

Residents incensed over change to condo proposal

Councillor Carmichael Greb waiting for city staff input

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A proposed revision to an application that was approved for 228 Wilson Ave. in 2014 has residents in the Old Orchard Grove neighbourhood upset over what they argue is a lack of transparency.

The original application called for a 17-storey, 108-unit condo tower on the site. While residents were not thrilled with that development, they came to accept it. The property was sold two years ago, however, and the new owner has applied for a new site plan approval that would see 131 units built on the site. City staff are reviewing the revised application, which will be sent to the committee of adjustment.

"They're applying for a 'minor variance' but I don't think

increasing (the number of units) by 22 per cent is minor," said Old Orchard Grove Residents Association chair France Rochette.

"We're seeing this more and more as a pattern - developers getting zoning approval for a project, and, before they even build it, they go back to get more."

Rochette pointed to an application in the Don Mills area where she said a similar move by a developer was passed "without question" at council.

The increase in units is not the only concern for residents. The number of parking spaces has also been decreased from 130 to about 100.

"They'll have to park on the streets around here and then cross Wilson at a place where it's very dangerous to cross," Rochette said.

She expressed skepticism over a traffic study done for the site, which she said did not reflect rush hour traffic.

Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FoNTRA) chair Geoff Kettel said those were only the obvious is-



Justin Greaves/Metroland

Local residents, Mary Carrier (left), France Rochette and Pam Main are concerned about the 228 Wilson Avenue construction site where the developer has applied for a variance to increase the number of units and reduce parking.

sues with the revisions.

"There are likely other concerns which are not apparent due to the lack of public disclosure and proper planning process currently being contemplated for this development proposal," he said in a statement. "Our preliminary assessment

shows significant differences in the performance standards in the new submission which require a Zoning Amendment according to a 2016 Staff Report."

Eglinton-Lawrence Coun. Christin Carmichael Greb said she was not surprised when the new owner asked for changes to

the application that was approved in 2014.

She said the new developer has hosted a public meeting since purchasing the property "and I knew they wanted to make changes, but they didn't announce any at that meeting."

She added that the reduction in parking was to be expected as the building is now slated to consist of rental units rather than condo units.

"There's generally less parking for rental buildings," she said.

Carmichael Greb said she would wait to hear what city staff have to say about the new site plan approval before deciding whether to support or reject the plan.

Whatever the case, Rochette said the revisions could create a dangerous precedent.

"We'll go to the committee of adjustment to oppose this because they shouldn't be able to just change an application after it's been approved," she said. "These kinds of changes should require a new zoning amendment, not just a minor variance."