DESIGN BRIEF

THE EAST FLATS, 301-324 LETT STREET SITE PLAN APPLICATION

May 2020



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JAMES B. LENNOX & ASSOCIATES INC. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This Design Brief supports the Site Plan Application by Claridge Homes for the next phase of the East Flats neighbourhood, at 301-324 Lett Street, in Downtown Ottawa.

Over a decade ago, Claridge Homes began developing a neighbourhood on the east side of LeBreton Flats, on the land acquired from the National Capital Commission (NCC). In 2017, the plan for the "East Flats" was updated in response to the Confederation LRT Line. The plan envisions a thriving mixed-use community anchored by the Pimisi LRT Station, set in a rich system of parks and open spaces, and connected to the network of streets, bicycle routes, and multi-use paths in and around downtown.

On July 11, 2018, City Council approved amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law 2008-250 to permit implementation of the East Flats plan, including five residential towers ranging in height from 25 to 45 storeys, with a mix of retail and institutional uses in the tower podiums. At the time, holding provisions were placed on all phases of development with the exception of the intended next phase, which consisted of a 30-storey residential tower and a 2-storey podium in the northwest block along Booth Street. The lifting of the hold provisions is subject to transportation and servicing studies demonstrating adequate infrastructure capacity for each subsequent phase of development.

As the next step in the continued transformation of the East Flats, Claridge Homes is now proposing the next phase of development on the central block bound by Fleet street to the north, Lloyd street to the west, and Lett Street to the south and east ("the site") while maintaining the overall vision and fully respecting the land use and built form policies and regulations approved in 2018. An application to amend the Zoning By-law was submitted in April 2020 to transfer the holding provisions from the subject site to the northwest block.







The Site

D02-02-17-0106

Zoning By-law 2008-250 Schedule 386

Summary of Proposed Development

The current Site Plan Application proposes a 25-storey condominium apartment building, with a podium containing a daycare and grade-related residential units, and a 30-storey rental apartment building, with a podium containing commercial space overlooking the future "Aqueduct Park" as well as grade-related units. Between the two buildings, a through-block landscaped pedestrian walkway and outdoor amenity spaces are proposed.

Proposed Concept Statistics

- Total Gross Floor Area: 36,757 m2 (395,650 sq. ft.)
- Total Number of Units: 595 units (276 condominium units & 319 rental units)

- **Total Retail Area:** 740 m2 (7,965 sq. ft.)
- Daycare Area: 384 m2 (4,133 sq. ft.)
- Amenity Areas: 10,100 m2 (108,715 sq. ft.)
- Vehicle Parking: 347 spaces
- Bicycle Parking: 470 spaces



BRIEF HISTORY OF LEBRETON FLATS

LeBreton Flats has a rich cultural history. Before European settlers arrived in the area in the 17th century, the Ottawa River Valley was an important trade, transportation and communication corridor for Canada's indigenous peoples. When European settlement began in earnest at the beginning of the 19th century, LeBreton Flats developed as a vibrant industrial district with businesses, homes, and rail lines that supported the mills on the nearby Chaudière and Victoria islands. The historic aqueduct running to the south of the site dates back to this time, as well as the Fleet Street Pumping Station and a series of stone bridges along the aqueduct, one of which is known to be Ottawa's oldest bridge (Pooley's Bridge).

After a large fire destroyed much of the area in 1900, the area's industries transitioned to focus more specifically on supporting Ottawa's railway sector with foundries, smelters and other metalworks dominating the landscape. In the 1960s, the Federal Government expropriated and demolished the buildings in the area to make way for a federal office building campus, but one was never built. The lands remained vacant for decades, until the Canadian War Museum was built, followed by the initial phases of the East Flats development and more recently the Holocaust Memorial.



View of LeBreton Flats from Parliament Hill (1865 - 1870) / Image Source: Library and Archives of Canada, Ontario



Aerial view of LeBreton Flats' industrial landscape in the early 1900s



The Fleet Street Pumping Station

The aqueduct

Pooley's Bridge

THE EAST FLATS DESIGN BRIEF

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS TODAY

The site is bound by Fleet street to the north, Lloyd street to the west, and Lett Street to the south and east. On the east side of the site are the first two phases of the East Flats neighbourhood: a condominium apartment building ranging from six to fourteen storeys north of Fleet Street; and two apartment buildings of six and eight storeys on either ends of a row of townhouses south of Fleet Street. Immediately to the west of the site are vacant lands intended for future phases of the East Flats development.

The Pimisi LRT Station is approximately 200 metres from the site, providing convenient rapid transit connections to key areas of the city including downtown and the University of Ottawa to the east, and Tunney's Pasture to the west. Extensions to the Confederation Line, to the east, west and south, are under construction.

The site is surrounded by unique natural features and cultural landmarks, including the Ottawa River to the north, the escarpment to the east, and the historic aqueduct that runs to the south of the site. North of the site is the Firefighters' Memorial, the Holocaust Memorial and the Canadian War Museum. A new Ottawa Central Library and Archives Canada building is planned to the southeast, on top of the escarpment. Set to open in 2024, the new library will add a landmark destination and community facility close to the site.

To the east of the site, on top of the escarpment, is the Cathedral Hill neighbourhood, home to many high-rise apartment buildings.

The site and surrounding context

View looking west towards Claridge lands

View looking east along Macdonald Parkway

View looking south from Lett Street towards the site / Image source: Google Maps

View of the site looking north from Lett Street / Image source: Google Maps

View looking east on Fleet Street

Pimisi Station / Image source: Otrainfans

View looking north-east along aqueduct to Fleet Street Pumping Station

View of the Tail Race

View looking south to Firefighters' Memorial and existing East Flats development

The site is surrounded by a variety of parks and open spaces that include LeBreton Flats Park and Pindigen Park, the latter across the street from the site, greenspaces and the Pumphouse Whitewater facility along the aqueduct, and trails that form a part of the Capital Pathway and the Ottawa River Pathway. A future City park is also planned immediately south of the site, adjacent to and straddling the aqueduct. Along with the planned outdoor spaces associated with the planned Central Library, the future park will offer a significant open space addition to the area.

Lands west of Booth Street and Pindigen Park make up the 29-hectare LeBreton Flats site owned by the NCC. In January 2020, following cancellation of the previous redevelopment plan, the NCC's Board of Directors approved a new preliminary Master Concept Plan to guide mixed-use development of the lands over the next 25-35 years. The Concept Plan calls for residential communities of high-rise (up to 40 storeys) and mid-rise buildings, a cultural and entertainment district along the aqueduct and a new destination park.

Planned Ottawa Central Library and Archives / Image source: Ottawa Public Library

LeBreton Flats Preliminary Master Concept Plan / Image Source: NCC

Artistic rendering of the Urban Playground proposed in the LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan / Image Source: NCC

Artistic rendering of the Aqueduct District proposed in the LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan / Image Source: NCC

Artistic rendering of the Albert District proposed in the LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan / Image Source: NCC

Artistic rendering of the Capital Park proposed in the LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan / Image Source: NCC

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ARCHITECTURAL APPROACH

The proposed development has been guided by the vision to redefine the site as an urban neighbourhood with transit-oriented density that supports the existing Pimisi Station, and the desire to provide a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment.

The initial phases of development at LeBreton Flats, located to the north and northeast of the site were designed following a strict master plan developed by the NCC, featuring perimeter blocks of low-rise (4-6 storey) housing punctuated by mid-rise structures (13 storey maximum). These guidelines, dating from 2004, yielded a strongly street defined medium-density urban intervention with inward-oriented gardens, except where the project opened to the tailrace to the east.

The guidelines restricting built form and density have since been relaxed and a new image of the LeBreton Flats development has emerged as an inner-city gateway project of substantial density, inviting a more iconic architecture. This involved a major re-thinking of the master plan and the resulting massing and architectural treatment of the next phases.

The proposed development has been designed in concert with future phases which include an iconic 45-storey tower to be located on the adjacent block to the west, and a major urban park bridging the aqueduct located to the south which will provide a stage for the development. In anticipation of the taller tower to the west, we feel the current phases require a certain sobriety in deference to future phases, and must also contribute a transitional expression with strong links to the defining elements of the previous phases.

The massing of the project consists of two separate 5 storey podiums on the north and south sides of the site with rotated towers reaching 25 storeys (north side) and 30 storeys (south side) sitting at the northwest and southeast corner of the site, respectively. The podiums are divided on the site's east-west axis by a green space which serve as a through-block passageway. The approach taken is to apply the street-oriented aspect of the first phases and reinterpret the garden-courtyard, its place taken with the more vectorial, more public through-block garden passageway which will be treated in a manner much less rigid and more sinuous than the at-grade experience of the perimeter, creating a strong sense of contrast within the internal and external expression of the project.

The softness of the garden passageway is achieved through the sculpting, modulation and material treatment of the adjacent defining structures. Double-height but human-scaled elements project from the podium structure into the envelope of the passageway creating an intimacy of experience differing from the perimeter. These low-rise built forms contain the project's indoor private swimming pools and a public daycare centre with its circular playground and garden. Lett and Lloyd streets are linked by a winding pathway between these elements, flanked by integrated concrete benches and gardens. The swimming pools will be substantially glazed offering a transparency into and out of the project across the garden pathway.

The ground floor planning provides a visual link through the elevator and entrance lobbies of each building to Fleet street on the north and Lett street and the public park on the south. Material treatments in the garden passageway would be extensions of the podium treatment, featuring combinations of an earthy brown masonry, elements of weathered steel, glass and landscape elements of nearly white precast concrete. It should be noted that no private dwellings face the garden pathway at pedestrian levels, avoiding privacy issues. The daycare playground is separated from the pathway by the concrete bench and a vegetated fence.

The podium borrows from the expression of the earlier phases, particularly along the longer (north-south) Lett Street elevation across which it faces - clad in the earthy-brown masonry with a rational grid of punch-window openings interrupted by larger openings providing loggias. The podium above grade level appropriately retains a residential character in expression. The ground floor facing the longer Lett Street mainly presents street-accessible residential units currently designed as townhome, live-work or loft-type units in order to avoid bedrooms at street level, to animate the grade level, to offer an alternative housing typology and to fully and efficiently occupy the higher ground floor height of the project. The street facade of the daycare and its main entrance address the longer Lett Street at the portal of the garden walkway.

Turning west from each corner, the podium at grade becomes more transparent and less gravity defined, as uses become less private and more communal and public. The masonry gradually hovers above the sidewalks revealing a transparent grade-level containing amenities, lobbies and commercial space. Double-height lobbies occupy northwest and south east corners, with entrances oriented off Lloyd and the longer Lett Streets respectively. Both building lobbies are fully glazed, facing gardens and are intended as common tranquil meeting spaces where comings and goings of neighbours and visitors can be enjoyed in daylit space facing animated streets and gardens. Where masonry meets the ground, glazed planes are inset and masonry returned to provide some privacy and containment to the functions within, and to create an impression of mass of the solid elements which meet the ground.

View of the podiums and landscaped mid-block connection

The upper floors of the podium are expressed in the same manner as that described on the longer Lett elevation; rational generous punch windows with punctuation of loggias opening up the straight-forward volumes. Balconies, contrasting those of the earlier phases, are irregular, continuous and projected. Along longer Lett and Lloyd streets, they are non-rectilinear in plan and do not align from one floor to the next creating an irregular plane projecting in front of the more severe masonry envelope. Guards are bands of silk-screened glass. The balcony forms are intended to reflect the horizontally striated limestone found on the banks of the tailrace to the east and south and also provide a dynamic counterpoint to the earlier phases across Lett. Limited surfaces at the ground floor and within loggias are treated in weathered steel to recall the industrial past of LeBreton Flats.

Roofs of the daycare and projected portions of the swimming pools will be treated as garden roofs, benefiting the residential units located on the second floor. The two towers sit atop their respective podiums at opposite corners of the site, as previously described, so as to offer non-obstructed views from each face. They are generally rectangular in plan - only slightly off being square - but are subtly sculpted to provide modulation of form. Each typical floor plate measures 750 m2 in area allowing for 10 or 11 residential units of differing types. At the base of the towers on the 6th floor, common amenities of both phases are located so as to take advantage of expansive terraces of the podium roofs.

The towers feature a combination of two principal material treatments and a differing transitional treatment. Generally, facades of the tower will be a light-coloured masonry with regular, generous but restrained punch window openings forming a regular, repetitive grid pattern. Window frames are black in colour to contrast the light masonry and to maximize the expressed openings in the masonry. Rising above the corners of the residential entrances and lobbies, the northwest and south east corners of the towers are completely glass- clad, predominantly transparent in combination with glass spandrels. At their respective summits, the glass corners project above the cornices of the masonry-clad adjacent facades to house mechanical penthouses and screen roof-top mechanical equipment. On the two floors resting on the podium roof, the volumes of the corners are slightly set back and treated as transitional fully transparent curtain wall to provide a 'base' at the podium level. The same setback occurs at the 16th floor of both towers, providing additional relief of massing, and relating to the heights of the towers of the earlier phases. The glass facades are separated from the masonry facades by either a vertical slot (providing a partially recessed balcony) or a set-back. This treatment in concert with the vertical projection of the glass corner above the general roofline allows the glass corners to be read as volumes rather than surfaces. The disengagement at their base from the podium, the gap at the sixteenth floor, their slightly irregular form in plan and elevation as well as the inclined cornice line at the top of the mechanical screen walls are intended to create the image of distinct glass crystals, defining the prominent corners of the project. The treatment is intended to enhance verticality, create distinct smaller scaled elements and interrupt uniformity within a cohesive composition.

Bird's eye view

View from the Intersection of Fleet and Lloyd Streets

Through-block Open Space

View from Lett Street

View from the Corner of Lett Street

Site Plan and Ground Floor Plan

Floor Plan - 2nd Floor

Floor Plan - 6th Floor

Typical Tower Floor Plan - 8th to 15th Floor

Floor Plan - 16th Floor

TOWER C 17th TO 25th FLOOR

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The landscape design attempts to create an environmentally sensitive, energy-efficient urban campus consistent with the previous phases of the neighbourhood. This urban campus feeling was created through the integration of Fleet Street, Lett Street and Lloyd Street with the previously built streetscapes. The integration was facilitated through the use of consistent plant materials, pavements and landscape treatments.

Private, communal and commercial exterior spaces are integrated into the fabric of the project to create secure spaces for residents to interact and develop a sense of community. Pedestrian and cycle way-finding is provided with a variation in surface materials and separation of the various modes of transport. Bicycle parking is secure and inside of the building protected from the elements.

Landscape material palette from initial phases of the East Flats development

Landscape Plan

SUSTAINABILITY

The design and construction of the proposed development will continue to pursue sustainability principles established in the earlier phases, which are certified LEED silver.

The proposed development of the site will provide 595 residential units, a daycare and 740 square metres of commercial space, focusing density and accommodating mix of uses for future residents in a more sustainable manner compared to low-density housing options.

With the implementation of Ottawa's LRT system, the site is located at a rapid-transit hub, and presently offers within easy pedestrian reach a wide range of shopping and amenities, being within walking distance of the city core. The future mixed-use development of LeBreton Flats and its environs will only improve the walkability of the address, reducing the need for private motor vehicles for daily needs.

All on-site parking is provided underground, and is provided in numbers far below the city's permitted maximum rate. Electric charging stations will be provided and communal spots will be considered. Secure, indoor ride-in bicycle storage is also provided below grade, in numbers exceeding municipal requirements and LEED standards.

Over 34% of the site is landscaped at grade. A through-block garden passageway will be substantially vegetated, contributing the greening of the neighbourhood. The vegetated, occupied podium roofs at levels 2 and 6 and reflective roof treatments on tower roofs contributes to mitigating the urban heat island effect. Stormwater management principles will be strictly applied with consideration of using rain water collected in sub-grade cisterns for irrigation of landscaping. Exterior lighting will be designed so as to reduce light pollution to a minimum. The building design including envelope and heating and cooling systems will optimize energy consumption through modeling to meet and exceed all provincial and federal model requirements. The building envelope will be predominantly rain-screen masonry and punched windows, allowing for higher overall energy efficiency than can be achieved with all-glass wall systems. Where full glazing is used, the efficiency of glazing units and spandrel panels will be optimized to assure comfort and overall energy model performance.

Construction will favour locally sourced, durable, sustainable and recycled materials. Contractors will be required to follow best waste-management principles. Interior finishes will also favour local sourcing and will be selected for durability and low-emissivity. HRVs will efficiently condition air within units and provide suitable fresh air into each unit, while operable windows will permit natural ventilation to all living spaces. Units are designed for maximum penetration of natural light. These measures will reduce energy consumption and reliance on electrical and mechanical systems.

Bird's eye view showing the green podiums and through-block open space

THE EAST FLATS DESIGN BRIEF

BUILDING ELEVATIONS

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Garden (Mid-block) Elevation

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CONFORMITY TO POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

East Flats Policies, Central Area Secondary Plan

The proposed development conforms to the Central Area Secondary Plan's urban design policies for the East Flats approved in 2018 (Section 1.11.13), specifically:

- Active frontages are proposed along all facades and grade accessed units are provided on Lett Street.
- Buildings will be built close to the property lines.
- Building entrances will be located in accessible and visible locations oriented to the street.
- The ground floors incorporate active uses and transparent glazing to create visual interest and support an active public realm.
- The buildings take a tower-and-podium form. The podiums are five storeys and will animate the pedestrian realm, form a continuous street wall, and relate to the adjacent buildings in massing, height and architectural rhythm.
- The towers will be stepped back from the podium level to mitigate their micro-climatic and visual impact and provide transition from abutting properties.
- The towers will have a maximum floor plate of 750 square metres to maintain sky views and reduce the perceived massing of the buildings.
- The separation distance between towers will be approximately 24 metres to mitigate shadow impacts on adjacent sensitive areas, sky-view and privacy impacts.
- The mechanical penthouses are architecturally integrated in a manner that is consistent with the overall character of the towers.
- Lloyd, Lett, and Fleet Streets, surrounding the block, will prioritize the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists and will be planted with street trees.

- Street trees and other landscaping comprise a diversity of native species.
- Residential parking will be located underground.
- Pick-up and drop-off locations will be located close to primary building entrances on the street.
- Loading and servicing areas will be located underground, with access located on Lloyd Street.
- Adequate on-site visitor parking shall be provided.

Ottawa Urban Design Guidelines for High-Rise Housing

The proposed development also adheres to the City's Urban Design Guidelines for High-Rise Housing, specifically the buildings:

- Are oriented to establish a pattern of development blocks, street edges, and site circulation that defines a public realm of streets and open spaces and integrates the surrounding street pattern;
- Use the proportions, rhythm and height of the building base and tower to define relationships to the neighbouring existing buildings;
- Use distinctive design features, building forms and shapes to contribute to a sense of place;
- Provide direct links to public transit, sidewalks and streets;
- Define a human-scaled street space;
- Design corner sites with buildings that wrap around the street corner;
- Do not block or detract from views to landmarks, historic buildings, monuments, public art, parks and the Ottawa River;
- Support human-scaled streetscapes, open spaces and quality pedestrian environments:

- to the public realm;
- people on the street;
- Provide wide sidewalks;
- the street; and
- the south.

• Locate active uses along the street façades to enhance the relationship

• Create sufficient separation between towers to allow for adequate light, solar exposure, views and privacy for people in the building, as well as

• Provide a setback of landscaping with trees, shrubs, walls and fences where residential units are at grade to define the pedestrian space, provide a sense of privacy for residents, and enhance the character of

• Frame the edge of Pindigen Park to the north and the future City park to

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