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Town of Aurora
Committee of Adjustment Report
No. MV-2024-16

Subject: **Minor Variance Application**
York Region District School Board
155 Wellington Street West
PLAN 102 PT LOT 40
File: MV-2024-16
Related File: SP-2020-13, SPM-2023-07

Prepared by: **Kenny Ng, Planner**

Department: Planning and Development Services

Date: July 11, 2024

Application

The applicant is requesting relief from the requirements of the Town's Comprehensive Zoning By-law 6000-17, as amended, to create a third driveway on Murray Drive to accommodate 50 new parking spaces and 2 barrier-free spaces at the Aurora High School.

Proposed Variance

The following relief is being requested:

- a) Section 5.5.4 (d) of the Zoning By-law 6000-17 states that driveways shall not exceed two (2) in number. The applicant is proposing three (3) driveways.

Background

Subject Property and Area Context

The subject lands are municipally known as 155 Wellington Street West, located south of Wellington Street West, on the west side of Murray Drive. The subject lands currently accommodate an existing institutional use, known as the Aurora High School. The subject lands have an approximate lot area of 6.45 hectares (15.94 acres), and an approximate lot frontage of 350.01 m (1,148.33 ft). The existing two-storey institutional building has a

Gross Floor Area of 13,874.6 m² (149,345 ft²) with a total of 148 parking spaces and 4 barrier-free spaces with two driveway access from Murray Drive. There is an existing school sports field to the south of the building.

Proposal

The applicant proposing to extend the existing southerly parking lot of the school and provide an additional 50 parking spaces. As a result, a third driveway access is required. The applicant has applied for a Minor Site Plan application (SPM-2023-07) for the additional parking spaces. Currently, no building addition is being proposed to the Aurora High School.

The purpose for the additional parking spaces is to fulfill an Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) order on the adjacent lands located at 145 & 147 Wellington St W. The OLT approved an infill Site Plan application (SP-2020-13) for three stacked townhouses containing 56 dwelling units. The site plan condition requires that fifty (50) temporary parking spaces be provided at 155 Wellington Street West or any other location satisfactory to the Town for the duration of constructing the stacked townhouse units, and the parking spaces will be temporarily reserved for the existing residents living in the 2 multi storey apartment buildings at 145 & 147 Wellington St W. Once the construction for the stacked townhouse units is completed, the 50 parking spaces constructed at 155 Wellington St W will permanently become part of Aurora High School's parking spaces and will no longer be used by the residents at 145 & 147 Wellington St W.

Official Plan

The subject property is designated 'Community Services and Facilities' by the Town of Aurora Official Plan. Public School is a permitted use within the Community Services and Facilities designation.

Zoning

The subject property is zoned 'I (Institutional Zone)' under Zoning By-law 6000-17, as amended, which permits a Secondary School.

Related Planning Applications

SPM-2023-07

The Minor Site Plan application for the proposed alternation to the existing parking area and addition of parking spaces and driveway has been submitted to the Town and is currently under review. Professional plans and reports such as landscape plan, parking

plan, Stormwater Management Report, Transportation Impact Study, Site Servicing Plan have been submitted to address any technical requirements from the Town and external agencies.

Preliminary Zoning Review

A Preliminary Zoning Review (PZR) has been completed by the Town of Aurora's Building Division. The PZR identified the required variance and no other non-compliance was identified.

Applicant's stated reason(s) for not complying with the Zoning By-law

As stated by the applicant, "The addition of a third access point is ideal to disperse traffic flow and improve site circulation between students and the residents of 145 & 147 Wellington Street West."

Planning Comments

Planning Staff have evaluated Minor Variance Application MV-2024-16 pursuant to the prescribed tests as set out in Section 45 (1) of the *Planning Act*, as follows:

a) The proposed variance meets the general intent of the Official Plan

The subject property is designated 'Community Services and Facilities' by the Town of Aurora Official Plan and the intent of the designation is to protect the function of existing uses and to facilitate the development of additional facilities to support the local community and strengthen the role of the Town as a regional service provider.

As it pertains to the subject Minor Variance application, Section 10.2.4 b) of the OP outlines that "Vehicular access shall be located and designed to discourage vehicular traffic or parking generated by community facilities from intruding into local residential neighbourhoods."

Based on the site layout, planning Staff are of the opinion that the proposed access point for the additional driveway and the extension of the existing parking lot to provide additional parking spaces have been designed in a manner intended to promote safety for pedestrians. Furthermore, vehicular traffic will be further dispersed through the introduction of the additional access point, while having minimal to no impact to the existing surrounding neighbourhood. As outlined in previous sections, the additional parking spaces are intended to be used by the residents at 145 & 147 Wellington St W only on a temporary basis. The driveway will provide for specific access to the south end parking lot and will help separate the users for the school and the apartment residents.

The Town's traffic engineer has also reviewed the subject application and the submitted Transportation Impact Study prepared by Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited and have no concern with the proposed driveway and associated parking lot expansion.

It is therefore the opinion of Planning staff that the proposed variance maintains the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan.

b) The proposed variance meets the general intent of the Zoning By-law

The subject property is zoned 'Institutional' under Zoning By-law 6000-17, as amended, which permits a Public School. The intent of Section 5.5.4 d) of the Zoning By-law is to limit the maximum number of driveways to two (2) as well as to regulate the design of driveways to ensure that there is adequate space for landscaping and the placement of utilities, and to ensure there are no adverse impacts on sidewalks, roadways or streetscape and that adequate space for parking remains available.

With a lot frontage of 350.01 m (1,148.33 ft) along Murray Drive, Planning staff are of the opinion that the subject property has an extensive lot frontage to comfortably accommodate the additional driveway configuration proposed without compromising the soft landscaping space along the frontage of Murray Drive. Staff also notes that additional landscaping will be provided for the subject lands along the proposed south end parking lot expansion, ensuring a high-quality streetscape is maintained. The proposed driveway is also separated from the nearest driveway by over 30 m, which helps to minimize any potential impact to site circulation and access safety. The applicant has also submitted detailed site servicing and grading plan for the proposed development to ensure that the proposed driveway would not conflict with any existing servicing and utility lines.

With a very generous existing lot frontage along Murray Drive, combined with sufficient separation distance being provided between each driveway, staff are of the opinion that the proposal will result in no negative impacts to the overall character of the streetscape. Additionally, sufficient space is retained for the subject property to provide adequate landscaping and parking space. Planning Staff are therefore of the opinion that increasing the number of driveways to three on the subject property as proposed will not result in any negative impacts and are of the opinion that the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law is met.

c) The proposed variance is considered desirable for the appropriate development of the land

In permitting for an additional driveway on the subject property, staff are of the opinion that this will allow for enhanced vehicular movement, in allowing the apartment residents

to have a separate access to their parking. In addition, this will further mitigate for any potential impacts with vehicular movement within the parking lot, as an additional point of entry/exit is being provided. Staff are of the opinion that this will result in traffic being accommodated on site to the greatest extent possible, and will significantly minimize the potential parking impacts off site.

Planning staff are of the opinion that allowing an increase in the number of driveways permitted for this site would allow for safe and efficient inbound and outbound traffic movements throughout the property. Town Operation staff has reviewed the subject application and have no concerns with the proposed access subject to applicable permits (Road occupancy and Curb Cut) being acquired for the construction of the driveway. The additional driveway would also allow for enhanced vehicular access guidance to separate the school visitors and the apartment residents at 145 & 147 Wellington St W while the additional parking spaces are being temporarily used by off site residents in the duration of the construction.

Staff are of the opinion that the variance as proposed is considered to be desirable for the appropriate development and use of the land.

d) The proposed variance is considered minor in nature

The Town's Engineering and Operations department have reviewed the proposed application with no objection. It is Staff's opinion that the proposed variance to permit an additional driveway access is warranted to improve traffic movements. Given the substantial size of the property (15.94 acres) and it's lot frontage (1,148.33 ft) along Murray Drive. The subject property has sufficient amount of space to accommodate all three driveways. As such, staff therefore consider the variance to be minor in nature.

Additional Comments

The minor variance application was circulated to Town Department/Divisions and to external agencies for review and comment. The following comments were provided:

Department or Agency	Comments
Building Division	Preliminary Zoning Review was completed. No objections.
Engineering Division	No objections.
Transportation	No objections.

Department or Agency	Comments
Operational Services (Parks)	No objections.
Operational Services (Public Works)	No objections.
Central York Fire Services	No objections.
York Region	No objections.
LSRCA	No objections.

Public Correspondence

Written submissions were not received at the time of writing of this report. Should written submissions be received after the writing of this report, the Secretary Treasurer will provide the submission(s) to Committee members at the meeting.

Conclusion

Planning staff have reviewed the application with respect to the Section 45 (1) of the Planning Act, R.S.O, 1990, c.P.13, as amended, and are of the opinion that the requested variance meets the four tests of the Planning Act for granting of minor variances. Please refer to Appendix 'A' for recommended conditions of approval for the requested variance.

Attachments

Appendix 'A' – Recommended Conditions of Approval

Appendix 'B' – Site Plan

Appendix 'A' – Recommended Conditions of Approval

The following conditions are required to be satisfied should application MV-2024-16 be approved by the Committee of Adjustment:

1. That the variance only applies to the subject property, in conformity with the plan(s) attached as 'Appendix B' to this Staff Report, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Development Services or designate.