



SANDY HILL • CÔTE-DE-SABLE

250 Somerset St. East | 250, rue Somerset Est Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6V6

Jennifer Kluge, Planner
City of Ottawa
613-580-2424 x27184

Re: Application D02-02-19-0027

Dear Ms. Kluge,

Action Sandy Hill (ASH) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-led, community association, incorporated in 1969, that represents and promotes the interests of Sandy Hill and its residents. ASH appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed zoning by-law amendment to permit the conversion of the existing three-unit, 19-bedroom dwelling at 515 Chapel Street into a 7-unit low-rise apartment dwelling. In June of 2018, ASH supported a bunkhouse rehabilitation workshop to explore ways in which the bunkhouse at 515 Chapel Street could be ‘revised’ into better housing for a more diverse tenancy. The workshop responded to the strong desire among community members to contribute their ideas toward repurposing bunkhouses. At the time of the workshop, its participants, a selection of community members assisted by Carleton University architecture and heritage conservation students, were willing to entertain allowing the rezoning to turn 515 Chapel from a bunkhouse to a low-rise apartment building, provided that the community-led design, indicated in the landscape plan and an artist rendering provided to the proponent is implemented.

Since that time, other community members, some of them close neighbours to the property, have spoken in opposition to the project, fearing that it effects a sleight-of-hand. They fear that the increased units will expose the property to greater densification in the future or that this would create a dangerous precedent. They want assurances that the number of bedrooms allowable on this property will be capped. This is a reasonable ask, especially given that the building is out of scale and character for the streetscape. Indeed, knowing that the addition wouldn’t be allowable today doesn’t help us rectify the error of the past. Focussing on what is, we do not oppose the rezoning application. We do so for the following reasons:

- The proposal provides for 2 and 3 bedroom units, which are in short supply in Sandy Hill, and which will support a broader and more diverse demographic than do 6-bedroom units.
- As a pilot project, and if successful, the conversion will demonstrate that bunkhouses can feasibly be converted to more habitable housing.
- Such project may contribute to bringing the ‘missing middle’ back to Sandy Hill, restoring our diversity and even countering the ‘flight’ of long term residents we are seeing as a trend in our community.

That is not to suggest any kind of glowing endorsement of the project. Rather, ASH exhorts the City of Ottawa to be vigilant in reviewing development applications so that the burden of making compromises such that rezoning to allow an apartment that should never have been built can pro-

ceed does not fall on our shoulders again. Sandy Hill residents are forced to choose between living with bunkhouses and their attendant problems (overcrowding, noise, garbage from nearly 2,800 new bedrooms added to our neighbourhood in the last 7 years) and incentivising landlords to make even greater profits from them by converting them into better units. Even if the latter benefits Sandy Hill in the long run, you can appreciate that it is a hard pill to swallow for residents who have long had to deal with the effects of predatory developers and landlords. We certainly shouldn't have to worry about the possibility that one-off community-supported conversions be exploited in the future through non-conforming rights.

For that reason, we ask that the following conditions be part of the approval of the application

- site-specific performance standards be applied to the property to ensure that in the event the existing building is demolished in whole or in part in the future, for whatever reason, that it cannot be rebuilt within a larger building envelope than what is currently there and cannot house a greater number of bedrooms than the 19 proposed, and that
- these standards should restrict any internal reconfiguration of the property to increase the number of bedrooms therein.

Also, we echo the sentiments of many residents in asserting that the zoning amendment must not establish a precedent for other properties. We wish that it be acknowledged that the proposal is part of a pilot intended to study the short and mid-term effects of bunkhouse conversion to a 2 and 3-bedroom apartment building, not a means for landlords to create further density (a stepping stone to a greater number of units, allowing an increase in bedrooms and so on and so forth).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Young".

Susan Young
President, Action Sandy Hill

cc Mathieu Fleury, Councillor, Ward 12