

OLD BUILDINGS, GREAT BEER:

Lessons of Adaptive Reuse and Microbreweries
in the City of Toronto

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Queen's University

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E E C T I E S M M A R

Microbreweries have become increasingly popular in recent years, responding to changing consumer demands and tastes. In Canada, the phenomenon started in the last fifteen years, with microbreweries proving popular among urban, young professionals. To cater to their main demographic, many microbreweries are choosing to locate in dense, mixed-use urban neighbourhoods. This creates a host of planning issues – such as zoning relating to microbrewery’s light industrial status – but also issues surrounding the adaptive reuse of old buildings in which microbreweries locate;

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To answer these research questions, a case study approach was used which involved a literature review, municipal planning document review, and interviews with representatives from four microbreweries in the City of Toronto. The literature review was completed to provide an overview of the existing literature, research, and findings related to the research question and to serve as a base for the report's later analysis and recommendations. A municipal planning policy review was done to deliver a summary of the current relevant policy framework in Toronto. Four microbrewery case study interviews were conducted, which provided an opportunity to gain an understanding of the experiences of each individual microbrewery. The interview question responses were categorized into themes, which were later aggregated and formed into lessons and recommendations.

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Recommendations are provided with the goal of assisting both municipalities and microbrewery owners during the development process. They are categorized into 'Recommendations for Municipalities' and 'Recommendations for Microbreweries'. Although these recommendations were based on the experiences of microbreweries in the City of Toronto, they are broad enough that they could be applied to municipalities across Canada.

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2: A

Often, an application is passed around the Planning Department, landing on the desks of multiple planners. This can create confusion, where different planners tell wrong or different information to the proponent, causing delays in the application process. When an application is given to one planner, a stream of effective and constant communication should be established, resulting in the application being processed faster. The use of layman's terms when communicating with the proponent, especially when it is directly with the microbrewery owner (who may not have a background knowledge of the planning process), should be a best practice.

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Establishing a proper definition of microbreweries in the Zoning By-law will help alleviate any misconceptions or misinterpretations by the City staff. This can include defining the differences between different sizes and types of brewing – industrial breweries, craft breweries, microbreweries, and brewpubs – each with their own specific by-law regulations and zones in which they are permitted to locate.

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4: S

The role of light industry in contributing to a vibrant and liveable mixed-use neighbourhood is still not fully understood. If a municipality wishes to promote this type of small-scale light industrial development – such as microbreweries – a study

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Municipalities should create more inclusive zoning policies for light industrial uses, and

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Gaining formal support from the local MP, MPP (or other