." serves no design or compatibility purpose – all buildings facing a street have a façade and pedestrian walkways (presumably this term means a path to the front doors, how unusual is that?). Overall, there is no presentation of fact in this proposal that could possibly support the statement "The proposed development respects the character along Somerset Street in terms of the built form and streetscape and supports the design objectives of the low-rise infill housing guidelines." as absolutely no comparators are made with the design of neighbouring buildings.
5. We eagerly await the results of the Streetscape Character Analysis, which we foresee will only be able to show how incompatible the design of this proposed development is with its neighbours on Somerset St.
6. We strongly object to any external stairway, which must be included in the interior of the building.
7. To fit in with neighbouring residences, lighting should be subtle and near the entrance ways. There is no need to light all the building walls, a mistake made on similar new buildings one block west highlighting their non-compatibility with their neighbours.
8. We wonder how will the owner prevent parking in the backyard, which is "communal amenity area", given the laneway access and no provided parking for residents or clients of the proposed commercial space?
9. The Official Plan states that the design should 'accommodate the needs of a range of people of different incomes and lifestyles at various stages in the life cycle.' This development is a 4-unit 16 bedroom building aimed specifically at students. This proposal does not address the shortage of



accommodation for the missing middle in Sandy Hill, and exacerbates the gap that is appearing in our neighbourhood where no new developments are being built for the missing middle.

10. This development would not be attractive to families as storage is limited, and the size of the living spaces is not conducive to family or disabled resident living as they are barely bigger than the bedrooms. The four bedrooms would be too many for a young professional or a couple. It does not allow for a range of socio-economic groups. In addition, the building code with respect to one larger bedroom compared to others does not appear to be followed and the City needs to verify this.
11. We trust the City will measure to ensure the 30% soft landscaping rule is followed, and that all trees along the property line will be fully protected at all times during any demolition or construction.
12. We trust the City will require private garbage pickup.

Overall, this development is unacceptable and requires a complete re-design to serve the purposes of all populations seeking rental accommodation. We request that all these comments are shared with the developer.

We look forward to seeing the next iteration of the development application, and plans.

Please do not hesitate to contact ASH with any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Susan Young' in a cursive script.

Susan Young
President, Action Sandy Hill