

Garden Suites A New Concept For Apartments

A new concept in apartment living for this area was proposed to Richmond Hill Council's planning committee at its October 26 meeting. The applicant, KRS Construction Limited, wishes to construct a 60-suite apartment building on the southeast corner of Markham Road and Colborne Avenue. Each suite would have its own 400-square-foot garden on the roof of the apartment below. Each would have its own address and a front door opening onto the garden. Each home would be reached by means of an outdoor sidewalk from the elevator.

The suites are a mixture of one-storey and two-storey units. All parking would be underground and there would be a landscaped central court. This court would be communal property and an ideal place for small children to play with a minimum of supervision. Tom Brown, the construction firm's representative, explained. Each garden would be provided with shrubs in planters and a wooden-slatted terrace for sitting and walking with basic landscaping for each suite.

HUMANE LIVING
"This is a little more humane concept of apartment living," he said. He estimated it would be six months before construction starts and a year after that the building would be completed.

The applicant originally requested the committee of adjustment to consider relief for a minor variance in a lot coverage. But it was reported the committee didn't consider the project a minor variance and the application was therefore ruled out of its jurisdiction.

Brown asked that the gardens and internal court be considered landscaping so as to reduce the lot coverage to an acceptable level. The limit on lot coverage is 35% and if the gardens are included as part of the building floor space then the proposed building would cover 58%. If the gardens are considered landscaping then the coverage will be within permissible limits.

Brown said the building might be developed as a condominium.

Planning Director Hesse Rinon said this type of housing is very common in Greece, Turkey, the Middle East and Mexico. It works well in mild climates. He said Canada's more severe climate was one of the major reasons why Montreal's Habitat, with the same structural idea, had some difficulties.

SNOW PROBLEM
Rinon asked how it was planned to get rid of the snow from the elevated sidewalks, which would have to be cleared by the maintenance staff. Brown said a snow slide might have to be incorporated in the design.

The building of brick and stucco would be four-storeys in height with the parking on the ground level and the landscaping and grading bringing the ground level up to the second storey.

The planning committee received the application. A site plan agreement and amendment to the zoning bylaw is necessary to permit this type of construction. The committee instructed the planning director to process the application.

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