


## 551 WATERLOO STREET

### TEMPORARY USE ZONE CHANGE – ONE YEAR PERIOD

Public Meeting  
For City of London File # Z-8599

Planning and Environment Committee  
May 30, 2016  
7:00 PM

Prepared by: Monteith Brown Planning Consultants for Mystery Escape Rooms



## 551 WATERLOO STREET

### TEMPORARY USE ZONE CHANGE – ONE YEAR PERIOD

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants (MBPC) was retained by Ryan Singh of Mystery Escape Rooms (MER) on November 17, 2015.

A notice of Non Compliance was issued in October 2015 to the owner, noticing the permitted use as Mystery Escape Rooms is not included in the current zoning.

As a new venture in London, the use was understood by the operator to be a business office at the time they established the operation on the subject lands. MER has since been advised they are not a permitted use in the existing zone.

No new development or alterations are proposed on the subject lands and the owner of the property, David Russell has authorized this request on behalf of his tenant MER who is leasing the lands for this use. The hours of operation for MER are evenings and weekends with special reservations taken during weekdays.

- ## 551 WATERLOO STREET
- ### TEMPORARY USE ZONE CHANGE – ONE YEAR PERIOD
- Requesting a Temporary Zone change to permit 'place of entertainment' at 551 Waterloo Street for a period of one year. This would allow the current tenant known as Mystery Escape Rooms (MER) to remain open while renovations at NEW LOCATION 388 Richmond Street are complete.
  - Requesting a special provision to reduce the required parking spaces by 2 for 'place of entertainment' for a period of one year.
  - Rectify the existing split zoning on the subject lands which separates the parking area from the buildings on the subject lands. (requested by City Staff through Pre Consultation meeting).

## 551 WATERLOO STREET

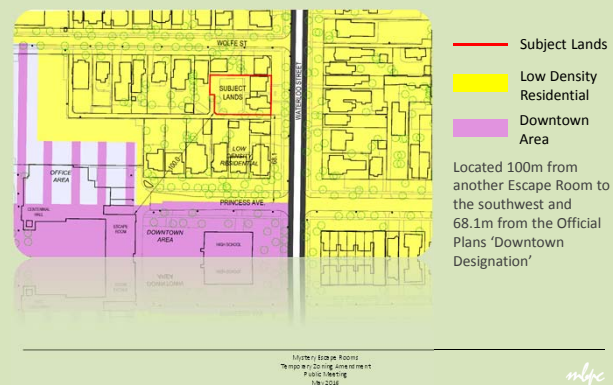
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The subject lands are located in Low Density Residential land use in the City of London Official Plan. The designation permits Community Facilities as a secondary use.

The policies and objectives of the Official Plan should allow for a little flexibility. Where lists or examples of permitted uses are provided in the policies related to specific land use designations, they are intended to indicate the possible range and types of uses to be considered. Specific uses which are not listed in the Plan, but which are considered by Council to be similar in nature to the listed uses and to conform to the general intent and objectives of the applicable land use designation, may be recognized as permitted uses in the Zoning By-law (S. 19.1.1.iv).

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### 551 WATERLOO STREET – OFFICIAL PLAN DESIGNATION



*mlpc*

## 551 WATERLOO STREET

### TEMPORARY USE ZONE CHANGE – ONE YEAR PERIOD

Temporary Use By-Laws in section 19.4.5 of the Official Plan indicate temporary uses not exceeding 3 years in accordance with the Planning Act may be authorized by Council. As per Section 19.4.5, the enacting provisions should have:

- a) Compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding land uses.  
 Yes, compatible with office conversions and surrounding residential land uses which has been proven over the last year. Participants are onsite for approximately an hour, similar to office conversion use without any outdoor activities.
- b) Any requirement for temporary buildings or structures in association with the proposed use.  
 No, there are no buildings or additions proposed.
- c) Any requirement for temporary connection to municipal services and utilities.  
 No, they already exist.
- d) The potential impact of the proposed use on transportation facilities and traffic in the immediate area.  
 There have been no known issues to date as the amount of traffic generated is minimal.
- e) Access requirements for the proposed use.  
 Vehicle access is provided via shared asphalt laneway to the south of the subject lands and the existing building has several access points from the north, east and west via concrete sidewalks.
- f) Parking required for the proposed use, and the ability to provide adequate parking onsite.  
 There is parking provided on-site in the rear yard of subject lands. A minor reduction of approximately 10% is being sought as part of the temporary use zone. The close proximity to public transit and on street parking are available in all directions from the subject lands with exception to Waterloo Street. Also, parking space sharing with other uses after regular business hours could be utilized as MER is open in the evening bringing people to the downtown area for other activities.
- g) The potential long term use of the temporary use.  
 By requesting a 1 year Temporary Use instead of the normal 3 years shows that the business plans to move to a new location within that time period. As noted previously, MER has purchased their NEW LOCATION for their business in the downtown.

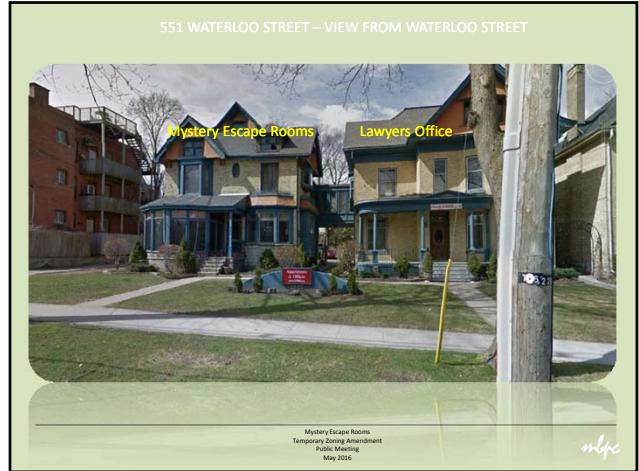
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## 551 WATERLOO STREET

### TEMPORARY USE ZONE CHANGE – ONE YEAR PERIOD

- Current zone on the subject lands is Residential (R3-1(6)) and Office Conversion (OC4) which permits dwelling units and offices in existing buildings.
- The current tenants on the subject lands are MER (since November 2014) on main and second floors of south building (totals 230m<sup>2</sup>) and Lawyers Office on the main and second floor of the north building (totals 260m<sup>2</sup>).
- A residential unit exists in both buildings.
- Hard surface parking lot in the rear yard for 18 parking spaces.

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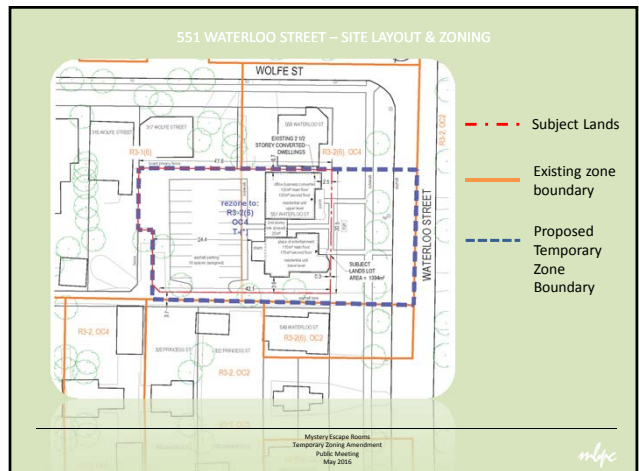
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Parking breakdown for the current uses are as follows:

Land Use	Permitted Use	Current Use	Floor Area	Parking Req.	Total	Provided	%
Office	Office Business Converted	Law Office & Vacant	260m <sup>2</sup>	1/45m <sup>2</sup>	6	6	
Residential	Converted units	2 Converted Units	250m <sup>2</sup>	1/unit	2	2	
Commercial Facility	Place of Entertainment	Mystery Escape Rooms (MER)	230m <sup>2</sup>	1/20m <sup>2</sup>	12	10	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>740m<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>90%</b>

Requesting a minor reduction in parking for Mystery Escape Rooms regular hours of operation from 12 spaces to 10 spaces.



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- The requested zone change is temporary to allow MER to complete interior renovations on a building purchased in August 2015 at 388 Richmond Street in London to relocate their business to the 'Downtown Designation' where their use is permitted and parking is not required.
- Ryan Singh is the owner of Mystery Escape Rooms and here to discuss the past, present and future of MER and answer questions.

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## 551 WATERLOO STREET

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We realize that "place of entertainment" is very broad, so we would like to explain what our business is. It is essentially a team-building exercise where people are in a room solving puzzles and riddles. There are various types of problems, including logical, analytical and word games, where people work together in small groups to complete them.

When we first opened, we thought we would fit under the Office Use category for which this building was zoned, as we believed the vast majority of our clientele would be corporate groups. However, it caught on with the public and the city has since moved Mystery Escape Rooms to the broad category of place of entertainment.

Since we received the categorization, we began planning our move and purchased a new building in the downtown core. We are only seeking a temporary period to allow us to move. When we initially applied, it was less than a year, and now there is only seven more months. We have been at this location since November of 2014, and have not received any complaints. It is a positive and fun exercise promoting learning and critical thinking skills and finding ways to work well in groups.

No alcohol is served or allowed.

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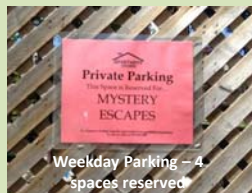
- MER has not received any complaints from surrounding lands since opening late 2014.
- MER has sent letters to the responses provided through this process explaining their business.
- MER intends to relocate business to 388 Richmond Street in London within one year.
- MER has posted parking signs in the parking lot for their clients to use.

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Photos taken May 30 2016



Weekday Parking - 4 spaces reserved



Weeknight and weekend parking - 10 spaces reserved

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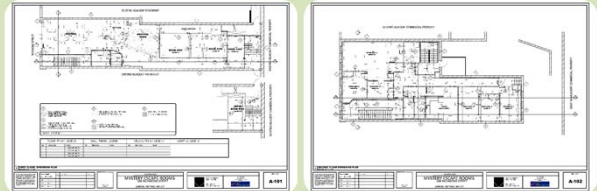
Mystery Escape Rooms have donated to countless causes in London since we started, and have raised over \$30,000 for local charities including the Make a Wish Foundation, the Ronald McDonald House, the MS Bike Tour, the Brain Injury Association, the Sunshine Foundation, the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network, Mission Services of London, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Camp Trillium, London Health Sciences Centre, the Pink Party Fundraiser for Breast Cancer, the Social Justice Club, the Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, and over 30 other smaller organizations. For a charity event for the Lung Association, we even created an entire mini-escape room for their one-day event.

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## 551 WATERLOO STREET

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Floor plans for NEW LOCATION at 388 Richmond Street



*mlypc*

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Building Permit for NEW LOCATION at 388 Richmond Street submitted and paid. Permit # 16146678-1692895



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'Mystery Escape Rooms has three full-time staff members and twelve part-time staff members who would lose their jobs if we are shut down before our renovations are completed at 388 Richmond Street. Our staff is comprised of several very intelligent and hard-working people that love their jobs. We are a small business, and if we are shut down before we move, it would be crippling.'

Ryan Singh

*mlypc*