# **FOTENN**



# **36 Robinson Avenue**

Planning Rationale Site Plan Revision and Lifting of Holding Symbol April 27, 2020



Prepared for TCU Development Corporation on behalf of Robinson Village IV LP

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1.0	Introduction	1
	<ul> <li>1.1 Site and Development Application History</li> <li>1.2 Public Consultation Strategy</li> <li>1.2.1 Site Plan Revision</li> <li>1.2.2 Lifting of Holding Symbol</li> <li>1.3 Proposed Development</li> </ul>	1 2 2 2 2 2
2.0	Site and Surrounding Context	5
	2.1 The Site 2.2 Context	5 5
	2.3 Community Amenities	7
	2.4 Transportation Network	7
	2.4.1 Active Transportation	7
	2.4.2 Road Network	7
3.0	Policy and Regulatory Framework	8
	3.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2014)	8
	3.2 Provincial Policy Statement (2020)	8
	3.3 City of Ottawa Official Plan	8
	3.3.1 Managing Growth	8
	3.3.2 Land Use Designation	9 9
	3.3.3 Urban Design and Compatibility	9 <b>11</b>
	3.4 Sandy Hill Secondary Plan 3.5 Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines	11
	3.6 Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2008-250	12
	3.6.1 Zoning Provisions	12
	3.6.2 Holding Symbol	12
4.0	Conclusion	13

# Introduction

Fotenn Consultants Inc. ("Fotenn"), acting as agent for TCU Development Corporation (on behalf of the owner Robinson Village IV LP), is pleased to submit this Planning Rationale in support of the enclosed Site Plan Revision and Lifting of Holding Symbol applications for the property municipally known as 36 Robinson Avenue ("the subject property"). The applicant proposes to revise the Site Plan that was recently approved, alongside an associated Zoning By-law Amendment, by City of Ottawa Council on January 29, 2020. The purpose of the Zoning By-law Amendment was to reduce the required parking, increase the permitted walkway width, and lift the Holding Symbol applicable to the site.

As the Zoning By-law Amendment that was approved by Council on January 29, 2020 has been appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), the intention of this Site Plan Revision application is to obtain approval for a development that is fully compliant with the zoning that is currently applicable to the site. Furthermore, a stand-alone Lifting of Holding Symbol application has been submitted to permit the development to proceed once the enclosed Site Plan Revision has been approved.

Where there have been no changes in background information, supporting policies or guidelines, these sections have been restated from the Planning Rationale dated April 22, 2019 that was submitted in support of the original Site Plan Control application (application # D07-12-19-0044).

### 1.1 Site and Development Application History

In 2014, City of Ottawa Council approved Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) plans and associated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for three Light Rail Transit (LRT) station areas: Lees, Hurdman and Blair. The associated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments included amendments to the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan, specifically amendments to permitted heights within the Robinson Village neighbourhood, which is within the Lees LRT station area. The height amendments impacted the subject property by redesignation it from 'residential high-profile' to 'residential high-medium' and implementing a maximum building height of six storeys (i.e., 20 metres). The previous owner of the subject property appealed the amendments to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) – now the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) – and a settlement was reached with the City of Ottawa. The settlement resulted in the current zoning of the site, which permits a maximum of nine storeys and 27 metres on the site, along with other site-specific zoning provisions, including a Holding Symbol that requires the approval of a Phase 1 Site Plan Control application.

In 2019, development plans for the subject property were initiated by the current owner for a nine-storey residential building. The following is an overview of the application history as it pertains to the development of the site by TCU Development Corporation on behalf of the property owner:

- / March 18, 2019: Submission of Site Plan Control Application D07-12-19-0044
  - Application submitted to permit the development of a nine-storey residential building with a building envelope in compliance with site zoning
- / March 26, 2019: Community Information Session #1
  - Session coordinated by the Ward Councillor. Approximately 60 residents attended the meeting held at the Sandy Hill Community Centre
- August 21, 2019: Submission of Minor Zoning By-law Amendment Application D02-02-19-0101
  - Application requested reduction of required parking, increased walkway width, and Lifting of Holding Symbol to permit the proposed development
- October 24, 2019: Community Information Session #2
  - Session coordinated by the Ward Councillor. Approximately 40 residents attended the meeting held at the Youville Centre
- January 23, 2020: City of Ottawa Planning Committee Meeting

- Planning Committee recommended that Council approve the Zoning By-law Amendment proposed for the subject property, along with Site Plan Control approval
- / January 29, 2020: City of Ottawa Council Meeting
  - City Council approved the Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control with a motion to revise the Site and Landscape Plans listed in the Site Plan Control approval, which had been revised to include side yard gates and building lighting
- March 3, 2020: Zoning By-law Amendment appealed to LPAT

### 1.2 Public Consultation Strategy

#### 1.2.1 Site Plan Revision

Pursuant to the City's Public Notification and Consultation Policy, the Site Plan Revision application will follow the Council-approved procedures for notification and consultation. It is important to note that the original Site Plan Control application (application D07-12-19-0044) was subject to public consultation and involved two community meetings as detailed in the previous section.

### 1.2.2 Lifting of Holding Symbol

Pursuant to the City's Public Notification and Consultation Policy, the Lifting of Holding Symbol application will follow the Council-approved procedures for notification and consultation.

### 1.3 Proposed Development

As detailed in the original Site Plan Control application, the proposed development is a nine-storey residential building with underground parking and rooftop amenity space. The revised Site Plan reduces the number of residential dwelling units from 192 units to 153 units, and increases the number of parking spaces from 71 to 88 to meet the minimum requirements as per the Zoning By-law. Additionally, the front walkway entrance has been reduced in width to 1.25 metres.

The development will maintain the same building envelope as previously proposed, which is a nine-storey building at a maximum building height of 27 metres. The building includes a stepback at the seventh storey and uses varying building materials, including brick and metal panelling, to provide visual interest and articulation. Vehicular access to the underground parking garage is to be provided at the west end of the building, as per the previous proposal, and bicycle parking will be mainly provided indoors within the parking garage, with nine spaces located outside. Amenity space is to be provided on the ground floor (gym and lounge), a common room on the ninth floor, a rooftop terrace, and private balconies. Waste management is internal to the building within the first level of the parking garage.

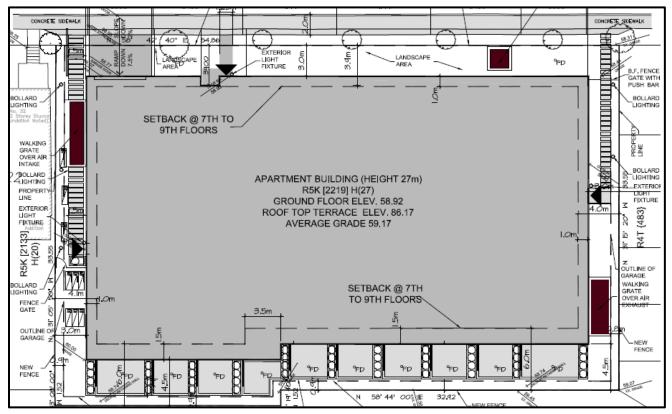


Figure 1: Revised Site Plan



Figure 2: North (front) elevation of proposed building

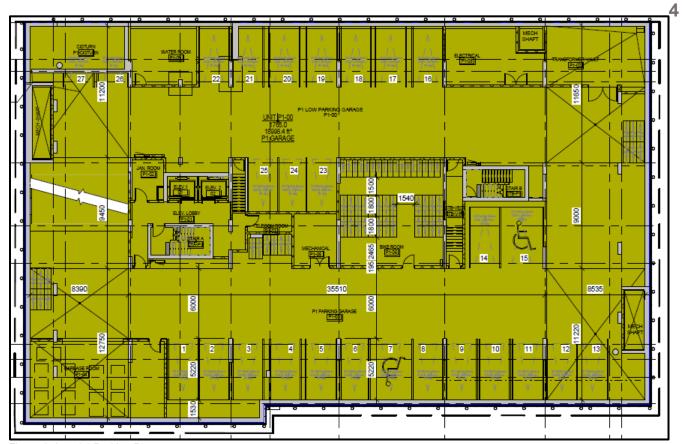


Figure 3: Level 1 Parking Plan

# **Site and Surrounding Context**

### 2.1 The Site

The subject property has a frontage of 48.9 metres on Robinson Avenue and a depth of 33.5 metres, for a total lot area of 1,875 square metres. There are currently four buildings on the subject property: a long, narrow building formerly used as a custom cycle repair shop; a pair of flat-roofed one-storey cinderblock buildings also formerly used for motorcycle repair and customization; and a two-storey house in poor condition. The legibility of the existing uses on the subject property is poor – the present function and purpose of these buildings is not readily apparent to the observer on the street. A large surface parking area accessed from the east edge of the site wraps around the rear of the aforementioned structures.

### 2.2 Context

The subject property is located in a low-rise residential enclave in the southeast corner of the Sandy Hill neighbourhood, bounded to the north by Robinson Field, to the east by the Rideau River, and to the south and west by Highway 417. Vehicular access to the area is limited to a single roadway passing beneath the Lees Avenue overpass.

The neighbourhood is characterized by a mix of land uses, particularly low- and medium-density residential dwellings. The City-owned Hurdman Yard Garage occupies the southern portion of the village, and some limited light industrial land uses are also present.



Figure 4: Context

**North** of the subject property is Robinson Avenue and a low-rise townhouse development. Beyond the townhouse development is Robinson Field, community gardens, and Robinson Park on the Rideau River shoreline. On the north side of Robinson Field is Strathcona Heights, an Ottawa Community Housing development in the Sandy Hill neighbourhood.

**South** of the subject property are varied low-rise residential uses ranging from single-detached dwellings to low-rise apartments, and varying in age and architectural style. On the south side of the Robinson Avenue loop is Hurdman Yard, a public works facility owned and operated by the City of Ottawa.

**East** of the subject property are low-rise residential uses consisting primarily of newer townhouses and stacked dwellings. Behind the townhouses is a multi-use pathway which follows the Rideau River shoreline.

**West** of the subject property are low-rise residential uses including detached dwellings and townhouses. Robinson Avenue and Hurdman Road intersect west of this site; Hurdman Road comes to a dead end and Robinson Avenue passes beneath the Lees Avenue overpass to connect with Lees Avenue further west.

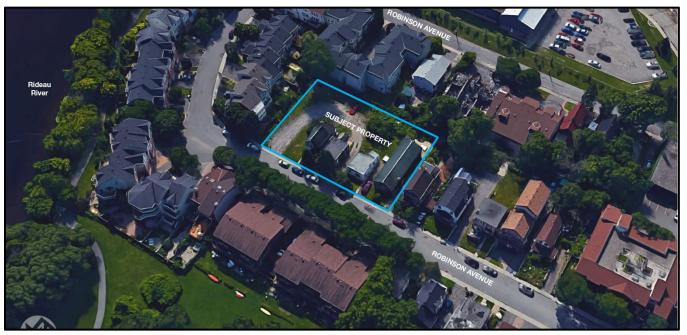


Figure 5: Aerial view of the subject site from the north



Figure 6: Existing conditions on the subject lands, looking southeast from Robinson Avenue

### 2.3 Community Amenities

The subject property is near Robinson Field, which is situated beyond the lots on the north side of Robinson Avenue and can be accessed via a footpath at the western end of the street. The subject property is also in close proximity to several community gardens, a multi-use pathway and linear greenspace along the Rideau River, the Sandy Hill Arena and the Lees Campus of the University of Ottawa.

As the nearby Lees LRT Station and the corresponding Transit-Oriented Development Plan is anticipated to incentivize dense, mixed-use, transit-oriented development in the surrounding area, the subject property is well positioned to take advantage of the neighbourhood's future evolution.

### 2.4 Transportation Network

### 2.4.1 Active Transportation

The nearest bus stop to Robinson Village is located on Lees Avenue, and is served by several major bus routes, including routes 6, 16, 95, 98, 101 and 103. Moreover, the site is within walking distance of the Lees LRT Station, as shown in Figure 5. Presently there is one pedestrian path leading northwest, out of Robinson Village, and a link to the multi-use pathway along the Rideau River to the east.



Figure 7: Site is located just over 400 metres from Lees LRT Station.

#### 2.4.2 Road Network

The area surrounding the subject site is relatively isolated despite its location in a central neighbourhood of the City of Ottawa. Its only connection to the road network is via Robinson Avenue, which passes underneath and then connects to Lees Avenue, an arterial road.

# **Policy and Regulatory Framework**

The proposed revisions maintain conformance with the Provincial Policy Statement, the City of Ottawa Official Plan, and the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan. Furthermore, the proposed revisions now result in a development that is fully compliant with the site's zoning pursuant to Zoning By-law 2008-250. The following sections detail the applicable policies, guidelines and zoning provisions.

### 3.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2014)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act in April 2014. It provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The Planning Act requires that decisions affecting planning matters "shall be consistent with" policy statements issued under the Act.

The PPS emphasizes the intensification of built-up areas to promote the efficient use of land, existing infrastructure and public service facilities to avoid the need for unjustified and uneconomic expansion. Planning authorities must pursue land use patterns that support active transportation and existing or planned transit [Policy 1.1.3.2] and identify and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment [Policy 1.1.3.3].

The proposed development capitalizes on an opportunity for mixed-use development and intensification within the city's built-up area. It minimizes the consumption of new land for development and makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and public services, brings residential intensification to an underutilized site and adds housing in an area where public transit is easily available, and promotes densities that contribute to more sustainable land use patterns.

The proposed development is in conformity with the intent and policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

### 3.2 Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

Recent changes made by the Province of Ontario to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) are expected to come into force on May 1, 2020. With respect to housing within the urban area, the 2020 PPS maintains the same general policies, while adding additional language to ensure that municipalities also address affordable and market-based residential types. Further to this, transit-supportive development and intensification are identified as cost-effective development patterns.

The proposed development is in conformity with the intent and policies of the proposed Provincial Policy Statement (2020).

### 3.3 City of Ottawa Official Plan

The City of Ottawa Official Plan provides the policy framework for strategic growth and development of the city to the year 2036. The City plans to meet Ottawa's growth and development by managing it in ways that support liveable communities and healthy environments. In other words, the City is striving to create 'complete' communities in which residents do not need to drive for everyday activities and where jobs, shopping, recreation and social activities lie within walking or cycling distance.

### 3.3.1 Managing Growth

Section 2.2 of the Official Plan addresses how growth is to be managed within Ottawa, including the urban area and village boundaries, managing intensification, and employment area policies. Section 2.2.2 – Managing Intensification within the Urban Area, defines residential intensification as "the development of a property, building or area that results in a net increase in residential units or accommodation". It is recognized that intensification is generally the most cost-effective pattern of development for the provision of municipal

services, transit, and other infrastructure, and can be provided through redevelopment, the development of vacant or underutilized lots, infill development, and conversions. Policy 11 of Section 2.2.2 states that building heights and densities for may be established through a secondary plan and implemented through zoning.

The proposed development represents residential intensification through the redevelopment of underutilized lots within an existing neighbourhood. The proposed building height has been established through both the applicable secondary plan and zoning.

### 3.3.2 Land Use Designation

The subject property is designated General Urban Area pursuant to Schedule B of the City of Ottawa Official Plan. As per the policies of Section 3.6.1, the General Urban Area permits a wide variety of uses, including all types and densities of housing. Generally, building heights are to be predominantly low-rise (e.g., up to four storeys), but higher heights are permitted pursuant to Secondary Plans or existing zoning. Additionally, higher heights are permitted on sites that support the City's rapid transit network, or where the area is already characterized by taller buildings or zoning that permits taller buildings.

Residential intensification of the General Urban Area through infill or redevelopment is to relate to existing community character, apply policies of Section 2.5.1 and Section 4.11, and contribute to the balance and range of housing types and tenures. While the proposed development is of a size and scale appropriate to General Urban Areas anywhere in the city, the policy speaks to the fact that transit-adjacent areas are seen as ideal for higher-density development.

The proposed building height of 27 metres (nine storeys) is permitted by the existing zoning on the subject property. The proposed development, which meets the definition of residential intensification as defined by the Official Plan, conforms to the policies of Sections 2.5.1 and 4.11 for Urban Design and Compatibility as further described herein.

### 3.3.3 Urban Design and Compatibility

As required for residential intensification sites within the General Urban Area, the policies of Sections 2.5.1 and 4.11 of the Official Plan are to be used to evaluate urban design and compatibility.

Section 2.5.1 of the Official Plan addresses building liveable communities through such aspects as built form, open spaces and infrastructure. Design objectives are identified to guide and influence the built environment from a city-wide to site-specific basis. The proposed development relates to the applicable design objectives and principles in Section 2.5.1 as follows:

- Objective 1: Enhances the sense of community by creating and maintaining places with their own distinct identity.
  - Mid-rise development is appropriate within close proximity to a transit-adjacent setting and is consistent with the built form patterns anticipated in the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan and TOD Guidelines.
- Objective 2: Defines quality public and private spaces through development;
  - The proposed development takes the place of several dwellings of varying massing and character, and, in doing so, promotes a more cohesive urban fabric.
  - The proposed development more strongly addresses the street and contributes to a continuous street frontage
- Objective 3: Creates places that are safe, accessible and are easy to get to, and move through.
  - The proposed development is a product of the integration of public transit with new development, providing increased densities in area served by higher-order transit.
  - The proposed development adds residential density to the neighbourhood, and with it, "eyes on the street" – new neighbourhood residents coming and going at various times of the day and night.

- / Objective 4: To ensure that new development respects the character of existing areas.
  - The proposed development takes place on lands that have fallen into disuse relative to the rest of the neighbourhood. The new built form represents an evolution in the role of the neighbourhood – from an out-of-the-way enclave of Sandy Hill to a node on a major transit line.
- Objective 5: Considers adaptability and diversity by creating places that can adapt and evolve easily over time and that are characterized by variety and choice.
  - Residential intensification helps achieve a more compact urban form over time and concentrates
    people in a central part of the city where they can walk, cycle, or take transit to employment
    opportunities, schools and services.
  - Adding more housing to the neighbourhood helps accommodate the needs of a range of people of different incomes, lifestyles, and ages.

Section 4.11 of the Official Plan sets out criteria which are used to evaluate the compatibility of proposed developments with respect to urban design and compatibility. These criteria address such aspects as views, building design, massing and scale, and outdoor amenity area. Not all criteria listed in Section 4.11 apply to every development proposal. The most applicable compatibility criteria are discussed in the following table:

**Table 1. Section 4.11 Compatibility Criteria** 

COMPATIBILITY CRITERIA	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
VIEWS:	The building will not impact any protected views.
BUILDING DESIGN:	The proposed building breaks up its massing vertically and horizontally through upper-storey stepbacks and articulation of the façade through varying volumes and materiality. This articulation relates to the surrounding low-rise development, as well as future mid-rise development that may take place in the area. [Policy 5]  The principal façade and entrances are oriented to the street, and windows are visible from the public realm; architectural elements are used to accentuate the main building entrance [Policy 6].  The garbage room for the building is internalized within the underground parking garage. [Policy 8]
MASSING AND SCALE:	The proposed building fits within the as-of-right zoning and within the height profile specified in the Secondary Plan for this site; its massing is broken up visually through articulation and materiality, and it is of a scale appropriate to an area that is meant to evolve as a transit-oriented neighbourhood with typical heights of six storeys on this block [Policy 10/12/13].
OUTDOOR AMENITY AREAS:	The proposed development meets all applicable zoning provisions with respect to massing and height. It shares a rear lot line with townhomes oriented around a central courtyard, and which are built practically to the rear lot line, minimizing the amount of impacted outdoor amenity area; amenity areas for the properties to the east and west will retain sunlight access to the south [Policy 19].  The proposed development will incorporate a range of usable private and communal amenity areas for residents appropriate to the size and type of development [Policy 20].

The proposed development supports the City's objectives for building liveable communities through appropriate intensification that supports transit and housing choices. The building envelope is

compliant with the current zoning applicable to the site, which employs the use of stepbacks to provide appropriate transition to the surrounding neighbourhood. Together with the stepbacks, materiality provides visual interest and articulation resulting in a development that fits in with the neighbourhood character.

### 3.4 Sandy Hill Secondary Plan

The Sandy Hill Secondary Plan is intended to preserve and enhance Sandy Hill as an attractive residential neighbourhood, provide for a broad range of socio-economic groups, accommodate a modest increase in population, and maintain the functions of Sandy Hill locally (as a primarily residential neighbourhood) and over a wider area (the Rideau Street corridor and the University of Ottawa).

The height maximum for the subject site is given as "medium-profile" in Schedule J of the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan, which permits development of five to nine storeys. Schedule L provides a more detailed height plan for the Robinson Village area, and specifies a height of eight storeys for the subject property. Note that the Zoning By-law establishes a maximum permitted height of 27 metres, which allows for nine storeys under the common assumption of three-metre floor-to-ceiling heights.

In Section 5.3.2 of the Secondary Plan, the pertinent policies on residential land use are:

- / To preserve and enhance the existing stock of good housing.
- To distinguish among types of new housing on the basis of scale, and to locate the different types in areas appropriate to them.
- To provide a wide variety of housing, including accommodation for low-income people, the elderly, the handicapped and others with special needs.

In Section 5.3.6 of the Secondary Plan, the pertinent policies on site development are:

- / To ensure that the scale, form, proportion and spatial arrangement of new development cause minimal intrusion on the sunlight, air and aspect enjoyed by existing adjacent development. Wherever possible, such new development shall contribute to the overall physical environment.
- / To ensure that new development shall provide for internal and external on-site amenity areas.
- / To enhance development with landscaping, especially for parking and loading areas and as a buffer between dissimilar land uses.

The proposed development conforms with the policies of the Secondary Plan. The building adds to the stock of housing choices, is scaled appropriately for its area, and provides rental units that can accommodate a variety of potential residents. It surpasses minimum density targets while fitting within the prescribed height profile for these lands.

### 3.5 Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a mix of moderate- to high-density transit-supportive land uses located within an easy walk of a rapid transit stop or station that is oriented and designed to facilitate transit use. The guidelines for TOD are to be applied to all development within a 600-metre walking distance of a rapid transit stop. The proposed development is in the area of influence of Lees Station.

The TOD Guidelines encourage transit-supportive land uses (Guideline 1), including high residential densities such as apartments, which generate pedestrian and cycling traffic and provide extended hours of activity throughout the day and week. Buildings are to be located close to each other and the front of the street (Guideline 7) to encourage ease of walking.

TOD Guidelines also make reference to reduced automobile use and limiting the supply of parking spaces (Guideline 32).

The proposed development meets the objectives of the TOD guidelines by increasing the residential density of lands within walking distance of transit.

### 3.6 Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2008-250

The subject property is zoned Residential Fifth Density Zone, Subzone K, Urban Exception 2219, Maximum Height 27 Metres, Holding Zone (R5K[2219] H(27)-h) in the City of Ottawa Zoning By-law. The purpose of the R5 zone includes allowing a wide mix of residential building forms up to high-rise apartments and regulating development to be compatible with existing land use patterns, among others.

### 3.6.1 Zoning Provisions

The revised Site Plan is compliant with the zoning applicable to the site as detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Zoning Compliance for mid-rise apartment in R5K [2219] H(27)-h Zone

Provision	Required	Proposed	Compliance
Minimum Lot Width (m)	15 m	54.9 m	✓
Minimum Lot Area (m²)	450 m²	1,875 m²	✓
Building Height (m)	27 m	27 m	✓
Minimum Front Yard (m)	1 – 6 storeys: 3 m 7 – 9 storeys: 4 m	1 – 6 storeys: 3 m 7 – 9 storeys: 4 m	<b>✓</b>
Minimum Rear Yard (m)	1 – 6 storeys: 4.5 m 7 – 9 storeys: 6 m	1 – 6 storeys: 4.5 m 7 – 9 storeys: 6 m	<b>✓</b>
Minimum Interior Side Yard (m)	,	1 – 6 storeys: 3 m 7 – 9 storeys: 4 m	<b>✓</b>
Parking (s.101)	0.5/unit = (153-12)*0.5 = 71 Max. 40% reduced = 28	74 resident parking 28 reduced/46 standard	<b>√</b>
Visitor Parking (s.102)	0.1/unit = (153-12)*0.1 = 14	14 visitor parking	<b>✓</b>
Aisles/ Driveway (s.107)	Driveway: Max. 6 m Drive aisle: Min. 6 m	Driveway: 6 m Drive aisle: 6 m	<b>✓</b>
Bicycle Parking (s.111)	0.5/unit = 153*0.5 = 77 Max. 36 vertical Max. 15 outdoors	Total: 77 51 horizontal/17 vertical 68 indoors/9 outdoor	<b>✓</b>
Amenity Area (s.137)	6m <sup>2</sup> per dwelling unit = 918 m <sup>2</sup> Communal: 50% of the total amenity = 459 m <sup>2</sup>	Total = 946 m <sup>2</sup> Communal = 694 m <sup>2</sup>	<b>✓</b>
Maximum Width of Walkway (s.139)	1.25 m	1.25 m	<b>✓</b>
Landscape Area (s.163)	30%	31%	✓

### 3.6.2 Holding Symbol

As previously discussed, a Holding Symbol is applicable to the site. Urban Exception 2219 details the provisions of the Holding Symbol, which requires that a phase 1 site plan approval be completed prior to its lifting. As detailed herein, upon approval of the enclosed Site Plan Revision, the provisions of the Holding Symbol will have been met, and the Holding Symbol can be lifted to permit development to proceed.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed development is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and conforms to the policies of the Official Plan and Sandy Hill Secondary Plan. The development represents appropriate intensification within the urban area and within close proximity to transit, and provides appropriate transition to the surrounding neighbourhood through appropriate setbacks and stepbacks.

The proposed development complies with the zoning applicable to the site, including maximum building height, building setbacks and stepbacks, and parking. With the submission of the Site Plan Revision and subsequent approval, the provisions of the Holding Symbol will be met allowing the Holding Symbol to be lifted and development to commence.

Overall, the proposed development supports appropriate growth within Ottawa, including optimizing the use of serviced lands, promoting residential intensification within the existing urban boundary, and promoting transit-oriented development. Based on the above analysis, it is our professional opinion that the proposed development represents good planning and is, therefore, in the public interest.

Sincerely,

Kersten Nitsche, MCIP RPP

Senior Planner