



Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: 1535 & 1537 Despard Avenue Development Variance Permit No. 00263

The Land-Use Committee of the Rockland Neighbourhood Association finds it imperative to respond to this application.

These properties have historically caused such disruption to the neighborhood, and especially, the immediate neighbors, that there were three direct results of their erection: the creation of a rooftop patio ban in the R1-A zone, changes to require a common roof line in the semi-attached regulations, and new grade manipulation restrictions.

The houses are connected by the structure that was required under the zoning; therefore, they are rightfully strata properties, like other duplexes or townhouses. The semi-attached designation in the bylaw was created to encourage owners to save their heritage homes by allowing them to add a small home if the lot size is at least 30m wide. It was never intended to circumvent the R1-A lot width requirement of 48m for two houses or to permit developers to double their profit by demolishing existing character houses and squeezing two huge buildings onto sites that are too small to subdivide, as happened on Despard and on other streets in Rockland.

Although the applicants have always been fully aware of the semi-attached designation on their properties, they are now asking that Council ignore the rationale for the existence of that designation, and bestow upon them relaxations that would result in a wind-fall of million-dollar endowments for each unencumbered property. It would also create independent lots, which would be open to further development.

It is disingenuous of the applicants to claim that the houses are “completely detached” buildings with “entirely inappropriate strata classification.” The homes were intentionally built to the R1-A semi-attached specification.

The professed “hardship” of paying insurance rates commensurate with other strata properties is unsupportable, given that it was this very strata designation that permitted the building of the two houses on one R1-A lot. The opportunity for the semi-attached houses to be separated paves the way for the owners of many other such dwellings in the R1-A zone to be similarly rewarded.

It is laughable that informed developers, after a decade of disruption to the neighborhood of which they profess to be “proud residents,” now wish to discard the very zoning which enabled them to own a residence on an undersized lot.

Please do not enable this variance.



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

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