



**The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Planning Advisory and Hearing Committee**

File Number: PAC Z-03-22

Applicant: De Saulniers Construction Ltd. on behalf of 1424 Property Holdings Inc.

Department: Planning, Development and Recreation

Division: Planning

Report Number: 2022-109-Planning, Development and Recreation

Prepared By: Alex Gatien, Development Planner

Meeting Date: July 18, 2022

Subject: 1424 Aubin Avenue – ZBL Amendment

Purpose

To consider the proposed Zoning Bylaw Amendment of 1424 Aubin Avenue from Residential 20 (RES 20) to Residential 20 zone with site-specific exceptions.

Recommendation

Based on the proceeding discussion, it is recommended:

(a) That Lots 55 – 56 of Part Lot 158, and Lot 47 of Part Lot 160, municipally known as 1424 Aubin Avenue, Cornwall, be rezoned from Residential 20 (RES 20) to Residential 20-11 (RES 20-11), which indicates a site-specific exception.

(b) That the following site-specific exceptions be approved:

Uses:

- i. Recreation, sports, fitness, cultural space, and community support services uses shall be permitted. An office for an amateur sports or

recreation organization shall be permitted. No additional office uses shall be permitted.

Standards:

- i. Rear yard setback of 6.1m.
- ii. A landscaped buffer of 0m along the north, south and east boundary of the existing parking lot.
- iii. The Community Centre parking ratio of 1 space per 50 sq. m. be applied to the site.

Background / Discussion

The applicant is proposing a Site-Specific Zoning By-law Amendment to rezone the property at 1424 Aubin Avenue to permit the adaptive reuse of the existing 2-storey school building into a combination of community-oriented uses. The former school consists of an original building that was constructed in 1946 and several additions added at a later date.

The proposed conversion requires interior renovations to the existing building, but the exterior of the building and site will only undergo minor changes, namely the potential reconstruction of an existing accessibility ramp at the front entry to provide barrier free access. The applicant is not proposing any changes to the extent of the parking area, except to delineate stalls and to add directional arrows. The applicant has submitted a Site Plan application for the site. Preliminary comments indicate that some small changes may be required to ensure adequate access aisle widths and to eliminate a redundant walkway, but that substantial redevelopment of the parking lot will not be required.

The proposed tenants are:

- Inspire will be the primary tenant occupying just under half of the building with 1,143 sq. m. (12,303 sq. ft.) of space spread over two floors. Inspire is described as “a recently amalgamated multi-service non-profit agency that provides a range of clinical and developmental services for children and adults alike, including therapeutic counselling/psychotherapy, psychological assessments, behavior consultations, and case management. Inspire also provides respite programs for those fleeing domestic violence, as well as for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

“The organization supports individuals and families in the City of Cornwall and the counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry. On a typical day, 22-25 patrons will visit the site, and the organization expects to have 25-30 staff in the office day-to-day. Appointments are generally spread across the day, and evening group programs occur on various evenings.”

Inspire is described as Community Support Services. Inspire will occupy the northern portion of the former school building.

- Cornwall Lion’s Basketball Club offices with 24.75 sq. m. (266 sq. ft.) of space.
- Beat Central Dance Company with 590 sq. m. (6,353 sq. ft.) of space spread over two floors.
- Undefeated MMA with 75.8 sq. m. (816 sq. ft.) of space.
- A Lil’ Pole Fitness with 80 sq. m. (862 sq. ft.) of space.
- Bee Fit Health and Fitness with 180.5 sq. m. (1,943 sq. ft.) of space).
- Set, Sweat, Cycle & Circuit with 39.1 sq. m. (421 sq. ft.) of space.

Operations of the tenants will not overlap with the exception of occasional evenings when Inspire will operate with a small number of staff. The fitness and recreation uses operate in the late afternoon and evening, and some offer services on Saturday mornings and early afternoon. Most of the tenants operate until 9PM, with fitness studios potentially operating until 10PM. Inspire will operate limited group counselling on one or two evenings per week, usually with two staff present.

The applicant submitted a Transportation Study in support of the application. The site has access to transit service on Pitt and Brookdale. There are sidewalks that connect directly to the site and a multi-use trail along the hydro corridor is approximately 60 m. (196 ft.) to the north of the site.

Anticipated traffic volumes are expected to be similar to the previous school use, but will be more spread out throughout the day. Morning peak hour traffic is projected to be considerably lower than the previous school use. Afternoon peak

hour volumes are expected to be higher than the previous school use but should not generate any queuing activity that is commonly associated with peak PM school traffic. Using the parking ratio for Community Centre, which is the most similar use, the proposed parking lot provides sufficient parking for the development.

The applicant requested a site-specific definition of Community Centre that reads:

“Community centre shall mean land, a building or a structure used for community activities, including recreation, fitness, assembly, cultural space, or similar institutional purposes, and includes community support services.”

Planning is of the opinion that a site-specific exception that permits the proposed uses is more appropriate than a site-specific definition of **Community Centre**, which is defined in the Zoning By-law as:

“shall mean land, a building, or a structure used for community activities, including public recreation, assembly, cultural space, or similar public institutional purposes and is under the control of the Municipality, a local board, an agent thereof, or other public authority, registered non-profit or not-for-profit organization.”

The Zoning By-law currently does not include any other site-specific definitions of defined terms. The proposed fitness, sports and recreation uses are similar to what could be found in a community centre, but they will be operated as private businesses. Inspire is a non-profit agency that would be characterized as an Institutional Use, being defined as:

*“shall mean any institutional use whereby a building or part thereof is used by an organized body or society for promoting a particular purpose without limiting the generality of the foregoing, shall include buildings used for the **medical, surgical, special or charitable treatment**, care or lodging of persons; places of worship and religious institutions; education institutions and noncommercial schools, premises of fraternal organizations, lodge halls, private clubs and a YMCA; prisons, court halls and correctional institutions; institutional residences; armories and defence establishments; cultural facilities, such as art galleries, museums and concert halls; offices of a public authority or a public utility and community facility operated by the municipality or other public authority, such as fire or police halls, community*

centres, libraries, arenas, swimming pools, convention facilities, day care centres.”

As such, Planning is of the opinion that a site-specific exception to permit a limited number of uses is more appropriate and in keeping with other site-specific exceptions in the Zoning By-law.

The City’s Official Plan includes a number of policies that support the application.

4.3.1 – Urban Residential Definition: *“Other uses which are complementary to, or serve the residential uses such as schools, churches, parks, day care centres, and local commercial and small institutions may also be permitted provided that the location and design of such uses is in accordance and compatible with the residential nature of the area.”*

In this case, small-scale commercial activities and an institutional use will be located in a former school building within an existing residential neighbourhood. The Official Plan outlines criteria for supporting limited commercial uses within residential neighbourhoods:

4.3.2.13 – Permit or evaluate local commercial development on the basis of the following performance criteria:

- a) require future local commercial uses to be on sites located on arterial or collector roads, and preferably on corner sites;*
- b) minimize the impact of local commercial uses on adjacent uses by:
 - i) applying site plan control;*
 - ii) ensuring that buildings, signs and lighting are arranged and designed so as to blend in with the adjacent residential area;*
 - iii) requiring adequate off-street parking facilities;*
 - iv) limiting the extent of local commercial uses through appropriate spacing and floor area control;*
 - v) restricting outside storage and ensuring that sites are properly maintained;*
 - vi) Requiring appropriate landscaping, buffer planting and screening of the site;**

c) include a separate zoning category in the Zoning By-law for local commercial uses (existing and future development) and allow new developments only by the process of amendment to the Zoning By-law;

d) ensure suitable pedestrian access from adjacent residential areas to local commercial sites.

The site is located on a corner lot. While it is not located on an arterial or collector street, the traffic generated by the site is expected to be similar to the previous school use, and it would obviously be prohibitive to move the building to an arterial or collector street. The property is subject to site plan control and has adequate parking for the proposed uses. The site generally has significant setbacks from the property line. The rear yard setback along the southern property line is less than the Zoning By-law requires, but the wall of the building facing south has limited fenestration. The site also features good active transportation and public transit links.

The Zoning By-law does include the Neighbourhood Commercial zone, which is intended for small-scale commercial uses. However, Neighbourhood Commercial is considerably more permissive than the proposed exception, and Planning is of the opinion that a site-specific exception is better-suited to limiting the types of commercial uses that are permitted, and ensuring they are comparable to the fitness, recreation and sports uses that would be found in a Community Centre in a Residential 20 Zone.

10.3.11.21 - Waste Reduction/Adaptive Re-Use: *“Council shall support the reduction of waste from construction debris as a result of the demolition of buildings by promoting and encouraging the adaptive re-use of older and existing building stock.”*

The application represents the adaptive re-use of an existing school building. Cornwall has numerous examples of former school buildings that have been repurposed to other uses, usually to residential, but there are also examples of school buildings being converted to include businesses, daycares, and community centres. The Centre Charles-Emile Claude is a community centre and daycare located in a former school building in a similar residential neighbourhood context, albeit with commercial uses directly to the south.

The western portion of the site is the former school yard, where residential uses could be added without modifying or demolishing the existing school building. No plans currently exist to do so, but this Zoning By-law amendment would not



preclude residential uses on the site provided they are permitted by Residential 20 Zoning.

Planning staff were made aware of neighbourhood concerns with the application after a July 13th meeting with the owner of 103 Fourteenth Street West, which is directly south of the site. He prepared a detailed memorandum outlining his concerns with the site. This resident was not inherently opposed to the uses proposed in the former school building, but he did express concern about potential traffic and noise impacts of the introduction of new uses in the existing school building. It should be noted that this flexibility may not be shared by other neighbourhood residents.

He was amenable to potential changes in parking location, site access and fencing that could reduce the impact of the proposed redevelopment on neighbouring properties. He noted that some of the proposed uses have already been established, and that the dance studio was loud when the windows were open, but that air conditioning the building would likely mitigate this concern. He also noted late night construction activities over the Canada Day weekend.

He presented Planning staff with a petition signed by 35 neighbours opposing the Zoning By-law Amendment.

Planning would note that this item could be deferred to a later PAC meeting to provide time to prepare a revised plan that could better address neighbourhood concerns. Updating the Transportation Study for the project may also be required.

Overall, Planning feels that the proposed Site-Specific Zoning By-law Amendment represents the appropriate reuse of an existing school building with an institutional use and narrowly defined commercial uses, while maintaining future residential development possibilities. However, Planning does recognize that some changes to the project might be required in order to respond to neighbourhood concerns.

Site Characteristics

Location: Lots 47, 48, 55, 56 on Plan 158

Municipal Address: 1424 Aubin Avenue, Cornwall, Ontario

Size: 0.68 hectares (1.67 acres)

Surrounding Land Use



North: Low-density residential. Multi-use trail along the Cedar Rapids Hydro Corridor is approximately 60 metres north of the site.

South: Low-density residential.

East: Low-density residential with some multi-unit housing. Pitt Street is located approximately 80 metres east of the site.

West: Low-density residential.

Official Plan: Urban Residential

Existing Zoning: Residential 20

Proposed Zoning: Residential 20-11

Comments from other Departments / Agencies

Municipal Works: Infrastructure Planning Division does not object to this re-zoning application regarding the change of use of the existing building. The re-development is currently the subject of a Site Plan Control application. The following is summary of the outstanding comments that will need to be addressed:

1. A Site Servicing Plan and Grading Plan are to be submitted for this Site Plan Control application. These plans shall provide additional details with respect to the locations of the existing site services (water, sanitary, storm, etc.) and surface drainage patterns.
2. Can the existing site services of the former school site accommodate the anticipated demand for a conversion to commercial uses? Please confirm the material/conditions of the existing services. Further, please confirm that these services conform to the requirements in the latest edition of the OBC.
3. In order re-use the existing services, a review of their condition will need to be completed. Please provide a CCTV video inspection of the sanitary and storm laterals if applicable.
4. Will the building require additional fire protection? If yes, can it be functional with existing services?
5. Stormwater Management may be required for this site if there is an increase in runoff from the site.

Building Division: No objections



Fire Services: I would like to ensure with this property that fire routing and front door access are maintained. As I am not sure how many staff and clients would be expected to attend this facility at any one time, I would like to ensure we fully understand and consider the following:

On street parking is kept to a minimum allowing for fire department access to the front door from Aubin Ave. On street parking and access may cause issues with traffic flow and our ability to move through the community. The original design of the area would have been for a residential setting and a school. The school parking lot would have been designed to enable the number of staff members to park vehicles without on street parking.

The fire route that is registered on the original plan of the school must be maintained for the future use of the fire department. If greater on-site parking is planned, it cannot impact the current fire route unless a new fire route will be planned and approved. If there are building systems such as standpipe or sprinklers, and if there are fire department connections they must be maintained, and access must be maintained.

Facilities Division: No objections.

Transit Division: No objections.

Social Housing Division: No objections.

Municipal Assessor: No objections.

Cornwall Police Service: No objections.

Economic Development: No objections.

Parks and Recreation: No objections.

Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA): No objections.

Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC): No objections.

Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (PPS): 1.1.3.4 Appropriate development standards should be promoted which facilitate intensification, redevelopment and compact form, while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety.

Public Commentary: Planning staff met with a neighbour who expressed concerns about the project, but was not inherently opposed to it. He prepared an extensive memorandum outlining concerns with the project. He also submitted a petition

Conclusion:

Overall, Planning feels that the proposed Site-Specific Zoning By-law Amendment represents the appropriate reuse of an existing school building with one institutional use and narrowly defined commercial uses. It would not prevent future residential redevelopment of the site as well. The Site Plan Control process will ensure site circulation and access are adequate. The exterior changes to the property will be minimal, which should result in negligible exterior construction. Planning does recognize the concerns of the surrounding neighbourhood and that changes to the site plan could potentially mitigate some of these concerns.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	ZBL Amendment - 1424 Aubin Avenue - 2022-109-Planning, Development and Recreation.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jul 14, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Mark A. Boileau - Jul 14, 2022 - 2:53 PM

Maureen Adams - Jul 14, 2022 - 4:30 PM