

Staff Report

Report To: Committee of Adjustment
Report From: Margaret Potter, Senior Planner
Meeting Date: June 24, 2025
Report Code: CS-25-064
Subject: Minor Variance A09-2025 for 1548 20th Street East
(Webster)

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-064 respecting Minor Variance A09-2025 by Martin Webster for the property known as 1548 20th Street East, the Committee of Adjustment approves the minor variance as the Committee concludes that the requested variance maintains the general intent and purpose of the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law, is minor in nature, and desirable for the appropriate development and use of the lands, subject to the conditions outlined in Schedule 'E'.

Highlights:

- An application for Minor Variance (A09-2025) has been submitted by Martin Webster.
- The applicant is proposing to establish a self storage facility on the subject lands.
- The application is requesting relief from Section 5 of the Zoning By-law to permit a reduction in required parking.
- The proposed development supports the planned function of the M1 zone to accommodate indoor storage uses.
- Staff recommend approval of the application to permit a parking rate of 0.2 stalls per 100 m² of indoor storage area.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The subject application represents a legislated review process.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

The subject application represents infill development.

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[City of Owen Sound Official Plan](#)

[City of Owen Sound Zoning By-law 2010-078](#), as amended

Consent Application B01-2024 [CS-24-019](#)

Background & Proposal:

An application for Minor Variance (A09-2025) has been submitted by Martin Webster.

Property Description

The subject property is located at 1548 20th Street East in the City of Owen Sound. The subject lands are irregularly T-shaped, with approximately 91 m of frontage on 20th Street East and approximately 93 m of frontage on 16th Avenue East. The property is approximately 2.8 ha in area and is currently vacant.

There is a channelized watercourse on the lands that is zoned Hazard Lands (ZH) and is subject to a drainage easement in favour of the City (described as Part 2, RP 16R-8583, Instrument 366797). At the time of future Site Plan Application, the ongoing protection of this easement and hazard area will be further considered.

Surrounding Land Uses include:

- North: industrial (Sprung's Transport & Movers, McDougall Energy Owen Sound), residential (single detached dwellings, townhouses, apartments)
- East: industrial (industrial mall), hazard land (Kenny Drain)

- South: industrial (vacant industrial lands, BWXT Canada), commercial (Heritage Place Mall, Zehrs)
- West: industrial (Soundview Centre, Grey Bruce LASIK, A1 Storage Systems Inc.), residential (single detached dwellings, apartments)

The subject lands are designated 'Employment' and 'Hazard Lands' in the City's Official Plan and are zoned 'General Industrial' (M1) with Special Provision 14.98 and 'Hazard Zone' (ZH) in the City's Zoning By-law (2010-078, as amended). Special Provision 14.98 adds clinics as a permitted use on the lands.

The Official Plan classifies 20th St E as a Minor Arterial Road and 16th Ave E fronting the property as a Future Collector Road.

For location context and surrounding land uses, please see the Orthophoto in Schedule 'A'. For the planning policy context, please see the Official Plan and Zoning Map in Schedule 'B'. The subject lands are further described in Schedule 'C'.

In 2024 a severance (B01-2024) was conditionally approved for the lands and at the time of this notice the conditions had not been fulfilled. This application created 2 lots, one with frontage on 16th Avenue and the second with frontage on 20th Street East. Should the conditions of B01-2024 be fulfilled, the development proposed by this application A09-2025 would be located entirely on the retained parcel and the severed parcel would remain vacant until a new development application was made.

The Proposal

The applicant is proposing to establish a self-storage facility on the subject lands.

The proposed development comprises 11 buildings with an approximate total Gross Floor Area of 4,999 m², as well as parking and landscaped areas.

To facilitate the proposal, variances are requested to Section 5 General Provisions as follows:

Regulations	Required	Proposed	Variance
5.18.2 Off-Street Parking Stall Requirements	63	13	50
5.19.1 Number of Required Accessible Stalls	3	1	2

The Zoning By-law calculates parking based on floor area; therefore staff recommend approval of the variance as an amendment to the required parking rate, rather than an amendment to the required parking number of spaces on site. This would allow the rate to be scaled up should additional storage units be constructed in future. It would also be consistent with the recent A05-2025 Decision for storage unit parking at U-Haul (2010 16th Street East). This will require an amendment to the description of the minor variance.

Based on the justification provided by the applicant, staff recommend a parking rate of 0.2 spaces per 100m² of GFA for Indoor Storage Use.

Staff support for the variance is based on this amended description.

A fulsome review and analysis of the proposed minor variance is outlined below.

Analysis:

As stipulated in the *Planning Act* (Sec. 45(1)), a minor variance may be authorized by the Committee of Adjustment, provided that the four tests of a variance are met. All decisions with respect to a planning matter must also be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024) has been reviewed with regard to the proposed application.

The PPS (Section 2.3) promotes a mix of land uses within settlement areas that efficiently use land and resources, infrastructure and public services, while encouraging intensification and regeneration on lands with existing servicing. Settlement areas shall be the focus for growth and development.

Policy 3.6 of the PPS identifies that all applications must demonstrate that the lands can be serviced with full municipal water and sanitary services; and are designed with stormwater management best practices.

The subject lands are within an existing settlement area with access to municipal water and sewage services. Stormwater management will be detailed through the required Site Plan Approval process.

The PPS directs development away from areas of natural or human-made hazards. Portions of the subject lands are zoned Hazard Lands. The conceptual site plan provided does not propose any buildings, structures, or required parking spaces in the hazard corridor. The location of all site features will be reviewed in further detail at the time of any site plan approval application. No relief is requested in relation to the hazard zone.

The proposal is consistent with the direction provided by the PPS, subject to the recommended conditions.

Test 1: Conformity with the Official Plan

The subject property is designated 'Employment' and 'Hazard Lands' in the Owen Sound Official Plan. The proposed parking areas would be within the 'Employment' designation.

For lands designated Employment the predominant use of land shall be manufacturing, assembly, fabricating, processing, packaging, printing, warehousing uses, and the storage of goods and materials (3.9).

Where lands are subject to intermittent flooding along natural or engineered drainage course, appropriate drainage controls and facilities to eliminate any potential hazard to development are required (3.9.2.7).

The predominant use of lands designated Hazard Lands shall be for preservation and conservation.

The proposed self storage facility is a permitted use in the Employment designation and no buildings or structures or parking area is proposed within the hazard corridor. Appropriate drainage controls will be evaluated at the time of any site plan approval application prior to the use being established on the site.

No buildings or structures are permitted in the Hazard Lands, and a permit from the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority will be required for any future

site alterations or developments proposed within areas regulated under O. Reg. 151/06.

In accordance with Section 5.1.4, all new development shall be required to provide adequate off-street parking and loading areas in accordance with the standards established in the Zoning By-law. The City may consider reducing the required number of parking spaces needed where the following criteria have been justified:

- a) demonstration that the proposed use does not require the stated level of parking; or
- b) an agreement has been registered on title to provide off-street parking.

The applicant has submitted a letter noting that the Zoning By-law does not identify a specific parking rate for indoor storage and is grouped with “all other industrial uses”. The details of this submission by the applicant will be evaluated further with respect to Test 2 below.

Section 5.1.4.14 requires parking and charging stations for electric vehicles through new development. The provision of parking and charging stations is also encouraged at the time of site plan review. As the requested variance relates to parking, a condition is recommended to require a minimum of 1 electric vehicle parking and charging station for any Indoor Storage use to be confirmed through the Site Plan Approval application.

The proposal is found to conform with the City’s Official Plan, subject to the recommended conditions.

Test 2: Conformity with the Intent and Purpose of the Zoning By-law

The subject lands are zoned ‘General Industrial’ with ‘Special Provision 14.98’ (M1 14.98) and ‘Hazard Lands’ (ZH) in the City’s Zoning By-law (2010-078, as amended).

Indoor Storage and Office uses are among the permitted uses in the ‘General Industrial’ (M1) zone. Special Provision 14.98 does not affect the proposal as it adds clinics as an additional permitted use. No buildings or structures or parking area is proposed within the hazard corridor.

The proposed development comprises 11 buildings with an approximate total Gross Floor Area of 4,999 m². To facilitate the development, the applicant

has requested relief from Section 5 General Provision of the Zoning By-law as follows:

Regulations	Required	Proposed	Variance
5.18.2 Off-Street Parking Stall Requirements	63	13	50
5.19.1 Number of Required Accessible Stalls	3	1	2

The applicant has provided a letter supporting their request by relying heavily on a similar application recently considered and approved by the Committee of Adjustment (A05-2025 for U-Haul).

The Committee should be aware that they are not bound by precedent as each site and proposal has its own unique set of circumstances to be considered.

Staff do see similarities between the applications:

- both are self storage uses; and,
- both provide off-street parking areas in addition to offering drive aisles for customers to pull up to their individual storage unit.

In this case, the main Building A, which contains the office, also has 47 internally accessed units.

The intent of the Zoning By-law is to implement the direction provided by the Official Plan, to provide adequate off-street parking to support the development on its own lot.

The Zoning By-law provides minimum parking stall requirements for many common land uses, but cannot contemplate all possible uses in all categories.

The 'All other industrial uses' parking ratio (5 plus 1 space per 90 m²) is intended to ensure that all industrial uses are required to provide off-street parking and offers a range that is more parking than would be required of a warehouse (1 space per 185 m²) or truck transport terminal (1 space per 100 m²), the only two industrial uses specifically provided for. Business Office uses span both industrial and commercial categories (1 space per 28 m²).

The site plan provided proposes 75.6 m² of office space and 4,923.0 m² of storage space.

No change is proposed to the required parking rate for the office space, which results in 3 parking space being required.

Based on the ratio for all other industrial uses, the storage space requires 60 parking spaces.

The applicant is proposing 13 parking spaces, including 1 barrier free.

If 3 parking spaces are needed for the office, then 10 are attributable to the storage use, representing a ratio of 0.2 spaces per 100 m² of storage space.

Through the A05-2025 application, a variance was approved to reduce the parking rate for "Indoor Storage" to 0.1 spaces per 100 m² Gross Floor Area. In that case, the planning justification report indicated that all of the buildings offered exterior access to self-storage facilities.

In this case, some of the self-storage facilities are accessed only from within the building, meaning that there is no opportunity to drive-up to the storage unit.

As the Zoning By-law calculates the required number of parking spaces required based on floor area, staff find that approval of a variance subject to an amendment to the parking rate, rather than an amendment to the parking number, would be more in keeping with the intent and purpose of the zoning by-law.

Staff recommend that 0.2 space per 100 m² is an appropriate parking ratio to apply as not all of the units proposed can be accessed from the outside (by driving up).

The Zoning By-law Section 5.18.12 requires all off-street parking stalls and areas shall be constructed of a non-migrating hard surface material and treated to prevent erosion and the raising of dust and loose particles.

The site plan provided proposes part of the Fire Route and access to some buildings to be gravel. Gravel is a loose material with the potential to migrate. The subject lands are adjacent to a drainage channel. Stormwater management that maintains the integrity of the drainage channels is an important consideration.

Staff recommend a condition that all parking areas, driveways, fire routes, and areas intended for vehicle access shall be constructed of a non-migrating hard surface material and treated to prevent erosion and the raising of dust and loose particles to avoid erosion and siltation entering the drainage channel.

Subject to the amended variance to provide a ratio rather than a number, and other recommended conditions, staff find the proposal maintains the general intent and purpose of the City's Zoning By-law.

Test 3: Minor in Nature

The request for relief from the Zoning By-law to reduce the amount of parking stalls on site can be considered minor in nature. The following factors merit consideration:

- The proposed use is permitted;
- The surrounding land uses are also industrial in nature;
- There is no specific parking requirement for indoor storage uses, although the request for relief may appear numerically large, the requirement is general;
- The required parking area is anticipated to be primarily used by customers for administrative visits to the office or those accessing interior storage in Building A;
- Most of the storage units are accessible from adjacent drive aisles for vehicles to pull up and load/unload items;
- A slightly higher site-specific ratio at this location than applied to A05-2025 helps to account for the storage units that do not have a drive-up configuration;
- The reduction in parking stalls is not anticipated to have negative effects on the surrounding land uses;

The proposal is deemed to be minor in nature.

Test 4: Desirable for the Development and Use of the Lands

The subject property is located within an existing built-up area of the City adjacent to other industrial uses. The proposal represents development of an underutilized site having access to full municipal water and sanitary services, which is desirable in the City's settlement area and consistent with the direction provided by the PPS And City's OP.

The use is permitted. Prior to establishing the use on the lands, a Site Plan Approval Application will be required. Matters of layout and location of buildings and parking spaces, pedestrian connectivity, fire routes, landscaping, lighting, and proximity to hazard will be considered among others at the time of Site Plan Approval. A permit is anticipated to be required from GSCA for any development or alteration to the site within the area regulated by O.Reg. 41/24 to ensure any work is appropriate for the location.

The proposal is deemed to be desirable for the development and use of the lands.

Comments Received:

In accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act* (Sec. 45, O. Reg. 200/96), Notice of the subject application was provided on June 10, 2025 to the public and prescribed bodies. Comments received by the Secretary-Treasurer as of the writing of this report are described below and included in Schedule 'F'.

City of Owen Sound Engineering & Public Works Department

Comment has been received from the City's Engineering & Public Works Department recommending approval.

Historic Saugeen Metis

Comment has been received from the Historic Saugeen Metis with no objection to the proposed minor variance.

Grey County

Comment has been received from Grey County with no objection to the proposed minor variance.

Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA)

GSCA has provided comment confirming that a portion of the proposed development is within the regulated area and a permit is required and recommends an engineered grading plan and stormwater management report be submitted for the formal site plan application and permitting.

GSCA has no concerns with the minor variance application, but note that their review fee has not been paid.

Payment of the GSCA review fee (\$630.00) has been recommended as a condition of approval.

Financial Implications:

None to the City. The applicant did not pay the GSCA review fee at the time of application, a condition is recommended requiring payment of the GSCA review fee applicable at the time of application (\$630.00).

Communication Strategy:

Notice of the minor variance application was given in accordance with Section 45(5) of the *Planning Act* and Ontario Regulation 200/96.

Consultation:

The application was circulated to various City Departments and our commenting agencies as part of the consultation process.

Attachments:

- Schedule 'A': Orthophoto
- Schedule 'B': Official Plan and Zoning Map
- Schedule 'C': Property Details
- Schedule 'D': Site Plan
- Schedule 'E': Conditions of Approval
- Schedule 'F': Agency Comments

Recommended by:

Margaret Potter, MCIP, RPP, Senior Planner

Reviewed by:

Sabine Robart, M.SC. (PL), MCIP, RPP, Manager of Planning & Heritage

Submission approved by:

Pam Coulter, BA, RPP, Director of Community Services

For more information on this report, please contact Sabine Robart, Manager of Planning & Heritage, at srobart@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1236.