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STAFF REPORT

251 Windermere Avenue- Committee of Adjustment Application

Date: June 4th 2026

To: Chair and Committee Members of the Committee of Adjustment, Toronto and East York District

From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

Ward: 4, Parkdale-High Park

File No: A0304/26TEY

Application to be heard: June 17th, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Planning staff recommend that the Committee of Adjustment **refuse** application A0304/26TEY.

APPLICATION

The applicant is seeking relief from the provisions of Zoning By-law 569-2013 by widening the existing front driveway.

COMMENTS

The subject site is located south of Bloor Street West and east of South Kingsway. The property is designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan.

The property is located in an area designated as *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan. Section 4.1.5 states that development in *Neighbourhoods* must respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the surrounding area, including patterns of landscaping, open space, setbacks, and the relationship between buildings and the public realm.

The property is zoned R (f7.5; u4; d0.6) (x798) under City Wide Zoning By-law 569-2013.

Official Plan Policies 2.3.1.1 and 4.1.5 require that development within *Neighbourhoods* respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the area, including patterns of landscaping, open space, setbacks, and the relationship between buildings and the public realm. Policy 2.3.6 further promotes environmentally sustainable development by encouraging the preservation and enhancement of landscaped open space, urban tree canopy, stormwater infiltration, and green infrastructure.

The City's zoning standards regulating driveway widths and minimum landscaping requirements are intended to achieve an appropriate balance between vehicle accommodation and the preservation of front yard green space. These standards are

important planning tools that help maintain the landscaped character of residential streets, support opportunities for tree planting, reduce stormwater runoff, improve groundwater infiltration, and mitigate urban heat island effects. The widening of driveways beyond the established standards incrementally erodes these objectives and contributes to the gradual conversion of front yards into vehicle-dominated spaces.

The proposed driveway widening would result in the loss of valuable soft landscaping for the sole purpose of increasing driveway width. Staff are of the opinion that the reduction in landscaped open space is not minor in planning terms and undermines the intent of the City's zoning standards and Official Plan policies. Front yard landscaping serves an important function beyond aesthetics, contributing to neighbourhood character, environmental sustainability, stormwater management, and the overall quality of the public realm.

Community Planning staff acknowledge that a limited number of widened driveways have been approved along the immediate surrounding of Windermere Avenue. A review of historical permit records identified widened driveway approvals at 280, 303, 309, 333, 355, 476, 480, 481, 485, 488, 489 and 492 Windermere Avenue, with approval dates ranging from 1983 to 2006.

However, these approvals represent historical permissions granted over a period of more than twenty years and under planning and regulatory frameworks that predate many of the City's current Official Plan policies, urban forestry objectives, and neighbourhood character protections. These historical approvals do not represent the prevailing condition of the street and should not be relied upon as justification for additional driveway widening applications.

Community Planning staff are of the opinion that approval of the requested driveway widening would establish an undesirable precedent that prioritizes additional vehicle accommodation at the expense of landscaped open space. Continued approvals of this nature would incrementally erode the effectiveness of the City's driveway and landscaping standards and contribute to the gradual loss of front yard green space throughout the neighbourhood.

The proposal fails to respect and reinforce the established physical character of the area, where landscaped front yards contribute significantly to the quality of the streetscape, tree canopy opportunities, and the overall character of the neighbourhood. The application is contrary to the intent of the Official Plan policies that seek to preserve and enhance Toronto's residential neighbourhoods through the protection of green space, sustainable site design, and attractive pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. Based on the foregoing, Community Planning staff are of the opinion that the requested variance is not minor, is not desirable for the appropriate development or use of the land, does not maintain the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan, and does not maintain the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law.

CONTACT

Bruna Nigro, Assistant Planner, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District,
416-392-5785

SIGNATURE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Nicholson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and last name "Nicholson" clearly distinguishable.

Signed by Dan Nicholson, MCIP, RPP
Manager, Community Planning on behalf of
Carly Bowman, M.ScPl., MCIP, RPP
Director, Community Planning
Toronto and East York District

copy: Councillor Perks, Ward 4
Dana Evans, Agent