

Subject: 1144 Davenport Road - minor variance removes storefront
Date: 2018-10-02 16:24

From: Helena Grdadolnik <helena@workshoparchitecture.ca>
To: Helena Grdadolnik <helena@workshoparchitecture.ca>
Cc: David Colussi <david@workshoparchitecture.ca>

Hi All,

I am sending this email to people in the neighbourhood who may be interested in the proposed minor variances to 1144 Davenport Road. If not, please ignore my long-winded email 😊

I am drafting a letter based on the info below to send to the Committee of Adjustment. I am happy to share the letter with those who may be interested in either sending your own letter and/or sign your support. It would be good to get letters from the resident associations.

OUR OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED MINOR VARIANCE IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

The proposal removes the commercial storefront and will include 6 residences, with an increase from 1.5 FSR to 2.07 FSR for the residences. David and I are not opposed to more height, more building area, or more residences added on site. What we do oppose is the loss of the commercial storefront and the precedent it will set to transfer the remaining properties in our commercial village.

As many of you know, we own 1157 Davenport Road. Since 2009 we have lived in the apartment upstairs and have our studio in the commercial storefront. We are in plans to move our office to a larger space we purchased on Wallace Ave, but in our search it became obvious that commercial spaces were in high demand for purchase and rentals in Davenport and beyond. The commercial spaces in this stretch of Davenport have been left vacant not because they are not leasable (we already have received interest in leasing our space, despite not advertising), but because the owners have decided not to lease them. The new owners of 1144 Davenport gave notice for the bike store to move out in 2016 and left the space empty for almost two years. As the articles here [1] and here [2] demonstrate, the City has not been protecting needed commercial and retail space, and there has been a lot of land rezoned to residential throughout the city. The second article does not mention that one reason office spaces are moving into storefronts is because many small businesses are being pushed out of downtown office buildings due to high rents. Storefront spaces such as the one that is proposed to be removed at 1144 Davenport Road, have been successful in providing retail, restaurant and office incubation spaces for businesses in Toronto for many years.

I would argue that the proposal for 1144 Davenport Road does not pass the four tests of "minor variance"

- The variance request is not minor - it constitutes a re-zoning from MCR (mixed-use commercial residential) to RM (multi-family residential)
- The proposal is not desirable/appropriate development - The residential entrance on Davenport is inconsistent with the other commercial storefronts and changes the character of the area.
- Residential unit 4: The sole windows to the basement apartment are light wells on the front façade at grade (above the bedroom ceiling

height which is below grade) and a window in the living room that is less than 5.5m from the wall (does not meet setback requirements) in the north-facing walk-out which is 12'-0" below grade. Furthermore, there are two windowless studies with closets that are the same size as the two bedrooms in the subterranean apartment. There is worry these may be intended to be used as illegal bedrooms.

- The general intent and purpose of the zoning/by-law are not maintained - MCR is for mixed commercial residential use with residential secondary to a commercial use on the main floor.
- It is not consistent with the intent of the OP -- Neighbourhood. "Development in established Neighbourhoods will respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood ... No changes will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of the neighbourhood."

I have attached the application info. There is some incorrect and misleading information including the following:

- A2.00 - As the building has been largely demolished, it is hard to tell if the walkout is an existing condition.
- A2.01 - There was no existing residential unit in the commercial storefront. This was a retail space.
- A4.03 - The rooms in the basement are incorrectly labelled. The three rooms labelled "storage" should be labeled "bedroom", "study" and "living room".
- A4.03 - This section does not show the light well on Davenport that are the only bedroom windows and it does not show the north-facing walk-out (12-0" below grade) that provides light to the living/dining and kitchen areas. There are no other windows in this 1174 sqft residential unit.

If there are others in the community that you think may be interested in this info, please feel free to pass this email along.

Best regards,

Helena Grdadolnik
director
WORKSHOP architecture inc
1157 Davenport Road
Toronto, ON M6H 2G4
phone: 416.901.8055 fax: 416.849.0383
www.workshoparchitecture.ca [3]

Links:

- [1] <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/real-estate/article-toronto-land-zoned-for-employment-use-is-shrinking/>
- [2] <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/small-business/>
- [3] <http://www.workshoparchitecture.ca/>