

**Toronto Local Appeal Body** 

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# **DECISION AND ORDER**

**Decision Issue Date** Thursday, January 02, 2020

PROCEEDING COMMENCED UNDER Section 53, subsection 53(19), and Section 45(12), subsection 45(1) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, as amended (the "Act")

Appellant(s): ELLIOT BALBOUL

Applicant: ELLIOT BALBOUL

Property Address/Description: 47 STRADER AVENUE

Committee of Adjustment Case Files: 18 268107 STE 12 MV (A0849/18NY (TEY), 18 268095 STE 12 CO (B0060/18NY (TEY), 18 268111 STE 12 MV (A0848/18NY (TEY)

TLAB Case File Numbers: 19 162557 S45 12 TLAB, 19 162556 S53 12 TLAB, 19

162558 S45 12 TLAB

**Hearing dates:** October 29, 2019 and October 30, 2019

**DECISION DELIVERED BY JUSTIN LEUNG** 

### **APPEARANCES**

NAME ROLE REPRESENTATIVE

Elliot Balboul Applicant/AppellanT Amber Stewart

City of Toronto Party Michael Mahoney

Minerva Lindo Party Tunu Sodhi

Sirvinder Sodhi Party

Alison Liley Participant

Estephania Rosales Hernandez Participant

Susan Tirimacco Participant

Jonathan Benczkowski Expert Witness

#### INTRODUCTION

This is a matter on appeal from the Toronto-East York Panel Committee of Adjustment (COA) which had refused applications for the severance of 47 Strader Avenue (subject property) and related variances.

The Applicant/Appellant, Elliott Balboul, proposes to sever the subject property resulting in two lots being created. A three-storey semi-detached dwelling with no parking spaces allocated would be constructed on each of these newly created lots. The two storey dwelling currently on the site proposed to be demolished.

This property is located in the Oakwood Village neighbourhood in the City which is situated south of Eglinton Avenue West and bounded by Oakwood Avenue to the west and Alameda Avenue to the east. The subject property is located on Strader Avenue, south of Eglinton Avenue West and north of Vaughan Road.

The subject property is designated 'Neighbourhoods' in the City Official Plan (OP). It is zoned Residential Multiple Dwelling zone (RM) which allows a multitude of residential building types such as detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling, duplex, triplex, fourplex and apartment building under the new City Zoning By-law 569-2013. A variety of commercial uses are also permitted in this zone category so long as certain conditions are met. The By-law outlines that each parcel should maintain a minimum lot frontage of 6.0m and a minimum lot area of 180 m<sup>2</sup>.

At the beginning of the hearing, I informed all parties in attendance that I had performed a site visit of this subject property and the surrounding neighbourhood and had reviewed all pre-filed materials related to this appeal.

#### BACKGROUND

The Owner originally submitted applications to the COA in December 2018. A hearing was scheduled for May 15, 2019. The City Planning staff did not provide formal comments relating to these applications. However, Engineering & Construction Services and Transportation Services did provide comments which were not in opposition to the proposal but provided comments of a technical nature. These items were to be addressed on the site if these applications were approved by the COA. The COA subsequently refused these applications. The applicant elected to submit an appeal within the 20 day appeal period to the TLAB. The TLAB, in receipt of this appeal, then proceeded to schedule a 2 day hearing for October 29 and 30, 2019 in which all relevant parties were notified to attend.

#### The proposal

The proposal before the TLAB is to sever the subject property into two lots and construct a new three-storey semi-detached dwelling on each lot. As a result, a total of 12 variances were requested.

The original variances being requested by the Appellant can be summarized as follows:

## 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. Chapter 10.80.30.20.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m. The frontage of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 5.26 m.

## 3. Chapter 10.80.40.10.(2), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted height of all side exterior main walls facing a side lot line is 8.5 m. The height of the side exterior main walls facing a side lot line will be 9.6 m.

### 4. Chapter 10.80.40.10.(4), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted height of the first floor of a semi-detached dwelling above established grade is 1.2 m. The first floor of the new semi-detached dwelling will have a height of 1.47 m above established grade.

# 5. Chapter 10.80.40.40.(1), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index of a semi-detached dwelling is 0.8 times the area of the lot (130.82 m2). The new semi-detached dwelling will have a floor space index equal to 1.13 times the area of the lot (184.51 m2).

#### 6. Chapter 10.20.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A maximum of one platform is permitted to be located on the rear wall at or above the second storey of a semi-detached dwelling. There will be two platforms located on the rear wall at or above the second storey of the new semi-detached dwelling.

#### 7. Chapter 10.80.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted area of each platform located at or above the second storey of a dwelling is 4.0 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the rear second storey deck will be 4.47 m<sup>2</sup> and the area of the rear third storey deck will be 13.88 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### 8. Chapter 10.80.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required setback for a deck at the rear of the dwelling located at or above the second story is 1.8 metres from the common wall dividing the dwelling units. The rear second and third storey decks will be located 0.0 m from the common wall.

## 9. Chapter 10.80.40.70.(3), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 1.5 m. The new semi-detached dwelling will be located 0.75 m from the east side lot line.

## 10. Chapter 10.5.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A platform without main walls, attached to or within 0.3 m of a building, must comply with the required minimum building setbacks for the zone, 1.5 m. The deck will be located 0.75 m from the east side lot line.

### 11. Chapter 200.5.10.1.(1), By-law 569-2013

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

## 1. Section 3.2.1 (v), By-law 1-83

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

It is noted that variance #1 relating to By-law 1-83, immediately preceding, is applicable to the retained lot (Part 2) only. The other variance requests would address development standards of both the severed lot (Part 1) and retained lot (Part 2). Moreover, variances #3, 7 and 9 were revised 'on the spot' at the scheduled COA meeting attributed to discussions which occurred at the meeting between the applicant and Committee members. However, even with such revisions as proffered by the applicant, the COA elected to refuse the applications.

During the TLAB proceedings, the appellant indicated that subsequent changes to the proposal have been made resulting in the reduction and elimination of some variance requests. Concurrent to such changes has also been revisions to the drawings for the proposed semi-detached dwellings as modifications to external building attributes have also been done. The revised drawings were provided at the hearing and also subsequently sent to the TLAB offices, attached here as Attachment 1. The revised variance requests are outlined below:

#### For Part 1:

## 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. Chapter10.80.30.20.(1)(C),By-law569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m. The frontage of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 5.26 m.

## 3. Chapter 10.80.40.10.(2), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted height of all side exterior main walls facing a side lot line is 8.5 m. The height of the side exterior main walls facing a side lot line will be 9.06m.

### 4. Chapter 10.80.40.40.(1), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index of a semi-detached dwelling is 0.8 times the area of the lot (130.82 m<sup>2</sup>). The new semi-detached dwelling will have a floor space index equal to 1.13 times the area of the lot (184.51 m<sup>2</sup>).

### 5. Chapter 10.80.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required setback for a deck at the rear of the dwelling located at or above the second story is 1.8 metres from the common wall dividing the dwelling units. The rear deck will be located 0.0 m from the common wall.

## 6. Chapter 10.80.40.70.(3), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 1.5 m. The new semi-detached dwelling will be located 0.75 m from the east side lot line.

### 7. Chapter 10.5.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A platform without main walls, attached to or within 0.3 m of a building, must comply with the required minimum building setbacks for the zone, 1.5 m. The deck will be located 0.75 m from the east side lot line.

## 8. Chapter 200.5.10.1.(1), By-law 569-2013

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

#### 9. Section 3.2.1 (v), By-law 1-83

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

#### For Part 2:

#### 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Chapter10.80.30.20.(1)(C),By-law569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m. The frontage of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 5.26 m.

### 3. Chapter 10.80.40.10.(2), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted height of all side exterior main walls facing a side lot line is 8.5 m. The height of the side exterior main walls facing a side lot line will be 9.06m.

### 4. Chapter 10.80.40.40.(1), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index of a semi-detached dwelling is 0.8 times the area of the lot (130.82 m2). The new semi-detached dwelling will have a floor space index equal to 1.13 times the area of the lot (184.51 m2).

### 5. Chapter 10.80.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required setback for a deck at the rear of the dwelling located at or above the second story is 1.8 metres from the common wall dividing the dwelling units. The rear deck will be located 0.0 m from the common wall.

## 6. Chapter 10.80.40.70.(3), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 1.5 m. The new semi-detached dwelling will be located 0.75 m from the west side lot line.

### 7. Chapter 10.5.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A platform without main walls, attached to or within 0.3 m of a building, must comply with the required minimum building setbacks for the zone, 1.5 m. The deck will be located 0.75 m from the west side lot line.

### 8. Chapter 200.5.10.1.(1), By-law 569-2013

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

#### 9. Section 3.2.1 (v), By-law 1-83

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

It is noted that the variance requests have now been reduced to 9. Moreover, other adjustments to the proposal which have been made are further outlined in the Expert Witness Statement:

- "22. The following changes have been made to the applications:
- -The request for the finished first floor height above grade has been eliminated.
- -The request for two platforms at or above the second floor has been eliminated.
- -The maximum area in excess for each platform has been eliminated.

-The height of the dwelling was reduced from 9.6m to 9.06m (a reduction of .54m (21"))."1

These changes were formally communicated to the presiding TLAB member and other parties in attendance. As the changes were not to introduce new variance requests, this TLAB member found that as the substantive impact of the proposal was now being reduced, it could potentially be a proposal which would be more complementary to neighbourhood characteristics: I assented to allow such revisions. In relation to this, proposed conditions of approval were also provided by the appellant and the Party for City of Toronto. I further instructed the appellant and the City's lawyer to ensure these materials were submitted to form part of the record-of this appeal matter. Moreover, the other parties to the hearing did not raise objections or concerns with these proposed changes

#### **MATTERS IN ISSUE**

The three-storey semi-detached dwellings as proposed are unique as they are introducing residential units which will not have parking allocated on each of their respective lots. As such, any potential new resident to either of these dwellings would need to make provision for off-site parking arrangements, if they intended to possess a vehicle. The appellant states that with the close proximity of 2 rapid transit lines to the subject property, new residents may elect to not own vehicles. They state that such a building type reflects the evolving needs of new residents as the City grows and matures. However, residents who are parties and participants to this appeal counter that the area currently has parking and traffic issues which would be exasperated by the introduction of residential units with no parking provided. They further argue that the area continues to be auto-dependent, irrespective of improvements to transit infrastructure along nearby thoroughfare of Eglinton Avenue West. In addition, they contend that such a building typology, where there is zero parking spaces for residential units, is not currently in existence in the area. If this proposal were permitted, a precedent could be set resulting in other similar building types beginning to appear in the area thereby causing harm to the current neighbourhood fabric.

The TLAB must assess the materials and submissions as presented to determine if this proposal meets both the criteria as set forth for subdivision of land and variances as prescribed in the *Planning Act*. It must also ensure that the community can accommodate such a proposal and that balancing interests of existing neighbourhood and future residents is achieved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Benczkowski, J. Witness Statement of Jonathan Benczkowski. 4 September 2019, pp. 7

### JURISDICTION

## Provincial Policy - S. 3

A decision of the Toronto Local Appeal Body ('TLAB') must be consistent with the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement ('PPS') and conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe for the subject area ('Growth Plan').

#### Consent - S. 53

TLAB must be satisfied that a plan of subdivision is not necessary for the orderly development of the municipality pursuant to s. 53(1) of the Act and that the application for consent to sever meets the criteria set out in s. 51(24) of the Act. These criteria require that " regard shall be had, among other matters, to the health, safety, convenience, accessibility for persons with disabilities and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the municipality and to,

- (a) the effect of development of the proposed subdivision on matters of provincial interest as referred to in section 2 of the Planning Act;
- (b) whether the proposed subdivision is premature or in the public interest;
- (c) whether the plan conforms to the official plan and adjacent plans of subdivision, if any;
- (d) the suitability of the land for the purposes for which it is to be subdivided;
- (d.1) if any affordable housing units are being proposed, the suitability of the proposed units for affordable housing;
- (e) the number, width, location and proposed grades and elevations of highways, and the adequacy of them, and the highways linking the highways in the proposed subdivision with the established highway system in the vicinity and the adequacy of them;
- (f) the dimensions and shapes of the proposed lots;
- (g) the restrictions or proposed restrictions, if any, on the land proposed to be subdivided or the buildings and structures proposed to be erected on it and the restrictions, if any, on adjoining land;
- (h) conservation of natural resources and flood control;
- (i) the adequacy of utilities and municipal services;
- (j) the adequacy of school sites;
- (k) the area of land, if any, within the proposed subdivision that, exclusive of highways, is to be conveyed or dedicated for public purposes;

- (I) the extent to which the plan's design optimizes the available supply, means of supplying, efficient use and conservation of energy; and
- (m) the interrelationship between the design of the proposed plan of subdivision and site plan control matters relating to any development on the land, if the land is also located within a site plan control area designated under subsection 41 (2) of this Act or subsection 114 (2) of the City of Toronto Act, 2006. 1994, c. 23, s. 30; 2001, c. 32, s. 31 (2); 2006, c. 23, s. 22 (3, 4); 2016, c. 25, Sched. 4, s. 8 (2).

### Minor Variance – S. 45(1)

In considering the applications for variances from the Zoning By-laws, the TLAB Panel must be satisfied that the applications meet all of the four tests under s. 45(1) of the Act. The tests are whether the variances:

- maintain the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan;
- maintain the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-laws;
- are desirable for the appropriate development or use of the land; and
- are minor.

### **EVIDENCE**

Susan Tirimacco, a resident of 16 Strader Avenue, was in attendance at the hearing. She indicated that she was not familiar with TLAB Rules and as such had not formally registered herself as a party/participant. As the presiding TLAB member, I stated that only party/participants are able to participate in the proceedings, although she could remain as an observer. Ms. Tirimacco responded that she may have clarifying questions as they related during the proceedings and that she had a direct interest in the matter. On that understanding, I-decided that Ms. Tirimacco may be added as a late participant; however, she would not be granted party status. Ms. Tirimacco and all other parties in attendance assented to this decision.

Amber Stewart, legal counsel for the appellant, stated that the Expert Witness Statement filed by Jonathan Benczkowski outlined changes to the variance requests for both the conveyed lot (Part 1) and retained lot (Part 2). These alterations were previously described in the 'Background' section. The neighbourhood is an urban setting which has a variety of building types. The overall cumulative effect of the variances is not substantial. In addition, lot frontage zoning requirements differ between the building types. As such, minimum lot frontage for semi-detached dwelling differs from a detached dwelling. In this instance, the built form which is being proposed would be relevant in framing the discussion.

In terms of precedent, Ms. Stewart contends that it is an element increasingly being assessed with proposals as being brought before the TLAB. Moreover, precedent should not be interpreted as a negative item as it could assist in informing the development pattern which is occurring in an area. The expert witness Mr. Benczkowski would be outlining an assessment of other lots in the area and their potential to be severed. While the City had a legal counsel in attendance, no Planner was present to defend the Council position to not support the proposal. Ms. Stewart commented that

their non-attendance could be construed, in her opinion, as Planning staff not opposing the applications.

The City's legal counsel Michael Mahoney provided his opening statement. Mr. Mahoney stated that while the City Legal staff had been instructed by Council to attend this hearing, this should not act to diminish the importance of his attendance as there will be significant development pressures which will begin to emerge in this subject property's area as it will soon be served by two rapid transit lines. As such, the City intends to provide appropriate direction on how development that will occur here will be done in a manner appropriate for the existing built form. The prevailing trend for in-fill development in the City has been to build larger homes. Possible disruption to the neighbourhood fabric could occur if this proposal was permitted.

Inquired that in reviewing the appeal matters, I noted that there was no Planning report prepared. I asked if that should be interpreted that the Planning staff did not have concern/objections of the proposal. Mr. Mahoney responded that it can be interpreted as such.

Sirvinder Sodhi, a party, indicated that the construction of these semi-detached dwellings could potentially negatively affect sunlight accessing adjacent residential properties. The rear facing balconies for these new dwellings could result in these new residents being able to view onto adjacent properties affecting privacy and enjoyment of those properties residents. The proposal's inclusion of zero parking spaces would also act to further constrain the parking situation of the neighbourhood. Minerva Lindo, party for 49 Strader Avenue, had also authorized Mr. Sodhi to speak on their behalf at the hearing.

Mr. Benczkowski was called by Ms. Stewart to the stand as an expert witness for the matter. The TLAB stated that he had reviewed Mr. Benczkowski's curriculum vitae and was able to qualify him to provide evidence in the field of land use planning.

Mr. Benczkowski began by stating that he had been retained by the applicant/appellant Elliott Balboul to represent his matter at the TLAB. He recommended that changes to the proposal be made which were submitted to the TLAB as well. In preparation for the hearing, Mr. Benczkowski conducted a series of site visits to the area. The community is served by the JR Wilcox Community School. The subject property currently has a two storey detached dwelling which is situated on the eastern portion of the property. He commented that this was a unique phenomenon for the neighbourhood. Parking is currently provided on a driveway on the western portion of the property.

The proposal is to sever the property to create two lots. The variance requests for both the conveyed and retained lots are identical in nature. 58% of the front soft landscaping will be provided. The proposed minimum lot area will be approximately 163 metres where the zoning requires 180 metres. Ms. Stewart asked if this reduction in lot area would be visible from the street. Mr. Benczkowski responded that it is not visible to the naked eye from the street. The side exterior main wall is a request for a variance; however, this does not related to building height requirements. The deck at rear was

proposed to be constructed to be 'in line' with the home adjacent and not to extend further into the rear yard. Finally, zero parking spaces are being proposed.

Ms. Stewart further indicated that the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) recently issued decision as it related to the residential zone provisions of By-law 569-2013. As such, these provisions are now in full force and effect.

As the presiding TLAB member, I asked if the zero parking variance request was due to site constrains. Mr. Benczkowski responded that the applicant/appellant choose a housing design which had no parking allocated recognizing the improved transit infrastructure occurring in this area. He further indicated that permit parking is available if future residents to these dwellings required use of vehicle.

The building is a tiered design to reduce the shadow impact towards the adjacent properties. The rear decks of the property are of a smaller dimension and would not be able to accommodate outdoor furniture. Due to factors such as the *Ontario Building Code*, windows are proposed only for the front and rear walls of the property. Furthermore, changes to the proposal are now being contemplated whereby privacy screening will be installed on the decks.

In terms of the study area which Mr. Benczkowski assessed, he did not include Eglinton Avenue as it comprises mostly commercial properties. In addition, apartment buildings were not included as part of this review/study of properties of the area. A network of one way streets make up this area and can be attributed to traffic calming measures. Although the previous variances which he had compiled are for the last 10 year period, Mr. Benczkowski asserts that redevelopment has been occurring for some time in the area and that the City's research portal only permits one to obtain variance information for the last decade.

The research conducted by Mr. Benczkowski outlined that there is a varied building typology for the area. As such, the built form of the neighbourhood is diverse and does not contain a common design characteristic. No trees are being proposed to be removed on the subject property. The proposal has been done to reduce the number of risers (stairs) on the front portion of property to reduce a front elevation which could appear to 'overbear' in terms of siting to other adjacent residential buildings. In terms of side yard setback requests, it is not dis-similar to other side yard setbacks which have been approved by COA. Furthermore, the urban context lends credence to the argument that the dwellings would be constructed in close proximity to other dwellings due to the constrained lot fabric.

Mr. Benczkowski opined that the test as it relates to 'minor in nature' is not an attempt to restrict development but to assess if the development as proposed is appropriate for the area in question. This proposal, in his opinion, would meet this test as such. The side yard setback is partially due to the conditions of the land parcel and not inconsistent with other houses which have recently been constructed in the area.

The City's Official Plan (OP) policies encourages 'in-fill' development. Mr. Benczkowski articulates that it is his professional opinion that the proposal here would be appropriate and in keeping with OP policy direction. Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 320 is further assessed and in particular the term 'prevailing' and how it relates to this

proposal. Prevailing does not necessarily mean the same and is interpreted by the expert witness to be a proposal which acts to respect and reinforce the existing neighbourhood context. The proposal should be 'materially consistent' with the immediate neighbourhood. In this neighbourhood, the prevailing character can be defined by the diverse building types as outlined earlier. I inquired if the property is within a heritage designated area as per the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Mr. Benczkowski responded that it was not.

Michael Mahoney, legal counsel for the City, proceeded to cross-examine the expert witness. Mr. Mahoney outlined a potential condition which they wanted to be include whereby the curb cut be restored if the proposal were approved, with zero parking spaces. He asked if the provincial policies and OP are relevant to the proposal. Mr. Benczkowski acknowledged this and further opined that the proposed two semidetached dwelling would have the same impact and appearance to the existing detached dwelling on site. Mr. Mahoney indicated that the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) as stipulated by the province had not yet clearly delineated geographic areas and how it would relate to the nearby Oakwood light rail transit (LRT) station. Mr. Benczkowski acknowledged that the MTSA areas had not yet been clearly defined, it had been approved in principle and that he believes this subject property area will be contained within an MTSA. Height and density criteria as outlined by OP policies are outlined by Mr. Mahoney as acting to guide development in this area. Mr. Benczkowski accepted this in general terms but argued that there are individual, case-by-case assessment criteria which must be undertaken with some development proposals. Mr. Mahoney further outlines that the policies of OPA 320 describes 'most frequently occurring' which would result in this proposal being inconsistent with the policy planning framework. Mr. Benczkowski responded that while semi-detached dwellings are not common this street, the requisite zoning permits semi-detached dwellings which addresses these policies as such. He further contends that, in his opinion, OPA 320 was not enacted as a means to conflict with provisions as permitted in the Zoning Bylaw.

Sirvinder Sodhi proceeded to cross-examine the expert witness. He asked about the side yard setback variances and if garbage bins could still traverse between the properties. Mr. Benczkowski responded the zoning requirement is 1.5 metres where the proposal is requesting 0.75 metres and that garbage bins could still fit. However, direct access to the rear of the properties will be decreased. Mr. Sodhi asked if the proposal will compromise sunlight to the adjacent properties. Mr. Benczkowski did not deny there could be an impact; however, this is a dense, urban area so sunlight access was already constrained. Mr. Sodhi outlined that there have been drainage issues with other properties along the street. He asked if the proposed dwellings will address water runoff issues sufficiently. Mr. Benczkowski responded that the proposal will be done to ensure water does not runoff onto adjacent property. Mr. Sodhi described that the tree on the subject property was removed and asked how the expert witness was unaware of this. Mr. Benczkowski responded that he was not aware that it could be a city-owned tree. Mr. Sodhi commented that there are parking issues on the street and that additional vehicles cannot be accommodated. Mr. Benczkowski responded that he had inquired with the City and that there were 2 on street parking spaces available. This concluded day 1 of the proceedings.

Day 2 of the proceedings commenced with Mr. Sodhi stating that the relationship between the applicant/appellant and with the immediate neighbours has not been constructive as there had been no dialogue which had been initiated with them on this proposal. The removal of the tree on the property had been an impetus to neighbourhood resident concerns of the appellant (builder) and how they would conduct themselves moving forward. He cited concerns that if the proposal is approved, the appellant would not work in accordance with rules and regulations. He did indicate that the reduction in height for the overall structure is a positive development.

Mr. Sodhi went on to comment on how parking is needed for the residents of the area. Some residents require it to work in areas outside of the City which is not transit accessible. The transit infrastructure, while is improving, is not adequate to meet current needs of the community.

Susan Tirimacco, a late participant of 16 Strader Avenue, provided a statement in relation to the proposal. Ms. Tirimacco described a concern that the semi-detached dwelling could be converted in future to allow for additional residents to live there. At the COA meeting, the applicant/appellant had stated that no trees were going to be removed. However, the subsequent tree removal again presented concerns to her regarding how the builder will conduct construction on this property. Although Planning staff did not provide comments on this proposal, she argues that it does not mean that there are not genuine Planning issues which need to be addressed. The bicycle paths in the area do not have inter-connectivity. Local residents should be involved in shaping how development unfolds in their own community.

Ms. Stewart asked Ms. Tirimacco if she was supportive of homes being renovated and redeveloped. She responded that she does not oppose such initiatives but that it should be done in a manner complimentary of the built form in the area. She feels that the builder here has taken a standard, common design and superimposed onto the subject property.

In closing summation, Ms. Stewart contended that if the OP policies are met with this proposal, the overall development proposal (consent and variances) would be found to be appropriate form of development, in her opinion. The built form does not regulate architectural style. Architectural style would be assessed for heritage properties, which is not applicable for this property. The compatibility assessment as part of the OP policies does permit a certain level of impactful development. She further opined that the term 'materially consistent' in these policies was defined as such to differentiate from 'consistent'. This demonstrates that in-fill development does not have to be in substantial conformity to adjacent properties. In terms of parking, she cited report from Transportation Services which did not object to the proposal having zero parking spaces. In terms of main wall height, besides the variance request the other wall heights are compliant. The proposal is also not of a flat roof design, for which the main wall height zoning provisions were designed to address.

Mr. Mahoney stated that the 2 day hearings had seen revisions to the proposal by the appellant. He requested that the appellant provide updated drawings and proposed conditions for approval to the TLAB in the event the tribunal elects to allow this appeal. The City would also have their own conditions to provide to the tribunal for

its consideration as well. The province has a policy-led planning system and all parties must adhere to these policies. A proposal cannot only meet certain aspects of the policy and negate others. The discussion on transit accessibility should extend beyond just rapid transit and also look at regular transit such as bus service of the area. Furthermore, the City had enacted OPA 320 to address the protection of existing neighbourhoods. Mr. Mahoney further contended that Mr. Benczkowski has not sufficiently applied and assessed the OP policies as they relate to this proposal.

It is noted that the applicant/appellant Elliot Balboul, Minerva Lindo, Alison Liley and Estephania Hernandez were not in attendance at the hearings.

# **ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, REASONS**

The proposal which has been brought forward is unique to this district of the former City of York as it is oriented to have no parking allocated for either of the two proposed semi-detached dwellings. The proposal has been crafted in anticipation to improvements to the transit infrastructure which are occurring along Eglinton Avenue West. Redevelopment has begun to appear in this community and is evident in examples as presented by the appellant's expert witness and as part of site visit as conducted by this TLAB member.

#### 38-40 ALAMEDA AVENUE

#### 53-55 CLOVELLY AVENUE





Figure 1: example of in-fill development from area (extracted from *Expert Witness Statement of Jonathan Benczkowski*)

While this redevelopment pattern has only begun to emerge in its infancy here, the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT line has provided a catalyst for new residents and development to begin to appear. The area is also currently served by Line 1 Yonge University and also provides vehicle access to the Allen Expressway as well. It should be noted that the area is not only experiencing in-fill development but also mid to hi-rise development is also beginning to appear, with most of these projects situated along the Eglinton Avenue West thoroughfare.

As part of the evidence presented to the tribunal, the City's lawyer indicated that the delineated boundaries for MTSAs had not yet been finalized by City planners. However, the City lawyer indicated that the assessment work as conducted by City and provincial policy planners thus far is being formally considered for an MTSA. During the proceedings, several opposing parties to the appeal articulated that this TOD model was inconsistent with the auto dependency of their area and that transit infrastructure continued to be woefully inadequate to meet community needs.

The TLAB also notes that the City is subject to provincial planning direction as the province does establish the planning framework by which municipalities must adhere, as evident in language as delineated in the *Planning Act* and *Provincial Policy Statement*.

The above-noted policy documents were presented by both the City lawyer and appellant's legal counsel further reinforcing the significant role they play in shaping the development pattern throughout the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It further outlines how municipal planning instruments such as the OP and Zoning By-law must provide appropriate consideration for the provincial planning regime to ensure conformity with the planning direction which the province intends for urban centres in Ontario.

These policies also provide a measure by which to assess the zero parking as it pertains to the proposed semi-detached dwellings to be located on the two newly created lots. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which is also included as part of the evidentiary materials submitted to the TLAB, specifically delineates that, within transit oriented development areas:

"c) providing alternative development standards, such as reduced parking standards;"

The province's updated planning documents illustrate that automobile use and parking has now been deprioritized. In addition, municipal policies and staff should also provide assistance to them in allowing for such a development model to materialize. While so, consideration should also be made to review the local context to ensure that the overall parking situation is not destabilized as a result. Here, the zero parking as requested is justified by the developer through the nearby 2 rapid transit lines which would be servicing this area. Moreover, on street permit parking along Strader Avenue or on other streets in the community is available for new residents to these dwellings. Other initiatives such as car and bicycle sharing programs are becoming more commonplace in urban neighbourhoods such as the one being assessed.

In terms of the rear facing decks, as expressed by the expert witness, changes have been made to reduce the dimensions of these decks. The decks being oriented in a stepped design along the rear portion of the dwellings can contribute to reducing sightlines onto neighbouring properties. Finally, the privacy screening which was proposed by the expert witness on behalf of the appellant could further reduce negative visual intrusions for neighbours. The comprehensive area analysis of 'in-fill' development outlined in the submitted materials further reinforces that the area is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019, May) Retrieved from <a href="https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-greater-golden-horseshoe-place-to-grow-english-15may2019.pdf">https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-greater-golden-horseshoe-place-to-grow-english-15may2019.pdf</a>

comprised of a dense lot fabric. As such, access to sunlight and privacy protection will not be as greatly accounted for as they could be provided for in suburban and rural settings. While attempts are made by planners to consider for this, compact urban environments such as the one being assessed could result in sun and privacy elements being compromised. However, this is negated by the ability to provide for more residents to live within walking distance to rapid transit amenities which would reduce the strain on the road infrastructure.

The City's lawyer contended that OP policies, most notably the 'Development Criteria in Neighbourhoods', had not been provided appropriate attention by the appellant as it relates to the proposal. These materials were included as part of the City's Disclosure Documents. The common theme of this criteria pertains to the term 'prevailing' in describing how a neighbourhood development should occur. The City's lawyer contends that the immediate neighbourhood, especially along Strader Avenue, possesses only a small number of semi-detached dwellings. As such, the notion that this built form is prevailing is without merit. However, it can be inferred directly from the OP policies that if a neighbourhood contains a mix of building forms, then the means by which to define 'prevailing' would be approached differently:

"While prevailing will mean most frequently occurring for purposes of this policy, this Plan recognizes that some geographic neighbourhoods contain a mix of physical characters. In such cases, the direction to respect and reinforce the prevailing physical character will not preclude development whose physical characteristics are not the most frequently occurring but do exist in substantial numbers within the geographic neighbourhood, provided that the physical characteristics of the proposed development are materially consistent with the physical character of the geographic neighbourhood and already have a significant presence on properties located in the immediate context or abutting the same street in the immediately adjacent block(s) within the geographic neighbourhood."

The testimony as presented to the TLAB by the expert witness and part of the evidentiary submissions acts to demonstrate the physical/built form of the area is diverse and contains several building types such as detached, semi-detached and midrise buildings. Two and three storey buildings are also located throughout this Oakwood Village neighbourhood. Commercial and institutional uses are also evident as witnessed by the Beer Store with frontage onto Strader Avenue and a Toronto Fire Services station located to the north of the subject property at the intersection of Bude Street and Oakwood Avenue.

In terms of rear yard usage, the properties here again are being used in a variety of forms such as rear parking garage, rear accessory structures, backyard gardens and for rear facing patios. This typology further affirms that there is no prevailing use for residential properties rear yards. Introduction of rear decks to these proposed semi-detached dwellings will not be creating a new condition to the community.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Mahoney, M. City of Toronto-Document Disclosure Book. 30 August 2019, pp. 182

Finally, in terms of the elimination of parking on this property, the tribunal does find that this configuration is not commonplace within the area. However, the additional OP policy direction further confirms that TOD development is to be implemented where it is feasible. The emergence of new frequent and reliable transit to this area would contribute to a new development dynamic which this proposal would be subject to. Moreover, the contention by opposing parties that 2 vehicle parking on residential properties is the normative standard for the area seems unfounded as there are several triplex and fourplex buildings in the area which have varied parking requirements. As the OP and provincial policies are prescriptive in decreasing the reliance on automobile use, and as this is a province-led planning regime, municipalities are provided policy mechanisms which can result in a decreased emphasis on provisioning for parking as they had in the past, where it can be applied in an appropriate local context.

With the materials as presented at the hearings, the TLAB prefers the arguments as put forward by the appellant. They have set forth a rationale and sensible proposal which is a gentle 'in-fill' development which will complement the existing neighbourhood fabric. While some opposing parties have contended that the existing detached dwelling should remain and that the site remain in its current state, it should be noted the OP policies outline that a 'stable neighbourhood' does not mean 'static' whereby no change or development is to occur. Regeneration of the housing stock is contemplated for in the OP and in provincial planning documents. This allows for neighbourhoods to continue to support and attract new residents to relocate to them. Such development can also ensure that existing community infrastructure such as schools and community centres will continue to be viable. Comments that builders/developers are acting in a financially influenced manner while abdicating community concerns fails to recognize that the building industry does contribute to the overall local economic health. It further ensures that property taxes can be maintained at reasonable levels for residents.

Established rules and procedures provide a regulatory framework which provides enforcement and control of the building industry to ensure the public interest is preserved. While the City attempts to maintain stability of communities, these polices are not structured in a manner by which to constrain communities which have not seen development for a prolonged period. When such development does potentially occur, the City must ensure that it is done appropriately to respect the existing built form which also provisioning for housing as the City's population grows. While so, the concept of 'over-development' is recognized by planning academics and is a phenomenon municipalities must be cognizant of and ensure that established communities are not completely altered resulting in distinct neighbourhood characteristics being eroded in the process. It is further noted that communities which have identified cultural heritage and design significance are afforded protection under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The exclusion of this area from heritage designation can be attributed to Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) staff not finding it necessary to afford such protection here.

In supporting this proposal, the tribunal will also address the issue of precedent. As the matter being dealt with pertains to a severance, opposing parties to the appeal have raised concerns that an approval would result in other severances appearing later on. Firstly, it should be noted that the zoning requirements here permit semi-detached dwellings. As such, this severance approval to facilitate this building type would not be incompatible for this area as its requisite zone category has contemplated for this built

form as being appropriate for the neighbourhood context. In assessing the submitted materials and the City's Application Information Centre (AIC), while it is found that there have been several variance applications processed for the immediate area, there have not been as many severance applications. However, the expert witness documents have shown, and seen in Figure 1, that severances have begun to occur in this area. While the criteria to assess precedent has, through previously derived decisions for consent through COA has shown, it can be used as a basis for review of future potential proposals. Within this dynamic, the tribunal has determined that this proposal is appropriate for the immediate neighbourhood in relation to the local site characteristics. While the TLAB recognizes that commenting on another future severance proposal could be construed as pre-mature, it does so to clearly dictate that any severance in future espousing for zero parking allocation would be assessed by the pertinent decision-makers within the necessary local context to ensure the needs of current and potential future residents are properly allocated for.

In providing such commentary, the tribunal does comment that this should not be interpreted as a carte blanch support for all lots which can support additional residential dwellings to be severed. In reviewing the relevant policies as contemplated for within OPA 320, this proposal was analyzed within the context of 'prevailing' as stipulated by this policy in ensuring that this proposed housing form is compatible with the neighbourhood in question. OPA 320's intent is more succinctly stated by Councillor Gord Perks in the following comments:

"(OPA) 320, which "amends the *Healthy Neighbourhoods*, *Neighbourhoods* and *Apartment Neighbourhoods* policies of the Official Plan.to protect and enhance existing neighbourhoods, allow limited infill on underutilized apartment sites in *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, and implement the City's Tower Renewal Program."<sup>4</sup>

The comments illustrate that Council's intent, while to preserve existing, stable neighbourhoods, also has flexibility contained in the policy language which does ensure a certain degree of development can occur in these areas, especially as it pertains to 'yellowbelt' development or to have greater housing allocated in existing neighbourhoods, which Council has been discussing and has provided preliminary support for this initiative. It is noted the above-noted comment as provided by the Councillor is focused on potentially greater intensification within established areas. However, the proposal being assessed is for two semi-detached dwellings which is, on initial review, is of a less impactful local development than what OPA 320 could, as contemplated, possibly permit.

As such, it is a planning exercise to demonstrate that the area is in transition and that development is anticipated to occur more frequently as new residents begin to relocate to the area. It is imperative that decision-makers such as politicians, residents, builders and staff work collaboratively to ensure that the redevelopment in the area is accomplished in a manner which respects the neighbourhood character while also recognizing the changes which elements such as the Eglinton Crosstown LRT line will bring here as well.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Map TO: The Yellowbelt (2019, April, 28) Retrieved from <a href="http://www.mapto.ca/maps/2017/3/4/the-yellow-belt">http://www.mapto.ca/maps/2017/3/4/the-yellow-belt</a>

#### **DECISION AND ORDER**

I authorize the following variances and approve the consent requested. The earlier decision of the COA is set aside.

#### Requested Variances

47 Strader Avenue (Part 1) – List of Variances

## 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. Chapter10.80.30.20.(1)(C),By-law569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m. The frontage of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 5.26 m.

## 3. Chapter 10.80.40.10.(2), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted height of all side exterior main walls facing a side lot line is 8.5 m. The height of the side exterior main walls facing a side lot line will be 9.06m.

### 4. Chapter 10.80.40.40.(1), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index of a semi-detached dwelling is 0.8 times the area of the lot (130.82 m2). The new semi-detached dwelling will have a floor space index equal to 1.13 times the area of the lot (184.51 m2).

#### 5. Chapter 10.80.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required setback for a deck at the rear of the dwelling located at or above the second story is 1.8 metres from the common wall dividing the dwelling units. The rear deck will be located 0.0 m from the common wall.

#### 6. Chapter 10.80.40.70.(3), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 1.5 m. The new semi-detached dwelling will be located 0.75 m from the east side lot line.

#### 7. Chapter 10.5.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A platform without main walls, attached to or within 0.3 m of a building, must comply with the required minimum building setbacks for the zone, 1.5 m. The deck will be located 0.75 m from the east side lot line.

## 8. Chapter 200.5.10.1.(1), By-law 569-2013

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

### 9. Section 3.2.1 (v), By-law 1-83

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

## 47 Strader Avenue (Part 2) – List of Variances

### 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Chapter10.80.30.20.(1)(C),By-law569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m. The frontage of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 5.26 m.

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#### 6. Chapter 10.80.40.70.(3), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 1.5 m The new semi-detached dwelling will be located 0.75 m from the west side lot line.

#### 7. Chapter 10.5.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A platform without main walls, attached to or within 0.3 m of a building, must comply with the required minimum building setbacks for the zone, 1.5 m. The deck will be located 0.75 m from the west side lot line.

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### 9. Section 3.2.1 (v), By-law 1-83

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

#### **CONDITIONS OF MINOR VARIANCE APPROVAL**

- (1) The dwellings shall be constructed substantially in accordance with the plans prepared by MTRX Architecture all dated June 11, 2019 (revision date) attached as Attachment 1. Any other variance(s) that appear on these plans but are not listed in the written decision are NOT authorized.
- (2) The owner is required to remove the paving in the area of now obsolete driveway, restore back to soft landscaping within the City boulevard and restore existing curb cut to a full curb, at no cost to the City.
- (3) The roof of second storey shall not be used for rooftop deck or platform, and shall not be accessible from rear of the third floor.
- (4) Privacy screens minimum of 1.8 m. height shall be installed on east and west sides of rear second floor balcony.

#### **CONDITIONS OF CONSENT APPROVAL**

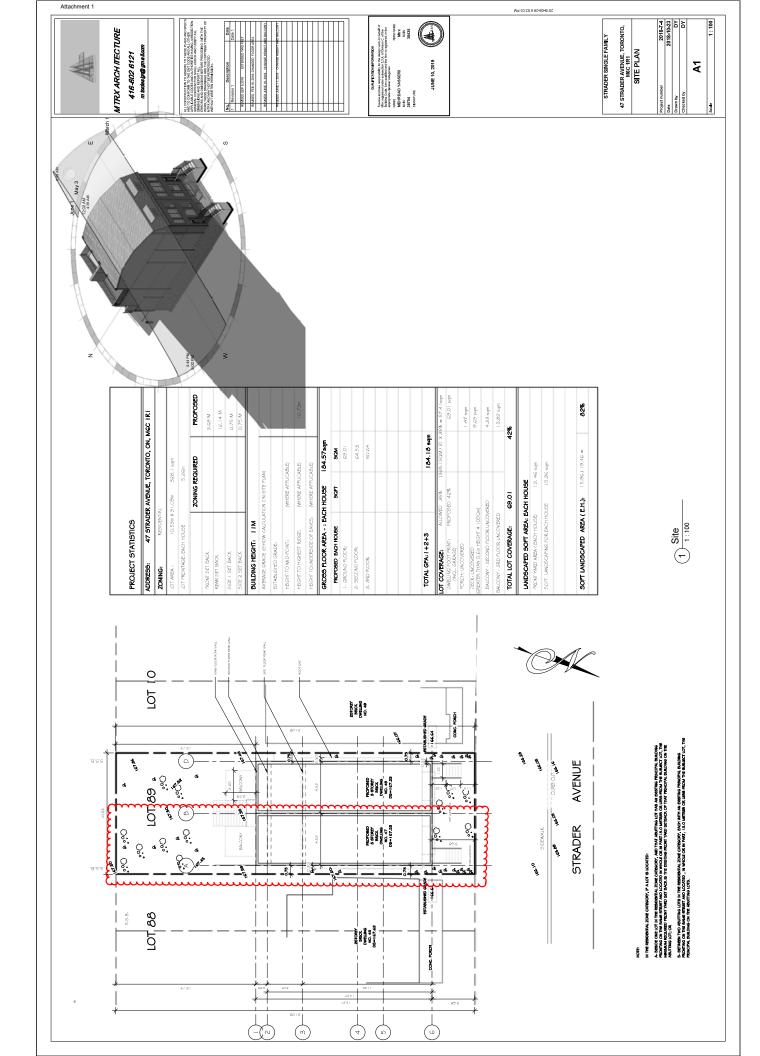
- (1) Confirmation of payment of outstanding taxes to the satisfaction of Revenue Services Division, Finance Department.
- (2) Municipal numbers for the subject lots indicated on the applicable Registered Plan of Survey shall be assigned to the satisfaction of Survey and Mapping Services, Technical Services.
- (3) Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall satisfy all conditions concerning City owned trees, to the satisfaction of the Director, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Urban Forestry Services.
- (4) Where no street trees exist, the owner shall provide payment in an amount to cover the cost of planting a street tree abutting each new lot created, to the satisfaction of the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.
- (5) Two copies of the registered reference plan of survey integrated with the Ontario Coordinate System and listing the Parts and their respective areas, shall be filed with City Surveyor, Survey & Mapping, and Technical Services.
- (6) Three copies of the registered reference plan of survey satisfying the requirements of the City Surveyor, shall be filed with the Committee of Adjustment.

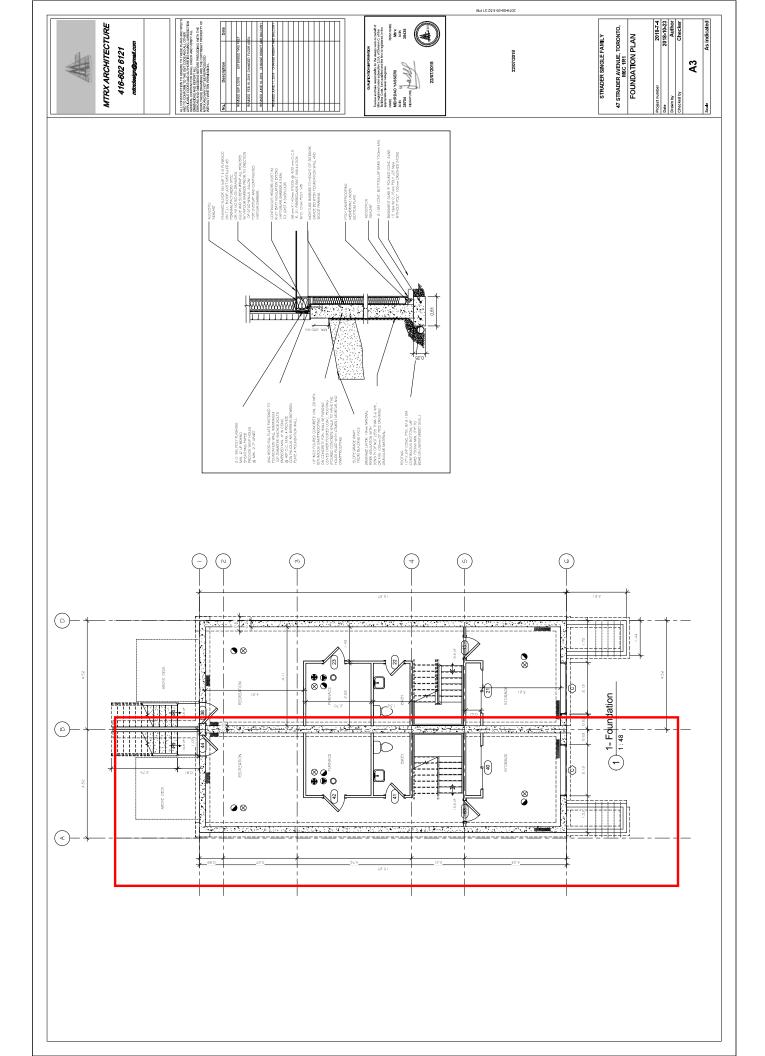
- (7) That Applicant contact Construction Services of Transportation Services, to obtain permit for any landscaping and/or paving within the City boulevard and to arrange for full-face curb restoration.
- (8) The Owner contacting municipal numbering staff at municipaladdress@toronto.ca to obtain or verify new municipal address prior to submitting an application for a building permit. All addressed parcels and structures must have the correct municipal address posted. For further details visit https://www.toronto.ca/citygovernment/planning-development/municipal-numbering-of-a-property/ 2 Municipal addresses are required for the purpose of setting up the water account with the city of Toronto when the application is made for the proposed sewer and/or water service connection (as applicable).
- (9) Within ONE YEAR of the date of the giving of this notice of decision, the applicant shall comply with the above-noted conditions and prepare for electronic submission to the Deputy Secretary-Treasurer, the Certificate of Official, Form 2 or 4, O. Reg. 197/96, referencing either subsection 50(3) or (5) or subsection 53(42) of the Planning Act, as it pertains to the conveyed land and/or consent transaction.

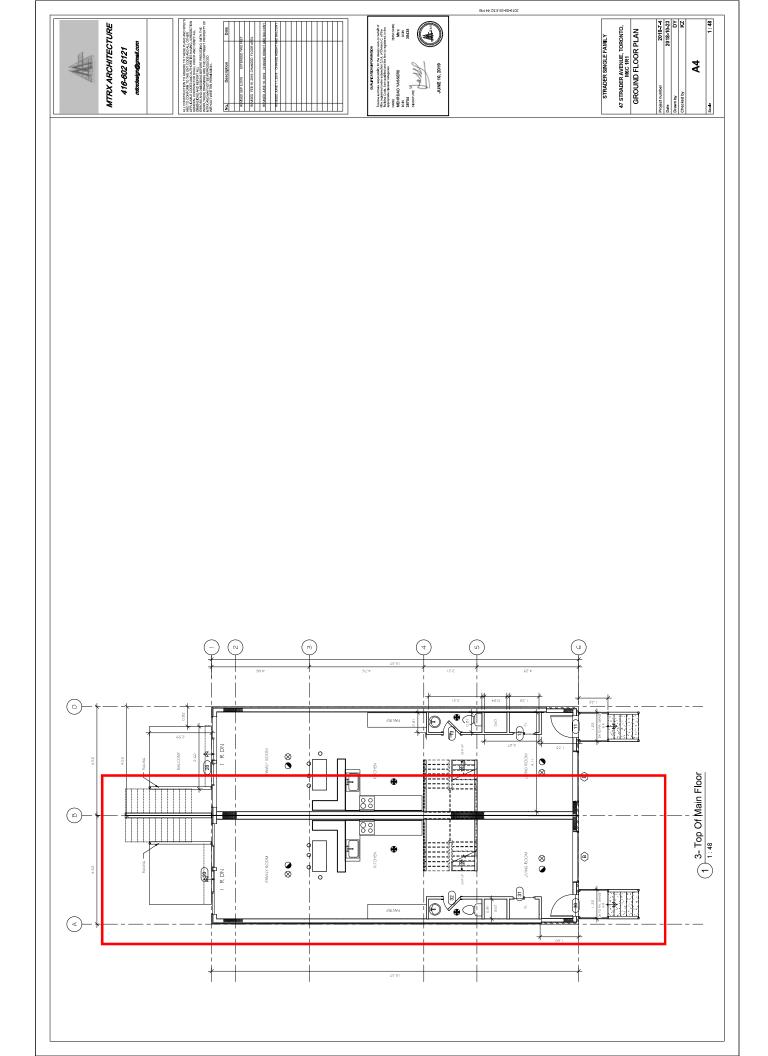
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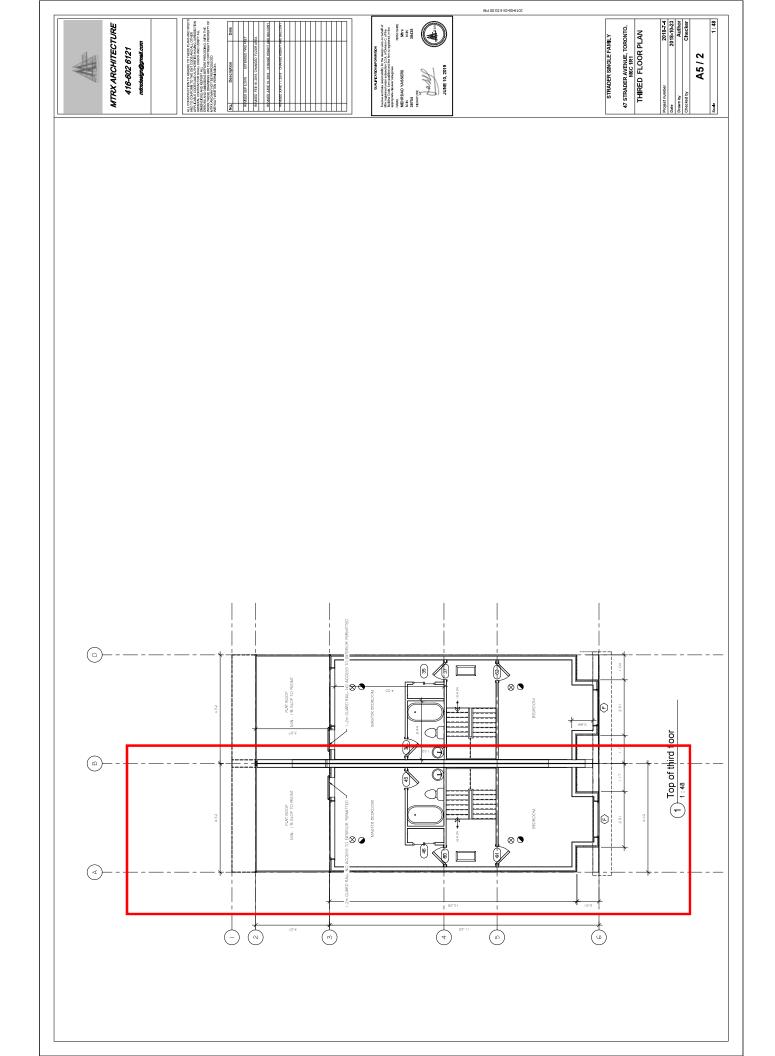
Justin Leung

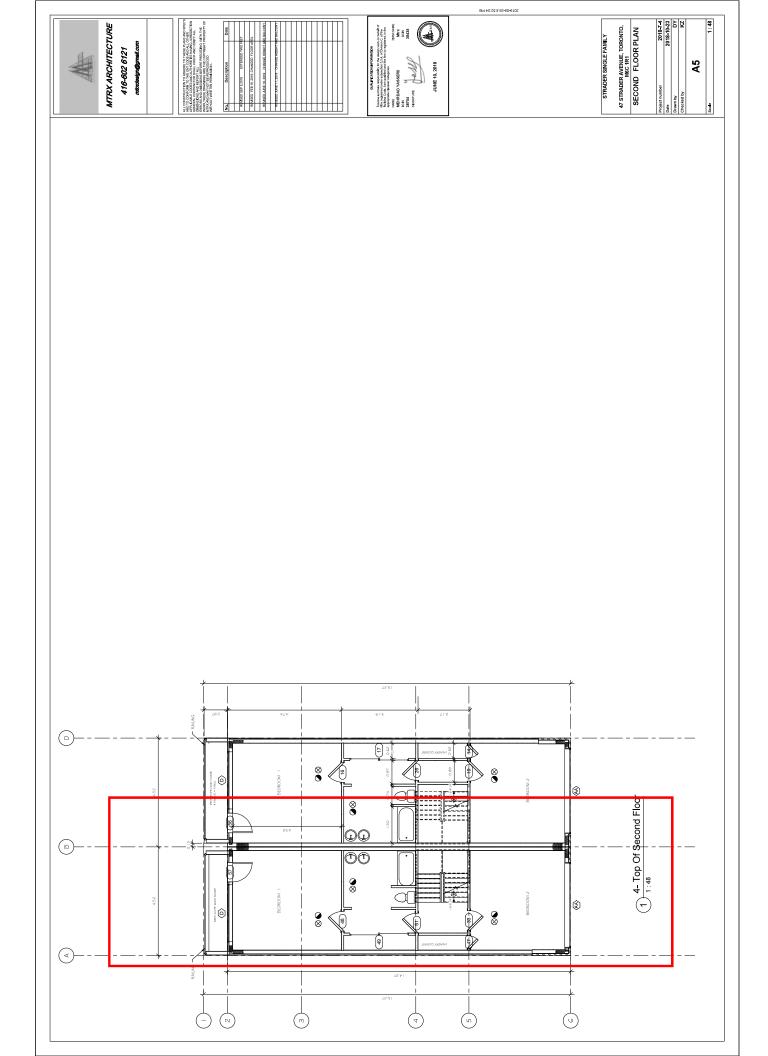
Panel Chair, Toronto Local Appeal Body

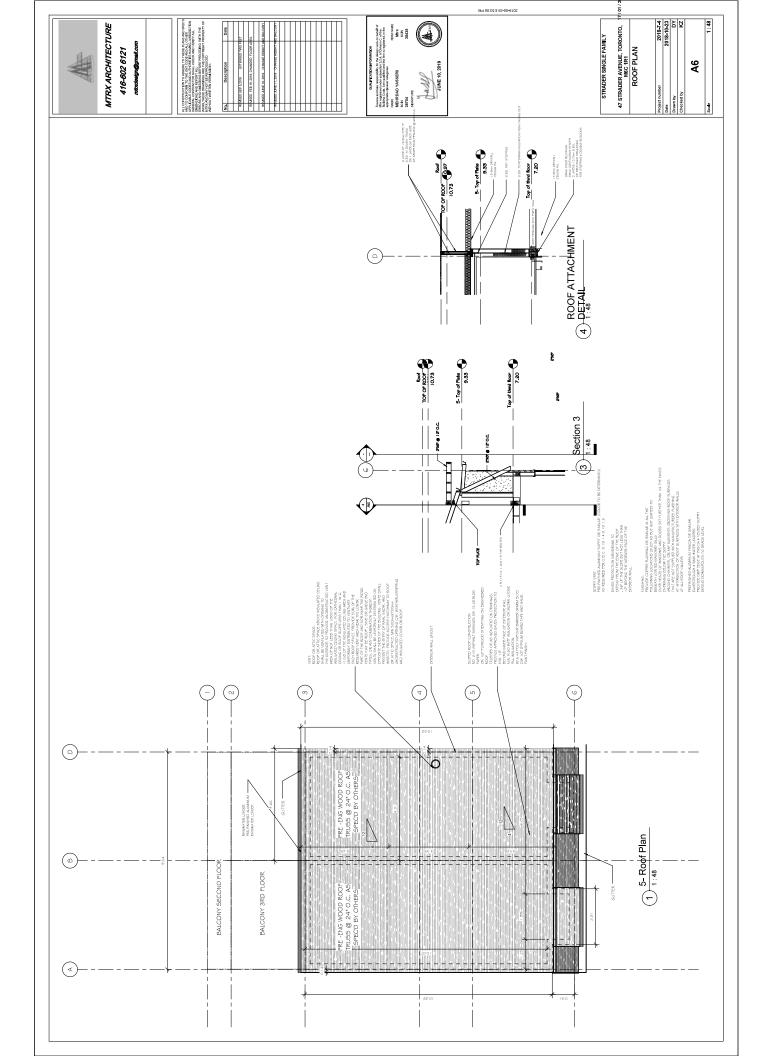




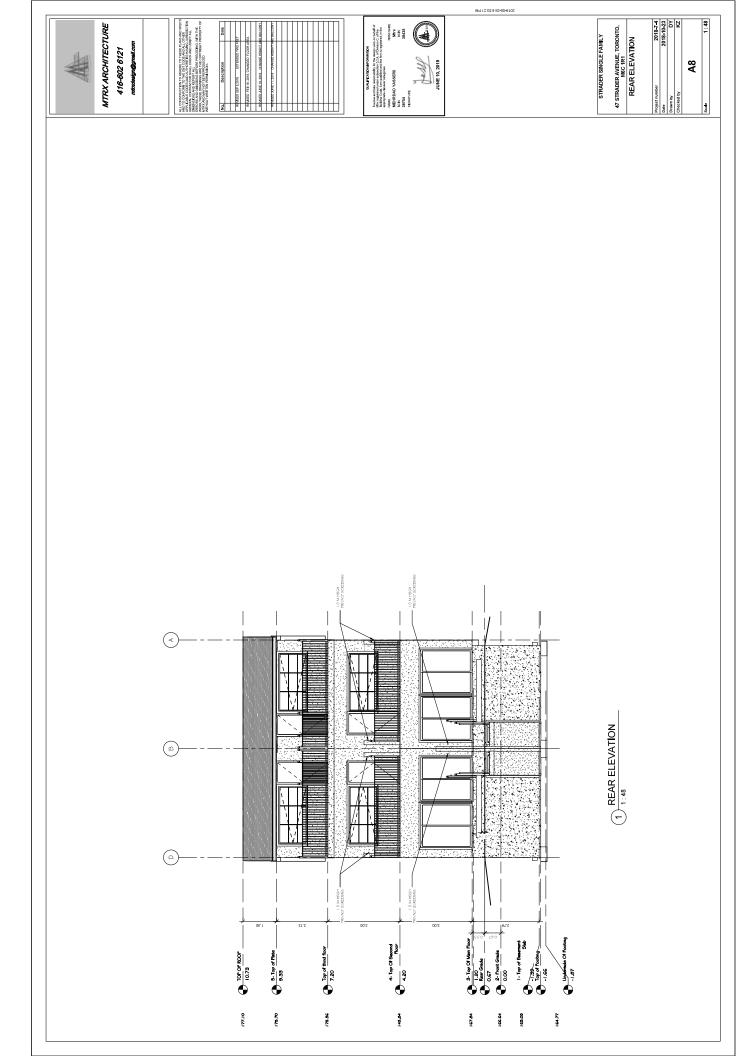


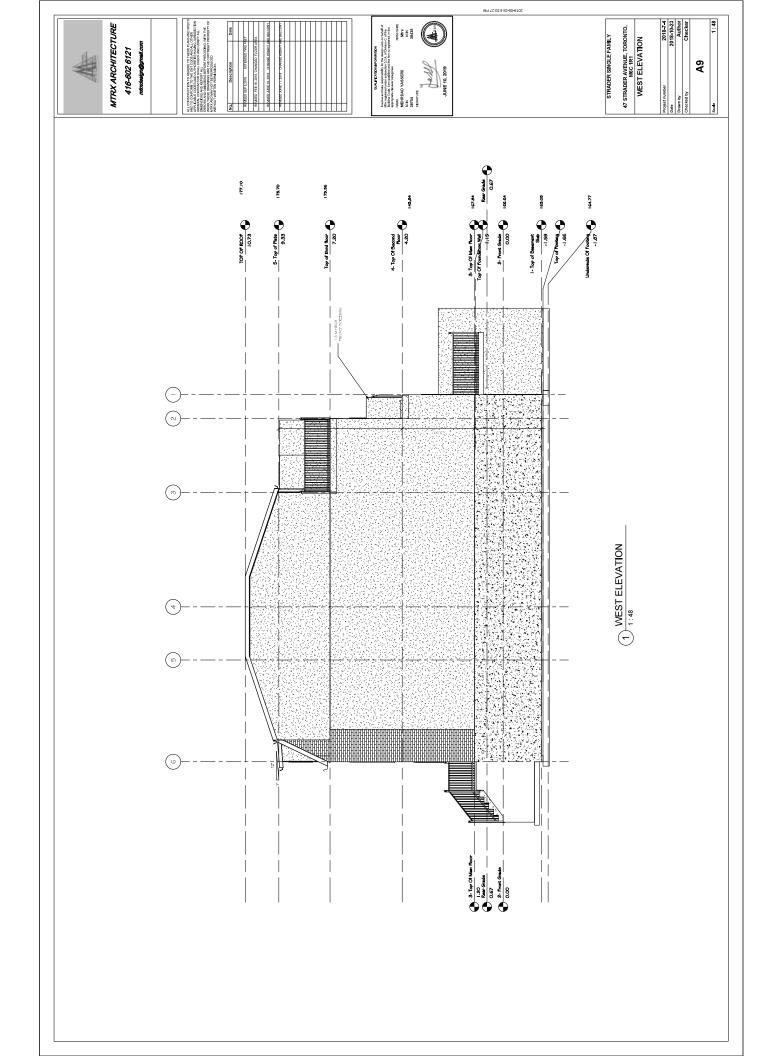


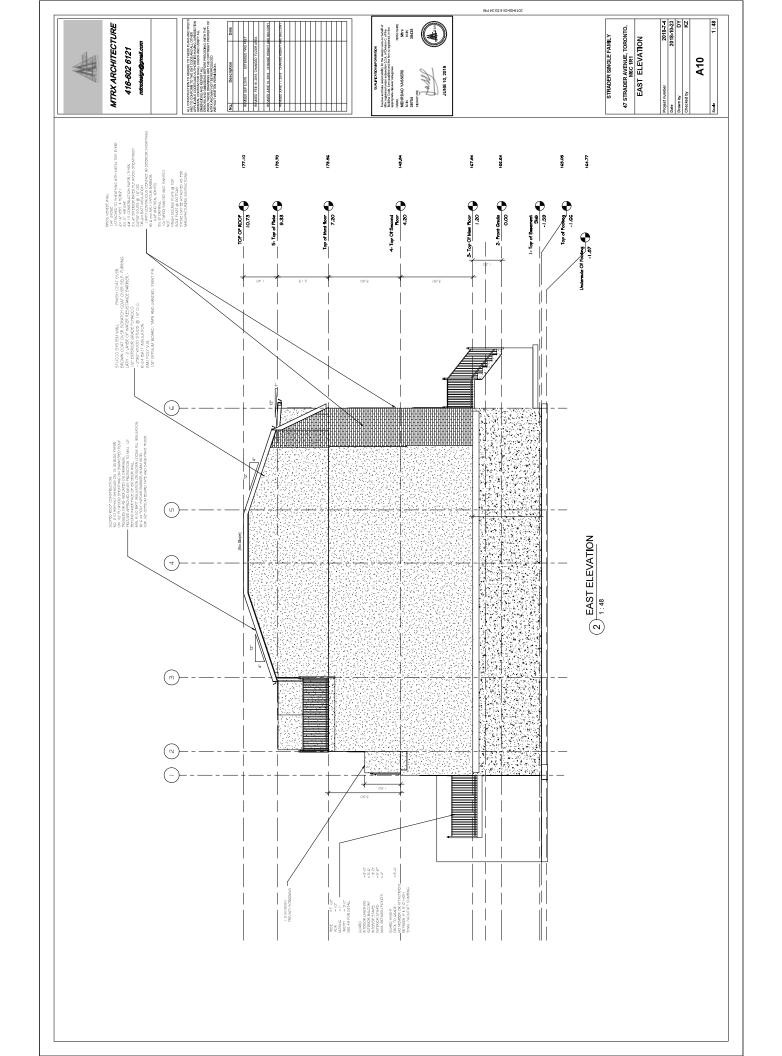


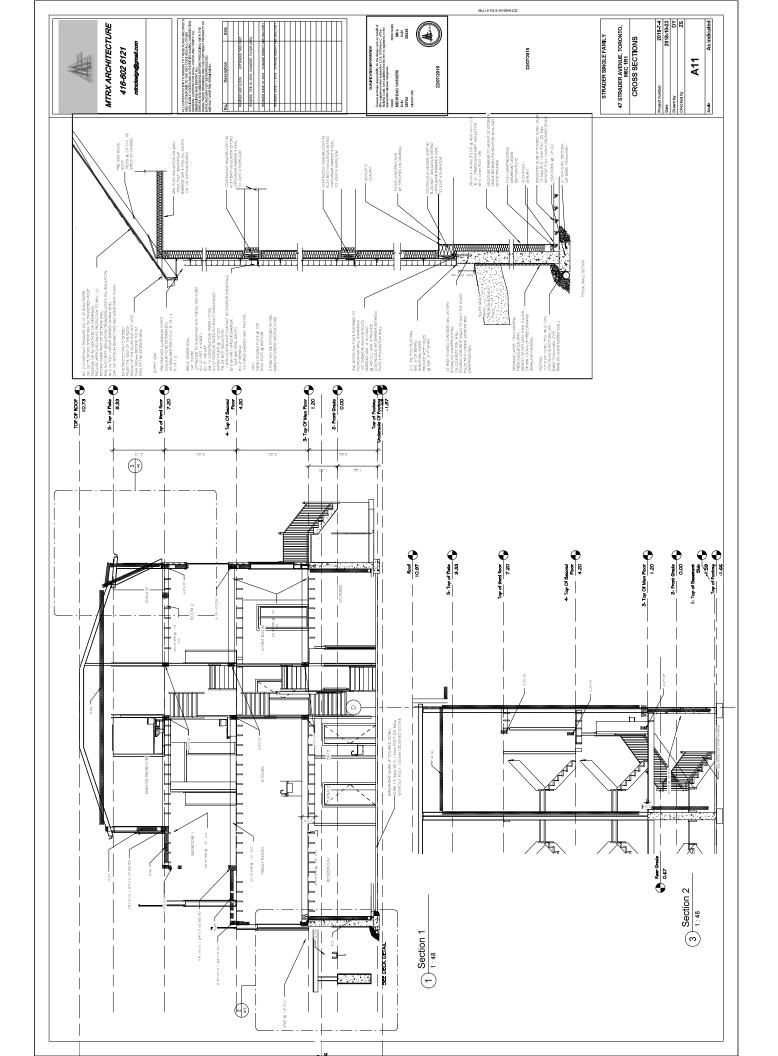


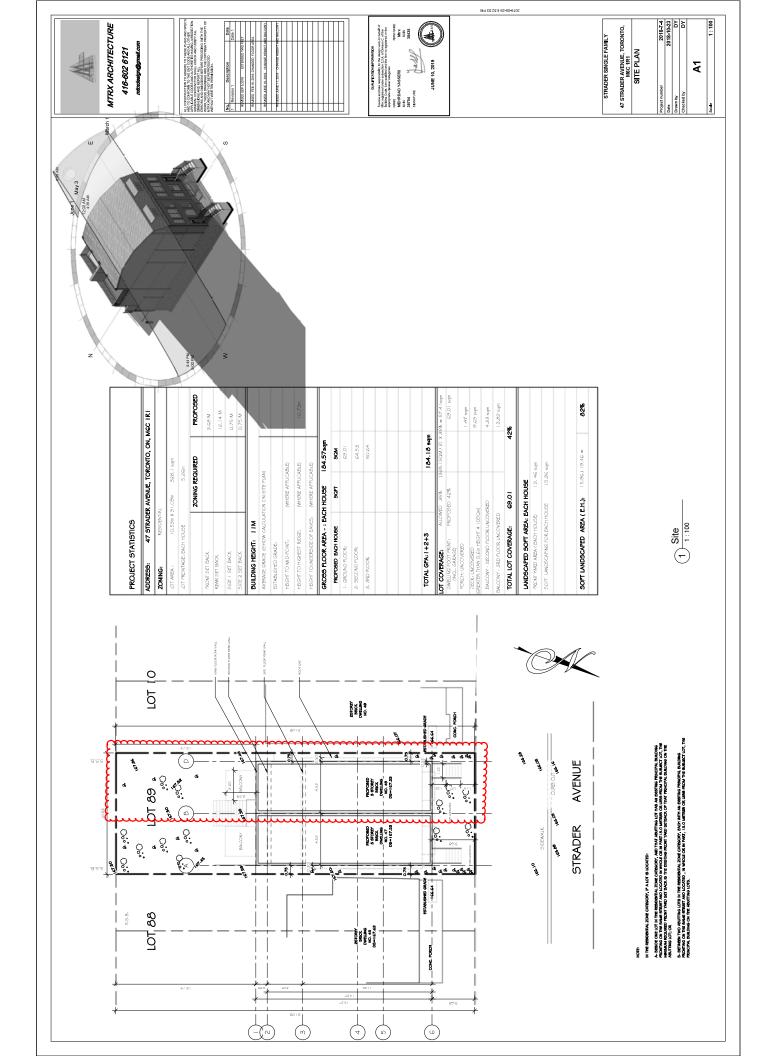


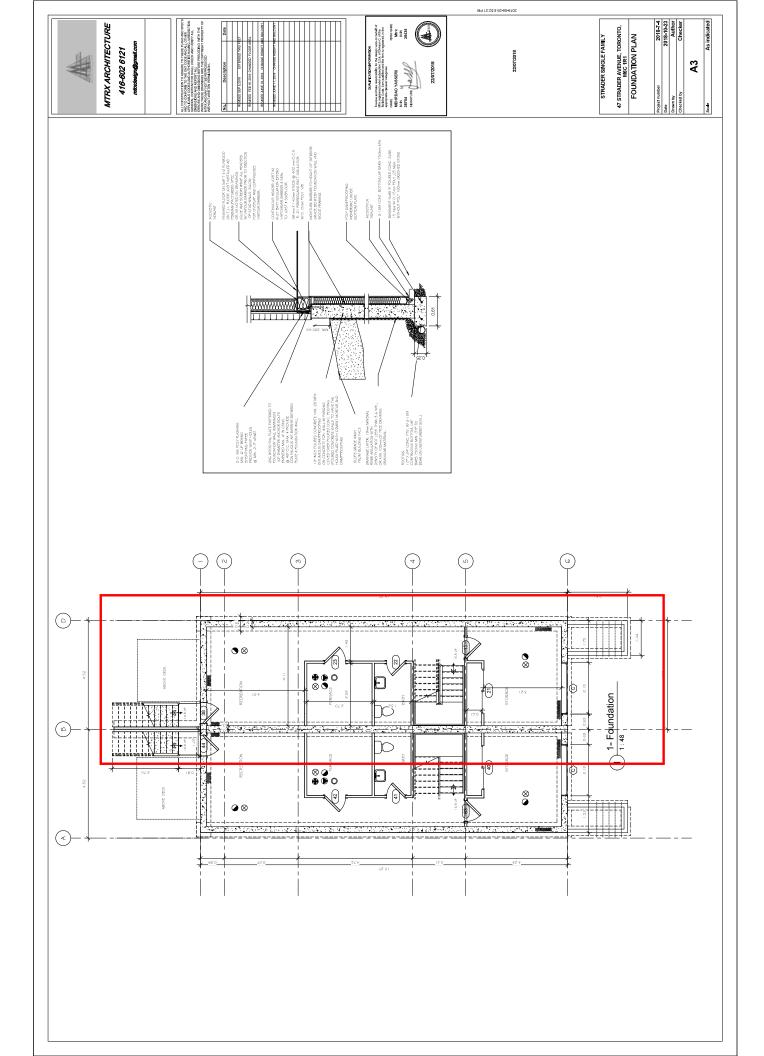


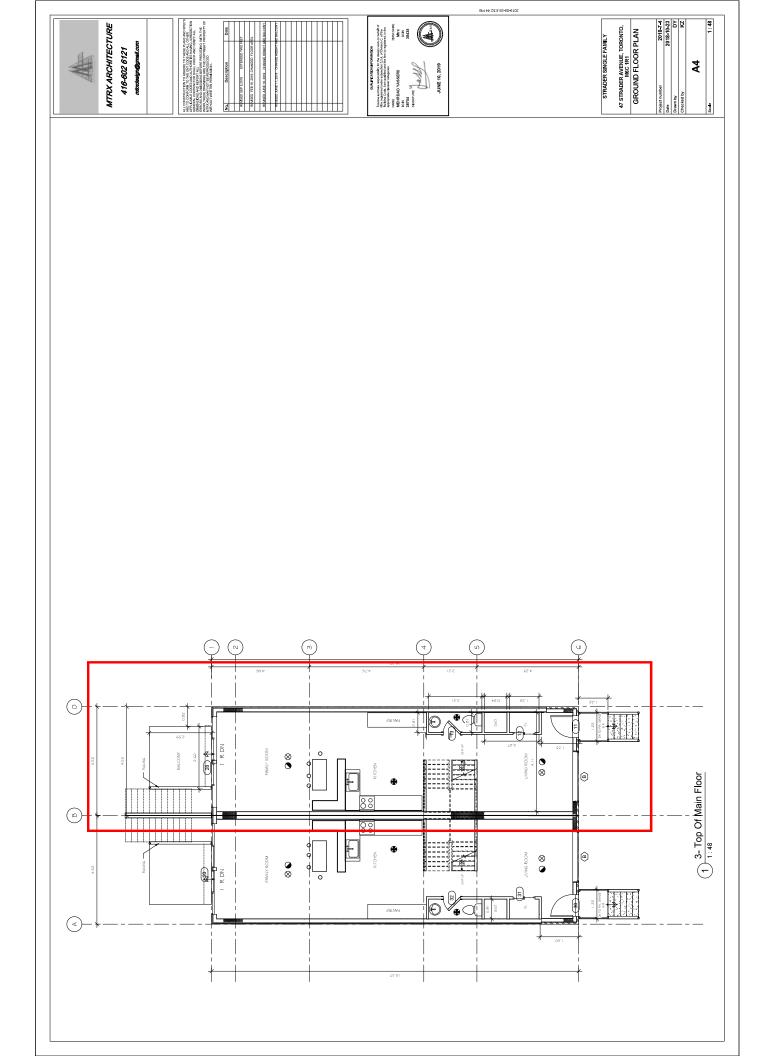


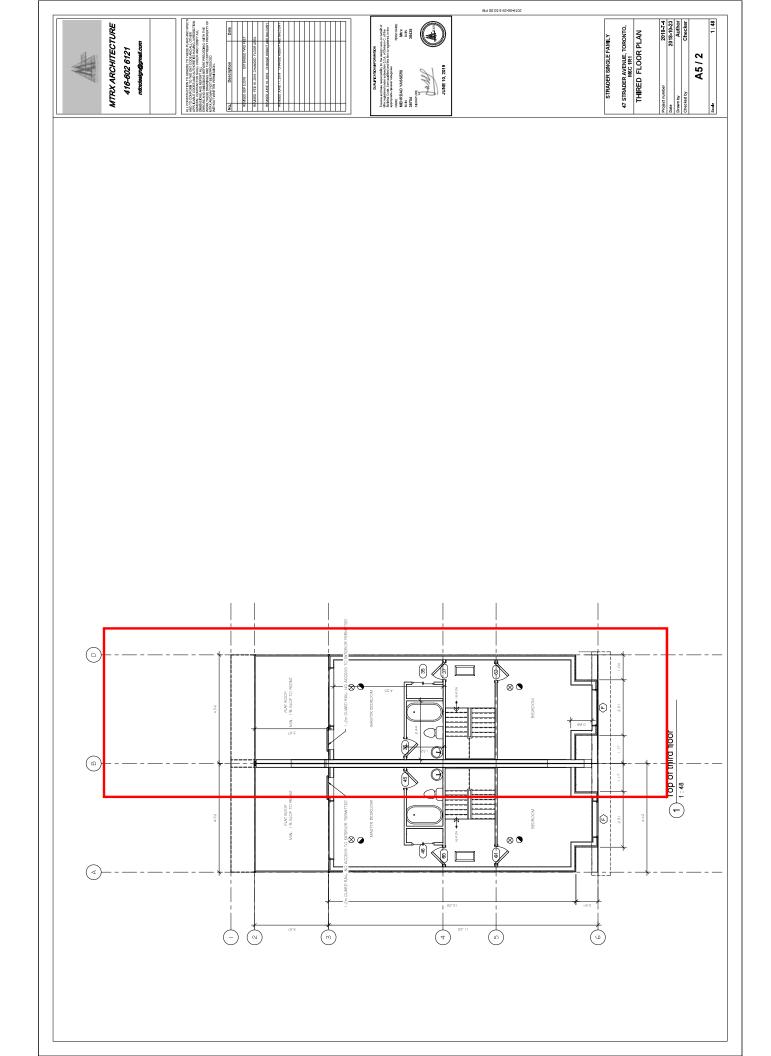


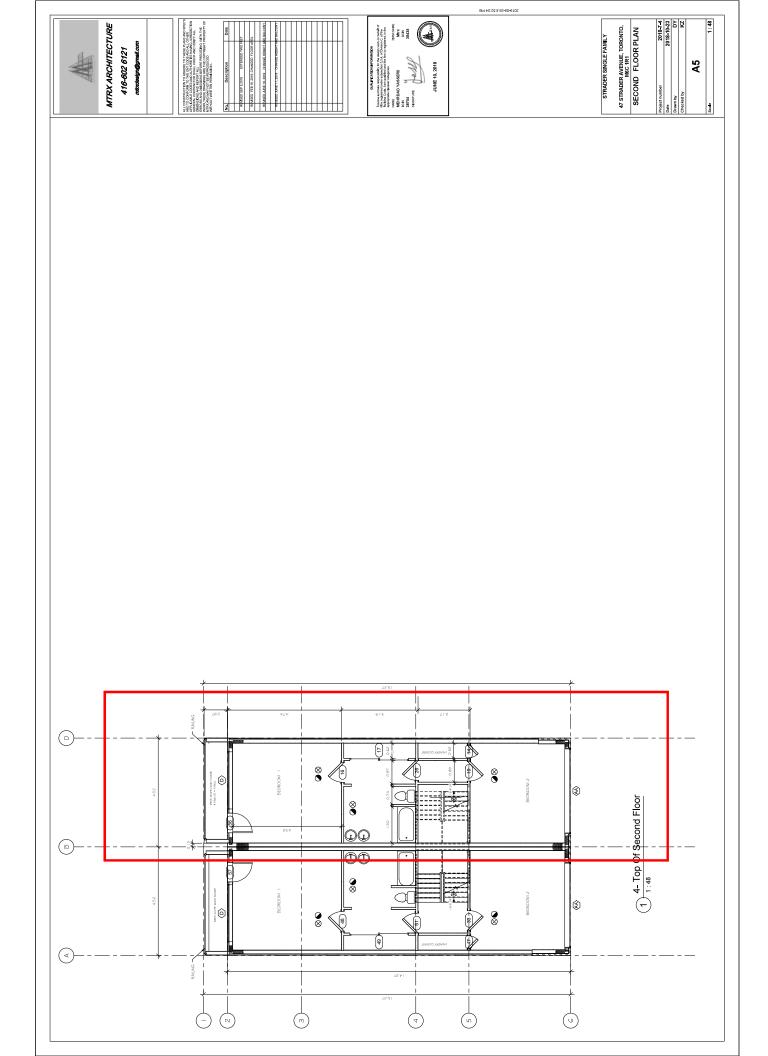


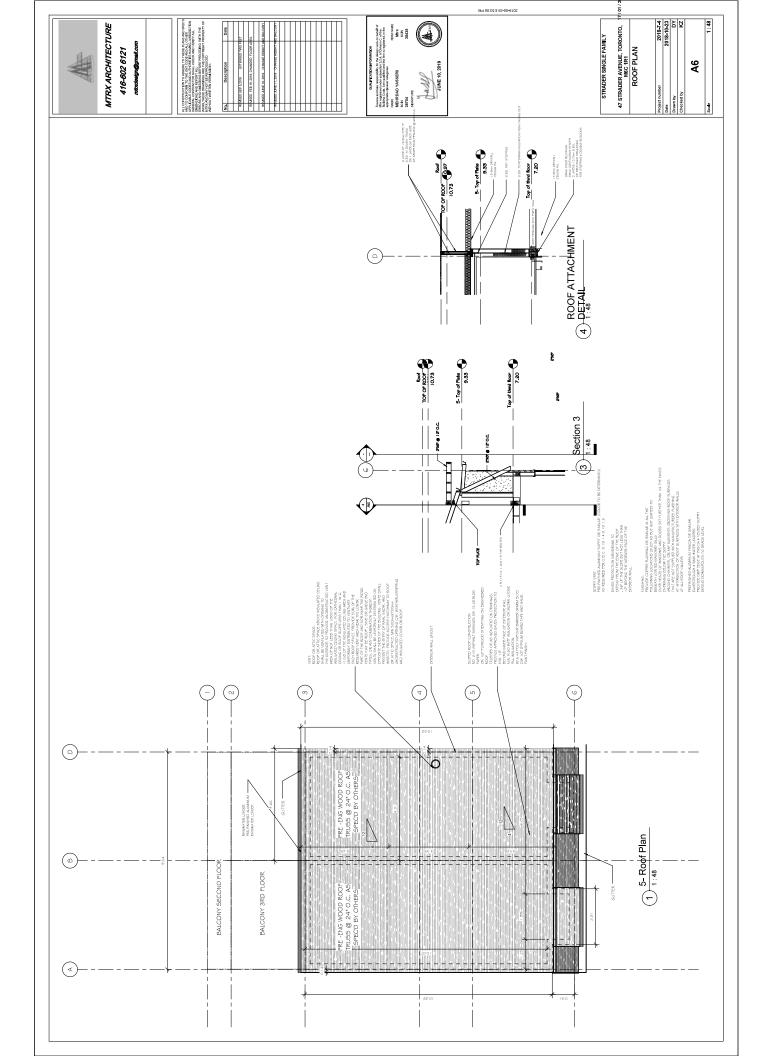




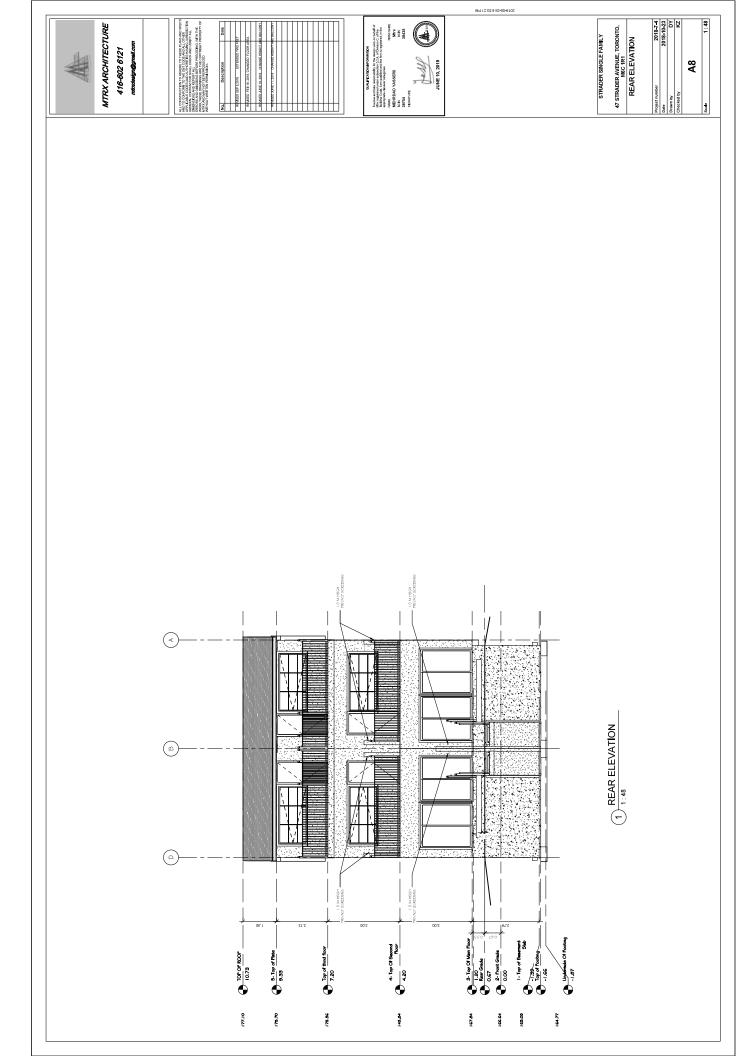


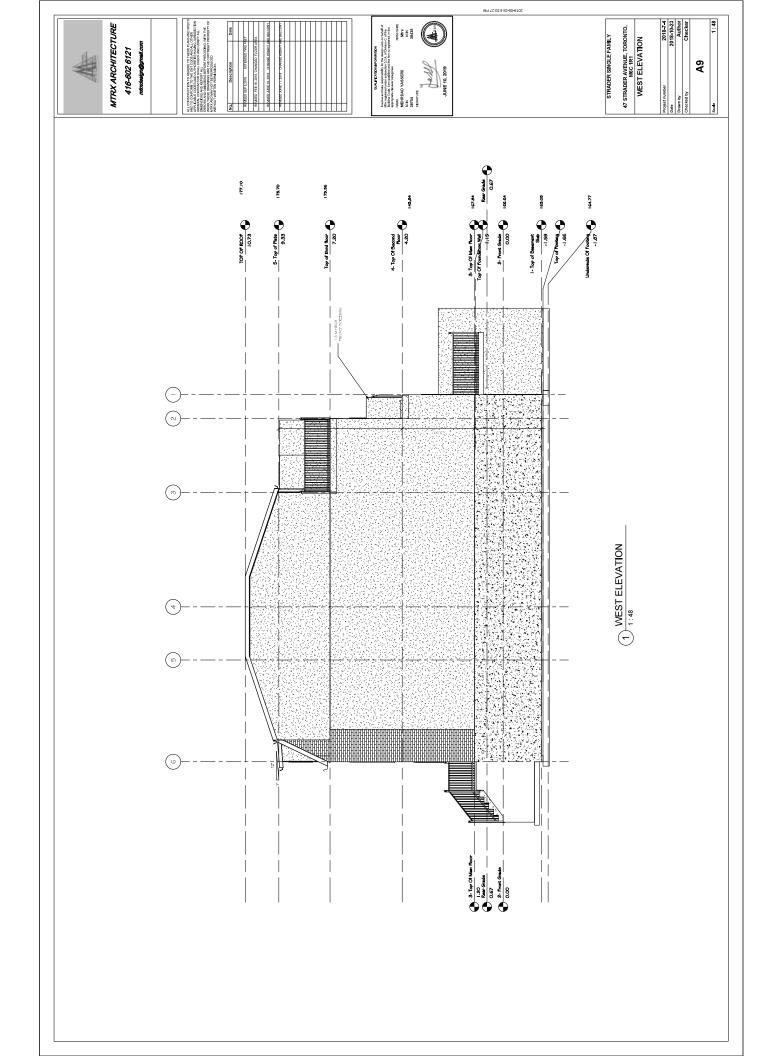


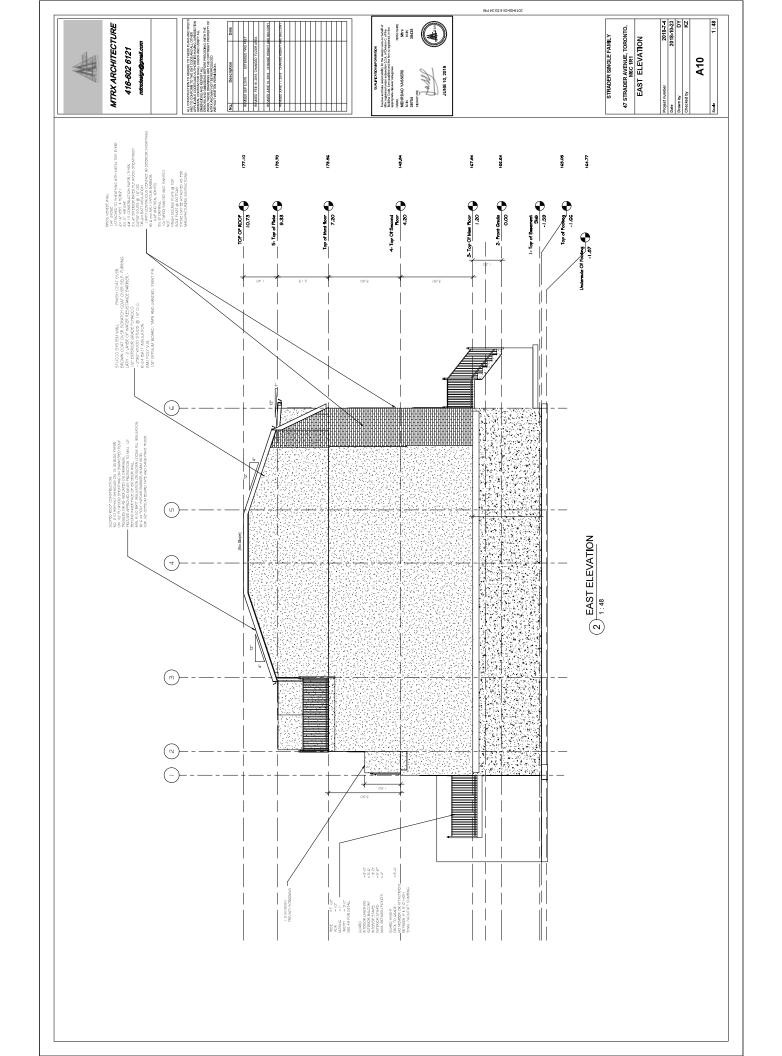


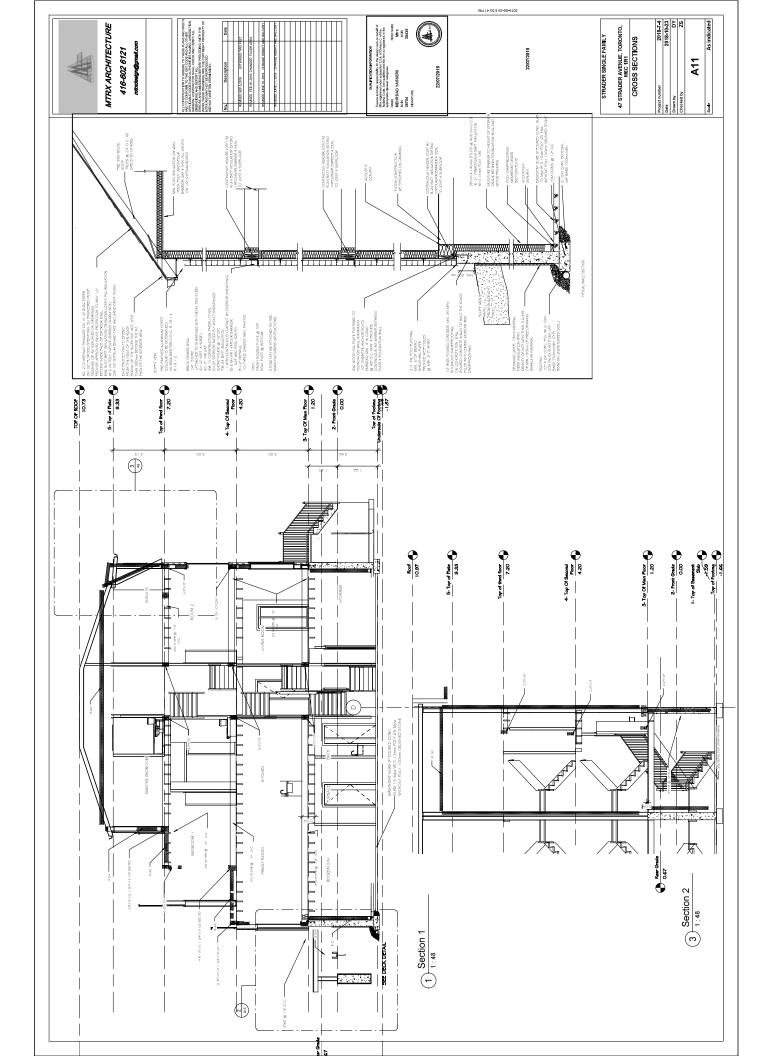












#### Revised List of Variances – 47 Strader Avenue – PART 1

# 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>.

The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

# 2. Chapter10.80.30.20.(1)(C),By-law569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m.

The frontage of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 5.26 m.

# 3. Chapter 10.80.40.10.(2), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted height of all side exterior main walls facing a side lot line is 8.5 m.

The height of the side exterior main walls facing a side lot line will be 9.06m.

# 4. Chapter 10.80.40.40.(1), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index of a semi-detached dwelling is 0.8 times the area of the lot (130.82 m<sup>2</sup>).

The new semi-detached dwelling will have a floor space index equal to 1.13 times the area of the lot (184.51 m<sup>2</sup>).

### 5. Chapter 10.80.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required setback for a deck at the rear of the dwelling located at or above the second story is 1.8 metres from the common wall dividing the dwelling units.

The rear deck will be located 0.0 m from the common wall.

### 6. Chapter 10.80.40.70.(3), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 1.5 m

The new semi-detached dwelling will be located **0.75 m** from the east side lot line.

### 7. Chapter 10.5.40.50.(2), By-law 569-2013

A platform without main walls, attached to or within 0.3 m of a building, must comply with the required minimum building setbacks for the zone, 1.5 m. The deck will be located **0.75 m** from the east side lot line.

### 8. Chapter 200.5.10.1.(1), By-law 569-2013

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

## 9. Section 3.2.1 (v), By-law 1-83

A minimum of one parking space is required to be provided. In this case, no parking spaces will be provided.

#### Revised List of Variances – 47 Strader Avenue – PART 2

# 1. Chapter 10.80.30.10.(1)(C), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required lot area is 180.0 m<sup>2</sup>.

The area of the conveyed lot (Part 1) lot will be 163.53 m<sup>2</sup>.

# 2. Chapter10.80.30.20.(1)(C),By-law569-2013

The minimum required lot frontage is 6.0 m.

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