26-40 Birch Avenue – Zoning By-law Amendment Application – Final Report

Date: September 24, 2019
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards: Ward 12 - Toronto-St. Paul's

Planning Application Number: 18 212287 STE 22 OZ

SUMMARY

This application proposes to amend the Zoning By-law to permit a 4-storey (13.4 metres plus 2.7-metre rooftop staircase enclosure) stacked, back-to-back townhouse building with 27 dwelling units and 56 parking spaces within a 1-level below ground garage at 26-40 Birch Avenue.

The proposed development is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014), conforms with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019), conforms with all relevant policies of the Official Plan and the Yonge-St. Clair Secondary Plan, and is consistent with the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Building Guidelines. The proposed development conforms with the development criteria for Neighbourhoods policies and fits within the existing and planned context of the neighbourhood.

This report reviews and recommends approval of the application to amend the Zoning By-law.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council amend Zoning By-law 438-86, for the lands at 26-40 Birch Avenue substantially in accordance with the draft Zoning By-law Amendment attached as Attachment No. 5 to the report dated September 24, 2019 from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District.

2. City Council amend City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 for the lands at 26-40 Birch Avenue substantially in accordance with the draft Zoning By-law Amendment attached as Attachment No. 6 to the report dated September 24, 2019 from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District.
3. City Council authorizes the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the draft Zoning By-law Amendment as may be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

A Preliminary Report on the application was adopted by Toronto and East York Community Council on February 14, 2019. The Preliminary Report from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District dated January 28, 2019 can be found at the following link: http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.TE3.66

At its meeting on July 16, 17 and 18, 2019, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report to the Planning and Housing Committee in the fourth quarter of 2019 on options and a timeline to increase housing options and planning permissions in areas of Toronto designated as Neighbourhoods in Toronto’s Official Plan. The motion introduced at City Council specifically refers to expanding permissions for "The Missing Middle" in building types ranging from duplexes to walk-up apartments as a form of gentle growth within Neighbourhoods.

CONSULTATION WITH APPLICANT

Pre-application meetings were held on February 5, 2018 and June 25, 2018. The focus of discussion at the meetings was the proposal's conformity with the Official Plan and consistency with the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Building Guidelines.

The Zoning By-law Amendment application was submitted on August 20, 2018. A Notice of Complete Application was sent on September 20, 2018 deeming the application complete as of August 20, 2018.

After the submission of the application, consultation meetings with the applicant were held throughout 2018 and 2019 to discuss concerns and resolve issues identified during the review of the application.

SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The subject site is located on the north side of Birch Avenue, west of Yonge Street. Birch Avenue is a street with a diverse character comprised of a variety of uses and building types, including residential buildings, a school, a public park, a day care and commercial, and includes both Neighbourhoods and Mixed Use Areas land use designations.
The subject site was most recently used for institutional purposes within two buildings, consisting of a 1-storey building located in the front southeast corner of the site, a 2-storey building located in the rear northwest corner, and a surface parking lot. The subject site is a regularly shaped rectangular with a frontage of 62.32 metres along Birch Avenue, a depth of 41.85 metres and a site area of 2,610.52 square metres.

The subject site slopes up from the street to the rear lot line. Along the rear lot line is retaining wall which separates the subject site from the rear yards of the properties along the south side of Alcorn Avenue, which are approximately 1.0 metres above the elevation of the subject site.

Uses and structures near the site include:

**North:** of the subject site, abutting the rear property line are 19-41 Alcorn Avenue. 19 Alcorn Avenue is a surface parking lot associated with a 3-storey commercial office building on the north side of Alcorn Avenue at 10 Alcorn Avenue. The properties located at 21-39 Alcorn Avenue consist of 2- and 3-storey townhouses. 41 Alcorn Avenue is a 2-storey detached house with a below grade integral garage. East of 19 Alcorn Avenue are 15A–17C Alcorn Avenue which include 3-storey townhouses with at-grade integral garages. Adjacent to 41 Alcorn Avenue is also a 2-storey detached house with a below-grade integral garage.

Further north are generally 2- and 3-storey residential buildings, including detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, and townhouse blocks behind townhouse blocks separated by a private driveway.

To the Northeast, along Yonge Street, is a mix of 2 to 6 storey commercial office, retail, institutional buildings, and low-rise residential buildings.

**South:** of the subject site is Birch Avenue, a two lane local road extending west from Yonge Street, terminating in a cul-de-sac east of Oaklands Avenue. This local road provides access to the dwellings on Birch Avenue and Gange Avenue, with a single ingress and egress to the neighbourhood from Yonge Street.

Directly across Birch Avenue, on the south side, is 25-39 Birch Avenue. 25-27 Birch Avenue consists of 3-storey semi-detached houses with a detached garage at the rear. 27A Birch Avenue is a surface parking lot which services 29 Birch Avenue that is a 2-storey commercial building used for child care services. 31-39 Birch Avenue consists of 2-storey townhouses with street parking.

Further to the south are 3-storey townhouse and semi-detached houses along Gange Avenue. The townhouses consist of street parking while the semi-detached houses contain integral garages. Immediately south of this is the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).

**East:** of the subject site is a 4-unit, 3-storey townhouse condominium. Each townhouse unit includes an at-grade integral garage accessed by a shared laneway along the eastern property line.
Further east are 2- and 3-storey house form buildings with retail and office uses at grade and residential uses above. Parking is facilitated by street parking and some on-site parking for properties closer to Yonge Street.

East of Yonge Street is the entrance to the Summerhill TTC subway station on the north side of Shaftesbury Avenue, approximately 250 metres (an approximate 5 minute walk) from the subject site.

**West:** of the subject site is 42-44A Birch Avenue which consists of 2-storey townhouses. Further west, are 2- and 3-storey residential buildings along the north side of Birch Avenue and Lionel Conacher Park, a 1.43-acre public park containing a soccer field, splash pad, and playground. Adjacent to the park is Cottingham Junior Public School, on the south side of Birch Avenue.

Further west are more residential uses including detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, apartment buildings, De La Salle College, and 4 blocks of 19 4-storey townhouses along Oaklands Avenue and Avenue Road, currently under construction, approved by the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) in 2018 (Application no. 14 263631 STE 22 OZ; PL150753).

See Attachment 2 for the Location Map.

**PROPOSAL**

The application proposes a new 4-storey residential building with a streetwall height of 10.7 metres and a building height of 13.4 metres measured to the top of the flat roof with projections above for a roof parapet and 2.7-metre rooftop staircase enclosures. The proposed building has 6,730 square metres of residential floor area, a density of 2.58 times the area of the site, and 27 dwelling units. The unit mix comprises of: 18 two-bedroom units (67%) and 9 three-bedroom units (33%).

The building is setback 3.6 to 3.9 metres from the front lot line, measured to the ground floor. The second and third floors cantilever above the ground floor towards the street and are setback 3.0 metres from the front lot line. The second and third floors include bay window projections in the front wall and have setbacks ranging from 2.1 metres where the building is closest to the residential area to the west to 1.2 metres towards the east. The setback of the fourth floor increased to a setback range of 3.3 to 5.2 metres and has been designed as a sloped roof with dormer projections.

The building is setback 7.5 to 9.0 metres from the rear property line, measured to the rear main wall at the ground and second floors. The setback of the third floor increases to 11.5 metres from the rear lot line, incorporating a typical stepback of 4.0 metres. The rear wall of the fourth floor is generally in line with the third floor, however, it has been designed as an angled roof with dormer projections. Above the fourth floor, the rooftop staircase enclosures are centrally located and setback 20.0 metres from the rear lot line, incorporating a stepback of 8.9 metres from the third and fourth floors. The rear portion of the building and its associated setbacks have been designed to comply with a
45 degree angular plane measured from the rear lot line. This performance standard is found within the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Building Guidelines.

The east side yard setback ranges from 1.7 metres, where the building is closest to the street, to 1.2 metres at the rear wall.

The west side yard setback ranges from 3.0 metres, where the building is closest to the street, to 3.6 metres at the rear wall. Along the west side wall are bay window projections at the second, third and fourth floors. These bay windows have a setback range of 2.1 to 2.4 metres.

The building has been designed as a stacked, back-to-back townhouse development and is comprised of: six 2-storey at-grade townhouse units, a common residential lobby entrance, and a single 2-way garage entrance facing Birch Avenue; seven 2-storey at-grade townhouse units facing the rear yard; and 14 2-storey units on the third and fourth floors. The building includes an internal corridor system to provide access to all units.

Along the west side and rear of the building is a 1.8-metre wide walkway that provides access to the rear at-grade units and secured access to the rear yards of abutting properties on the south side of Alcorn Avenue.

Parking spaces for residents and visitors are wholly located in the underground parking garage. A total of 56 parking spaces are provided of which 51 spaces are allocated for residents and 5 spaces are allocated for visitors. These parking spaces are accessed by a common driveway located at the east boundary of the site, providing access to/from Birch Avenue. Bicycle parking spaces are provided in a secure room with a total of 24 spaces in the underground garage.

The current proposal incorporates numerous revisions from the original application as summarized below:

- reduced density from 2.64 to 2.58 times the lot area;
- reduced residential gross floor area;
- decreased height from 14.7 metres to 13.4 metres;
- improved transition to the residential area to the west;
- increased front yard setbacks, allowing more opportunities for landscaping and healthy street tree growth;
- increased west side yard setbacks, allowing for better separation between residential buildings, a wider walkway, and a larger side yard landscape buffer;
- increased landscaped open space and soft landscaping; and
- improved privacy and overlook conditions.

See Attachment 1 for Application Data Sheet, Attachment 7 for a three dimensional representation of the current proposal in context, Attachment 8 for the site plan, and Attachments 9 to 12 for the elevations.
Reasons for Application

The application proposes a 4-storey (13.4 metres plus 2.7-metre rooftop staircase enclosure) stacked, back-to-back townhouse building on Birch Avenue. The overall proposed height of the building exceeds the 11-metre height limit on the site. The overall proposed density is 2.58 times the area of the lot, whereas the existing maximum permitted density is 1.0 times the area of the lot. A Zoning By-law amendment is therefore required for non-compliance with these and a number of other performance measures in both Zoning By-laws, including building depth, front yard setback and side yard setback.

The Zoning By-law considers the stacked and back-to-back townhouse with more than 5 dwelling units as an apartment building, which is a building type permitted in both the Official Plan and the R (Residential) zoning category.

APPLICATION BACKGROUND

Application Submission Requirements

The following reports/studies were submitted in support of the applications:

- Survey Plan;
- Architectural Plans, Elevations and Sections;
- Landscape Plans;
- Tree Preservation Plan;
- Civil Plans;
- Shadow Study;
- Arborist Report;
- Energy Efficiency Report;
- Hydrogeological Study;
- Geotechnical Investigation Report;
- Transportation Impact Study;
- Functional Servicing Report;
- Stormwater Management Report;
- Planning and Urban Design Rationale Report;
- Draft Zoning By-law Amendments;
- Public Consultation Plan;
- Toronto Green Development Standards Checklist; and
- Digital copy of the Building Massing Model.

All submission materials can be found at the following link: [https://aic.to/26-40BirchAve](https://aic.to/26-40BirchAve)

Agency Circulation

The application together with the applicable reports noted above, have been circulated to all appropriate agencies and City Divisions. Responses received have been used to
assist in evaluating the applications and to formulate appropriate Zoning By-law standards and conditions of Site Plan Control approval.

Statutory Public Meeting Comments
In making their decision with regard to the applications, Council members have an opportunity to consider the submissions received prior to and at the statutory public meeting held by the Toronto and East York Community Council for the applications. Oral submissions made at the meeting are broadcast live over the internet and recorded for review.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Planning Act
Section 2 of the Planning Act sets out matters of provincial interest which City Council shall have regard to in carrying out its responsibilities, including: the orderly development of safe and healthy communities; the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing; the appropriate location of growth and development; the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water; the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems; and the promotion of a built form that is well designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

Provincial Land-Use Policies: Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans
Provincial Policy Statements and geographically specific Provincial Plans, along with municipal Official Plans, provide a policy framework for planning and development in the Province. This framework is implemented through a range of land use controls such as zoning by-laws, plans of subdivision and site plans.

The Provincial Policy Statement (2014)
The Provincial Policy Statement (2014) (the "PPS") provides policy direction province-wide on land use planning and development to promote strong communities, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. It includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- The efficient and wise use and management of land and infrastructure over the long term in order to minimize impacts on air, water and other resources;
- Protection of the natural and built environment;
- Building strong, sustainable and resilient communities that enhance health and social well-being by ensuring opportunities exist locally for employment;
- Residential development promoting a mix of housing; recreation, parks and open space; and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit; and
• Encouraging a sense of place in communities, by promoting well-designed built form and by conserving features that help define local character.

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes and addresses the complex inter-relationships among environmental, economic and social factors in land use planning. The PPS supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among policy areas.

The PPS is issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS. Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS.

The PPS recognizes and acknowledges the Official Plan as an important document for implementing the policies within the PPS. Policy 4.7 of the PPS states that, "The official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of this Provincial Policy Statement. Comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning is best achieved through official plans."

**Provincial Plans**

Provincial Plans are intended to be read in their entirety and relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. The policies of the Plans represent minimum standards. Council may go beyond these minimum standards to address matters of local importance, unless doing so would conflict with any policies of the Plans.

All decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS and shall conform with Provincial Plans. All comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also be consistent with the PPS and conform with Provincial Plans.

**A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)**

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) (the "Growth Plan (2019)") came into effect on May 16, 2019. This new plan replaces the previous Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. The Growth Plan (2019) continues to provide a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, of which the City forms an integral part. The Growth Plan (2019) establishes policies that requirement implementation through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), which is a requirement pursuant to Section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan (2019), including the establishment of minimum density targets for and the delineation of strategic growth areas, the conversion of provincially significant employment zones, and others.

Policies not expressly linked to a MCR can be applied as part of the review process for development applications, in advance of the next MCR. These policies include:
• Directing municipalities to make more efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure to reduce sprawl, contribute to environmental sustainability and provide for a more compact built form and a vibrant public realm;
• Directing municipalities to engage in an integrated approach to infrastructure planning and investment optimization as part of the land use planning process;
• Achieving complete communities with access to a diverse range of housing options, protected employment zones, public service facilities, recreation and green space that better connect transit to where people live and work;
• Retaining viable lands designated as employment areas and ensuring redevelopment of lands outside of employment areas retain space for jobs to be accommodated on site;
• Minimizing the negative impacts of climate change by undertaking stormwater management planning that assesses the impacts of extreme weather events and incorporates green infrastructure; and
• Recognizing the importance of watershed planning for the protection of the quality and quantity of water and hydrologic features and areas.

The Growth Plan (2019) builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the GGH region. The policies of the Growth Plan (2019) take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Planning Act all decisions of Council in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform with the Growth Plan (2019). Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by Council shall also conform with the Growth Plan (2019).

The Growth Plan (2019) contains policies pertaining to population and employment densities that should be planned for in major transit station areas (MTSAs) along priority transit corridors or subway lines. MTSAs are generally defined as the area within an approximately 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk. The Growth Plan (2019) requires that, at the time of the next municipal comprehensive review (MCR), the City will update its Official Plan to delineate MTSA boundaries and demonstrate how the MTSAs will achieve appropriate densities and built form at that time, and this approval does not impact this matter that will require a MCR.

**Toronto Official Plan**

This application has been reviewed against the policies of the City of Toronto Official Plan and as follows:

The City's Official Plan designates the subject site as Neighbourhoods, as shown on Map 17- Land Use Plan. The lands immediately east and south of the subject site are designated Mixed Use Areas.
Chapter 2 - Shaping the City

Section 2.3.1 Healthy Neighbourhoods

Policy 2.3.1.1 states that Neighbourhoods are low rise and low density residential areas that are considered to be physically stable areas. Development in Neighbourhoods will be consistent with this objective and will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of buildings, streetscapes and open space patterns in these areas.

Chapter 3 - Building a Successful City

Section 3.1.2 The Built Form

Section 3.1.2 of the Official Plan states that development will be located, organized and massed to fit harmoniously with the existing and/or planned context. Development will limit its impacts on neighbouring properties and the public realm by respecting street proportions, creating appropriate transitions in scale, providing for adequate light and privacy, limiting impacts of servicing and vehicular access on the property and neighbouring properties; and limiting shadow and wind impacts.

Policy 3.1.2.1 provides further details, outlining how development is expected to frame and support adjacent streets, parks and open spaces. New development is expected to do the following:

- generally locate buildings parallel to the street or along the edge of a park or open space using a consistent front yard setback;
- locate main building entrances so that they are clearly visible and directly accessible from the public sidewalk;
- provide ground floor uses that have views into, and where possible, access to, adjacent streets, parks and open spaces; and
- preserve existing maturing trees wherever possible and incorporate them into landscaping designs.

Policy 3.1.2.2 states that new development will locate and organize vehicle parking, vehicular access, service areas and utilities to minimize their impact on the property and on surrounding properties and to improve the safety and attractiveness of adjacent streets, parks and open spaces by:

- using shared service areas including driveways;
- consolidating and minimizing the width of driveways and curb cuts across the public sidewalk; and
- providing underground parking where appropriate.

Policy 3.1.2.3 states that new development will be massed and its exterior façade will be designed to fit harmoniously into its existing and/or planned context, and will limit its impact on neighbouring streets, parks, open spaces and properties by:

- massing new buildings to frame adjacent streets and open spaces in a way that respects the existing and/or planned street proportion;
• incorporating exterior design elements, their form, scale, proportion, pattern and materials, and their sustainable design, to influence the character, scale and appearance of the development;
• creating appropriate transitions in scale to neighbouring existing and/or planned buildings for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this Plan;
• providing for adequate light and privacy;
• adequately limiting any resulting shadowing of, and uncomfortable wind conditions on, neighbouring streets, properties and open spaces, having regard for the varied nature of such areas; and
• minimizing any additional shadowing and uncomfortable wind conditions on neighbouring parks as necessary to preserve their utility.

Chapter 4 - Land Use

Section 4.1 Neighbourhoods

Section 4.1 includes policies and development criteria to ensure that physical changes to established neighbourhoods are sensitive, gradual and generally "fit" the existing physical character.

Policy 4.1.1 states that Neighbourhoods are considered physically stable areas made up of residential uses in lower scale buildings such as detached houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, triplexes and townhouses, as well as interspersed walk-up apartments that are no higher than four storeys. Parks, low scale local institutions, home occupations, cultural and recreational facilities and small-scale retail, service and office uses are also provided for in Neighbourhoods.

Development criteria in Policy 4.1.5 state that development in established Neighbourhoods will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood, in particular:

• patterns of streets, blocks and lanes, parks and public building sites;
• prevailing size and configuration of lots;
• prevailing heights, massing, scale, density and dwelling type of nearby residential properties;
• prevailing building type(s);
• prevailing location, design and elevations relative to the grade of driveways and garages;
• prevailing setbacks of buildings from the street or streets;
• prevailing patterns of rear and side yard setbacks and landscaped open space;
• continuation of special landscape or built-form features that contribute to the unique physical character of the geographic neighbourhood; and
• conservation of heritage buildings, structures and landscapes.

Policy 4.1.5 further states that no changes will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of a Neighbourhood.
Policy 4.1.9 states that in established *Neighbourhoods*, infill development on properties that vary from the local pattern in terms of lot size, configuration and/or orientation will:

- have heights, massing and scale that are respectful of those permitted by zoning for nearby residential properties, while taking into account the existing form of development on the infill property;
- have setbacks from adjacent residential properties and public streets that are proportionate to those permitted by zoning for adjacent residential properties, while taking into account the existing form of development on the infill property;
- provide adequate privacy, sunlight and sky views for occupants of new and existing buildings by ensuring adequate distance and separation between building walls and using landscaping, planting and fencing to enhance privacy where needed;
- front onto existing or newly created public streets wherever possible, with no gates limiting public access;
- provide safe, accessible pedestrian walkways from public streets; and
- locate, screen and wherever possible enclose service areas and garbage storage and parking, including access to any underground parking, so as to minimize the impact on existing and new streets and on residences.

**Official Plan Amendment 320**

As part of the City's ongoing Official Plan Five Year Review, Council adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 320 (OPA 320) on December 10, 2015 to strengthen and refine the Healthy Neighbourhoods, *Neighbourhoods* and Apartment Neighbourhoods policies to support Council's goals to protect and enhance existing neighbourhoods, allow limited infill on underutilized Apartment Neighbourhood sites and implement the City's Tower Renewal Program.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs approved a modified OPA 320 in December 2018 and the changes are in full force and effect. The application filed in August 2018 predates the Minister's approval.

**Chapter 5 - Implementation**

Section 5.6 provides guidance as to the understanding and interpretation of the Official Plan. Policy 1 indicates the Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. Further, Section 1.5 – "How to Read the Plan" indicates the Official Plan is a comprehensive and cohesive whole. This proposal has been reviewed against the policies described above as well as the policies of the Official Plan as a whole.

**Yonge-St. Clair Secondary Plan**

The site is located within the Yonge-St. Clair Secondary Plan area which is bounded by Avenue Road on the west, Moore Park Ravine/Beltline Trail on the east, Mount Pleasant Cemetery/Kay Gardiner Beltline on the north, and the CP rail line on the south.

The purpose of the Secondary Plan with respect to *Neighbourhoods* is to protect, promote and enhance the existing type and quality of neighbourhood; maintain the
stability of the neighbourhood; and, ensure that new development meets high urban design standards which contribute to achieving public areas which are attractive, inviting, comfortable and safe.

The Secondary Plan contains Urban Design Principles for Built Form and Public Amenity relevant to this proposal that include to:

- achieve a harmonious relationship to the built form context through building height, massing, setback, stepbacks, roof line and profile, architectural expression and vehicle access and loading; and
- provide high quality landscaped spaces.

The Secondary Plan also contains policies with respect to the built form of redevelopment in Neighbourhoods to:

- respect and reinforce the essential elements of established neighbourhood structure and character;
- be compatible with adjacent residential development; and
- recognize the relevant urban structure elements, such as views afforded to and from the escarpment.

The outcome of staff analysis and review of relevant Official Plan policies and designations, Secondary plans, and site and area specific official plan planning studies noted above, are summarized in the Comments section of the report.

Zoning

The property is zoned R2 Z1.0 under Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended, and R (d1.0) (x745) under Zoning By-law 569-2013. These zones permit a range of residential building types including detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and apartments. The site has a maximum permitted height of 11 metres and a maximum permitted density of 1.0 times the area of the lot.

See Attachment No. 4: Existing Zoning By-law Map.

Design Guidelines

Part III of the PPS under the section titled "Guidance Material" states that guidance material and technical criteria may be issued from time to time to assist planning authorities and decision-makers with implementing the policies of the Plan. Policy 5.2.5.6 of the Growth Plan (2019) indicates supporting documents, such as design guidelines, will direct the development of a high quality public realm and compact built form in achieving minimum intensification and density targets of the Plan. Policy 5.3.2.1 of the Official Plan states guidelines will be adopted to advance the vision, objectives, and policies of the Plan. Urban design guidelines specifically are intended to provide a more detailed framework for built form and public realm improvements in growth areas. The following design guidelines were used in the evaluation of this application.
Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines
City Council adopted city-wide Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines and directed City Planning staff to use these Guidelines in the evaluation of townhouse and low-rise apartment development applications. These new Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines replace the Infill Townhouse Guidelines (2003) and are intended to be used in the review of an application when the proposed built form meets the City's Official Plan policies. The new Guidelines identify strategies to enhance the quality of these developments, provide examples of best practices, and improve clarity on various development scenarios. The link to the Guidelines is here: https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/townhouse-and-low-rise-apartments/.

Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities
In July 2017, Toronto City Council adopted the Draft Growing Up Urban Design Guidelines and directed City Planning staff to apply the "Growing Up Guidelines" in the evaluation of new and under review multi-unit residential development proposals. The objective of the Growing Up Guidelines is for developments to increase liveability for larger households, including families with children, at the neighbourhood, building and unit scale. The draft Guidelines are available at: https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planningstudiesinitiatives/growing-up-planning-for-children-in-new-vertical-communities

Site Plan Control
The proposal is subject to Site Plan Control. An application for Site Plan Control was submitted on August 20, 2018 and is under review.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
A community meeting was held on December 17, 2018 at 255 Spadina Road (Toronto Archives) and attended by 25 members of the public. At the meeting City staff and the applicant's team gave presentations on the site and surrounding area, the existing planning framework, and the original proposal. Following the presentations, City staff led a town hall format question and answer period.

The attendees asked questions and expressed a number of comments, issues and concerns, including:

- the proposed building is too tall and too dense for the street and neighbourhood;
- the architectural style is not in keeping with the character of the area;
- the proposed massing will result in shadow impacts on adjacent properties;
- the size of the building footprint is too large and results in reduced landscaped open space for the site;
- the traffic generated as a result of the proposed development will add to an already congested street;
- there are issues with the methodology and conclusions of the submitted Traffic Impact Assessment; and
- new dwelling units will increase TTC ridership on a subway line that seems to be at capacity.

Following the community consultation meeting, staff organized several meetings, including a neighbourhood walking tour, with the local residents' association and nearby neighbours to discuss outstanding concerns.

COMMENTS

Planning Act

It is staff's opinion that the proposed development has regard for the relevant matters of provincial interest, including: the orderly development of safe and healthy communities; the adequate provision of a full range of housing; the appropriate location of growth and development; the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems; and the promotion of a built form that is well designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

These provincial interests are further articulated through the PPS (2014) and the Growth Plan (2019).

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The proposal has been reviewed and evaluated against the PPS (2014) and the Growth Plan (2019). The proposal has also been reviewed and evaluated against Policy 5.1 of the Growth Plan (2019). Staff have determined that the proposal is consistent with the PPS (2014) and conforms with the Growth Plan (2019) as follows.

Provincial Policy Statement (2014)

The PPS (2014) came into effect on April 30, 2014 and provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. City Council’s planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS (2014).

The PPS (2014) is to be read in its entirety. The language in each policy, including the Implementation and Interpretation policies assists decision makers in understanding how the policies are to be implemented. The PPS (2014) contains minimum standards and municipalities can go beyond these standards unless doing so would conflict with other policies of the PPS (2014).

Key policies applicable to this application include:

Policy 1.1.1 states that healthy, livable and safe communities are sustained by: promoting efficient development and land use patterns; and accommodating an
appropriate range and mix of residential uses, including second units, affordable housing and housing for older persons.

Policy 1.1.3.1 states that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.

Policy 1.1.3.2 states that land use patterns within settlement areas shall be based on densities and a mix of land uses which: efficiently use land and resources; are appropriate for, and efficiently use, the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available; support active transportation; and are transit-supportive.

Policy 1.1.3.3 states that planning authorities shall identify appropriate locations and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment.

Policy 1.1.3.4 states that development standards should be promoted which facilitate intensification, redevelopment and compact form, while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety.

Policy 1.4.3 directs planning authorities to provide a range of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents. This policy directs planning authorities to permit and facilitate all forms of housing required to meet the social, health and well-being requirements of current and future residents, and all forms of residential intensification and redevelopment where existing or planned infrastructure can accommodate projected needs. This policy further directs planning authorities to promote densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation and transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed. Planning authorities are also directed to establish development standards for residential intensification which minimize the cost of housing and facilitate compact form.

Policy 1.6.7.4 promotes a land use pattern, density and mix of uses that minimizes the length and number of vehicle trips and supports current and future use of transit and active transportation.

Policy 4.7 states that the official plan is the most important vehicle for implementation of the PPS (2014) and that official plans shall identify provincial interests, as identified in Section 2 of the Planning Act, which includes the promotion of a well-designed built form.

The proposed development is consistent with the above noted intensification, land use and built form policies (Policies 1.1.1, 1.1.3.1, 1.1.3.2, 1.1.3.3, 1.1.3.4, 1.4.3, and 1.6.7.4) as it provides intensification and redevelopment in an appropriate location in close proximity to a subway line and in a well-designed built form that has respect for its local context. Further, the proposal is consistent with the policy that states the Official Plan is the most important vehicle for the implementation of the PPS (2014) (Policy 4.7) as the proposal conforms with all applicable Official Plan policies including those regarding built form and development within Neighbourhoods.
Based on the analysis of the policies, it is City Planning staff's opinion that the application and the amending Zoning By-laws are consistent with the PPS (2014).

**Growth Plan (2019)**

The Growth Plan (2019) provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. City Council's planning decisions are required to conform with the Growth Plan.

The key Growth Plan policies applicable to this application are:

Policy 2.2.1.3 c) directs municipalities to undertake integrated planning to manage forecasted growth which will provide for an urban form that will optimize infrastructure, particularly along transit and transportation corridors, to support the achievement of complete communities through a more compact built form.

Policy 2.2.1.4 c), d) and e) state that applying the policies of the Growth Plan (2019) will support the achievement of complete communities that: provide a diverse range and mix of housing options to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes; expand convenient access to transportation options and open space; and provide for a more compact built form and a vibrant public realm.

Policy 2.2.2.3 c) states that all municipalities will develop a strategy to achieve the minimum intensification target and intensification throughout delineated built-up areas, which will encourage intensification generally throughout the delineated built-up area.

Policy 2.2.6.3 states that to support the achievement of complete communities, municipalities will consider the use of available tools to require that multi-unit residential developments incorporate a mix of unit sizes to accommodate a diverse range of household sizes and incomes.

The proposed development conforms with the above noted policies (Policies 2.2.1.3, 2.2.1.4, 2.2.2.3 and 2.2.6.3) by: promoting sensitive intensification within a built-up area; contributing to a range of housing options; proving a compact built form in close proximity to public transit and a variety of public parks; providing public realm improvements; and contributing to the overall achievement of a complete community.

It is City Planning staff's opinion that the application, and the amending Zoning By-laws conform to the Growth Plan (2019).

**Land Use**

This application has been reviewed against the Official Plan policies described in the Policy Considerations section of this report as well as the policies of the Official Plan as a whole. The Official Plan states that *Neighbourhoods* are considered physically stable areas made up of residential uses in lower scale buildings including interspersed walk-up apartments that are no higher than four storeys. The proposed use and building type are permitted within the *Neighbourhoods* land use designation of the Official Plan and
the R (Residential) zone of both Zoning By-laws. Further, the proposal which includes a unit breakdown of 66% two-bedroom units and 33% three-bedroom is appropriate on a residential street with direct access to a public park (Lionel Conacher Park), is in close proximity to large public parks (Ramsden Park, David A. Belfour Park), and contributes much needed family sized units for the City.

Given the existing and the planned context for the subject property and the surrounding area, Planning staff is of the opinion that the proposed residential use is appropriate for the site.

**Building Type**

The Official Plan states that *Neighbourhoods* are considered physically stable areas made up of residential uses in lower scale buildings including interspersed walk-up apartments that are no higher than four storeys. The proposed 4-storey apartment is a permitted use and building type within the *Neighbourhoods* land use designation of the Official Plan and within the R (Residential) zoning category of the Zoning By-law.

Further, Section 4.1, Policy 5 of the Official Plan states that new development in *Neighbourhoods* will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood, including prevailing building type. The subject site is located in a neighbourhood with a diversity of building types, including: detached houses, semi-detached houses, townhouses; townhouse blocks behind townhouse blocks; and multi-unit buildings.

While the proposed building is technically defined as an apartment building as per the Zoning By-law, and apartment buildings are not the prevailing building type in the neighbourhood, the building has been designed as stacked townhouses with unit widths that respect and reinforce the typical lot pattern of the many townhouse blocks that comprise a considerable portion of the neighbourhood. This rhythm of frontages and the high degree of articulation in the front façade contribute to a proposal that is compatible with and reinforces the character of the neighbourhood.

This application has also been reviewed with Policy 4.1.9 of the Official Plan in mind. The subject site, currently used for institutional uses, is of a size and configuration that varies from the typical lot pattern of the neighbourhood.

**Family-Sized Units**

The City's Growing Up Guidelines indicate that a building should provide a minimum of 25% large units: 10% of the units should be 3-bedroom units and 15% of the units should be 2-bedroom units. Further, the Guidelines outline an ideal range of unit size to represent a diversity of bedroom sizes while maintaining the integrity of the common space to ensure their functionality. 2-bedroom units should have a floor area equal to 87-90 square metres and 3-bedroom units should have a floor area equal to 100-106 square metres. These performance standards emphasize the need to accommodate the growing demand for family housing in vertical communities.
The proposed development includes 27 residential units with a proposed unit breakdown including 18 two-bedroom units (66%) and 9 three-bedroom units (33%). The proposal meets and exceeds the requirements for minimum number of family-sized dwelling units. The proposed unit sizes also meet or exceed the unit size range outlined in the Growing Up Guidelines.

**Height, Density, Massing**

The proposed maximum height of the building is 4-storeys with a height of 13.4 metres to the top of the roof terrace. The overall height to the rooftop stairway access is 16.1 metres, measured from established grade.

The Zoning By-law permits a maximum building height of 11 metres. The proposed 3-storey streetwall height of 10.7 metres is less than this provision. While the overall building height of 13.4 metres is taller than the other buildings on the street, the fourth floor is set back from the streetwall by 2.2 metres and angled with narrow dormer projections. Stepping the fourth floor back and angling it reduces the perceived height of the building from adjacent properties and from the public realm, reduces the impact of the upper level massing, and improves the transition to adjacent low-rise residential buildings.

Furthermore, the Birch Avenue elevation incorporates a variety of architectural features, including sloped roofs, dormer windows, projecting bay windows, canopied front entrances, outdoor balconies, a high quality brick and steel façade, and other architectural elements. These features provide articulation which further break up the massing of the front wall, provide visual interest along the length of the building, and contribute to the fit of this development with existing dwellings in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The building is setback 3.6 to 3.9 metres from the front lot line, measured to the ground floor. The second and third floors cantilever above the ground floor towards the street and are setback 3.0 metres from the front lot line. The second and third floors include bay window projections in the front wall and have setbacks ranging from 2.1 metres where the building is closest to the residential area to the west to 1.2 metres towards the east. The setback of the fourth floor increased to a setback range of 3.3 to 5.2 metres and has been designed as a sloped roof with dormer projections.

The building is setback 7.5 to 9.0 metres from the rear property line, measured to the rear main wall at the ground and second floors. The setback of the third floor increases to 11.5 metres from the rear lot line, incorporating a typical stepback of 4.0 metres. The rear wall of the fourth floor is generally in line with the third floor, however, it has been designed as an angled roof with dormer projections. Above the fourth floor, the rooftop staircase enclosures are centrally located and setback 20.0 metres from the rear lot line, incorporating a stepback of 8.9 metres from the third and fourth floors. The rear portion of the building and its associated setbacks have been designed to comply with a 45 degree angular plane measured from the rear lot line. This performance standard is found within the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Building Guidelines.
The east side yard setback ranges from 1.7 metres, where the building is closest to the street, to 1.2 metres at the rear wall.

The west side yard setback ranges from 3.0 metres, where the building is closest to the street, to 3.6 metres at the rear wall. Along the west side wall are bay window projections at the second, third and fourth floors. These bay windows have a setback range of 2.1 to 2.4 metres.

Planning staff is satisfied with the height, setbacks, overall massing, and architectural design of the proposed building.

**Traffic Impact**

The applicant submitted a Transportation Impact Study dated July 2018, and an addendum dated February 2019, both prepared by Cole Engineering Group Ltd. in support of their application.

Based on a review of the study, and taking into account the nature of the application for this project, Transportation Services have no objection to the traffic impact related to the proposed development.

**Parking**

The proposal includes a total of 56 vehicle parking spaces, consisting of 51 resident parking spaces and 5 visitor parking spaces, which are located within a 1-level below ground parking garage.

Based on the applicable parking rates in the Zoning By-law, a total of 33 parking spaces are required, consisting of 28 residential parking spaces and 5 residential visitor parking spaces. The proposed parking supply exceeds the minimum By-law requirements. Transportation Services staff have determined that the proposed parking rates are acceptable.

The proposal includes parking space and drive aisle dimensions that meet the requirements of the Zoning By-law. Transportation Services staff are generally satisfied with the layout of the proposed underground parking garage and typical dimensions of the proposed parking spaces and drive aisles.

The Zoning By-law, as amended by By-law 597-2017, requires a minimum of 1 accessible parking space for every 25 parking spaces if the number of required parking spaces is between 25 and 100. The applicant has included 2 accessible parking spaces in their proposal as required.

The Zoning By-law requires 22 bicycle parking spaces. The proposal includes 22 bicycle parking spaces within a secured room located in the underground parking garage.
Access and Circulation

Access to the below-grade parking garage is proposed directly from Birch Avenue via a 2-way sloped driveway. Transportation Services staff have reviewed the location, slope and width of the proposed driveway to the garage and have determined it to be acceptable. Transportation Services have also reviewed the drive aisle locations and widths and have determined that they are acceptable.

Loading

Zoning By-law No. 569-2013 requires a loading space in a residential building with 31 or more dwelling units. In this instance, the proposal includes 27 dwelling units. No loading space is proposed to serve this project. Transportation Services staff have determined that the provision of no loading space is acceptable.

Pedestrian Easement

A consent application has been filed with the Committee of Adjustment to establish an easement for pedestrian access in favour of the residential properties abutting the subject site to the north. These properties include 23, 29, 33, 37 and 39 Alcorn Avenue. The application is under review.

Servicing and Stormwater Management

The applicant has submitted a Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report dated August 2018, and an addendum dated February 2019, both prepared by Cole Engineering Group Ltd. Engineering and Construction Services staff have reviewed the documentation and have no objections to the approval of the subject application.

The provision of any improvements to the municipal infrastructure in connection with the site servicing assessment, should it be determined that upgrades are required to the infrastructure to support this development, will be at the cost of the applicant. Detailed functional servicing and stormwater management plans, and agreements, as necessary, will be entered into as part of the site plan review process.

Hydrogeological Impacts

The applicant has submitted a Geotechnical Investigation Report, dated July 13, 2018 and prepared by The Pinchin Group, and a Hydrogeological Investigation Report, dated June 13, 2018 and prepared by DC Consultants Ltd., all in support of their application. Engineering and Construction Services and Toronto Water staff have reviewed the documentation and have no objections to the approval of the subject application.

Indoor/Outdoor Amenity Space

Private outdoor amenity space is proposed to be provided in the form of enclosed garden terraces at ground level for the 13 grade-related units at the front and rear of the property. For the remaining 14 upper units private outdoor amenity is provided in the form of balconies at the third floor for rear facing units and at the fourth floor for the front
facing units. Additional amenity is provided as rooftop terraces that are centrally located and setback from each elevation on the rooftop.

Tree Preservation
The applicant submitted an Arborist Report, prepared by Cogen & Master Tree and Shrub Services, dated July 26, 2018, in support of their application.

The report indicates that there are 10 trees that meet the criteria for protection under the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813 Articles III (Private Tree by-law). The development proposes the removal of 7 privately-owned trees that meet the criteria for protection under the City of Toronto’s Private Tree By-law with the remaining 3 trees retained and protected. Urban Forestry staff require the planting of 21 new trees to replace the 7 private trees proposed for removal.

The report indicates that there are 6 City-owned street trees which are protected under the provisions of the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813 Articles II (Street Trees by-law). The development proposes the removal of 6 City-owned street trees. Urban Forestry staff require the planting of 6 new trees to replace the 6 City-owned trees proposed for removal. The applicant is proposing 6 new street trees.

Parkland
The Official Plan contains policies to ensure that Toronto's systems of parks and open spaces are maintained, enhanced and expanded. Map 8B of the Official Plan shows local parkland provisions across the City. The lands which are the subject of this application are in an area with 3.00 + hectares of local parkland per 1,000 people. The site is in the highest quintile of current provision of parkland. The site is in a parkland acquisition priority area, as per Chapter 415, Article III of the Toronto Municipal Code.

This proposal is for a 4-storey stacked townhouse complex with 6,730 square metres of residential gross floor area comprising 27 units. The total site area is 2,610.52 square metres.

In accordance with Chapter 415, Article III of the Toronto Municipal Code, the applicant is required to satisfy the parkland dedication requirement through cash-in-lieu. The residential component of this proposal is subject to a cap of 10% parkland dedication.

The value of the cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication will be appraised through Real Estate Services. Payment will be required prior to the issuance of said permit.

Toronto Green Standard
Council has adopted the four-tier Toronto Green Standard (TGS). The TGS is a set of performance measures for green development. Applications for Zoning By-law Amendments, Draft Plans of Subdivision and Site Plan Control are required to meet and demonstrate compliance with Tier 1 of the Toronto Green Standard. Tiers 2, 3 and 4 are voluntary, higher levels of performance with financial incentives. Tier 1 performance
measures are secured on site plan drawings and through a Site Plan Agreement or Registered Plan of Subdivision. The applicant is required to meet Tier 1 of the TGS.

Section 37
The Official Plan contains policies pertaining to the provision of community benefits for increases in height and/or density pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act. Section 37 may be used for development, excepting non-profit developments, with more than 10,000 square metres of gross floor area where the zoning by-law amendment increases the permitted density by at least 1,500 square metres and/or significantly increases the permitted height. The proposed gross floor area of 6,730 square metres falls below the density threshold.

Conclusion
The proposal has been reviewed against the policies of the PPS (2014), the Growth Plan (2019), and the Toronto Official Plan. Staff are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with the PPS (2014) and conforms with the Growth Plan (2019). Furthermore, the proposal conforms with the policies of Toronto Official Plan, particularly as it relates to Neighbourhoods and Built Form. Staff worked with the applicant to address and resolve the following key concerns: reduced building height; increased front and west side lot line setbacks; compliance with the rear 45 degree angular plan; improved on-site landscaped open space; and improved transition between the Mixed Use Areas to the east and the low-rise residential area to the west. Staff find that this proposal fits in with the existing and planned context of the neighbourhood and that the proposal is appropriate. City Planning recommends that Council approve the Zoning By-law Amendment application.

CONTACT

Kevin Friedrich, Planner
Tel. No. (416) 338-5740
E-mail: Kevin.Friedrich@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Lynda H. Macdonald, MCIP, RPP, OALA, FSCLA
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District
ATTACHMENTS

City of Toronto Data/Drawings
Attachment 1: Application Data Sheet
Attachment 2: Location Map
Attachment 3: Official Plan Land Use Map
Attachment 4: Existing Zoning By-law Map
Attachment 5: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment 438-86
Attachment 6: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment 569-2013

Applicant Submitted Drawings
Attachment 7: 3D Model
Attachment 8: Site Plan
Attachment 9: North Elevation
Attachment 10: South Elevation
Attachment 11: West Elevation
Attachment 12: East Elevation
Attachment 1: Application Data Sheet

Municipal Address: 26 Birch Avenue Date Received: August 20, 2018

Application Number: 18 212287 STE 22 OZ
Application Type: Rezoning

Project Description: 4-storey (13.4 metres) residential building containing 27 dwelling units.

Applicant Agent Architect Owner
Goldberg Group Goldberg Group Richard Wengle Architects Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

Official Plan Designation: Neighbourhoods Site Specific Provision: N
Zoning: (R) (d1.0)(x745) Heritage Designation: N
Height Limit (m): 11 Site Plan Control Area: Y

PROJECT INFORMATION

Site Area (sq m): 2,611 Frontage (m): 62 Depth (m): 42

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Lot Coverage Ratio (%): 60.14 Floor Space Index: 2.58

Floor Area Breakdown Above Grade (sq m) Below Grade (sq m)
Residential GFA: 6,731
Retail GFA:
Office GFA:
Industrial GFA:
Institutional/Other GFA:

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Total Residential Units by Size

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Parking and Loading

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CONTACT:

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Kevin.Friedrich@toronto.ca
Attachment 3: Official Plan Land Use Map
Attachment 4: Existing Zoning By-law Map
Attachment 5: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment 438-86

The draft By-law will be made available on or before the October 10, 2019 Toronto and East York Community Council Meeting
Attachment 6: Draft Zoning By-law Amendment 569-2013

The draft By-law will be made available on or before the October 10, 2019 Toronto and East York Community Council Meeting
Attachment 8: Site Plan

Site Plan
Applicant's Submitted Drawing
Not to Scale
01/28/2019

26-40 Birch Avenue

File #: 18 212287 STE 22 OZ

BIRCH AVENUE
Attachment 10: South Elevation
Attachment 12: East Elevation