

Toronto Local Appeal Body

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DECISION AND ORDER

Decision Issue Date Wednesday, April 28, 2021

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

Appellant(s): RANDY MCWATTERS

Applicant: ANDREW ARSENAULT

Property Address/Description: 17 GARDEN PLACE

Committee of Adjustment Case File: 19 211226 WET 03 MV

TLAB Case File Number: 19 236695 S45 03 TLAB

Hearing dates: Monday, November 30, 2020, Tuesday, December 22, 2020 and

Tuesday, March 15, 2021

DECISION DELIVERED BY JUSTIN LEUNG

APPEARANCES

Name Role Representative

Andrew Arsenault Applicant

2696080 Ontario Ltd. Owner David Bronskill

Randy McWatters Appellant

Christine Mercado/LBNA Party

David Godley Expert Witness

Andrew Ferancik Expert Witness

Tony Lieu Witness

Vito Dilecce Participant

Name Role

Alexander Donald Participant

Ronald Jamieson Participant

Steve Cmelo Participant

INTRODUCTION

This is an appeal from a decision of the Etobicoke-York Committee of Adjustment (COA) pertaining to a request for a series of variances for 17 Garden Place (subject property).

The variances had been sought through the COA to permit the construction of a detached dwelling with an attached garage.

This property is located in the Long Branch neighbourhood of the City of Toronto (City) which is situated south of James Street and bounded by Forty First Street to the west and Fortieth Street to the east. The property is located on Garden Place, south of James Street and north of Hilo Road.

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 neighbourhood and had reviewed all materials related to this appeal.

BACKGROUND

The application consists of the following requested variances:

1. Section 900.6.10.(2)(D)(i), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index is 0.35 times the lot are (97.18 m²). The proposed dwelling will have a floor space index of 0.66 times the lot area (185.01 m²).

2. Section 900.6.10.(2)(F)(i), By-law 569-2013

The minimum required side yard setback is 0.9 m. The proposed dwelling will be located 0.6 m from the east side lot line.

3. Section 10.5.40.60.(7), By-law 569-2013

Roof eaves may be no closer than 0.3 m to a lot line. The eaves of the proposed dwelling will be located 0.15 m from the east side lot line.

These variances were heard and conditionally approved at the September 26, 2019 Etobicoke-York COA meeting.

Subsequently, an appeal was filed by Randy McWatters on October 16, 2019 within the 20 day appeal period as outlined by the *Planning Act*. The TLAB received the

appeal and scheduled a hearing on November 30, 2020 for all relevant Parties to attend. Additional hearing dates of December 22, 2020 and March 15, 2021 were allocated to ensure all relevant testimony was heard and dispensed with. The City of Toronto had also initially filed an appeal on this matter. However, their appeal was subsequently withdrawn.

MATTERS IN ISSUE

The Long Branch community had, as directed by City Council, a *Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guideline* completed to provide a more formalized point of reference towards in-fill development which was occurring in this area. The Appellant and several Parties/Participants to this matter contend that the *Guideline* must be adhered to and should not be neglected in the Planning process. The applicant here detracts from this statement and argues that constructive attempts have been made to meet the principles as prescribed in the *Guideline*, when possible. However, they further argue that this *Guideline* is not an enforceable document and if the TLAB were to do so, would be exceeding its authority in this regard. They further state that a variety of other issues have been taken into consideration to produce the proposal before the Tribunal.

The TLAB must assess this proposal in a comprehensive manner to determine if it constitutes good planning. In addition, the Tribunal will also have to determine if pertinent legislation is being interpreted and applied to this subject proposal appropriately.

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 of the Greater Golden Horseshoe for the subject area ('Growth Plan').

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 *Planning 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

On the first day of Hearings, David Bronskill, legal counsel for the applicant, indicated that he would be calling Andrew Ferancik of WND Associates, to provide evidence as it relates to land use planning matters. At this point, I indicated that I had reviewed Mr. Ferancik's curriculum vitae (CV) and would be able to qualify him the field of land use planning.

Mr. Ferancik commenced by stating that he was engaged to provide testimony to the TLAB on this matter. However, he had not been a party to the matter when it had been presented to the Committee of Adjustment (COA). He stated that at that COA meeting, changes had been made to the original proposal. The COA had conditionally approved the variances but it had been appealed by one of the Parties herein to the TLAB. He describes that the area the subject property is located within is a RM zone which can allow a variety of residential building types such as apartment buildings and single detached dwellings. The RM zone is applicable, as described by Mr. Ferancik, to a small 'pocket' or area as there are other zone designations within the Long Branch community.

The subject property is adjacent to the waterfront area and also to stores and retail uses along Lakeshore Boulevard. He contends that the area is oriented to meet the needs of modern young families.

With regards to the building form being proposed, especially as it relates to the raised front steps to the front door, Mr. Ferancik argues that this building type is already present in the neighbourhood. There had previously been a variance for side wall height which had been eliminated by the applicant. As such, the side wall will be built in accordance with Zoning requirements, if the TLAB elected to allow this proposal.

Mr. Ferancik proceeded to describe the transit infrastructure situated in this area. To the immediate north of the subject property is the Long Branch GO station. There is also a TTC streetcar line running along Lakeshore Boulevard.

In terms of Official Plan (OP) policies, he outlines the 'Built Form' policies and how they relate to this proposal. In terms of the integral garage as proposed, he argues it acts to comply with OP policies as it also provisions for parking in the front of the house. Mr. Ferancik also argues that the area has seen continuous change and development since the 1920s.

He further describes that the study area which he has illustrated to the TLAB closely resembles the RM zone boundaries. As such, this was part of the impetus for him selecting such a study area. In terms of the built form, he further argues that it would act to reinforce the prevailing neighbourhood characteristics. With regards to the FSI variance request, Mr. Ferancik contends that there are other houses in the area which have greater FSI than this proposal.

A photo study of the neighbourhood, which has been provided as part of the disclosure documents, was shown to the TLAB. This study is used by Mr. Ferancik to

argue that this proposal is not substantively dis-similar to other recent in-fill residential dwellings that have occurred in this area. He also showed an image of an apartment building which is in close proximity to the subject property. Furthermore, he presented material outlining previously approved variances for the area. With this data, Mr. Ferancik argues that the FSI variance request in question would fall within the range of previously approved FSI variances by the COA.

In terms of the *Long Branch Neigbhourhood Character Guideline*, Mr. Ferancik states that it is not policy and should not be treated as such. However, he concurs that regard should be provided to the *Guideline* for any in-fill house proposal. He comments that the architect for this proposal has described how they have attempted to meet the overall concepts of the *Guideline* with their proposal. He concluded his testimony by stating his professional opinion that this proposal meets the four tests for a variance, as per the *Planning Act*.

Judy Gibson, of the Long Branch Neighbourhood Association (LBNA), then proceeded to cross-examine Mr. Ferancik. She presented an email correspondence from a resident and asked Mr. Ferancik when it was submitted. He responded that it appears the email had been submitted to the City after the COA meeting had occurred. She inquired if any letters of support had been received from residents within the study area as defined by Mr. Ferancik. He responded that it may appear that no letters of support were provided.

Ms. Gibson then asked Mr. Ferancik to reiterate his interpretation of the streetscape. Mr. Ferancik responded that he believed that there is a varied building typology which is expressed in this area. Ms. Gibson states that it appears there are only two other similar houses, in terms of building type, that are on the opposing side of the street. Mr. Ferancik responds that he does not believe that is relevant as he believes the proposal still acts to reinforce the building typology he had illustrated as part of his study area.

Ms. Gibson inquired about the proposal and if it had any windows on the side and also if Mr. Ferancik was aware of *Ontario Building Code* requirements as they pertain to the placement of side facing windows. Mr. Ferancik responded that this proposal has no side facing windows. He further expressed that he does not believe he is qualified to speaking to Building Code matters.

Ms. Gibson asked if Mr. Ferancik had reviewed the *Guideline* and if he understood the rationale for it being drafted. Mr. Ferancik responded that he had reviewed it. However, he describes that he is not an urban designer. He outlines his understanding is the *Guideline* was drafted due to local concerns as it related to severances which had begun to occur in the area. In terms of applying this *Guideline*, Mr. Ferancik states that with developments which are proposed on a more 'main street' setting, the *Guideline* requires a site plan application process be employed. However, in this 'internal' type neighbourhood, such a process is typically not required.

Ms. Gibson then showed images of other in-fill houses with a large number of raised steps to a front door and used this to compare to the subject proposal. Mr.

Ferancik responded that he does not believe these are comparable examples as the subject proposal's raised steps are not as high as those shown in the presented images.

Ms. Gibson asked if a semi-detached dwelling type would not be appropriate for the area. Mr. Ferancik commented that the semi-detached type is permitted for this area, in accordance with Zoning requirements.

Ms. Gibson then inquired about Mr. Ferancik's earlier comments that in-fill housing would primarily be housing young families. She asked if this is contained in relevant policies. Mr. Ferancik commented that provincial policies have been passed to address housing for young families. In addition, municipal policies such as those in the OP also contain such language.

Ms. Gibson then asked about OPA 320 and how it pertains to the subject proposal. Mr. Ferancik responded that in his earlier testimony, he had outlined in detail a series of arguments which he provided to explain his opinion that OPA 320 policies had been properly considered and afforded for in this proposal.

This concluded the first day of Hearings. It is noted that Tony Lieu, the City Planner who had been summoned to provide testimony on this appeal matter, was informed that he would have to return to the second day of Hearings. I stated that he would be called up first at that Hearing to provide his evidentiary material.

On the second day of Hearings, Tony Lieu was called by Judy Gibson to provide evidence relating to this matter. I indicated that I would be able to qualify Mr. Lieu in the field of land use planning. For reference purposes, it is noted that Mr. Lieu had recently left the City of Toronto seeking employment at another organization. This TLAB matter would be the last City related matter he would have to dispense with prior to formally concluding his employment with the City.

Ms. Gibson asked Mr. Lieu, as it related to OPA 320 policies, if this proposal is of the prevailing character. Mr. Lieu responded that, at the time of his review of the matter, these policies were assessed and the comments in the staff report reflect this. In addition, he opined that the OP also contains policies addressing other elements important to determining neighbourhood characteristics.

Ms. Gibson then proceeded to discuss the *Guideline* and the checklist which must be completed by the applicant to demonstrate how their proposal meets *Guideline* performance standards. She then attempted to outline potential deficiencies with this proposal as it related to their completed checklist. Mr. Lieu stated that the *Guideline* is not policy or a by-law and as such there is no legally enforceable mechanism attached to it. I then asked if the applicant is unable to meet the requirements of the *Guideline* how staff would respond. Mr. Lieu indicated that staff would engage with the applicant and attempt to develop a proposal which strives to meet the overall tenets of the *Guideline*. Furthermore, when a proposal was unable to comply with this *Guideline*, a document would have to be submitted outlining the areas of non-compliance. This document would act to meet requirements as described in the *Guideline*.

Ms. Gibson inquired that it appears the staff report does not contain such wording on what Mr. Lieu had just described. Mr. Lieu indicated that the City practice is to only write reports for COA applications which staff may have an issue with. Here, due to revisions to the proposal and extensive discussions with the applicant, staff had provided updated comments. As such, the practice of the staff would be to not provide comprehensive statements on the checklist and on specific areas in which it complied or not.

Mr. Bronskill then proceeded to cross-examine Mr. Lieu. He asked about the building depth provisions within the *Guideline*. Mr. Bronskill inquired if the FSI variance request for 0.66 would contravene those previously stated *Guideline* provisions. Mr. Lieu responded that it would not.

Mr. Lieu's testimony to the TLAB concluded and he was relieved of his duties to the Tribunal.

The neighbourhood association then requested that David Godley be brought forward to offer his testimony. I stated that, while recognizing Mr. Godley's experience in the field of land use planning, as expressed in his submitted *Witness Statement*, it was noted that he resided within the Long Branch community. As such, there could be a perceived conflict of interest. However, recognizing that he is a long-term resident of the area, the TLAB would, and consistent with practices as seen in other previous TLAB appeal matters, be able to qualify him as a local area expert.

Mr. Godley commenced by describing that Long Branch had seen an influx of 'soldier houses' or houses he characterized as having habitable space designed above a garage. He further stated that the overall building type provides an appearance of a three storey as opposed to two storey dwelling.

Ms. Gibson asked what could occur if this appeal were approved. Mr. Godley stated that he believes a precedent could be created as a result of a potential approval by the TLAB. He contends that there are other properties on Garden Place which he presumes could be redeveloped in the near future as well.

Mr. Godley then outlined the 'Long Branch Character Defining Conditions' which is contained within the *Guideline*. He argues that this proposal is not compatible with those 'conditions' due to the raised steps to the front entrance, and the roof and garage design are described as being inconsistent with the historic character of the area.

Mr. Bronskill then proceeded to cross-examine this witness. He asked if the term 'storey' is used as an actual Zoning term. Mr. Godley responded that the term is used in other parts of the city, but is not applicable here. Mr. Bronskill then stated the City is currently assessing whether it would implement the development permit system (DPS), in certain parts of the city. He then asked if the Long Branch area could be considered for the DPS system. Mr. Godley responded that it is a possibility but questioned if the City had necessary staff to address such a potential initiative. Mr. Godley's testimony then concluded.

The Appellant Randy McWatters then proceeded to provide his testimony on this matter. Mr. McWatters described his concern with this proposal and potential future redevelopment that could occur in his area. He believes these houses are 'overbuilt' and act to exacerbate the housing affordability issue of this area. However, he stated that he is not opposed to the mix-used development occurring along Lakeshore Boulevard. He further states that if the proposal were 're-designed' and to remove the integral garage, that the proposal may be more appropriate for this neighbourhood context. Mr. McWatters indicated that he believed mediation was to be initiated at the TLAB on this matter. I responded that I had reached out to all Parties regarding potential mediation and the applicant did not agree to this. I indicated that mediation was a voluntary exercise which required the consent of all Parties to an appeal. Finally, I stated that Mr. McWatters had filed the appeal on this matter so he should be aware of the responsibilities which are related to such a process.

Participant Alexander Donald then provided his testimony to the TLAB. Mr. Donald explains that his interpretation of the OP policies is that it is not to promote intensification within residential neighbourhoods. He further describes his belief that the Zoning provisions for Long Branch have remained relatively the same since the 1960s and as such, in his opinion they are not structured to allow greater density for this area. He further outlines that this subject property should be developed in a sensible manner taking into consideration the neighbourhood context.

Participant Ronald Jamieson then provided testimony to the Tribunal. Mr. Bronskill had asked if the testimony, which he believed to be primarily dealing with planning matters, would be inappropriate for Mr. Jamieson to present as he was not a planner, by training. I indicated that Mr. Jamieson is a Professional Engineer. As such, I would entertain his testimony. He indicated he had done a study himself of the FSI of comparable building types for the area. His study found that the FSI variance request here is not substantively similar to that of other houses for the area.

I stated that it appears that a third day of hearings will be necessary. As such, this Hearing was adjourned to reconvene at another date, as yet to be determined.

At the beginning of the third day Hearing, it was noted that Party Christine Mercado and Participant Donald Jamieson had submitted additional material to the TLAB, just before this scheduled Hearing date. Mr. Bronskill objected to the inclusion of such material as it was not in accordance with *TLAB Rules*. Ms. Mercado and Mr. Jamieson responded that they submitted the material due to discussions which had occurred on the second day Hearing. I responded that these submissions were not in accordance with the *Rules* and as such would not be entered in as part of the evidentiary material for this appeal.

Mr. Jamieson then commenced to begin his testimony. He outlined a study area that he had prepared on this matter. The study area was contained in his *Participant Statement*, entered as Exhibit A. The study area is approximately bounded by Forty First Street to the west, Branch Avenue to the north, Fortieth Street to the east and Hilo Road to the south. He indicated that he excluded certain street blocks as they had, in

his opinion, built form which was exceptional (ex. apartment building) which was not of the prevailing built type in this local area.

Mr. Jamieson then outlined his assessment for FSI of houses within his study area. He concludes that the majority of houses were complying with Zoning By-law requirements. In assessing this proposal as per the four tests for variance of the *Planning Act*, he referenced OP S. 4.1.8 which he critiques requires the Zoning By-law to have numerical site standards, including density provisions as well. With this, Mr. Jamieson concluded that the requested FSI variance request of 0.66 would be inconsistent with the average FSI of houses in his study area.

Mr. Jamieson then presented a design assessment of the subject proposal, entered as Exhibit B, as it related to the *Guideline*. He references S. 2.2.1 and how, in his opinion, the subject proposal results in a building type which would be 'domineering' in relation to other houses along Garden Place. He further contends that the building height proposed here would act to negatively impact sunlight to adjacent properties. He then discusses how his previously mentioned study area data concluded that the majority of houses on Garden Place do not have an integral garage attached to the dwelling. Mr. Jamieson states that the subject proposal would thus be introducing a unique building type to this neighbourhood which would also be inconsistent with the *Guideline*.

Mr. Bronskill proceeded to cross-examine Mr. Jamieson on his proffered testimony. Mr. Bronskill asked if issues as raised in his assessment, such as relating to the integral garage, first floor elevation, building height and building depth require variances. Mr. Jamieson responded that none of these elements required variances, however, he notes that the proposed building depth will create a house with a depth greater than the adjacent properties' houses.

Mr. Bronskill then inquired about Mr. Jamieson's analysis of FSI of building types in his study area. He asked if his analysis' use of mean (average) of FSIs for houses in the area was an appropriate quantitative analysis method. Mr. Jamieson responded that the data he presented was actually in relation to OPA 320 to show what is the prevailing building type for this local area context.

Participant Vito Dilecce then provided testimony to the Tribunal. He raised concerns that the subject proposal will negatively impact sunlight to this adjacent property.

Mr. Bronskill then began to cross-examine Mr. Dilecce on his testimony. Mr. Bronskill asked if he is aware that no variances for side yard setbacks were being sought. Mr. Dilecce responded he had believed that there was to be proposed change to the property setbacks.

Party Christine Mercado then took the stand to provide her testimony to the TLAB. Ms. Mercado indicated she is the Chair of the Long Branch Neighourhood Association (LBNA). She stated that the LBNA is active in assisting residents who oppose Planning proposals in their neighbourhoods.

Ms. Mercado references, as part of her disclosure material, a City document which she contends indicates the City is currently 'on track' to meet its growth forecasts, in accordance with the provincial *Places to Grow Act*. She outlines that there is denser development occurring north of this subject proposal's location which will accommodate several future residents.

Ms. Mercado also prepared a study area, with the boundaries of this study similar to those as proffered with Mr. Jamieson's study area. She also removed certain high density building types, such as apartments, from her study area as she considered them an irregular building type for the area and not relevant to her analysis here, which focused on residential dwellings. She also referenced 'soldier houses' which Mr. Godley had described in his previous testimony. She explains that besides this subject proposal that other 'soldier houses' have been built in this area, facilitated through variance requests.

Ms. Mercado proceeded to outline other in-fill proposal in her study area to depict the broader development activity occurring here. She also referenced that some variance applicants explain that they want to build a new house as the current house on the property is 'undesirable'. Ms. Mercado contends that is not the case and that the building type in this area is conducive for new residents living arrangements.

With regards to the *Guideline*, Ms. Mercado argues that the 'weight' which is given to the *Guideline* and its applicability to an in-fill proposal is dependent on the decision-maker, whether a COA or TLAB member.

In terms of integral garages, Ms. Mercado contends that they are not consistent with the principles of the *Guideline*. The building depth for this proposal is also argued as being incompatible with other adjacent houses. She states that the subject property can accommodate an appropriately sized house without the application of variances.

Ms. Mercado had requested to present a study which had been prepared for the LBNA relating to the tree canopy in the Long Branch neighbourhood. Mr. Bronskill objected as he argued there are no trees being proposed to be removed on the subject property. Ms. Mercado responded there is potential tree injury which could occur as a result of on-site construction. I responded that in my review of this file, there does not appear to be any formal comments provided by City Urban Forestry staff nor has any tree removal been proposed. As such, I found that it would not be pertinent to discuss this issue.

Mr. Bronskill then proceeded with this cross-examination of Ms. Mercado. He asked if she has the dimensions of the proposed house. Ms. Mercado did not immediately have that information to provide. She further indicated her analysis was to assess the character of the houses in her study area. Mr. Bronskill responded that it would have been appropriate to provide evidence on all houses in the study area which are on small or large sized lots as part of her assessment. Ms. Mercado responded that her FSI analysis for houses in this study area acted to illustrate the building types on different sized lots in this area.

Mr. Bronskill then asked Ms. Mercado if she believed Mr. Ferancik's testimony to the TLAB was done in an independent and impartial manner. Ms. Mercado stated that she recognized Mr. Ferancik's duties as an expert witness, however she believed his testimony was incomplete.

I then indicated that as we were approaching the end of the day, that closing statements couldn't be presented. I explained that I did not believe an additional day of hearings would be appropriate and proposed that written closing statements be provided to me, as has been done in other TLAB matters I have presided over. The Parties consented and I requested written closing statements be provided by the Appellant by March 26, 2021. The applicant could then provide their statements by April 5, 2021. This could allow for reply evidence to be provided if necessary.

The Hearing then concluded with written closing statements to be provided forthwith.

Closing statements were received from both Mr. Bronskill, Ms. Gibson and Mr. McWatters. It is noted that Mr. Bronskill had requested additional time to provide his statement due to a personal matter which had arisen. I acceded to this request.

Mr. Bronskill's closing statement, dated March 29, 2021, reiterated that the testimony proffered by the opposing Parties should not be afforded legal weight. Mr. Bronskill argues that the genesis of these arguments relates to the built form of the subject proposal, which is not appropriate as variance proposals should be assessed in relation to the four tests for a variance, as stipulated by the *Planning Act*. He also feigns caution in appropriating the *Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guideline* the status of applicable law. The *Guideline* may be referenced but, as he opines, should not be applied to in-fill development proposals as a mandatory-type exercise.

He further cites the testimony of the expert witness Mr. Ferancik to demonstrate that Mr. Ferancik has sufficiently demonstrated that this proposal meets all relevant Planning legislation, such as OPA 320. He concluded that the construction of this in-fill house would be consistent for this local neighbourhood context. Mr. Bronskill further argues that the testimony of Mr. Ferancik was uncontroverted.

Mr. Bronskill also references the testimony of the City Planner Mr. Lieu, who also indicated that, as part of his review of this proposal, that the revised proposal which was subsequently prepared by the applicant to be appropriate and meeting the four tests for variance.

With regards to the testimony of the opposing Parties, Mr. Bronskill described that several of these Parties provided mathematical, or quantitative, analysis towards the subject proposal. He contends that this is an inappropriate method to assess variances. He further argues that these Parties had not properly interpreted OP policies and acted to parse the policies in a manner which would suit their arguments in opposition to this proposal. In addition, Mr. Bronskill believes that discussions about matters such as living space above the garage are not within the purview of the TLAB as the variance requests do not relate to this portion of the proposed house.

Ms. Gibson's closing statement was provided, dated April 8, 2021, as a representative of the LBNA. Ms. Gibson argues that the testimony of Mr. Ferancik was not comprehensive in its assessment of all relevant Planning policies and legislation. She contends that his interpretation of OPA 320, as it related to this proposal, was insufficient and did not demonstrate that this proposed house would complement the existing neighbourhood context. She further opines that a potential approval of this appeal could provide precedent to other active TLAB appeals in this area.

She then outlined how the testimony of Parties such as Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Godley provided a comprehensive assessment of Zoning provisions, such as that for the FSI, which demonstrated that the FSI variance request herein was not in keeping with the principles established within OPA 320. She contends that they had demonstrated that the FSI being requested here would be inconsistent with other houses of the immediate and broader context.

Ms. Gibson disputes Mr. Bronskill's assertions that the evidence as proffered by Mr. Ferancik was uncontroverted. She contends that the testimony of other Parties such as Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Godley should provide the TLAB with additional evidence which is contrary to the arguments as advanced by Mr. Ferancik.

TLAB and Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) (now reorganized as the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal) decisions were also provided by Ms. Gibson for my review and consideration in relation to the appeal matter herein. One which is specifically mentioned is the OMB Decision for 9 Meaford Avenue (Case No. PL161048) which is used by Ms. Gibson to support her argument that the testimony of residents, or lay persons, can be given equal consideration by a Tribunal, in comparison to that of expert witnesses.

Mr. McWatters, the Appellant, provided a closing statement to the TLAB as well. He reiterates some comments that were made during the Hearing. He is concerned about continued 'over-development' which is occurring in the Long Branch established residential neighbourhoods. He argues that this proposal, and in particular its FSI variance request, would be inconsistent with OPA 320. He references the testimony of Ms. Mercado to assert that semi-detached dwellings constitute the minority of the built form for the local area context. He also cites testimony of other Participants such as Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Donald who also described the FSI variance as being 'excessive' and that the *Guideline's* provisions were not being appropriately met here. He also referenced an OMB Decision for 20 Garden Place (Case No. PL160457) which was an appeal for a consent application. He contends that the OMB Decision to approve this severance was inaccurately derived.

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, REASONS

The evidence which has been outlined in the disclosure documents and in the comprehensive 3 days of hearings presents a thorough accounting of this proposal. The matter, which is for a proposed new house to be built on an existing residential lot, includes unique items which must also be considered as part of the analysis herein.

This is due in part to the *Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guidelines*, which was passed by City Council in recognition of community comments on in-fill development which had begun to occur in this area. As such, this proposal is distinct in that it has additional Planning direction as it pertains to development within established residential neighbourhoods.

Competing arguments were presented on whether the *Guideline* must be adhered to or not. In this instance, the applicant has indicated that 'best attempts' have been made to meet the performance standards as outlined in the *Guideline*. Conversely, the local neighbourhood association and other residents contend that the *Guideline* should not be 'ignored' and must be provided appropriate weight and consideration by the TLAB.

The applicant, who had retained Andrew Ferancik, a Registered Professional Planner, to provide evidence on the proposal, made note of the *Guideline* and its relation to this proposal as follows:

"In my opinion, the proposed development appropriately responds to the Long Branch Neighbourhood Character Guidelines. Although this is not a statutory planning document, the proposed development meets the general intent of the guidelines by delivering a built form that has significant precedent in the neighbourhood, including on Garden Place itself."

The above-noted statement, from the *Expert Witness Statement*, is similar to the testimony as proffered by Mr. Ferancik at the Hearing. In his testimony, Mr. Ferancik provided a detailed analysis of the proposal as it relates not only to the *Guideline* but to other relevant legislation such as *Official Plan Amendment 320 (OPA)*, *Places to Grow Act* and *Provincial Policy Statement*. What became evident here is that the Long Branch neighbourhood is, although within an established settlement area, able to accommodate for more 'focused' or dense development, especially along major corridors within the community. This was demonstrated in the presentation of policy documents such as the *Places to Grow Act*. Furthermore, while it is a long-standing residential community, it could also accommodate gradual change and development within local residential streets. This would ensure the needs of new residents to the city were met while also allowing existing residents could 'remain in place' if they choose to.

With regards to the *Guideline*, City Planner Tony Lieu's testimony acted to further illuminate this matter. Here, Mr. Lieu described that the applicant had provided an initial proposal which had a different set of variances. The City then engaged in additional discussions with the applicant which resulted in them revising their proposal which altered some of the variance requests. Mr. Lieu further described how an amended staff report, dated September 2019, was issued which described the revisions that were made. The report was referenced by Mr. Lieu as part of his testimony to depict how the applicant had attempted to address issues as raised by Planning staff. Moreover, it is referenced that the applicant did submit a performance standards checklist as stipulated

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¹ WND Associates Ltd. (2020, March) Witness Statement of Andrew Ferancik, pp. 5

in the *Guideline*. The staff report articulates the proposal and how it relates to Planning legislation and documents:

"The proposed new dwelling will improve the existing east side yard setback from 0.25 m to 0.6 m, but requires a variance to permit the proposed eaves to be located 0 m from the east side lot line. The proposal is in keeping with the required overall building height provisions as prescribed by the zoning by-law, but the proposal requires a variance to permit a side exterior main wall height of 7.52 m. In addition, the proposal is in keeping with the required front yard landscaping provisions and no trees are located on the subject site.

In review of the application, Planning staff identified concerns with the requested floor space index (FSI) of 0.74 times the area of the lot and discussed this concern with the applicant. The applicant has revised the proposal to decrease the proposed FSI from 0.74 to 0.66 times the area of the lot. As a result of the reduction of the FSI, the building coverage has been reduced from 37.74% to 33.63% and the rear yard setback has increased from 12.64 m to 14.41 m."²

The description from the staff report demonstrates that one of the four tests for a variance, does it conform to the Zoning By-law, is being appropriately met here. The variances which are being posited are not a substantial departure from what is permitted as per the Zoning By-law. As had been proffered in testimony to the TLAB, the applicant has acted to revise their proposal to bring it into conformance with Planning staff comments. The staff report further states that the building height and front yard landscaping requirements are in compliance with Zoning requirements. As such, this proposal is surmised to be a building type which will not differ significantly from the prevailing housing stock of the area.

The opposing Parties to this appeal provided testimony to the TLAB which argues that the City Planner Mr. Lieu had raised concerns about the FSI variance request and to the non-conformity of the subject proposal with the *Guideline*. I find it relevant to note that the testimony of Mr. Lieu clearly demonstrated that while he had concerns with the initial proposal, that subsequent revisions to it acted to address said issues. Mr. Lieu testimony was not proffered in opposition but in support of the applicant's proposal. Issues which were raised such as a Planning Manager not signing the staff report are not relevant to this discussion as it is established practice of the City Planning Department for reports to be approved by the Manager prior to their issuance to the public.

Here, it can be found that another test, is it minor in nature, is seen to be sufficiently addressed. The City Planner has indicated that there are 3 variances which are being requested to facilitate this single detached dwelling. While so, the Planner finds that the overall cumulative impact of these variances to be minor and would not be inconsistent with the development pattern of this area. The Planner also recognizes the

² City of Toronto (2019, September) Staff Report: Committee of Adjustment Application, pp. 3-4

work undertaken by the applicant to revise their proposal in consideration of City staff's initial concerns on this matter.

The comments described above also critique the building materials which the applicant has proposed. It does recommend that, if possible, higher quality materials be applied. As part of his testimony to the TLAB. Mr. Lieu does describe areas of the proposal that had not met the 'spirit' of the *Guideline*. Here, he notes that the applicant has attempted to revise the proposal in certain areas. As such, he found the applicant had made a genuine effort to produce a new dwelling design which would be more compatible to the neighbourhood and thus address the overall tenets as espoused in the *Guideline* and other requisite legislation such as OPA 320.

What is evident from Mr. Lieu's testimony is that the *Guideline* exists as a 'best practices' type document and provides a reference to local stakeholders on 'aspirational' objectives in terms of how in-fill development could unfold in this local area. While so, it was not drafted to be what is known as 'applicable law' whereby non-conformity would result in enforceable consequences on the part of the builder or property-owner proposing the new house. As had been expressed in the testimony of Ms. Mercado, the *Guideline* was initially drafted through a collaborative effort engaging a variety of parties, including residents and members of the building industry.

In the testimony of these Parties to the TLAB, and as provided through cross examination, none of the Parties indicated that there is a 'mechanism' by which to concretely enforce this *Guideline*. As such, I acted to conclude that this document provides a reference for individuals when assessing an in-fill proposal. However, the inability of a proposal to directly conform to all tenets as outlined in the *Guideline* does not necessarily mean that the proposal cannot be permitted for the Long Branch neighbourhood. As had been previously referenced, there can be other elements which may be relevant to be considered when assessing whether a proposal could still be appropriate for the local area context. This can include items such as the employment of Zoning standards and assessment through policy documents such as the OP. Moreover, in review of the testimony and of the disclosure documents, I do not find that the *Guideline* contains provisions which provides decision-making authority to a person, such as a COA or TLAB member, to ensure the *Guideline* is followed by an applicant. If such an intent had existed, it would have been provisioned for in said document.

The testimony as proffered by the expert witness as called by the LBNA is noted here as well. David Godley is a Registered Planner with the United Kingdom Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). The TLAB understands that there is an agreement between the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) and the RTPI whereby the credentials of each organization's members will be recognized by its reciprocal partner entity. Mr. Godley acted in the capacity of a 'local area expert' to support the LBNA which was an opposing party in this matter. Mr. Godley elected to provide a diagram to the TLAB in which he demonstrates this proposal is incompatible for the streetscape of Garden Place:

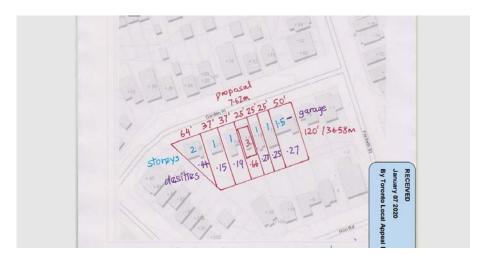


Figure 1: diagram from Witness Statement of David Godley (source: http://app.toronto.ca/AIC/index.do?folderRsn=Lk8ZEczeaRebrZ9o9%2B5MEg%3D%3D)

The TLAB recognizes that Mr. Godley's evidence, and also expressed in submissions by other opposing Parties to this matter, demonstrates that this proposed residential dwelling may have differing characteristics in relation to other houses along the southern portion of Garden Place. While this may be the case, I must state that a street encompasses all properties along either side of that road. As such, the study area as proffered here by Mr. Godley can be seen to be 'incomplete' as it does not provide proper consideration of the entirety of the streetscape along Garden Place. In addition, there is the broader neighbourhood context which needs to be contemplated for as well. If one were to extend the study area to encompass the entirety of Garden Place and the immediate streets abutting it, one would conclude that a varied building typology of established and newer homes exist. This was shown in Mr. Ferancik's testimony to the TLAB as well. Furthermore, there are apartment buildings within this local area as well. This is evident in the photographs/diagrams which formulated the disclosure documents.

In this respect, the subject proposal is not a radical departure from the prevailing development trends which have been occurring in this local area. This area also has a varied and eclectic building typology which, in essence, is the area's defining feature. The photographic evidence of persons such as Mr. Ferancik and Mr. Jamieson act to reinforce this. As such, this proposal would not be acting to interrupt the prevailing neighbourhood development pattern as there is not a 'conformist' building motif which is being articulated here.

Several of the Parties/Participants presented case law from previous TLAB and Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) matters for my review and consideration. Judy Gibson of LBNA presented them as a means of justifying that this subject proposal should not be approved by TLAB. On review of the disclosure documents and on recalling the oral testimony of Parties/Participants during the 3 days of hearings, it is noted that the majority of the case law provided pertain to consent (severance) applications which had associated variance applications to them. The

Parties/Participants indicated that while the subject proposal relates to a variance application only, that this provided case law should be afforded consideration to the matter at hand.

One of the case laws cited is that of TLAB Decision and Order for 70 Thirty Sixth Street, as delivered by Member Ted Yao. The opposing Parties/Participants reference this Decision and the refusal of the severance request as a Decision that should be used as a 'reference point' for the Tribunal here. It is noted that for consent (severance) applications, they are subject to another set of assessment requirements, contained in the *Planning Act*, known as criteria for subdivision of land.

In further reviewing this Decision, it also had associated variances, which include requests for lot frontage and lot area. It should be noted that the subject proposal does not contain such variance requests as the lot in question already complies with such Zoning requirements as the land is not proposed to be severed. Furthermore, there are 7 variances proposed for the retained and severed lots, if the TLAB had approved them. The overall intensity of the requests would be greater for this proposal as, in comparison, the subject proposal contains 3 variance requests only.

Ms. Mercado and Mr. Jamieson's testimony to the TLAB was comprehensive with both Parties/Participants utilizing a study area to assess the proposal. It was noted that both persons were not Professional Planners but Ms. Mercado was an LBNA representative who had participated in other Planning applications in the area while Mr. Jamieson was a Professional Engineer. Their testimony focused on the FSI variance request and that, in their summation, it was a material increase from what the Zoning permitted. There was also discussion proffered on the integral garage, as part of this proposal, resulting in a overall built form which was not compatible for Garden Place. It was argued that it would be preferrable if the proposal was revised to eliminate the integral garage and make that area a habitable space. This could, in Ms. Mercado's opinion, result in a reduced building depth and could also make the building more aesthetically pleasing by having a window at the ground level facing out towards the street.

It is noted that typically, design matters are not considered by the TLAB as the assessment of variances is only done in accordance with the four tests, as stipulated by the *Planning Act.* However, this proposal is unique as there is a *Guideline* which exists for this neighbourhood which was adopted by City Council. As such, I find that, to a certain extent, such discussion could be relevant to this matter.

In critiquing the testimony of both Ms. Mercado and Mr. Jamieson, who are both involved with the LBNA, the study areas that they have presented were assessed by me in greater detail. What was evident in these study areas is not which was included, but what had been removed as such.

This would entail certain building types, such as apartments, which both persons chose to emit from their study areas. It was explained that these building types were anomalous to the 'prevailing' low rise residential development of the Long Branch neighbourhood. I would find that, as part of the review of the disclosure documents and

through my site visit of the area, that if their study areas had included all building types, would have given credence to the notion that the area has a diverse building type, with several structures which have been in existence for a long period of time. Any analysis which is presented to the TLAB should be forthright in considering all elements of a neighbourhood. That would allow for appropriate conclusions to be drawn from the data gathered. With regards to the discussion on integral garages and the contention by Ms. Mercado that this is not an appropriate form of development, if one were to more closely critique the building type within her study area, they would find there are houses with integral garages which currently exist, and also on Garden Place. These dwellings now form part of the urban fabric of this neighbourhood and is relevant when discussing policies such as OPA 320 in relation to proposed in-fill houses. This further demonstrates that another test for variance, desirable for an appropriate form of development or use of the land, is met here as the proposal's building type is already existing in this neighbourhood. As such, the inclusion of this proposed house would not act to disrupt the neighbourhood 'rhythm'.

Ms. Mercado also described how higher density development is already occurring in Long Branch neighbourhood, mostly on lands north of Lake Shore Boulevard West. She argues that the growth targets have been met for the Long Branch area. It is noted here that there are no policies which act to define where development should and should not occur in the Long Branch neighbourhood. Although the province establishes growth targets, it is up to each individual municipality to determine how they will achieve such targets. The legislation does not prohibit a municipality from exceeding those established targets. A municipality may have other issues to consider when determining if exceeding such 'thresholds' is warranted. City Council, through documents such as the Zoning By-law and OP, act to encourage a broad range of housing types for its residents and also outlines that established neighbourhoods are not 'static' in nature but can develop, over time, in a manner respectful of the local area context while also ensuring that current and future population needs are provided for.

In countenance to this, Mr. Ferancik's testimony to the TLAB attempted to rationalize certain elements which were missing from the discussions as advanced by Parties such as Mr. Godley, Ms. Mercado and Mr. Jamieson. Mr. Ferancik acted to consider the entire building typology of the Long Branch neighbourhood when formulating his study area. He also provided a comprehensive outline on the *Guideline* and expressed the underlying intent of this document as it related to in-fill development for this local area. It is noted that the other Parties to this matter who provided testimony did not provide a comprehensive rebuttal to the testimony of Mr. Ferancik.

It is noted that the 3 closing statements provided commentary to the Tribunal which should be accounted for. With regards to the statements as provided by Ms. Gibson and Mr. McWatters, I note that fulsome participation was allocated for the Parties/Participants to this matter. This was seen in the detailed testimony which I allowed to be provided by both Mr. Godley and Mr. Jamieson to the TLAB. I found that the knowledge and experience of residents of the local area to be relevant in assessing this appeal matter. In recognizing this testimony, I also acknowledge the closing statement of Mr. Bronskill where he argues that the evidence as provided by Mr. Ferancik to be uncontroverted.

The arguments as posited by the opposing Parties/Participants have not conclusively acted to disprove the findings as presented by Mr. Ferancik to the Tribunal. As described previously in this document, the study areas which they have provided failed to include all building types of the local area context. A study area should be devised to be representative of the local community's development pattern in its entirety. The discussion about the FSI variance request and the *Guideline* was also raised in the closing statements. However, as these issues were analyzed in detail in previous parts of this document, I will not reiterate them here.

With the material that has been presented to me, I find the arguments as provided by the applicant, most notably of their expert witness, to be compelling and rationale. They have provided an extensive critique on the subject proposal and how it will be able to respect and reinforce the prevailing character of the area. The eclectic and diverse building type of this neighbourhood can be observed in both the immediate and broader context. Along Garden Place, there are triplexes, houses with integral garages, houses with below grade garages and detached dwellings with front parking pad. As such, arguments which were provided regarding 'disruption' to this local urban fabric would be unfounded when reviewing the material submitted on this appeal matter.

Planning staff have also stated that the revised proposal is now, in their opinion, a more appropriate building type and will have reduced impact to the adjacent properties. There are also no proposed trees to be removed so the existing tree canopy will not be adversely impacted. It is found that, and referenced earlier in this document, the four tests for variance are met and other related policies such as OPA 320 are found to be in conformance here. The contention of 'precedence' being set with an approval of this proposal isn't relevant as this building type has already been constructed in this neighbourhood. However, I note that the approval herein is not acting to encourage rebuilding of existing houses in this area. Each proposal, if seeking a Planning approval, will be subject to rigorous public process to assess its merits and whether it should be allowed or not. This process ensures that any development that occurs in a neighbourhood will be achieved in a balanced manner taking into account all relevant issues.

It is noted that Planning staff had not recommended conditions as part of a potential approval of the variance application. However, Urban Foresty staff, in a memo dated September 19, 2019, outlined a series of 5 conditions which may need to be included as part of an approval of the variance application. The COA issued an approval for this application with 2 of those conditions, which were obtaining a tree permit for any possible injury or removal of trees and a payment-in-lieu for planting a street tree of \$583/tree. I find that it would be appropriate to apply these 2 conditions to this appeal matter as well. In addition, and in analyzing other similar TLAB matters, I would also find it suitable to include 2 other conditions relating to the review of drawings for substantial conformity and for a grading plan to be submitted and approved by City staff. The TLAB finds that these 2 conditions are typical for in-fill development and would be appropriate in this particular instance.

DECISION AND ORDER

The appeal is allowed, and the variances in Appendix 1 are approved subject to the conditions therein and subject to the condition that the building must be constructed substantially in accordance with plans contained in the City staff report and attached in Appendix 2.

Justin Leung

Panel Chair, Toronto Local Appeal Body

Appendix 1

List of proposed variances

1. Section 900.6.10.(2)(D)(i), By-law 569-2013

The maximum permitted floor space index is 0.35 times the lot are (97.18 m²). The proposed dwelling will have a floor space index of 0.66 times the lot area (185.01 m²).

2. Section 900.6.10.(2)(F)(i), By-law 569-2013

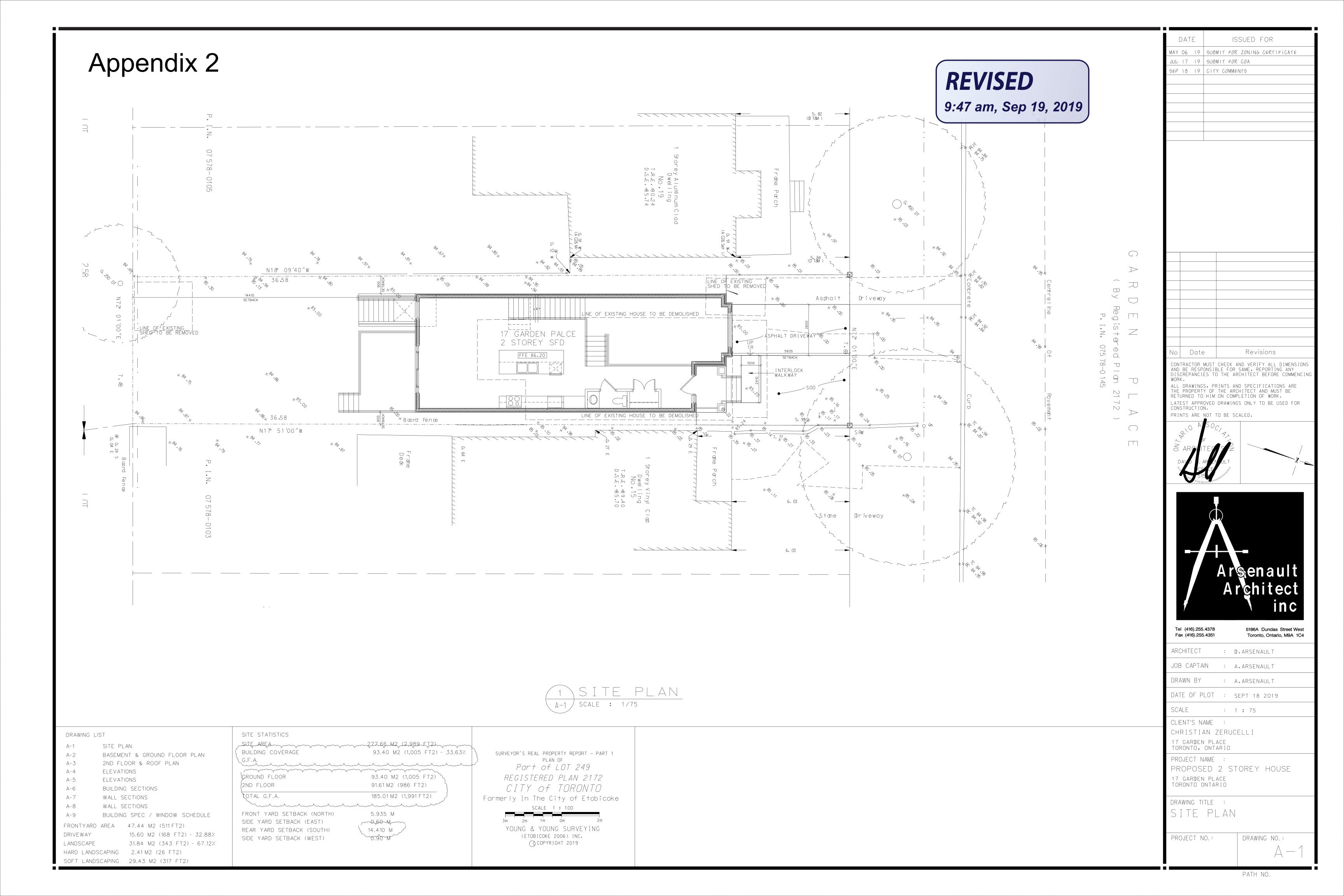
The minimum required side yard setback is 0.9 m. The proposed dwelling will be located 0.6 m from the east side lot line.

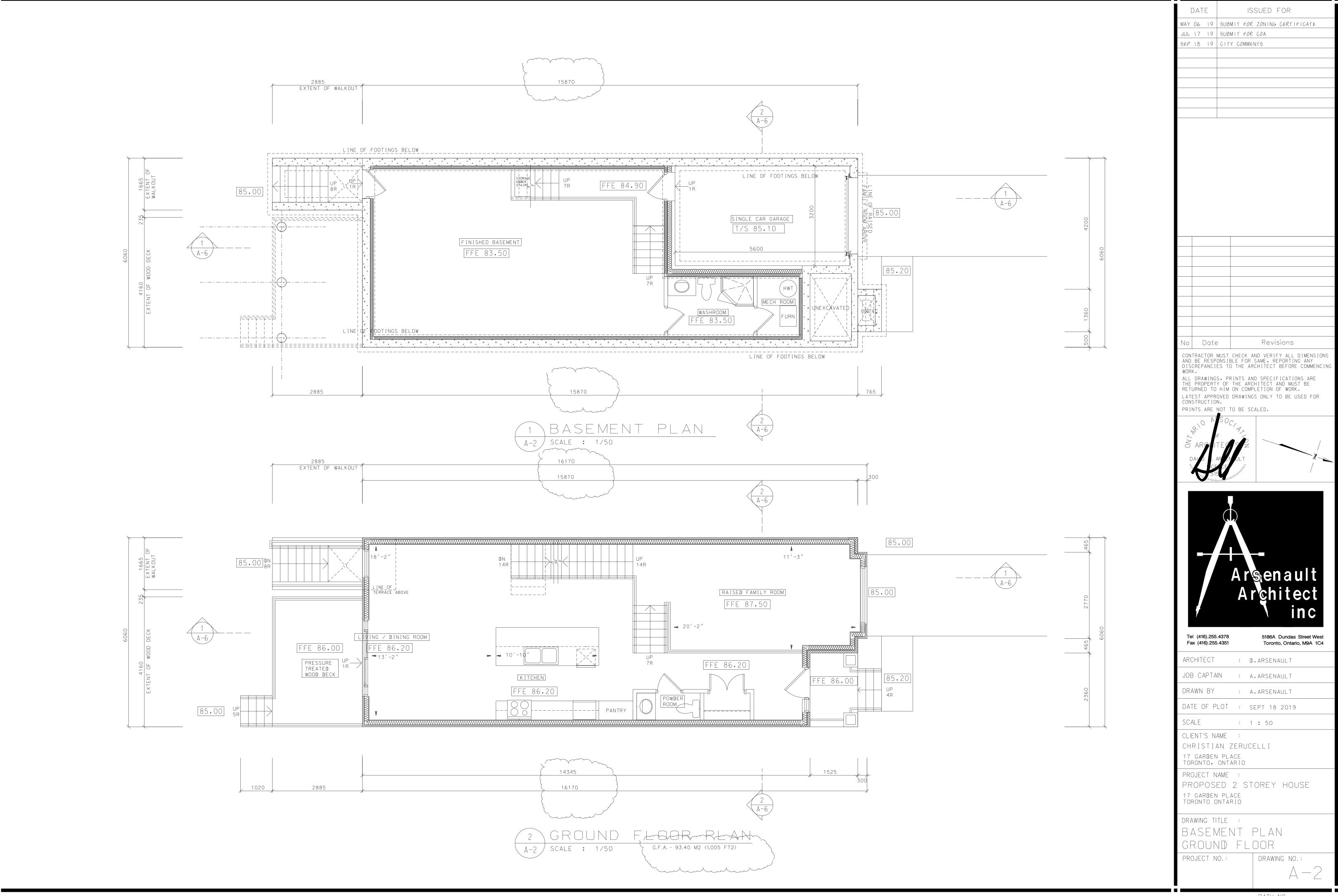
3. Section 10.5.40.60.(7), By-law 569-2013

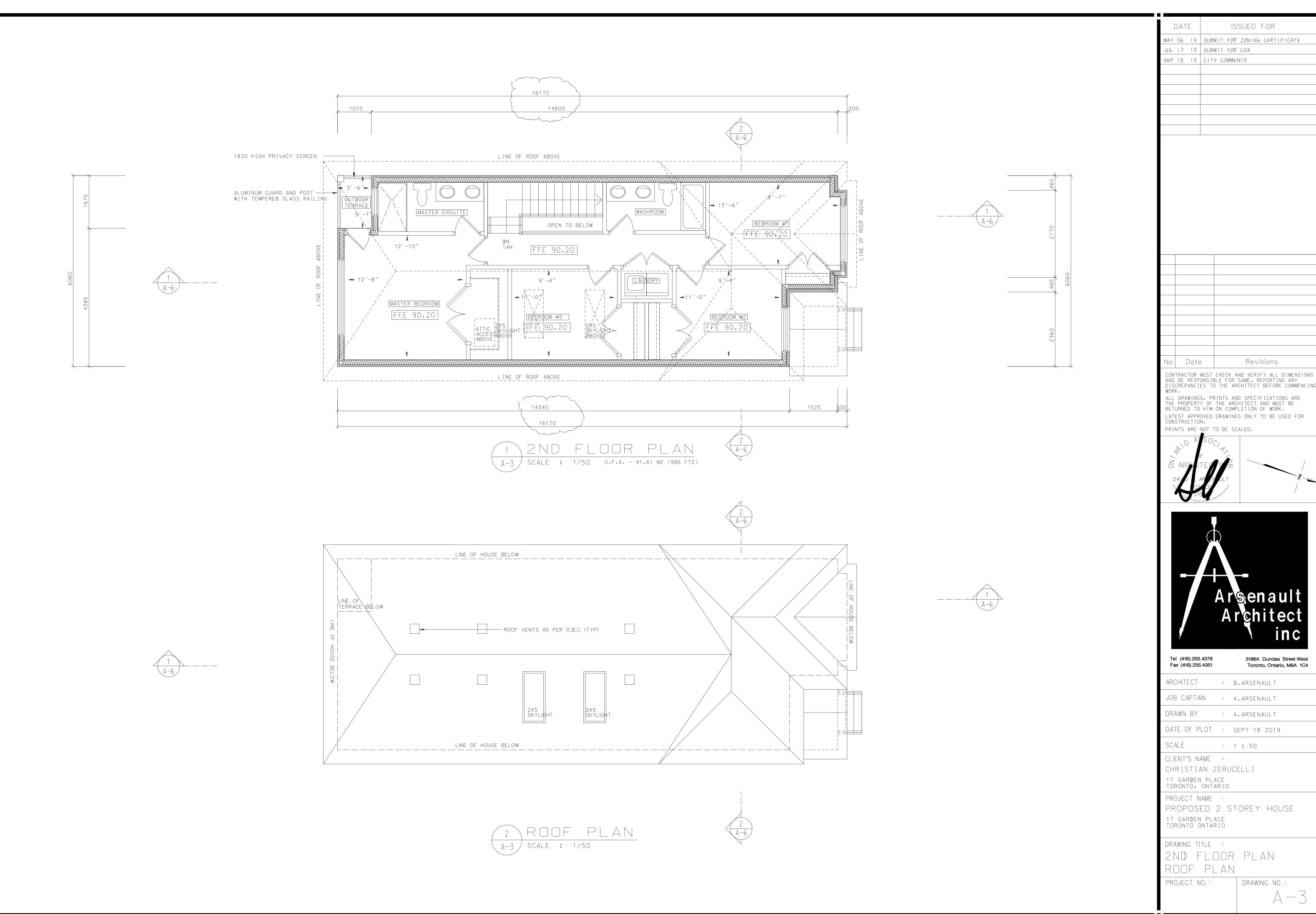
Roof eaves may be no closer than 0.3 m to a lot line. The eaves of the proposed dwelling will be located 0.15 m from the east side lot line. height is 9.0m.

List of proposed conditions

- 1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant/Owner shall submit a complete application for permit to injure or remove any private or City owned tree(s) under Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees Article II, Trees on City Streets, to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, Urban Forestry, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Toronto and East York District.
- 2. Where there is no existing street tree, the owner shall provide payment in lieu of planting one street tree on the City road allowance abutting each of the sites involved in the application. The current cash-in-lieu payment is \$583/tree.
- 3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Owner shall submit a site servicing plan for review and acceptance to the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering & Construction Services, to show the existing and planned water, storm and sanitary services (all of which must be clearly labelled).



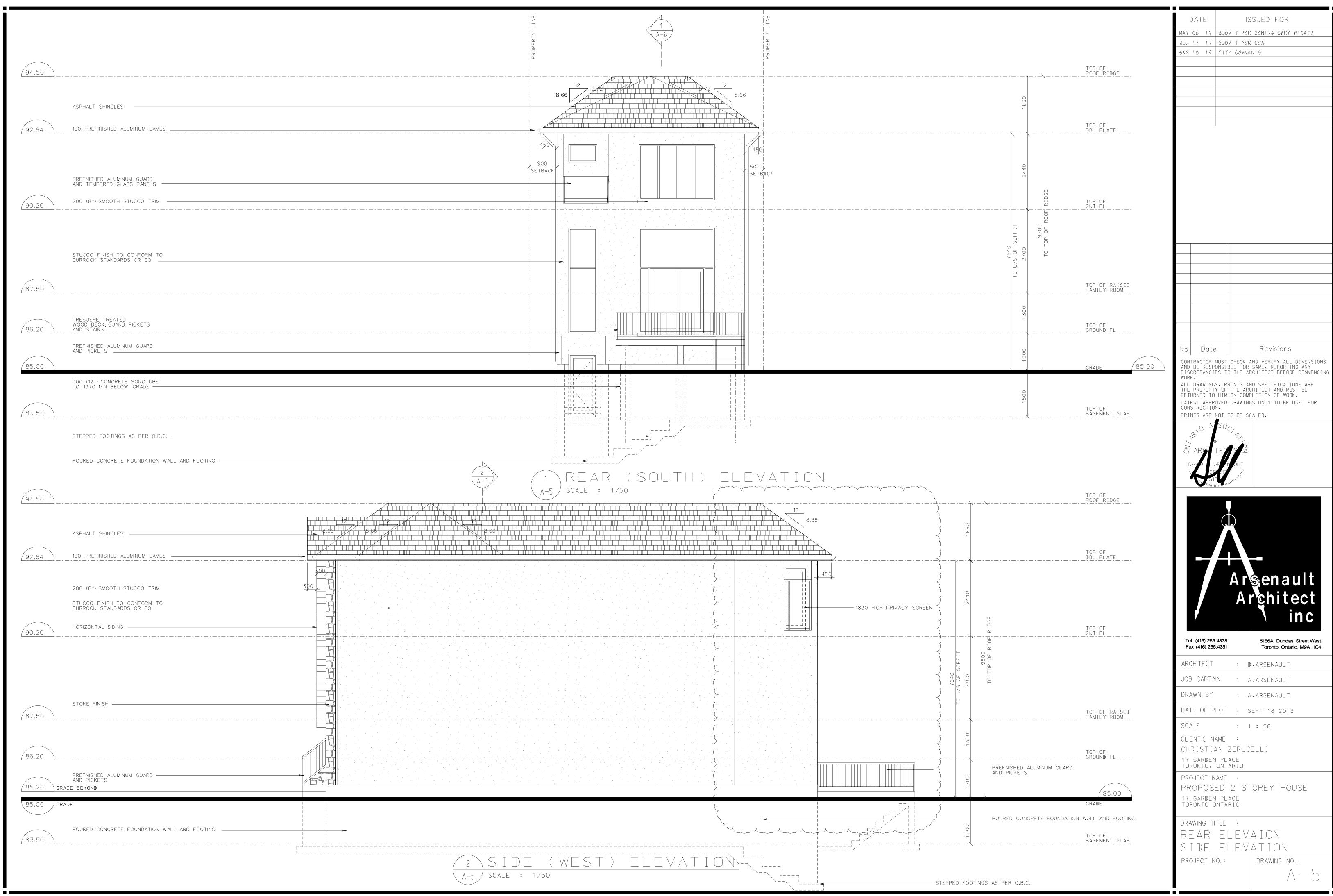




PATH NO.



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