

# PLANNING RATIONAL

## 1 SITE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT

This planning rational was prepared in support of a Minor Variance and Site Plan Control Application for the lands known municipally as 603 Cummings Avenue. As illustrated in Figure 1, the subject property is located on the east side of Cummings Avenue one property south of Montreal Road.

### THE SITE

The subject property (known herein as the site) consist of one lot of record and is identified municipally as 603 Cummings Avenue. The site is located on the east side of Cummings Avenue (just south of Montreal Road). The site has approximately 15.39 m of frontage along Cummings Avenue and a lot depth of 45.72m (varies) depth and a total lot area of 701.6 sm (7551 sf) in a AM 10 zone H (15) in the Ottawa East Community. The site is currently occupied by surface parking.



Figure 1

The use of the site was previously an animal hospital and is currently a parking lot. Several commercial and residential buildings form the Montreal Road corridor from Aviation Parkway to St. Laurent Boulevard.

### COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The neighbourhood is currently in transition, with a recently updated Secondary Plan and a planning direction to develop with a mix of uses, including low to high profile residential, and commercial uses fronting the Traditional Mainstreet on Montreal Road. The surrounding area uses vary, but consist primarily of low-rise

detached, Semi-detached, and townhouse residential uses, open space, commercial, institutional, and office uses. The following identifies the land uses that surround the site:

**North:** The existing Montreal Road right-of-way is located directly one property north of the site. Beyond the right-of-way there are restaurant and commercial uses on the north side of Montreal Road. The site abuts a gas station and animal hospital to the north.

**South:** The site abuts a residential R4 zone to the south occupied by a 3 ½ and 4 storey residential apartment building. Beyond these lands to the south there are other low-profile residential uses.

**East:** An existing Harveys restaurant and an eye clinic abuts the site to the east. A significant grade change exists between the Harveys property and the subject site. The Harveys site is considerably higher with an embankment adjacent to the rear of the property.

**West:** Across Cummings Avenue to the west is an office use.

## 2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The site plan application is for a proposed 3 ½ storey rental apartment residential infill development at 603 Cummings Avenue.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

A program was established to re-develop the existing vacant site with Anatolij Koniouchine, the owner of the property and longtime Montreal Road Business owner and proprietor of Rockcliffe Dental and Denture Center.

The program entails 8 two bedroom apartments in a 3 ½ storey building.

The neighbourhood is in transition as re-development opportunities arise. A number of sites have been developed along Cummings Avenue for residential purposes.

The neighbouring residential building to the south enjoys a wide side yard with a drive aisle and parking.

The proposed development positions the building close to the north side of the side in close proximity to the existing animal hospital offering a greater separation to the property to the south.



Figure 5



## DESIGN STATEMENT

### PROGRAM

The owner is proposing a series of stacked apartment flats over 3 ½ storeys respecting the height of existing buildings in the neighbourhood. The units are side by side separated by a main entrance stair and supported by exit stairs serving all four storeys in each corner of the floor plate.

### SITE CONCEPT AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Discussions with the City yielded a desire by the City of Ottawa Planning and Urban Design Group to incorporate massing which provided a strong relationship to the street offering continuity and interest hence a focus was placed on the principal elevation and public realm facing Cummings Avenue.

The setbacks and open space in the front yard addressed neighbouring property setbacks and streetscape characteristics. The entrance sidewalks provided a strong connection between the building and the streetscape in conjunction with articulation of the principal façade and street trees. Common amenity space is provided in the rear yard as is bicycle parking and enclosed waste facilities. A barrier free parking stall and two additional stalls are provided in close proximity to the principal entrances to the building and screened from the street and separated from neighbouring property.



### 3 POLICY & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Design considerations for 603 Cummings Avenue focus on issues of integration, compatibility and project fit into the urban environment.

*‘Mainstreets are defined in the Official Plan as “streets that offer some of the most significant opportunities in the City for intensification through more compact forms of development, a lively mix of uses and a pedestrian-friendly environment.” Arterial Mainstreets, in contrast to Traditional Mainstreets, are identified as those Mainstreets developed after 1945 that generally “present an urban fabric of larger lots, larger buildings, varied setbacks, lower densities and a more automobile-oriented environment.” These streets usually do not provide on-street parking. The predominant land use is often single purpose commercial, many with parking lots located between the building and the street.*

*Purpose and Application The purpose of these guidelines is to provide urban design guidance at the planning application stage in order to assess, promote and achieve appropriate development along Arterial Mainstreets. Specific site context and conditions will also be reviewed in conjunction with these guidelines. These guidelines are to be applied throughout the City for all streets identified as an Arterial Mainstreet within the Official Plan. Where a Community Design Plan or relevant planning study exists, these guidelines will augment those documents. They will also be used to help inform the preparation of new Community Design Plans.’*

#### *‘Objectives*

- To foster compatible development that will contribute to the recognized or planned character of the streets*
- To promote a comfortable pedestrian environment and create attractive streetscapes*
- To achieve high-quality built form and establish a strong street edge along Arterial Mainstreets*
- To facilitate a gradual transition to more intensive forms of development on Arterial Mainstreets*
- To accommodate a broad range of uses including retail, services, commercial, office, institutional and higher density residential*
- To enhance connections that link development sites to public transit, roads and pedestrian walkways*

*Official Plan and By-Law Direction For Arterial Mainstreets, the Official Plan supports compatible development that respects the character of the street and adjacent areas so that a gradual transformation to a more compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented pattern of development with building heights up to eight storeys, can be achieved. This transformation can occur through a combination of higher density employment and residential uses, mixed-use buildings and the redevelopment of parking lots (Official Plan Amendment No. 28, Section 3.6.3). Annex 1 of the Official Plan identifies the protected rights-of way sufficient to provide enough area for the streetscape elements and meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.’*

## CITY OF OTTAWA OFFICIAL PLAN • OPA 150

The evaluation of development applications for properties along Arterial Mainstreets are considered in accordance with the urban design and compatibility guidelines in Section 2.5.1 and 4.11 of the Official Plan. The subject property is designated Arterial Mainstreet on Schedule B - Urban Policy Plan of the City of Ottawa Official Plan. The objective of the Arterial Mainstreet designation is to encourage more dense and mixed-use development that supports and is supported by increased walking, cycling and transit use. A broad range of uses is permitted on Arterial Mainstreets including retail and service commercial uses, offices, residential and institutional uses. Uses may be mixed in individual buildings or occur side by side in separate buildings.

With respect to building height the Official Plan outlines that Arterial Mainstreets will support building heights of up to eight (8) storeys, although greater heights may be contemplated in accordance with criteria in Section 4.11 of the Plan. The proposed development meets the urban design and compatibility criteria in Sections 2.5.1 and 4.11 of the Official Plan. Further, the development proposal meets several of the guidelines in the Urban Design Guidelines for Development along Arterial Mainstreets.

The subject site maintains its Arterial Mainstreet designation in OPA 150. The Arterial Mainstreet policies have been revised to include more specific height policies. Building heights up to a maximum of eight (8) storeys will generally be permitted in the Arterial Mainstreet unless greater heights are identified in a Secondary Plan as per Policy 3.6.3.12.

The proposed development meets OPA ISO's revised Arterial Mainstreet policies in that:

- The subject site is identified in the Montreal Road District Secondary Plan (OPA 127) as a location for increased building heights although the proposed development does not seek relief for additional height. The proposed height is lower than the 15m height permitted in the bylaw.

## MONTREAL ROAD DISTRICT SECONDARY PLAN

The subject site forms part of the East Sector in the Montreal Road District Secondary Plan, a sector identified as the gateway from downtown into the district. In this sector the south side of Montreal Road is expected to provide opportunities for residential intensification, mixed-use developments and the potential for taller buildings, while maintaining the intent of the Arterial Mainstreet OP designation along Montreal Road.

## CITY OF OTTAWA ZONING BY-LAW 2008-250 AM10

An application for minor variances has been submitted to permit the project as proposed. The property at 603 Cummings is zoned AM 10 and as such relief is requested from the 7.5m side yard setback after the first 20m from the front property line to permit a more contiguous form of development. The sideyard setback for the first 20m from the property line permitted in the AM 10 bylaw is 3.0m. The proposed side yard setback is increased to 5 m for the first 20m from the bylaw yielding an increased setback of 2 m. Additional minor variances are requested to reduce parking stall and drive aisle requirements in the bylaw. These are minor in nature as parking is not required for this development however we are providing 3 stalls as outlined in this document.

Additional amendments may be identified following staff review, technical circulation and as a result of Site Plan revisions.

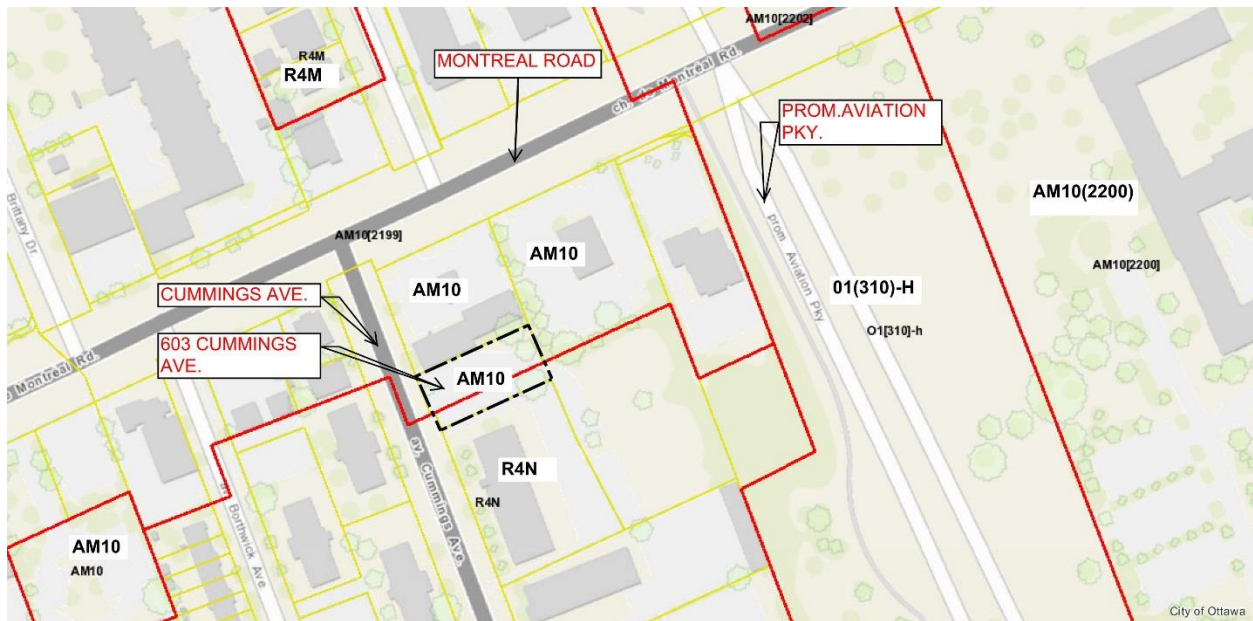
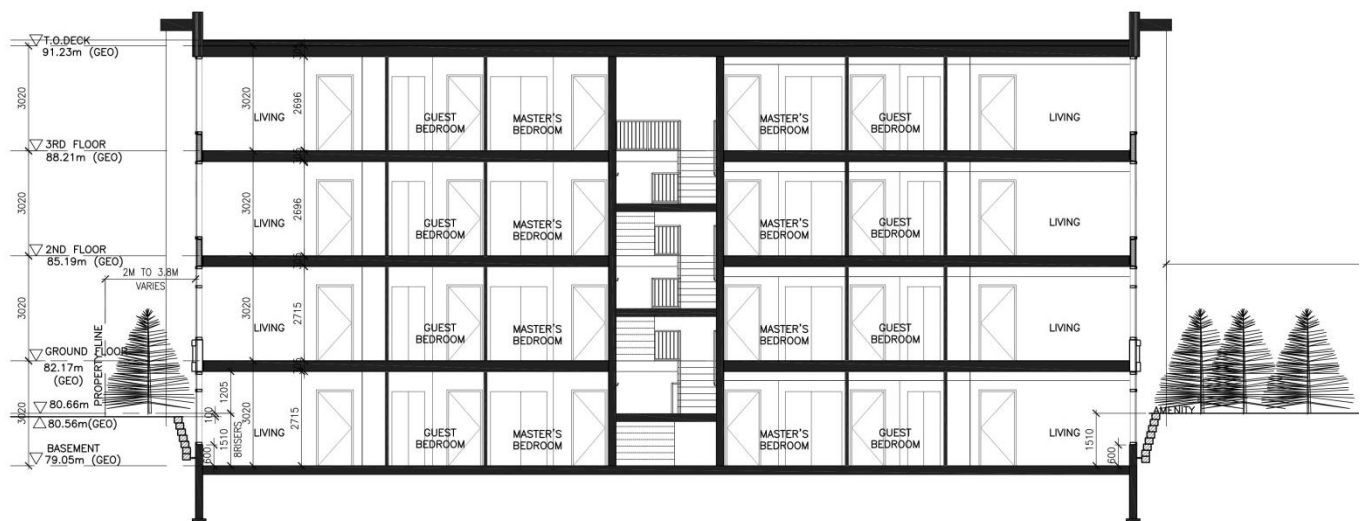


Figure 6

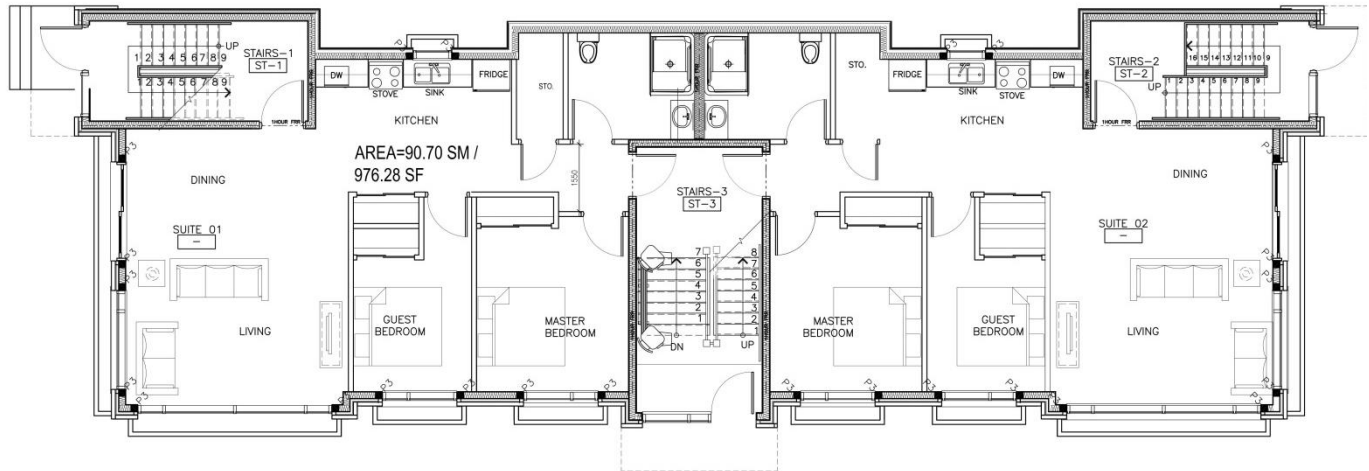
## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The proposed form of development is compact and integrates with the existing built form of similar height and compatible uses. The streetscape is in keeping with the character of the street and reinforces the built form along Cummings Avenue. The building materials enhance the character of the neighbouring buildings and the projecting canopies and large window openings address the street and add interest to the public realm. Continuity of the interface of the site landscape with the public realm encourages pedestrian movement and bicycle use.



The ground floor of the proposed residential building is a half level below grade with a lobby at grade.

The lower level accommodates 2 two bedroom apartments as do floors 2, 3, and 4. The central entrance and residential lobby serves all the four floors of rental residential apartments. In order to provide two means of exit from each apartment an additional two stairwells are provided serving all floors. One stairwell faces Cummings Avenue and provides access directly from the street and the main entrance is located along the side of the building fronting the pedestrian sidewalk and drive aisle. The third stair faces the rear yard and the outdoor amenity area.



The rear yard provides for 3 parking stalls, 8 outdoor bicycle stalls, a large landscaped amenity area and a garbage and recycling enclosure. An existing retaining wall separates the grade change to neighbouring properties. All waste and recycling are to be provided by private contractors.

The building design addresses sustainable design initiatives including a high performance envelope, high energy efficient HVAC equipment, energy metering within each rental suite to promote tenant responsibility, a white roof and other green initiatives.

Following consultation with Christopher Moise Urban Designer and Alison Hamlin and Tracey Scaramozzino Planners, the site planning and building design was positioned to address the street with as much built form as possible while recognizing a 3m wide drive aisle and to respect setbacks to the neighbouring residential R4 property to the south. The principal elevation of the building facing Cummings Avenue was designed as a 'street oriented façade' in keeping with Urban Design principles. A pedestrian walkway links the street sidewalk to the main entrance and continues to the rear yard amenity area, bicycle storage and enclosed waste and recycling area.

The landscape design provides for large trees fronting Cummings Avenue and in the rear yard amenity area. There is a screened in waste enclosure adjacent to the rear of the property and the Harveys restaurant. The Harveys restaurant site is elevated and the associated parking area and drive aisles are located above the rear of the proposed residential parking and waste enclosure. An existing retaining wall separates the two properties.

To improve the setback to the existing 3 ½ storey residential apartment building to the south, the building foot print has been located as close as possible to the northern property line and the south facing wall is setback over 5 m in lieu of the 3m minimum side yard setback in the bylaw. Given the narrowness of the property and the need for a consistent floor plate and suite layouts a variance is required for the side yard setback beyond 20 m from the street. The required side yard setback beyond 20m from the street is 7.5m. The proposed setback beyond 20m from the street is reduced to 5m for a length of 11.5m.

Furthermore a reduction in the drive aisle serving 3 parking stalls along the rear yard to 6.1m (back up space) is sought as the property line is skewed and a desire to maintain a continuous sidewalk serving the rear yard consequently encroaches minimally into the back up drive aisle reducing the drive aisle from 6.7m to 6.1m.

A number of factors support these variances and mitigate the reduction in the side yard beyond 20 m from the street including;

- 1) The proposed side yard setback is 2m wider for the first 20m from the street (than required by bylaw an increase from 3m to 5m)
- 2) The adjacent building is located further west towards the street with a deeper rear yard with existing tenant parking located along the side yard and rear yard
- 3) the adjacent building is located further south with a wide separation provided by an existing 14.68m side yard which accommodates parking and a drive aisle and which separates the two properties.

These factors contribute to a greater separation of the structures and meet the four tests.

To develop an urban design solution within a narrow site, a significant amount of study has been undertaken to ensure the impact is minor in nature, the urban and architectural solution is both an appropriate and desirable development for the area, in keeping with the purpose and intent of the bylaw and in keeping with the purpose and intent of the Official Plan

The proposed development satisfies the following objectives;

- To promote development that will enhance and reinforce the recognized or planned scale and character of the streets
- To promote development that is compatible with, and complements its surroundings
- To achieve high-quality built form and strengthen building continuity along Traditional and Arterial Mainstreets
- To foster compact, pedestrian-oriented development linked to street level amenities
- To support a broad range of uses including retail, services, commercial uses, offices, residential and institutional uses where one can live, shop and access amenities

Some of the Urban Design Guidelines for Infill which this proposal seeks to address include:



## Streetscape

### Guideline #1

*Align street wall buildings with the existing built form or with the average setback of the adjacent buildings in order to create a visually continuous streetscape.*

The proposed front yard setback is approximately 3m and widens to the south and respects the setbacks of adjacent buildings further along Cummings Avenue.

### Guideline #3

*Provide or restore a wide concrete sidewalk and locate to match approved streetscape design plans for the area. Where there is no approved streetscape plan, match the existing context..*

The proposed front yard incorporates linkages to the existing sidewalk pattern.

### Guideline #4

*Use periodic breaks in the street wall or minor variations in building setback and alignment to add interest to the streetscape and to provide space for activities adjacent to the sidewalk.*

The proposed front elevation facing Cummings Avenue is articulated with projections in the front façade and large openings to provide activation of the façade and add visual interest.

### Guideline #6

*Create attractive public and semi-public outdoor amenity spaces such as green spaces with trees, pocket parks, courtyards, outdoor cafés, seating and decorative pools or fountains*

The Cummings Avenue frontage provides for an apron for green spaces with trees and low planting to create a sense of enclosure and a sense of entrance.

The required front yard setback is 3m and broadens to the south which enhances the landscaped area and integration of pedestrian pathways into the site. The surface is treated with interlocking pavers including the apron as the sidewalk approaches the front entrance long the side of the building and rear yard amenity area.

## Built Form

### Guideline #8

*Design quality buildings that are rich in architectural detail and respect the rhythm and pattern of the existing or planned buildings on the street, through the alignment of elements such as windows, front doors, cornice lines, and fascias*

The building is designed in a tripartite manner through the use of building materials to delineate a base with a stone veneer and a strong cornice separating the masonry body. The large window openings of the entrances and frames around the living room windows and French railings to suggest balconies to the dining rooms enhances the character of the street. The flanking return walls along front and side of the stacked living rooms addresses the corner condition and prominence of the corner and leads to the identification of the main entrance on the side of the building. The cadence and size of window openings within the body on floors 2, 3 and 4 reflect a contemporary yet classical treatment of window openings along the principal facades. The sills and headers reflect a contemporary character of Cummings Avenue as does the projecting cornice which caps the body of the building.

## Guideline #9

*Ensure sufficient light and privacy for residential and institutional properties to the rear by ensuring that new development is compatible and sensitive with adjacent uses with regard to maximizing light and minimizing overlook*

The 3 ½ storey built form reflects the existing context and due to its northern position does not cast shadow on residential uses. The amenity area in the rear yard is protected from the existing building which acts as an acoustical buffer.

## Pedestrian and Cyclists

### Guideline #17

*Provide pedestrian weather protection such as colonnades, individual canopies, awnings and balconies*

The proposed building provides projecting canopies for pedestrian weather protection, act to animate the streetscape and to screen the western sun to reduce energy consumption.

### Guideline #18

*Provide sheltered bicycle parking in visible locations near building entrances and pedestrian walkways. Ensure that these locations minimize conflict with pedestrians*

Bicycle parking is provided outdoors and in the rear yard adjacent to the building entrance and amenity area. There is no conflict with pedestrian movement systems.

### Guideline #20

*Design pedestrian walkways of materials such as concrete or unit pavers that are easily maintained for safety.*

The pedestrian walkways are designed with concrete and unit pavers in keeping with the existing sidewalk materials which are easily maintained for safety.

### Guideline #21

*Create inviting, well-lit pedestrian walkways to link rear parking areas to the public sidewalk/street*

The exterior pedestrian walkways will be well lit with bollards provide lighting which links the walkways to the main entrance and rear yard. The street is well light by existing municipal light standards and exterior wall sconces and soffit lighting will be located on the building.

## Vehicles and Parking

### Guideline #23

*Locate surface parking in the rear yard with vehicular access off side streets and laneways.*

Three parking stalls are located in the rear yard with a barrier free stall.

## Guideline #27

*Provide only the minimum number of required car parking spaces. Consider parking on the mainstreet.*

The parking is minimum and seeks to address barrier free parking.

Three parking stalls are provided and additional bicycle stalls beyond bylaw are provided a ratio of one per unit.

## Landscape and Environment

### Guideline #28

*Select trees, shrubs and other vegetation considering their tolerance to urban conditions such as road salt or heat. Give preference to native species of the region that are of equal suitability.*

The landscape materials specified satisfy this criteria and reflect the existing landscape material found within the streetscape.

### Guideline #32

Use green building technologies such as green roofs, drip irrigation, and other Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) approaches

The proposed building systems include high efficiency HVAC equipment, a high performance envelope, a white roof membrane and ensuite energy metering to encourage responsible energy consumption and reduce waste. Recycling is encouraged and recycling bins are provided in an enclosed waste and recycling facility at grade.

## Signs

### Guideline #33

Design buildings to include defined spaces to accommodate signs that respect building scale, architectural features, signage uniformity and established streetscape design objectives

Appropriate signage is provided to highlight the entrance and property moniker.

## Servicing and Utilities

### Guideline #38

*Enclose all utility equipment within buildings or screen them from both the traditional mainstreet and private properties to the rear. These include utility boxes, garbage and recycling container storage, loading docks, ramps, air conditioner compressors, utility meters and transformers.*

All utility equipment is located in each suite with the gas tree within a recess in the ground floor façade behind a screen along the rear of the building. The transformer is located on an existing hydro pole on Cummings Avenue.

### Guideline #40

*Design lighting so that there is no glare or light spilling onto surrounding uses*

The exterior parking area will be light will controlled lighting to eliminate spillage onto neighbouring properties. Residential lobby entrance lighting is within soffits providing controlled down lighting.

The following summarizes the minor variances sought;

1. (i) Minor Variance Requested – to permit a side yard setback of 5m along the south property line beyond 20 m from the street for a distance of 11.6m where abutting a residential zone.

By-law Requirement – a minimum side yard setback of 7.5m beyond 20m from the street where abutting a residential zone

- (ii) Minor Variance Requested – to permit a reduced drive aisle of 6.1m (at rear of property for 2 stalls back up space)

By-law Requirement - a minimum drive aisle of 6.7m

In our professional opinion the proposed development meets the intent of the Official Plan, reflects sound planning principles and is in keeping with the existing context both in scale and massing and a reuse of an existing parking lot,

Respectfully submitted,

Yours truly,

Vincent P. Colizza OAA MRAIC AIA