

Residential Demolition Application – 656 Gerrard Street East

Date: September 26, 2023
To: Toronto and East York Community Council
From: Director and Deputy Chief Building Official, Toronto Building
Wards: Ward 14 (Toronto - Danforth)

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter for which the Toronto and East York Community Council has delegated authority to make a final decision.

In accordance with city-wide residential demolition control under the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 363, under the authority of Section 33 of the Planning Act, the application for the demolition of an existing one-storey single detached dwelling at 656 Gerrard Street East (Application No. 23 207258 DEM 00 DM) is being referred to the Toronto and East York Community Council for consideration to refuse or grant the application, including any conditions, if any, to be attached to the building permit application because a building permit application for a replacement building has not been made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director and Deputy Chief Building Official, Toronto Building, Toronto and East York District recommends that the Toronto and East York Community Council give consideration to the demolition application for 656 Gerrard Street East, and decide to:

1. Refuse the application to demolish the existing one-storey single detached dwelling because there is no permit application for a replacement building at this time; or
2. Approve the application to demolish the one-storey single detached dwelling without any conditions; or
3. Approve the application to demolish the one-storey single detached dwelling with the following conditions:

- a) That construction fences be erected in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Code, Chapter 363, Article 7, if deemed appropriate by the Chief Building Official;
- b) That all debris and rubble be removed immediately after demolition;
- c) That sod be laid on the site and that the site be maintained free of garbage and weeds, in accordance with the Municipal Code Chapter 629-10, paragraph B and 629-11; and
- d) That all holes on the property are backfilled with clean fill.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts to the City resulting from the recommendations in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no City Council or Community Council decision history for this property.

COMMENTS

On November 25, 2014, a Zoning By-law review application (14 256592 ZC 00 ZR) was made by the previous property owner to construct a new four-storey mixed-use building with ground floor commercial and residential units. Minor variances for parking and a rear yard setback were identified. Relief from these minor variances was sought through a Committee of Adjustment application (15 122255 000 00 MV). The application was heard on April 29, 2015 and refused.

The application was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) (15 155398 000 00 OA). The appeal was heard on August 7, 2015 (Case No.: PL150383). On August 25, 2015, the OMB upheld the appeal and issued the Order with the condition that three parking spaces, one for each residential unit, be provided on or off-site. If off-site, the parking spaces are to be surplus to the required parking for the off-site location and be secured through a long-term lease.

An application was submitted to the City on September 26, 2023, proposing to demolish the one-storey single detached dwelling, install temporary fencing and backfill due to concerns with the condition and security of the vacant building. A replacement building permit application was not made.

The existing property is presently not on the list of historically designated buildings. Furthermore, the land is not located within a Toronto and Region Conservation Authority regulated area.

CONTACT

Andrew Wild, Manager, Plan Review, Toronto Building, Toronto and East York District
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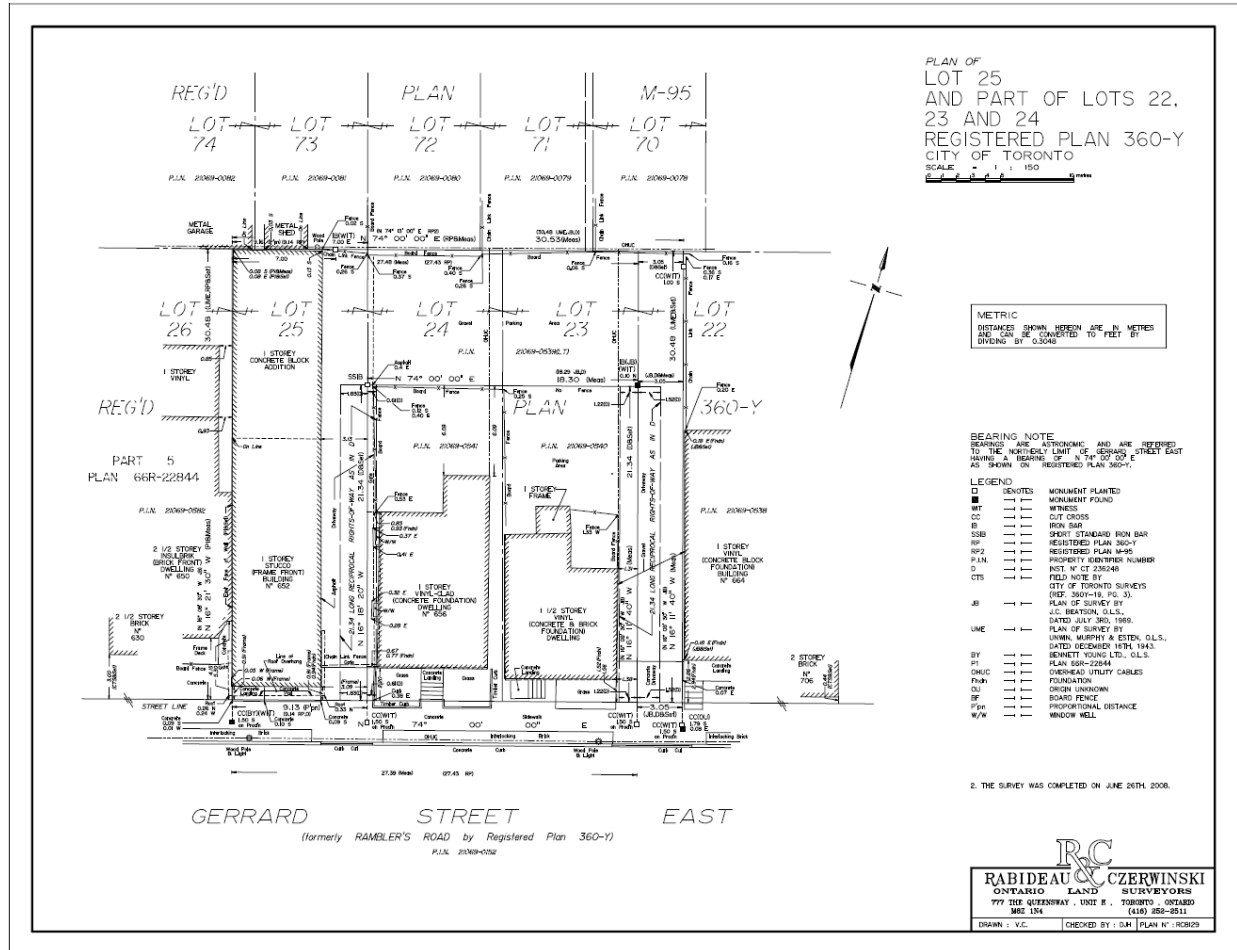
SIGNATURE

Bill Stamatopoulos
Director & Deputy Chief Building Official, Toronto Building
Toronto and East York District

ATTACHMENTS

1. Survey
2. Letter re: Demolition
3. Engineer's report

1. Survey



2. Letter re: Demolition



J.S.M. Corporation (Ontario) Ltd.

City of Toronto – Building Department
Via Email Attention: Andrew Wild – Manager Plan Review, Inspections
CC to: Nicolas Valverde – Advisor to Councillor Paula Fletcher

RE: Demolition of Vacant 656 Gerrard Street East

September 25, 2023

To whom it may concern,

We are providing this letter as supplementary information to a demolition application. The application relates to a vacant single-family residence in very poor condition and unable to be safely inhabited. The intention is to rebuild a higher density housing project at this site however but we are still in the planning stages. The current situation at the vacant home, however, has become untenable.

Information on Proposed Demolition:

The purpose of the demolition in the long term is to facilitate a higher-density residential development on this site. It is our goal to combine this land with the adjacent commonly-owned site at 652 Gerrard to create a multi-story residential building (likely purpose-built rentals) in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood. This application is just one step in a larger process which aligns with the city's goal of creating more housing and would ultimately enhance the vibrant nature of the Toronto-Danforth community of which we are a part.

In the meantime, however, the vacant structure at 656 Gerrard Street East is serving as a screen for unsafe activities, which have included trespassing, public masturbation / indecency, vandalism and illegal dumping of items including flammable items. The police have also attended the site on multiple occasions to help relocate an unhoused person from this area. Our tenants, specifically the new **woman-owned business** feel unsafe at times around their workplace.

Despite our team's efforts and close attention paid to this property, coupled with the funds spent (now exceeding \$10,000 for repeated cleaning and attempts to secure the area and improve safety), we are still unsuccessful in preventing these recurrences. Please see photos with timeline below for most recent event.

		
August 23/25 th – Site clean and well-maintained.	August 29/30 th – Items brought onsite / police attend and items abandoned	September 5 th (after Sept 1 st – cleaning / junk removal)

Unfortunately, it is not an option to have this structure occupied due to the structure's poor condition. The building has significant issues and a recent engineer report (included) uncovers many issues with the structure and confirms it is not economically viable to rehabilitate the building.



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Background Information on Applicant – J.S.M. Group of Companies

While we work closely with other municipalities routinely, our company name may be new to the City of Toronto. We are a small family-owned real estate developer, largely in commercial / industrial properties with roots in Montreal and the 401 corridor. Founded in the 1960s, we are now landlord to over 150 tenants across Ontario, Alberta and Quebec.

Our buildings are home to a wide range of Canadian businesses including household names, institutions and several non-profits, a sample of which are provided below. In addition, we have completed subdivisions and land servicing for residential developments. We are also very proud to have supported many start-up operations and first-time business owners including our neighbourhood's beloved and Michelin recognized **Wynona Restaurant**.

- ❖ **National Retail Brands including:** Shoppers Drug Mart, Dollarama, Dollar Tree, Tim Horton's, Wendy's, Harvey's, Swiss Chalet, Red Lobster, Mark's Work Warehouse and Farmboy
- ❖ **Recreational / Warehouse / Non-Profits including:** Children's gymnastics clubs, rock climbing facilities, various production facilities, storage warehouses including Calgary Theatre Company and Kingston Symphony, and a **United Way** food redistribution warehouse
- ❖ **Offices including Educational and Non-profit:** Queens University (off-campus), Epilepsy Resource for South Eastern Ontario, Community Foundation, and other independent accounting, engineering and therapist offices

J.S.M. Group's Community Ties to Toronto-Danforth Area

Over the last decade we have built strong community ties in the Toronto-Danforth area. I have personally lived in this area for a decade, and our group of companies owns and manages several other buildings within the community, namely:

- 819 Gerrard St. East – Wynona Restaurant (Zuricha Capital Ltd.)
- 1450 Gerrard St. East – Victoria Whole Foods and 2 floors of residential above (MIN Development Co. Ltd.)
- 1879 Gerrard St. East – Petit Paris Bakery Café (recently closed) and residential above (Albertine Holdings Inc.)

This community involvement brings us back to the primary subject of this letter, 656 Gerrard St. East. Our team is excited to begin planning our future development on the site which would support the city's larger goal of increasing housing. However, we are very apprehensive about this structure remaining on the site in the interim. The structure's poor current condition, as well as the dumping, vandalism, and trespassing that have occurred despite our best efforts and funds spent to secure it, are creating an untenable situation. Safety of our neighbours is our utmost concern behind the urgency of this demolition application.

Should you have any other questions we would be more than happy to meet with you to discuss.

Many thanks,



3. Engineer's report



2023-02-22

**Re: Project Name: 656 Gerrard Street
Project Number: 20230209
Review of Existing Structure**

Hi | ,

Stephenson Engineering Limited (SEL) was requested by J.S.M. Corporation (Ontario) Ltd. to review the existing structural condition of a single storey with basement detached bungalow located at 656 Gerrard Street in Toronto. SEL was not provided with any existing building drawings at the time of review. Due to finishes (drywalled walls and ceilings) and congestion of personal debris from previous tenants the above grade structure was not exposed at time of review. This focus of this letter is the structure that is exposed to view in the basement, partial ground floor framing and foundation walls.

Observations/Comments:

The floor framing is generally comprised of T&G decking supported by 2x6 floor joists. The joists span in the east-west direction, with a load bearing 2 wythe masonry wall running north-south down the middle of the basement (refer to Photo #1). These floor joists are generally undersized for their spans and current OBC loading for residential occupancy in both strength and serviceability, leading to a floor system with some noticeable sag. There is evidence of termite damage in localized areas. (refer to Photo #2)

The perimeter foundation wall of the structure is comprised of an original 2 wythe brick masonry wall. Many areas of the walls have been covered on the inside, however in the areas that were exposed to view there is peeling paint and efflorescence/signs of moisture ingress in the mortar joints between the bricks (refer to Photo #3). The brick wall did not appear plumb in many locations, with localized bulging at the outside of the building this foundation wall is exposed to view on the west side where there is a driveway which services surrounding properties. The asphalt for this driveway runs tight to the foundation wall, with some evidence of previous parking over the foundation wall above grade (refer to Photo #4) There does not appear to be any waterproofing or drainage present, which may be leading to the bulging and moisture ingress on the inside face of the wall.

Conclusions / Recommendations

The existing floor could potentially be reinforced by several methods to bring it up to current standards. "Sistering" the existing floor framing with dimensional lumber could be used to provide additional strength and serviceability to the existing framing, however this will not correct the sag in the joists or any issues with levelness issues in the existing framing. To correct these issues, full replacement of the floor framing would be required, likely with dimensional lumber joists and

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beams, and plywood or OSB sheathing. This would likely have major impacts to the framing of the house above, which may be using these joists to support areas of the ceiling and roof of the structure.

To repair the existing multi wythe brick foundation wall, full excavation/exposure of the perimeter foundation wall is recommended. In order to reduce the potential for water pressure on the wall and moisture ingress we would recommend a waterproofed/drained foundation wall with a weeping tile system to drain any potential water away from the wall. Backfilling the area with compacted clear stone to allow for proper drainage. all these rehabilitation concepts would be designed and carried out by professionals with suitable experience to perform the work.

The breadth of the work required to rehabilitate this existing structure is large considering the size of the building. There are many unknowns that remain relating to the condition of the structure that was not exposed to view at the time of review (walls above grade, roof framing). Given the work required, the unknowns, and that this is a detached bungalow structure it may be more economically viable to demolish this existing structure and build new than to try and perform all potential structural rehabilitation work.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the undersigned.

Yours very truly,
STEPHENSON ENGINEERING LIMITED

