

November 6, 2017

Development Review (Urban)  
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department  
City of Ottawa  
110 Laurier Avenue West, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ottawa, ON  
K1P 1J1

**Attention: Douglas James, Manager, Development Review Central**

Dear Mr. James:

**Reference: 355, 359 and 361 Nelson Street  
Site Plan Control Application  
Planning Rationale Letter & Design Brief  
Our File No. 116018**

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Novatech has been retained to file an application for site plan control for three contiguous properties known municipally as 355, 359 and 361 Nelson Street. The subject properties are located on the east side of Nelson Street, between Osgoode Street and Laurier Avenue East, within the Sandy Hill community. The properties are legally described as Part of Lot 8 and all of Lot 9 (East Side of Nelson Street), on Registered Plan 14349, in the City of Ottawa. The subject properties have a combined lot area of approximately 1,050 m<sup>2</sup> and a frontage of approximately 28 m along Nelson Street.



Figure 1: Site Context and Location Map

The neighbourhood surrounding the subject properties is characterized primarily by residential development in the form of two to three-storey buildings ranging from single-detached to low-rise apartment dwellings. It appears as though many of the dwellings have been converted to multi-unit housing to accommodate the large student population in the area prompted by the neighbourhood's proximity to the University of Ottawa campus. There is also a nine-storey apartment building to the north of the subject site, and an elementary school directly opposite to the site, on the west side of Nelson Street.



Figure 2: Adjacent Properties to the North



Figure 3: Adjacent Properties to the South

The University of Ottawa Campus is located two blocks west of the nearest intersection to the subject site, being Osgoode and Nelson Street. The subject site is within 600 m to both the Campus and Laurier Transit Stations along the Transitway and future LRT Confederation Line. The site is also in close proximity to multi-use pathways along the Canal and Rideau River which provide connection other multi-use pathways and networks throughout the City.

The property at 355 Nelson Street is currently occupied by a two-storey semi-detached dwelling, and the properties at 359 and 361 Nelson Street are both occupied by two and a half-storey single-detached dwellings, with the dwelling at 361 Nelson Street containing a secondary dwelling unit. The property at 355 Nelson Street is currently subject to two rights-of-way in favour of the property to the immediate north, per Instruments CR64551 and N608824. The properties at 359 and 361 Nelson Street are subject to a shared right-of-way per Instruments CR358284 and N714403. All rights-of-way will be quit-claimed and all buildings and structures on the subject properties will be removed.



Figure 4: Properties located at 355, 359 and 361 Nelson Street

The proposal involves the consolidation of the three existing properties to accommodate the development of a four-storey apartment building containing 27 units. The units will be a mix of one and two-bedrooms, and it is the intent of the owners to manage the property as rental units. The unit mix has been designed to appeal to a range of tenants.

A total of nine parking spaces, as required in accordance with the Zoning By-law, will be provided at-grade within the rear yard for use by residents and visitors. Access to the parking area will be provided by means of an existing shared driveway from Nelson Street located on the property to the immediate south (known municipally as 371 Nelson Street and currently under the same ownership as the subject properties), adjacent to the shared property line. Once the site plan application has progressed through the approval process, an application will be filed with the Committee of Adjustment to establish the proposed easement to permit shared access.

The balance of the rear yard area located to the north of the parking area will consist of soft and hard landscaped area, providing approximately 153 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor amenity area. Additional amenity area is provided in the form of private balconies along all facades for the above-grade units.

Bicycle storage space is provided within the basement and includes a total of 15 bicycle parking spaces, comprising a mix of horizontal and vertical spaces. Garbage and recycling storage is also proposed internal to the building.

The purpose of this Planning Rationale and Design Brief letter is to provide planning justification in support of the application for site plan approval for 355, 359 and 361 Nelson Street and demonstrate how the proposed development conforms to the policies of both the City of Ottawa Official Plan and the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan, and complies with requirements of the City of Ottawa Zoning By-law 2008-250. Furthermore, this letter demonstrates how the proposal is in keeping with the policy and design objectives of the Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Area Guidelines and the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing.

### **City of Ottawa Official Plan (As amended by OPA 150, 2013)**

The subject site is designated as General Urban Area on Schedule B of the City of Ottawa Official Plan, which permits many types and densities of dwellings, including low-rise apartment dwellings. Policy 5 under Section 3.6.1 supports opportunities for intensification within the General Urban Area where it will complement the existing pattern and scale of development and planned function of the area. New development must be compatible with the existing community character so that it enhances and builds upon desirable patterns of built form, and contributes to a balance and range of housing types and tenures for a variety of demographic profiles.

The proposal conforms to the overall policy direction of the Official Plan which contemplates low-rise apartments as a generally permitted use, and represents an opportunity for intensification through redevelopment in a manner which is compatible with the existing scale of development. Existing development along Nelson Street consists primarily of two to three-storey dwellings and apartment buildings. Additionally, there is a nine-storey residential building in the vicinity, as well as commercial uses occupying converted dwellings fronting onto Laurier Avenue. Directly adjacent to the subject property to the north is an existing two-storey apartment building, and directly adjacent to the south is an existing three-storey apartment building. The proposed development represents an opportunity



for intensification within this central neighbourhood in a manner which is consistent with the existing scale of development in the area.

The proposal complements the planned function of this neighbourhood of Sandy Hill by providing a mix of unit types to appeal to a range of demographic profiles, and promoting an urban lifestyle which is supportive of active and public transportation. The proposal is in keeping with the predominantly low-profile residential character along this portion of Nelson Street, and builds upon desirable established patterns of built form by providing for building setbacks, orientation and massing which complement the character of the street.



**Figure 7:** Coloured Front Elevation Drawing

It is the policy of the Official Plan that new development be in accordance with the design and compatibility objectives set out in Sections 2.5.1 (Designing Ottawa) and 4.11 (Urban Design and Compatibility) of the Plan. Section 2.5.1 provides that consideration should be given to components of built form, open space and infrastructure when designing buildings and spaces as these elements contribute to a community's identity. The design objectives detailed under Section 2.5.1 include policies relating to enhancing sense of community, defining public and private spaces, creating safe and accessible places, respecting character of existing areas, understanding natural features, and promoting sustainable design.

Section 4.11 establishes that development applications will be evaluated on the basis of various design objectives to ensure high quality urban design and compatibility in terms of scale and use among proximate development. The design and compatibility objectives under Section 4.11, as they relate to the proposed development, include policies regarding good building and façade design, massing and scale, and outdoor amenity areas.

The development responds to design and compatibility objectives of the Official Plan by proposing a four-storey apartment dwelling which is compatible with surrounding uses and which has been designed to complement the distinct character of the neighbourhood.

As explained by the project Architect, Vincent Alcaide, the proposed infill building respects building setbacks and utilizes building materials that are common and sympathetic to adjoining buildings and the general context of the neighbourhood. The building height is within the limit of the Zoning By-law and is designed with a flat roof which respects the existing flat roof building designs that are intermixed with sloped residential roofs of this neighbourhood.

The general architectural concept of the proposed building is derived from the traditional low-rise apartment buildings of the early 1900's. The majority of these building had highly articulated brick building facades with trim details around windows and stone banding. The entrances of these building were also designed with wrought-iron suspended or grounded canopies as an entrance feature to the building. The proposed building speaks to the architectural language of these older residential buildings while enhancing the character of the existing community.

The proposed building is clad with red brick for the majority of the building facades with a panelized lighter metal cladding for the fourth storey of the building. This same metal panel is brought vertically down between the brick facades to break-up the massing of the building and set a scale that is appropriate to its surroundings. In order to assist in the appearance of reducing building height, the base of the building is a stone block material that strengthens and grounds the building. The lower stone base is also symbolic of a traditional stone plinth commonly found in older buildings of this area as well as the building of the early 1900's.

All building facades benefit from the addition of balconies that are supported by brick piers and vary in height from three to four-storeys. The balcony metal railings are decorative in nature with solid pickets as often seen in the older residential buildings of this area. The majority of the balcony guard railings are framed between the balcony brick piers for an added design feature that reduces the scale of the building on all four facades. These brick balcony piers can be seen on numerous Sandyhill residential buildings and is considered a traditional front-porch approach to design.

The top of the building is trimmed with a metal faced cornice commonly found on early-century buildings. Precast cornices and trim banding is also provided at the conjunction between the fourth and third storey cladding material change as well as the brick to stone base cladding transition. The horizontal precast banding helps with the appearance of reducing building height as well as bringing a smaller residential scale to the exterior design.

The brick façade detailing includes recessed vertical brick inserts for balcony brick columns as well as brick stacked coursing between windows. This type of brick relief will humanize the building from the street perspective as well as for pedestrians. The windows will have precast window sills and headers found in older residential buildings. The window frame colour will be black to make the windows more distinctive and strength the openings in the exterior facade. In addition, the punched windows will have clerestory vision panels to grid the windows as a traditional approach to detailing the building.

Finally, Mr. Alcaide notes that the building will also have a canopy that accentuates the entrance of the building with a steel structure resting on brick piers that is trimmed with precast. The entrance paving to the building will be an interlocking stone pathway trimmed with granite or limestone edging.

It is concluded that the use of articulation, materiality and decorative features create interest along the façade, break up the massing in a manner which relates to the surrounding built form, and provide appropriate transition to the neighbouring buildings. The proposal fits with the existing neighbourhood context and supports the design objectives of the Official Plan.

### **Sandy Hill Secondary Plan**

Volume 2A of the Official Plan includes the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan which establishes policies to guide future growth and change in Sandy Hill. The subject properties are shown within the Residential Area – Low Profile designation on Schedule J of the Secondary Plan.

The proposal conforms to the policies of the Secondary Plan which support both the preservation of Sandy Hill as a primarily residential neighbourhood and the provision of a variety of housing to accommodate a broad range of socio-economic groups. Further, the proposal is in keeping with the policies of the Secondary Plan regarding site development, which aim to ensure new development is compatible with existing adjacent development in terms of scale, form, proportion and spatial arrangement in order minimize intrusion on sunlight, air and other aspects enjoyed by neighbouring development.

The proposal responds to the policies of the Plan which encourage the provision of internal and external on-site amenity areas and landscaping to enhance the development. The front yard pattern along Nelson Street is characterized by a mix of soft and hard landscaping, with intermittent driveways and walkways, and a variety of coniferous and deciduous street tree. Considerable landscaping, including new street trees, is provided to the front of the building to enhance both the development and the public streetscape. The proposed development will contribute to the identity of Sandy Hill as an attractive residential neighbourhood.

### **Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Character Area Guidelines**

The Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Character Area Guidelines provide direction for development within Sandy Hill to ensure new construction is appropriate to the character and cultural heritage features of the neighbourhood. The properties at 355, 359 and 361 Nelson Street are all identified as Category 3 properties. Category 3 properties are considered contributing buildings in the heritage character area. The properties are not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

The guidelines provide that the design of new buildings should be of their own time, but should be in keeping with the traditional scale of residential buildings and be systematic to the character of the neighbourhood and to the immediate neighbours in terms of setback, footprint and massing.

The character along Nelson Street consists predominantly of two to three-storey buildings with a mix of flat and peaked roofs and which are situated relatively close to the street. The building architecture compliments the traditional styles of architecture observed along the street, and the proposed massing is respectful of surrounding development, with a footprint similar in size to the existing buildings to both the immediate north and south.

The guidelines also provide direction for the use of materials for infill development, and encourage the provision of street trees and plantings to enhance the streetscape and public realm. The proposal responds to design and materiality considerations by incorporating a mix of cladding materials, including a predominant use of red brick which reflects the character of the neighbourhood.

In order to contribute to an appealing streetscape and enhance the development, new deciduous street trees are proposed, as well as significant decorative plantings and grassed area within the front yard. As access to the subject property is provided by means of a shared driveway located on the abutting property to the south, the full width of the property will consist of soft landscaping with a central walkway. The proposal also involves removing existing front yard parking spaces, which is encouraged pursuant to the Guidelines.

The proposed massing and materials relate to the existing character along Nelson Street, and the provision of significant landscaping and vegetation enhance the street edge. The proposal supports the policy direction of the Guidelines.

### **Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing**

The urban design guidelines for infill housing provide a framework to ensure new development is well-designed in terms of physical layout, massing, functioning and relationships to neighbouring properties. These guidelines also provide direction in relation to streetscape, landscape, building design, and parking.

The siting of the building is consistent with the established pattern along the street and respects all setback requirements. The site has been designed such that there will be a strong emphasis on landscaping and pedestrian movement, and minimal focus on vehicular access. The proposed building will have numerous windows and balconies along the front façade to interact with the street. To promote accessible design, a covered, barrier-free sloped entrance is provided which extends to the existing sidewalk.

The proposed development introduces a visual transition in building height in relation to the immediate neighbouring dwellings through the use of materials and massing. The use of lighter metal cladding on the upper storey has the effect of reducing the perceived height and massing of the building. A column of aluminum panels also divides the brick facade vertically into two asymmetrical blocks to create an appearance of separate, narrow façades. The development includes stacked balconies within the interior side yards create an impression of a three-storey massing adjacent to the neighbouring two and three-storey buildings to the north and south.

The proposed development is in keeping with the design guidelines as it enhances the streetscape, respects the character of the existing built form, and provides a strong emphasis on pedestrian access and orientation to the street.

### **City of Ottawa Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2008-250**

The subject properties are zoned R4S[480] (Residential Fourth Density Zone, Subzone S, Exception 480) in the City of Ottawa Zoning By-law and is within the Mature Neighbourhoods Overlay. The purpose of the R4 zone is to allow a wide mix of residential building forms ranging from detached to low rise apartment dwellings, in no case more than four storeys, and to regulate development in a manner that is compatible with existing land use patterns so that the mixed building form, residential character of a neighbourhood is maintained or enhanced. The proposed development complies with all provisions of the Zoning By-law, both in terms of permitted uses and performance standards.

The recently adopted Interim Control By-law, which affects mature inner urban neighbourhoods, including the entirety of Sandy Hill, has been reviewed in the context of the proposed development. The proposal does not conflict with the prohibitions set out in the Interim Control By-law.

A pre-consultation meeting was held with the City of Ottawa Planning Services on October 27, 2016, and follow-up comments and the study and plan identification list were provided on November 7, 2016. A subsequent email received on October 23, 2017 confirmed the adjusted number of copies of plans and studies required pursuant to recent updates to the City's submission requirements. As per the study and plan identification list and subsequent correspondence, please find the following enclosed:

- Site Plan Control Application Form;
- Survey Plan, Farley, Smith & Denis Surveyors Ltd., dated June 3, 2016;
- Site Plan, Alcaide Webster Architects Inc, Revision 4;
- Elevation Drawings, Alcaide Webster Architects Inc, Revision 4;
- General Plan of Services, Novatech, Revision 1;
- Grading and Erosion & Sediment Control Plan, Novatech, Revision 1;
- Landscape Plan, Novatech, Revision 1;
- Development Servicing Study & Stormwater Management Report, Novatech, dated October 27, 2017;
- Geotechnical Investigation, Paterson Group, dated April 6, 2017;
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, Paterson Group, dated March 7, 2017; and
- CD containing PDF copies of all submission material listed above (one disc).

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or clarification with respect to that provided.

Yours truly,

**NOVATECH**



Kayla Blakely, B.E.S. (PI)  
Planner

c.c. Tina Campagna, A.F. Martins Construction  
Vincent Alcaide, Alcaide Webster Architects Inc.