



STAFF REPORT

Committee of Adjustment Application

Date:	November 13, 2014
To:	Chair and Committee Members of the Committee of Adjustment Scarborough Panel
From:	Director, Community Planning, Scarborough District
Wards:	Ward 36- Scarborough Southwest
Reference:	File No's A229/14SC & A230/14SC Addresses: 13 Queensbury Avenue (A229/14SC) & 15 Queensbury Avenue (A230/14SC) Files to be heard: November 20, 2014

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that the Committee **refuse the applications** in order to protect the neighbourhood's existing physical character and avoid setting a negative precedent for the redevelopment of similar properties on the street.

APPLICATION

The applicant proposes to demolish each of the existing 1-storey semi-detached houses on 13 & 15 Queensbury Avenue (the "Subject Properties") and replace them with a pair of 2-storey detached houses. The houses each contain a garage at the basement level given the grade change along the street. The applicant has requested variances to permit increased density and coverage for each proposed house, as well as a reduced front yard setback for the house at 15 Queensbury Avenue. The variances requested are as follows:

13 Queensbury Avenue (A229/14SC)

By-law 569-2013 and By-law 8786

1. The proposed coverage is 47.5% of the lot area.
Whereas the maximum permitted coverage is 33% of the lot area.
2. The proposed floor area is 0.869 times the lot area (202 square metres).
Whereas the maximum permitted floor area is 0.6 times the lot area (139.97 square metres) or 204 square metres.

15 Queensbury Avenue (A230/14SC)

By-law 569-2013

1. The proposed front yard setback is 5.01 metres.
Whereas the minimum required front yard setback is 7.105 metres.

By-law 569-2013 and By-law 8786

2. The proposed floor area is 0.86 times the lot area (198.704 square metres).
Whereas the maximum permitted floor area is 0.6 times the lot area (139.24 square metres) or 204 square metres.
3. The proposed coverage is 46% of the lot area.
Whereas the maximum permitted coverage is 33% of the lot area.

By-law 8786

4. The proposed front yard setback is 5.01 metres.
Whereas the minimum required front yard setback is 6 metres.

COMMENTS

Location & Neighbourhood Character

13 & 15 Queensbury Avenue (the "Subject Properties") are located on the east side of Queensbury Avenue, north of Kingston Road and west of Warden Avenue in the Birchcliff Community. Queensbury Avenue is a mature street a short distance north of the Toronto Hunt Club and the Scarborough waterfront. The streetscape has changed considerably over many decades, and is characterized by mature trees and a diverse mixture of 1 and 2-storey houses of different ages and styles constructed on narrow lots. The street has an eclectic character, but houses are consistently small in scale due to the street's narrow frontages and small lot areas.

The Subject Properties each have a frontage of 7.5 metres (25 feet), a depth of 30 metres (100 feet) and are elevated over a metre above the level of the street (see Attachment 1- context map and streetscape views).

The Proposal does not meet the intent and purpose of the Official Plan

The Subject Properties are designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan. *Neighbourhoods* are defined as physically stable areas made up of residential uses in lower scale buildings such as detached houses and semi-detached houses. The Official Plan requires that physical changes to *Neighbourhoods* be sensitive, gradual, and generally "fit" the existing physical character. *Neighbourhoods* development criteria specify that new development maintain existing physical patterns, in particular the heights, massing, scale and dwelling type of nearby residential properties and patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space.

The density of each of the proposed dwellings significantly exceeds the Zoning By-law limit of 0.60 times the lot area. The proposed house at 13 Queensbury Avenue is 62 square metres (668 square feet) larger than the Zoning By-law permits, and has an overall density of approximately

0.87 times the lot area. The proposed house at 15 Queensbury Avenue is 59 square metres (640 square feet) larger than the Zoning By-law permits, with an overall density of 0.86 times the area of the lot. The proposed increase in density is not sensitive or gradual compared with the existing and recent approvals and does not translate into a built form that reinforces existing physical patterns. For example, the applicant has chosen to re-grade the front yards of the proposed houses and remove most soft landscaping to allow for a basement level garage. This design choice means that the houses will appear to be 3-storeys tall, which is unusual for this street.

The Proposal does not meet the intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law

The Subject Properties are zoned Residential Detached Zone (RD) under the City-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 and zoned Single Family Residential Zone (S) in the Birchcliff Community Zoning By-law 8786.

The Zoning By-law establishes a maximum building coverage and floor area (density) requirement for the following reasons:

- To discourage overbuilding of the site;
- To maintain an appropriate built form and scale within the neighbourhood;
- To preserve an adequate area for landscaping, drainage, and outdoor amenity space;
- To ensure that new houses maintain a consistent proportion to the lots they occupy.

Planning staff reviewed Committee of Adjustment decisions and the recorded densities of existing houses on the street to determine whether the proposed densities fit with the existing or emerging context. The average density of all houses on the street is approximately 0.37 times the lot area, and there are no houses on the street with a density higher than 0.76 times the lot area.

In 2000, the Committee of Adjustment approved a comparable application for two new single detached dwellings on the identically sized properties directly south (11A & 11B Queensbury Avenue, A216/00SC). Each dwelling had a density of 0.66 times the lot area and total floor areas of 153 square metres (1,650 square feet), which is substantially smaller than the proposed dwellings.

Houses with a density or coverage at or below the Zoning By-law standard typically have greater amounts of front and rear yard open space and landscaping, or larger side yard setbacks, all of which contribute to the physical character of the street. The proposed houses do not maintain an appropriate scale within the neighbourhood, and result in reduced front yard landscaping and rear yard amenity space.

Conclusion

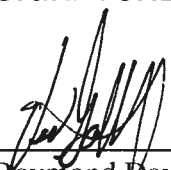
If approved, the proposed variances to both density and coverage would be the highest on the street and would result in a pair of houses that do not respect either the existing or emerging physical character of the area. The street includes over 30 properties occupied by aging 1-storey bungalows. Approval of the application would signal a new precedent for density and coverage that might be used to justify redevelopment proposals these lots, gradually destabilizing the

neighbourhood. Therefore, Planning staff recommend that the Committee of Adjustment refuse the applications to protect the existing character and avoid setting a negative precedent for the street and surrounding area.

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SIGNATURE

for  _____
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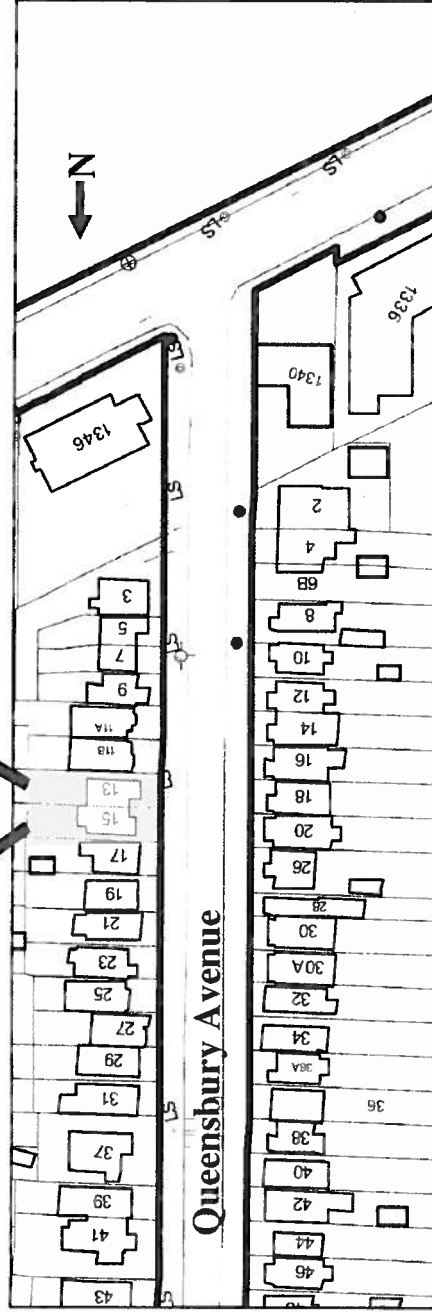
Attachments:

Attachment 1- Context map and streetscape views

Attachment 1- Context Map and streetscape views



Queensbury Avenue- east side (panoramic view)



Queensbury Avenue- west side, directly opposite to Subject Properties (panoramic view)