



Ontario Association of Architects

May 9, 2019

Via email

Attention: All Directors of Planning and Chief Building Officials in the Province of Ontario

Re: Applications for Site Plan Approval

Dear Director/Chief Building Official,

It has again been brought to the attention of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), by you or your peers, that there continue to be instances where non-architects are preparing the architectural designs accompanying applications for site plan approval under the *Planning Act*. The OAA initially wrote to Chief Building Officials (CBOs) and Directors of Planning in October 2012 and again in August 2016 to warn against these practices.

Designs submitted as part of the site plan approval process are intended to govern the construction, enlargement or alteration of buildings. Although these designs are submitted during early design stages of a project and indicate an initial concept, once approved, these designs become the basis for the development of all subsequent documents required for approval e.g. a building permit.

Subject to the qualifications and exemptions set out in the *Architects Act*, designs accompanying a site plan application must be prepared, sealed and signed by an architect. This excludes buildings exempted under sections [11\(3\) and \(4\)](#) of the *Architects Act*. Please note that the *Architects Act* legislates the following [definitions](#) within the Province of Ontario:

“design” means a plan, sketch, drawing, graphic representation or specification intended to govern the construction, enlargement or alteration of a building or a part of a building (“plan”)

“practice of architecture” means,

- (a) the preparation or provision of a design to govern the constructions, enlargement or alteration of a building,
- (b) evaluating, advising on or reporting on the construction, enlargement or alteration of a building, or
- (c) a general review of the construction, enlargement or alteration of a building; (‘exercice de la profession d’architecte’)

As with each of our respective professions, the protection of public safety is the overarching goal behind the work we do. This is expressly reflected in the *Architects Act*, which sets the [Principal Object](#) to regulate the practice of architecture “in order that the public interest may be served and protected.” Be advised that accepting designs by non-architects can directly, or indirectly, create circumstances compromising public safety.

If you have any concerns about potential lapses in the protection of public safety or other similar matters, please inform the OAA's Executive Director, Kristi Doyle via email ([kristid@oaa.on.ca](mailto:kristid@oaa.on.ca)) or by phone (416-449-6898 ext. 212). Where appropriate, the matter will be provided to the Registrar who may intervene and/or exercise legal authorities ([section 46, "Penalties"](#)) against anyone found to be in contravention of the *Architects Act*.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Kurtin, Architect  
OAA, FRAIC  
President

