STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

426 University Avenue – Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Approval Applications – Refusal Report

Date:	May 25, 2009
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Ward 20 – Trinity-Spadina
Reference Number:	08 163452 STE 20 OZ

SUMMARY

This application was made on or after January 1, 2007 and is subject to the new provisions of the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act, 2006.

The application proposed to replace the existing Royal Canadian Military Institute (RCMI), which is a private members club, with a 6 and ½-storey club and a 35 and ½-storey condominium resulting in a 42-storey mixed use building at 426 University Ave. No parking was initially proposed, however, a revised application included the provision of 9 parking spaces, 8 of which were proposed to be in parking stackers.

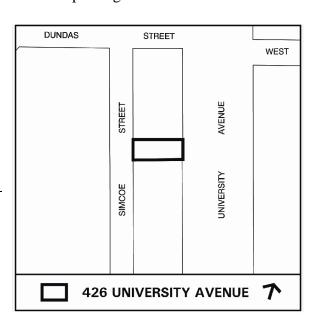
This report reviews and recommends refusal of the application to amend the Zoning By-law for the following reasons:

- insufficient provision of indoor amenity space; and
- insufficient provision of parking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council refuse the Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Approval Application No. 08 163452 STE 20 OZ.



2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor and other appropriate City staff to oppose any future appeal of Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Approval Application No.08 163452 STE 20 OZ.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Proposal

On May 20, 2008, Tribute Community Homes applied for a Zoning By-law Amendment for 426 University Avenue to permit the construction of a 42-storey (135 metres) mixed use building containing the RCMI, a private members club, on the first six and a half-floors (3,311 square metres) and a 35 and a half-storey residential condominium above. The residential floors would have contained approximately 315 residential units (24,353 square metres) of which 105 were proposed to be bachelor units and 210 were one-bedroom units.

The overall density would have been 38.06 times the area of the lot. No parking was initially proposed to be constructed as part of this proposal. However, the application was revised to include four auto stackers with provision for 2 cars per stacker and 1 parking space. It was anticipated that the spaces would be used for car share cars.

The applicant had proposed to reconstruct the existing University Avenue façade as a feature of the building. Other heritage features of the building were to have been incorporated into the proposal.

The benefit of the proposal would have been to allow the RCMI to continue to operate in this location in an updated, structurally sound building.

Site and Surrounding Area

The existing RCMI building is a two- and a half- storey building constructed in 1907. It was listed in 1973 on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties for architectural and contextual reasons. The Institute contains a library, dining rooms, meeting rooms, lounges, offices, residential rooms, bar and food related areas.

The site is rectangular in shape with approximately 640 square metres of area. It is a through lot between University Avenue and Simcoe Street to the west. There is a narrow walkway along the southern edge of the site and a service area on Simcoe Street.

Surrounding Uses:

North: a 20-storey commercial office building with direct access below grade to the St. Patrick subway station;

South: a 25-storey commercial office building;

East: across University Avenue is the Ontario Court House, and commercial office

buildings; and

West: on the west side of Simcoe Street are mixed use buildings containing residential

and commercial uses ranging in height from 2 storeys to 18 storeys.

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and, protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe including: directions for where and how to grow; the provision of infrastructure to support growth; and protecting natural systems and cultivating a culture of conservation.

City Council's planning decisions are required by the Planning Act, to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Official Plan

The site is located in the *Downtown Area* of the City of Toronto Official Plan and is designated as *Mixed Use*. There is no applicable Secondary Plan.

The Toronto Official Plan is available on the City's website at: www.toronto.ca/planning/official_plan/introduction.htm.

In conformity with the Official Plan, Section 3.1.5, the applicant provided a Heritage Impact Statement and would have provided documentation of the building to the City of Toronto Archives had it been recommended for approved.

Zoning

The site is zoned CR T7.8 C4.5 R4.8 which permits commercial densities of up to 4.5 times the area of the lot, residential densities of up to 4.8 times the area of the lot, and a maximum total density of 7.8 times the area of the lot. The maximum permitted height is 76 metres. A wide range of uses including residential, retail, offices, private club, and restaurants are permitted by the Zoning category. Among the provisions of the Zoning By-law that apply to this designation the following are particularly relevant to this application:

- Window separation from one dwelling unit to another dwelling unit, and to a wall/lot line;
- Height and density permissions;
- The provision of indoor amenity space; and
- The provision of parking.

Site Plan Control

An application for Site Plan Approval was made as part of this application.

Reasons for Application

Variances to Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended, include, but are not limited to, the following:

Variance	Zoning Requirement	Proposed	
Height (m)	76	135 m to the roof, 145.8 m to the highest point	
Non-residential gfa	4.5 x the area of the lot	5.32 x the area of the lot	
Residential gfa	4.8 x the area of the lot	33.2 x the area of the lot	
Total gfa	7.8 x the area of the lot	38.5 x the area of the lot	
Parking spaces	194 (156 for residents, 19 for both visitors and non-residential)	9 in total, 8 in parking stackers	
Parking stacker	Not permitted	4 Proposed	
Loading	0	1 Type B	
Visitor bicycle parking space	To be located not in a secured room	To be located in a secure room	
Indoor amenity space	624 sq.m.	130.25 sq.m.	
Outdoor amenity space	624 sq.m.	22.5 sq.m. (no kitchen or washrooms	
Window setback	5.5m from the lot line not a street line	0 from the north and south lot lines	
Encroachments	Not allowed over public/private property	East/west/south elevations encroachments proposed	
Common outdoor space	57.6 sq.m.	0	

Community Consultation

A public meeting was held October 21, 2008 at City Hall in conjunction with a public meeting for 210 Simcoe Street. Attendees included the Ward Councillor, and approximately 30 residents and interested parties. Questions were raised with respect to: the size and number of units; the provision of units suitable for families; the storage of garbage and the timing of its collection to minimize the impact on the residential uses to the west; and the lack of loading facilities.

Agency Circulation

The application was circulated to all appropriate agencies and City divisions. Responses received have been used to assist in evaluating the application.

COMMENTS

The intent of this application to provide small, relatively affordable residential units and preserve a City landmark is one which the City is respectful and appreciative of. Given the site's limited size, the adjacencies of tall buildings, the necessity to preserve as much of the heritage building as possible, the resulting design is sympathetic and would, subject to certain necessary modifications, warrant approval. Unfortunately, the omission of parking spaces (with the exception of nine spaces), and the inadequate supply of indoor amenity space, and their potential impacts on the adjacent areas, and indeed, the precedent for the City, cannot be ignored. It is therefore recommended that Council refuse the application.

Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Plans

The proposal was consistent with the PPS. The redevelopment of this site for commercial and residential purposes was in keeping with the intent of the PPS. The residential use adjacent to public transit, cultural institutions, and amenities was consistent with the goals of the PPS.

The proposal conformed and did not conflict with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe as it proposed intensification within a built-up urban area near a higher-order transportation system, namely the subway and streetcar system.

Land Use

The use of the site as a mixed use building containing both a private members club (RCMI) and a residential condominium was an appropriate use, consistent with the Official Plan and the Zoning By-law. While the proposal was for either bachelor (105) or one-bedroom (210) units, knock out panels between some units were included in order to allow for the possibility of larger units to be configured.

Heritage Impacts

The RCMI building is listed on the City's inventory of heritage properties for its architectural and contextual heritage value. The listing was adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973. A heritage impact statement was prepared by ERA Architects and submitted to the City. The current proposal was to demolish the majority of the building and reinstate a modified replication of the heritage facade.

Encroachments

Portions of the proposed building would encroach into the City right-of-way and onto the site to the south of the proposal. On the east side of the building, the vertical architectural fin and canopy would encroach into the City right-of-way. Similarly, the architectural fin would encroach on the west side. On both the west and east sides of the building, small encroachments would occur for architectural details but not for balconies or habitable space. All the balconies to the south, however, would encroach to one degree or another. In addition, historically, the cannons encroach into the City right-of-way. Therefore, an encroachment agreement and/or limiting distance agreement would be required with the City as well as with the owners of the site to the south to permit the proposal.

Siting

Because of the narrowness of the site, the building was proposed to be built essentially lot line to lot line. As a consequence, the Zoning By-law requirement for setbacks on the south side of the building where windows were to be located could not be met. The By-law requires that developments within the CR zone have windows that are set back 5.5 metres from a lot line that is not a street line or from the wall of a building. In this case, the proposed setback is zero as the building is located on the lot line. However, on the lot located south of the site, there is a significant open space between the proposed building and the existing building. The applicant was in the process of securing a limiting distance agreement with the property owners to the south to ensure that the current lack of setback would not become an issue should that site be redeveloped. Should Council approve this application, the limiting distance agreement should be in place prior to the introduction of Bills in Council.

The proposal also raises issues related to the Council-approved 'Design Criteria for the Review of Tall Building Guidelines'. The document states that setbacks beyond those required when planning for an as-of-right development are often necessary in order to achieve appropriate tall building conditions, including light, view and privacy. Among other things, the guidelines call for a 25 metre separation distance between tall buildings to allow for sun access and sky views between buildings and to protect the quality of life for residents by providing adequate separation for privacy. The inability of this proposal to achieve this setback speaks to the small size of the site and the potentially negative precedent it may set for other areas of the *Downtown*.

In this particular case, the two adjacent properties are built-out and appear unlikely to be re-developed in the short term. If, however, either of these properties had been considered redevelopable, the approval of this application could have had the effect of sterilizing or at least limiting development on that site. As it is, permission to encroach the south side balconies must be obtained from the owner to the south. In addition, a limiting distance agreement would be required. This requirement is an agreement between the owner to the south and the applicant that, should the property to the south be redeveloped, the new building will be set a sufficient distance from the property line in order to ensure that light, view and privacy are retained. (See Attachment 6: Separation distances between buildings to the north and south of the site.)

On the north side, no windows were proposed. In response to concerns raised by Planning staff, the applicant had proposed decorative elements on the wall to ensure that it did not read as a blank wall, e.g. the elevator shaft would be enclosed by glass block. This would be acceptable only because the building to the north screens much of this blank wall from the view of pedestrians.

Density

The Zoning By-law limits the floor area in the area zoned CR T7.8 C4.5 R4.8 to 7.8 times the area of the lot (or 4991.0 square metres), whereas the proposed gross floor area of the building exceeded the permitted density by almost 5 times (38.06 times the lot area or 24667 square metres). The proposed density was a result of the small lot size (38 metres by 16 metres) and the necessity to build essentially lot line to lot line to achieve a viable floorplate.

Height, Massing

The Zoning By-law establishes a 76 metre height limit for this site and surrounding properties. The proposed 42-storey building would have a height of 135 metres which significantly exceeds the permitted height. While the proposed uses are appropriate and permitted, the built form exceeded that permitted.

The site measures 38 metres by 16 metres and has the total lot area of 640 square metres which is the approximate size of one to two residential lots. The proposed gross floor area of the residential floors was 599 square metres which would have been acceptable.

In and of itself height and density are not issues as University Avenue is an appropriate location for both additional height and density. The difficulty occurs when that height and density result in a building that cannot provide sufficient parking or indoor amenity space.

Sun, Shadow, Wind

Section 3.1.3 (Built Form) of the Official Plan includes a policy that tall buildings must minimize the negative impact of shadows on adjacent public spaces including streets, parks and open spaces. The applicant submitted a Shadow Analysis that demonstrated that there are minimal additional shadow impacts. Staff was satisfied with the level of shadowing on nearby properties.

A wind study dated May 27, 2008 was prepared by Gradient Microclimate Engineering Inc. The report concluded that changes to the local ground level wind conditions, as a result of the proposed building, would be insignificant.

Traffic Impact, Parking

The comments of the City's Building's Division (May 19, 2009), indicated that the current zoning by-law standards require 194 on-site parking spaces, including non-residential, residential, and visitor, to be provided for the project. The original application proposed zero on-site parking facilities. In contrast to this lack of provision, a study of

multi-unit residential parking standards undertaken by Cansult Limited (February, 2007) for the new Zoning By-law Project confirms the continued appropriateness of the existing Downtown standards as they apply to the bachelor and one-bedroom categories that comprise the project's approximately 315 units.

Given the focus of concern on the residential parking issue, the applicant's transportation planning consultant prepared a "parking justification" report responding to the City's request for further analysis. As a result, the project was revised to include two additional underground levels to provide, among other things, 9 vehicle parking spaces (8 of which are in two-tier stackers) and 315 bicycle parking spaces. The vehicle parking spaces were accessed by means of a car elevator. The transportation consultant's report recommended that the 9 car parking spaces be devoted to car-sharing vehicles.

The provision of on-site parking for car share vehicles can be expected to reduce the average rate of household car ownership in the project. In a recent study undertaken for the new Zoning By-law Project entitled "Impacts of Car Share Programs on Parking Standards" (IBI Group, March 2009), it was found that, in general, a reduction of up to four required parking spaces for each dedicated car share space can be warranted. Applying this finding to the RCMI project would lower the required parking by 30 or so spaces but would still leave a considerable parking shortfall.

The project's parking justification report did not suggest that the proposed 9 car share spaces would meet the City's zoning requirements. Indeed, the report suggested there are other reasons for accepting the lack of on-site parking. It was the applicant's intention to market the relatively small residential units to people who elect to live downtown and not own a car. In addition, it was proposed to offer residents transportation demand management (TDM) measures aimed at reducing the need to own a private vehicle and encouraging more travel by transit, bicycle and foot. By making it clear that there was no parking, it was hoped that those owning vehicles would be dissuaded from moving into the building.

The lowest rates of car ownership and use are found in the Downtown. Data from the 2006 Travel Tomorrow Survey, for example, show an average rate of around 0.5 cars per household in the Downtown. The Cansult survey shows car ownership rates to be somewhat above this average for newer condominium buildings. The multi-unit residential parking standards proposed in the new Zoning By-law reflect the varying patterns of car ownership in the City, with the required standards generally increasing as one moves away from the Downtown and areas well served by transit.

The current and proposed parking standards for the Downtown are 0.3 and 0.5 spaces per bachelor and one-bedroom unit respectively. These standards would require the project's 315 residential units to provide approximately140 parking spaces for residents which implies a more than half "car-free" building. To assume that a residential development of the project's scale might be totally car-free runs counter to expert study and experience. Although there are many households in the Downtown without cars, it would be highly unlikely to find 315 of them permanently concentrated in one building. The more likely

outcome of conferring the status of "car free" on a large residential building is to create an under-supply of parking for its residents. Furthermore, exempting the project from the City's parking standards would create a negative precedent that undermines the integrity of the parking provisions of the zoning by-law. Although City staff is open to considering a reduction in parking for this project, a reduction to 9 parking spaces is not considered appropriate.

Bicycle Parking

The application proposed 273 resident parking spaces and 40 visitor parking spaces which meets the Zoning By-law requirement. A variance for the location of the visitor parking in a secured area would be required.

Driveway Access

Vehicular access, including loading access, was proposed by an entrance driveway from Simcoe Street. While the entrance location was acceptable to Technical Services, it does require the existing on-street commercial loading zone to be relocated further south.

Loading

Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended, does not require loading for lots under 1000 square metres in the *Downtown*. With a site area of 640 square metres, therefore, no loading space is required. Notwithstanding this, the application proposed one Type B loading space that would be accessed from Simcoe Street. The proposal was based on an assumption that refuse/recycling collection for the site would be conducted by a private operator using rear loader garbage trucks.

In the City's experience, in similar proposals where private companies are initially responsible for garbage pickup, frequently the condominium corporation when formed will approach the City for City pickup but by that time the building has been completed without the proper design that would permit the City to agree. Consequently, Technical Services recommended that the development be re-designed to include a Type G loading space.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Revisions to the proposed garbage and recycling collections services were required by Technical Services.

Unit Count

The proposal was for 210 one-bedroom units and 105 bachelor units. At the community meeting some residents expressed concerns about the size of the units, and the lack of two- and three- bedroom units. In response, the applicant explained that the market share that this building was aimed at, was for small, relatively affordable units that precluded larger more expensive ones. Knock-out panels were to be provided to ensure that should the demand be there for larger units it can be met.

Amenity Space

Zoning By-law 438-86, as amended, requires the provision of amenity space, both outdoor and indoor, at the rate of 2 square metres per unit for a total of 4 square metres per unit. Given the small lot size of 38 metres by 16 metres, it was reasonable to accept that the proposal contain a significantly reduced amount of outdoor amenity space (the 22.5 square metre proposal versus the 640 square metre required). Further, the proposal includes a private balcony for a minimum of two-thirds of the residential units. It was, however, possible to achieve if not the entire provision of indoor amenity space (624 square metres), significantly more than the 130 square metres proposed. The Zoning By-law requires the inclusion of a kitchen and a washroom in the indoor amenity space provided. Indoor amenity space is important in most buildings but particularly so in the proposed building given its 315 small, bachelor and one-bedroom, units.

Open Space

The proposal was deficient by 57 square metres in its provision of common outdoor space. Given the small size of the lot and the footprint of the building, lot line to lot line, it was not possible for the proposal to meet this requirement.

Parkland

The Official Plan contains policies to ensure that Toronto's system of parks and green spaces are maintained, enhanced and expanded. Map 8B of the Toronto Official Plan shows local parkland provisions across the City. The lands which are the subject of this application are in an area .43 to .79 hectares of local park land per 1,000 people. The site is in the lowest quintile of current provision of parkland. The site is in a parkland priority area, as per Alternative Parkland Dedication By-law 1420-2007.

The application proposed 315 residential units on a site of 0.0640 hectares (640 square metres). At the alternative rate of 0.4 hectares per 300 units specified in By-law 1420-2007, the parkland dedication would be 0.416 hectares (4160 square metres). However, a cap of 10% applies and hence the parkland dedication for the residential component of the development would be 0.0064 hectares (64 square metres).

The non-residential component of the development would be subject to a 2% parkland dedication requirement under Chapter 165 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code (which remains in full force and effect) to implement Section 42 of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, c.p.13. The 2% parkland dedication, based on a non-residential gross floor area of 2,311 square metres (being 9.49% of the total development) would be .00012 hectares (1.2 square metres).

The total combined parkland dedication requirement for both the residential and non-residential components of the development would be .00652 hectares (65.2 square metres) should the proposal be approved in some form. Given the small size of the site and the resulting parkland dedication, staff would have recommended cash-in-lieu of parkland for this site.

Streetscape

The proposal for the University Avenue streetscape maintained the current features including the re-location of the cannons at the front.

On the Simcoe Street side, the streetscape would be interrupted by the entrance to the below grade levels.

Toronto Green Standard

The Toronto Green Standard contains performance targets and guidelines that relate to site and building design to promote better environmental sustainability of development in Toronto. The standard has 63 possible green development targets. Based on the applicant's submission of the Toronto Green Standard Checklist, the proposed development was intended to achieve 40 targets. Some of the targets proposed to be met include:

- the provision of a green roof designed to meet the City's performance criteria with a minimum of 50% coverage;
- cover provided to shade at least 30% of all hardscape;
- 90% of interior materials were to be low emitting;
- building designed for a 25% improvement over the Model National Energy Code for Buildings;
- arrangements were to be made to ensure the building's energy related systems were installed, calibrated and performed according to the owner's project requirements based on design and construction requirements; and
- stormwater on-site retained to the same level of annual volume of overland runoff allowable under pre-development conditions.

The applicant also intended to pursue LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the development.

Section 37

Section 37 of the Planning Act allows the City to grant increased density and/or height in exchange for community benefits. The Official Plan contains provisions authorizing such an exchange, provided the density and/or height increase are consistent with the objectives of the Official Plan regarding building form and physical environment. The discussion between City staff and the applicant mainly focused on the built form issues, and because those have not been resolved, discussions regarding Section 37 did not progress beyond the initial indication by staff that the City intended to use the tool, should the aforementioned issues be resolved.

For an application of this type at this location appropriate community benefits could include, but not be limited to, one or more of the following: Dundas Street streetscape improvements; and a public art contribution.

Conclusion

The proposal is located at the intersection of two arterial roads, is adjacent to the subway and in close proximity to two streetcar lines, all factors which could make it a suitable location for intensification. However, the density at 38.5 times the area of the lot and the height at 134 metres, significantly exceed the Zoning By-law limits. The size of the site at the equivalent of one or two residential lots creates a situation in which the following requirements cannot be met:

- common outdoor space (0 provided, 57 square metres required);
- common indoor amenity space (624 square metres required, 130 square metres provided);
- common outdoor amenity space (624 square metres required, 22.5 square metres provided);
- setback from the lot line (5.5 metres from the lot line required, 0 provided)

In addition to these variances, the significant lack of parking in a proposal containing 315 units (194 parking spaces required, 9 proposed) cannot be justified given the recent parking study undertaken by the City.

Given the number and scope of the variances, the resulting proposal creates a negative precedent that reinforces that the size of the site is too small to accommodate the building as proposed. Of key concern are the insufficient provision of indoor amenity space and parking. Planning staff is therefore recommending that City Council refuse the application in its current form.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Raymond David, Director Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

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ATTACHMENTS

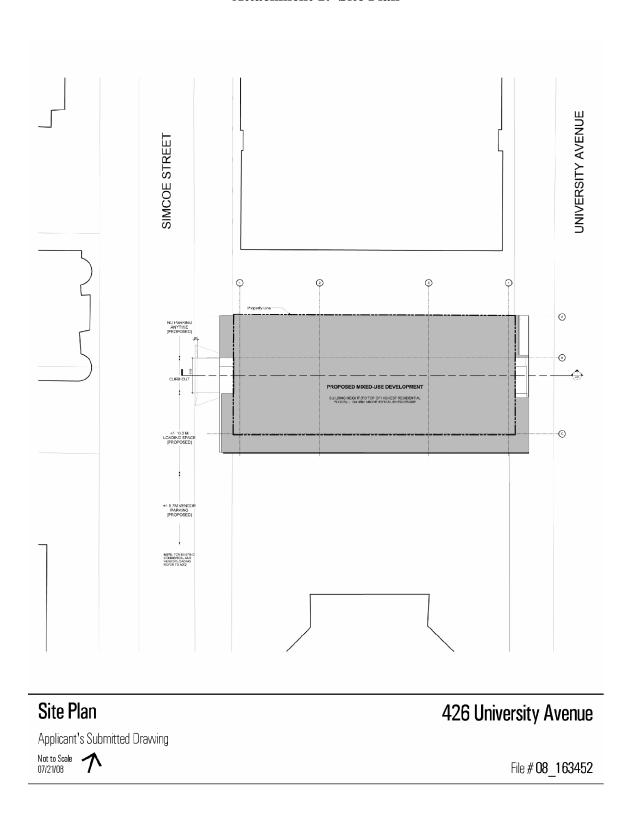
Attachment 1: Site Plan Attachment 2: Elevation Attachment 3: Elevation

Attachment 4: Application Data Sheet

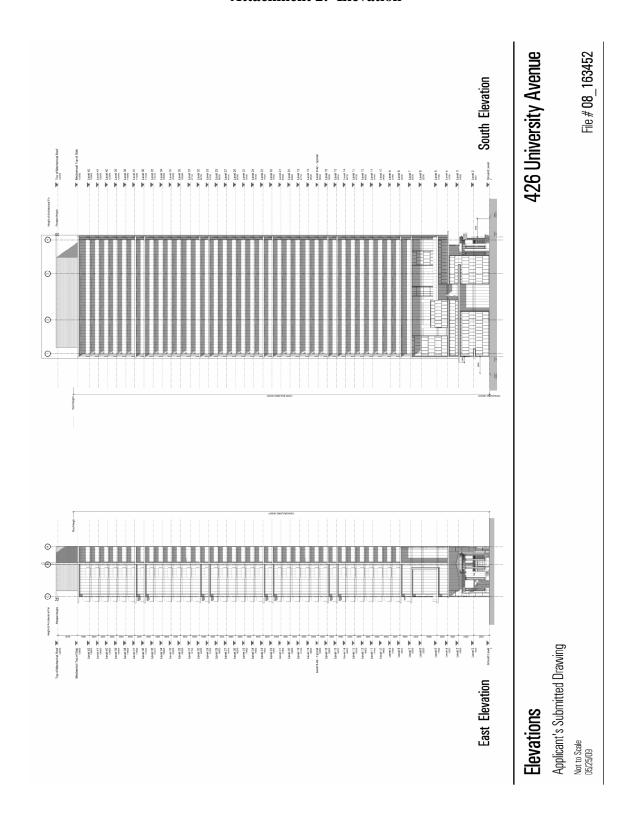
Attachment 5: Zoning Map

Attachment 6: Separation Distances from adjacent buildings

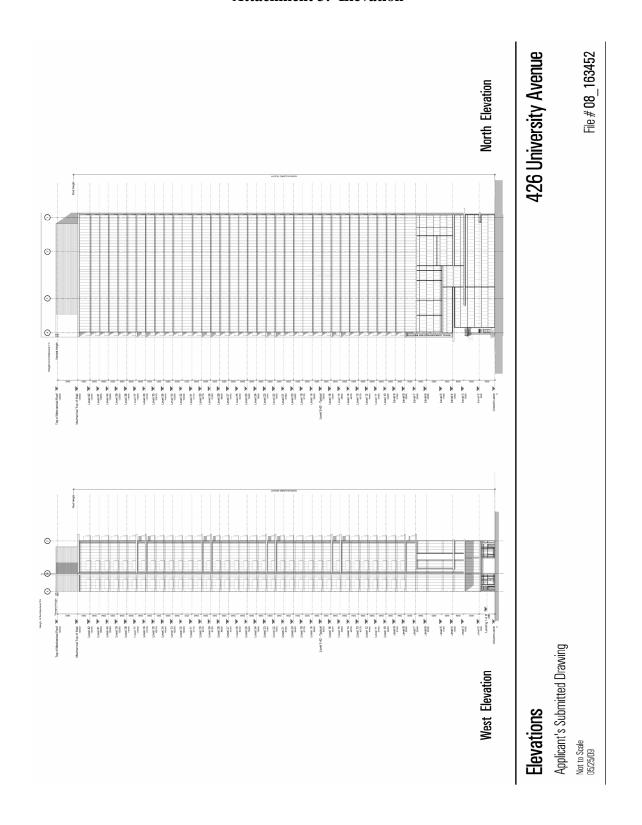
Attachment 1: Site Plan



Attachment 2: Elevation



Attachment 3: Elevation



Attachment 4: Application Data Sheet

Application Type Rezoning Application Number: 08 163452 STE 20 OZ

Details Rezoning, Standard Application Date: May 28, 2008

Municipal Address: 426 UNIVERSITY AVE

Location Description: PL 1 49 55 PT LT19 PL D211 LT4 PT LT3 PL 661E BLK A **GRID S2011

Project Description: Zoning By Law Amendment for proposed 42-storey mixed use development (private club

and residential uses) and reconstruct existing Heritage facade.

Applicant:Agent:Architect:Owner:STEVE DEVEAUXZeidler Partnership
ArchitectsRCMI

PLANNING CONTROLS

Official Plan Designation: Mixed Use Site Specific Provision:

Zoning: CR T7.8 C4.5 R4.8 Historical Status: Y
Height Limit (m): 76 Site Plan Control Area: Y

PROJECT INFORMATION

Site Area (sq. m): 639.9 Height: Storeys: 42
Frontage (m): 16.4 Metres: 135

Depth (m): 38

Total Ground Floor Area (sq. m): 530 **Total**

Total Residential GFA (sq. m): 21262 Parking Spaces: 9
Total Non-Residential GFA (sq. m): 3405 Loading Docks 1

Total GFA (sq. m): 24667 Lot Coverage Ratio (%): 82 Floor Space Index: 38.06

DWELLING UNITS

FLOOR AREA BREAKDOWN (upon project completion)

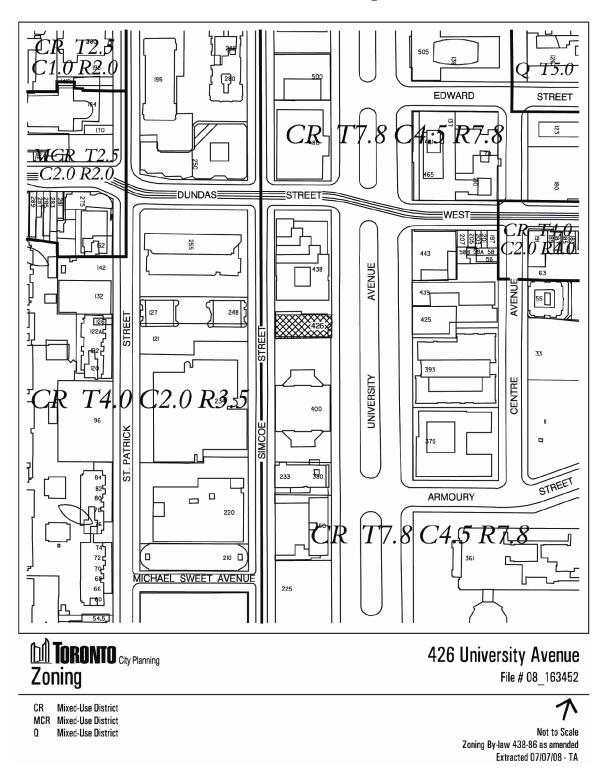
Tenure Type:	Condo		Above Grade	Below Grade
Rooms:	0	Residential GFA (sq. m):	21262	0
Bachelor:	105	Retail GFA (sq. m):	0	0
1 Bedroom:	210	Office GFA (sq. m):	0	0
2 Bedroom:	0	Industrial GFA (sq. m):	0	0
3 + Bedroom:	0	Institutional/Other GFA (sq. m):	3405	0

Total Units: 315

CONTACT: PLANNER NAME: Helen Coombs, Senior Planner

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Attachment 5: Zoning



Attachment 6: Separation Distances from adjacent buildings

