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Victory for Beach condo foes: OMB rejects four-storey building on lakefront

Posted: January 12, 2010, 9:00 AM by Rob Roberts

By Natalie Alcoba, National Post

Beach residents have won a three-year battle to prevent a lakefront condo they said would have been completely out of place in their neighbourhood.

The Ontario Municipal Board agreed and dismissed a rezoning application for a four-storey condo building with 10 units at 2-4 Neville Park Boulevard and 438-440 Lake Front Lane.

"The Beach is a neighbourhood, whether they live there or come to visit, people hold dear to their heart," said Steve Ottaway, a local resident and vice chair of the Beach Lakefront Neighbourhood Association.

The developers had proposed amalgamating three lots where houses currently sit for the new development, that would have been surrounded by houses.

The OMB sided with the residents and city, who viewed the affected "neighbourhood" as one comprised of three streets, Neville Park Blvd., Munro Park Avenue and Nursewood road, and that was only zoned for detached or converted homes; the developers' study area was much larger and included different kinds of streets and zoning patterns.

The OMB rejected the view that the proposed condo would "contribute to the eclectic character of the area," saying that "the sheer size and massing of this large building is not, in the Board's determination, a building form to be approved for this section of the Beach."

A lawyer for the developers behind numbered company 2107639 Ontario Inc. did not return a call for comment yesterday.

The Beach Lakefront Neighbourhood Association emerged out of opposition to the development. It raised money and held an outdoor concert to help pay for the cost of hiring expert planning opinions, around \$75,000. And legal fees were in the hundreds of thousands of dollars over three years, but the group benefited from the pro bono work of an area resident.

"It was certainly going to change the face of that part of the Beach," said Mr. Ottaway.

"And the fact that the OMB stood by the official plan and is protecting neighbourhoods is something we are extremely happy about."

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