

July 28th, 2026

**551 Riverdale Avenue
Architectural Site Design Rationale**

Context - Street Character

551 Riverdale (Fig. 4) is located between Bank Street & Cameron Ave. on the East side (river side) of Riverdale Avenue. (Refer to Figures 1 thru 7)

This portion of Riverdale Ave. is an evolving residential street with a mix of old & newer construction.

To the South of the site, on the same side of the street;

559 Riverdale Ave. - (Fig. 1)

Adjacent to the South - A one story house with a ramp driveway to the basement level garage. A previous Site Plan application (D07-12-16-0048) proposed redevelopment of the property with a three-storey, multi-unit apartment building and a 3.0 m front-yard setback. Although the application was approved, the approval has since lapsed. The existing house may therefore not represent the property's long-term development pattern and should be given limited weight when assessing the established building line along this evolving portion of Riverdale Avenue.

563 - 573 Riverdale Ave. - (Fig. 2 & 3)

4- 2 ½-Story brick 1950s walk up apartments. Entrance doors are at the side with parking in side yard laneways or in front yard. Setbacks are between 3m to 4m. Building widths are 12 meters on 15.5 metre wide lots (77% of the lot width).

To the North of the site, on the same side of the street;

517 - 511 Riverdale (Fig. 5&6)

- 4-40' by 100' lot bungalows
- side yard laneways
- garages or sheds in the rear yard
- built in the 1950s or earlier
- these bungalows are not typical 'Ottawa South' homes

Appropriate future redevelopment of these sites would include three story multi unit missing middle housing.

Directly opposite this site is a mix of newer 2 story single, 3 story apartment & 3 storey semi detached at odd angles to the street, with no tree line & not an example of a mature neighbourhood nor typical 'Ottawa South'. **(See Fig. 7)**

...2

The front yard setback of the proposed building should align with the 4-2 1/ storey apartment buildings to the South. These apartment buildings establish the building line when entering the neighbourhood from Bank Street. A new & appropriate building line will be established by the proposed building at 551 Riverdale, in line with the 4 apartment buildings.

Street Character Comments.

This block of Riverdale Ave, does not have a Mature Neighbourhood character & is not typical of "Ottawa South"

The dominant characteristics are;

1. Spatial Separation between buildings
2. Side yard laneways. No garages.
3. Large tree line on East, No tree line on West
4. House & apartment lots of approximately 8 to 12m wide.

The proposed Site Plan has;

1. Separation between the proposed building & adjacent properties.
2. Will have a side yard laneway, walkway/ bike way.
3. Will not have a garage or garage door facing the street.
4. Will have trees in the front yard.

All consistent with the existing streetscape.

Site Plan

A buildings floor plan design & site plan evolve from the Site analysis, dimensions, configuration & external influences. The greatest number of units in the building are located in rectangular shape running perpendicular to the street towards the river. This rectangle has a width of 19.5m which is critical to the efficiency of the floor plan, providing 1,2- & 3-Bedroom units on either side of a corridor with a rentable to gross floor area ratio of about 87%.

The buildings elevator core should be approximately in the centre of the rectangle's length. This results in the lobby & building entrance being in-line with the centre of the courtyard.

The courtyard as designed contributes significantly to the efficiency of the buildings floor plan and it would not be appropriate to be used as building area.

The courtyard is a combination of hard surface & landscaping with small sitting areas. It is an open space, facing South, partially shaded and protected from the prevailing winds.

The Lobby & adjacent function room have direct access and at times the Courtyard will be an exterior extension of the inside use.

There are 8 Surface parking spaces tucked into corners & under the building for short term visitors, deliveries etc. There are 30 cars underground. The inner Courtyard is not a busy traffic area. Cars, bikes & pedestrians share the hard surfaces.

Many units above the ground floor overlook the Courtyard from 3 sides. The inner Courtyard is connected to the River Walk through an opening under the building at grade.

As suggested, by City comments we have considered a extended building fronting Riverdale Ave. with a garage door to underground parking fronting the street but find that it would be out of character. It would force the main entrance & elevator core to where it should not be & reduce the number of ground floor units with access to the street.

Overhead garage doors & garbage room doors should not form part of a street façade (UDRP) unless there is no other option. We have designed projects with street facing garage doors but only in the Downtown Core area for very confined sites.

Riverdale Avenue is identified as a crosstown bikeway and an OC Transpo bus route. An integrated road, sewer & water rehabilitation project is in the design phase. The study & design is aimed at improving active transportation & as such trade-offs may happen such as eliminating on-street parking.

A ramp with egress directly onto an active Integrated Collector Road would be unsafe for sidewalk users and cyclists.

The proposed access is a driveway, walkway, bikeway, barrier free access to the building entrance & required fire access route to a portion of the building fronting the River Walk. The driveway is meant to be tree lined on the South side. Cars and bikes share the paved surface. The sidewalk is separated from the building wall by a landscaped strip.

The proposed access is a pleasant transition space between the street & inner Courtyard with a visual connection through the Courtyard & building ahead to the open space (River Walk) beyond, providing connectivity through the site. The inner Courtyard is a highly useable & enjoyable space.

Setback – Refer to SP1 & SK-SP1

The proposed setback to the buildings main front wall is 3.7m. This allows for appropriate separation between the sidewalk & dwelling unit windows & allows for tree planting along the lot line & lower landscaping. There are 4 covered stoops with gates to walkways leading to the sidewalk at the street. The building steps back in plan at the North and South ends to be more in line with the existing front yard setback of adjacent properties until they are redeveloped.

Street Elevation

Refer to Street Renderings (3) & Existing Streetscape Elevation (A200)

The facade is articulated with projecting elements in proportion to typical residential forms found in mature neighbourhoods in 'Ottawa South'.

There are 4 entrances from the ground floor units with covered stoops & walkways to the street.

There is no real established building height or datum line along this portion of Riverdale Ave. The fourth floor is stepped back to lower the perceived building height to 3 stories. Large windows & balconies will overlook the street at the second & third floor. The fourth-floor units will have roof terraces.

The dominate material of the 3-storey base will be brick, the dominate cladding material of Ottawa South. A linear stone highlights the ground floor entrance & steps the building base down at the ends. Metal details in the gates, lighting & railings add to the richness of the façade.

The design will be contemporary (of its time) and compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood.

North Façade

The Setback along the North property line is 6.0m which is suitable to plant large trees inside the property line. These trees will have a crown at the level of the 4th storey balconies (upper most floor). The balconies, projecting from the building wall, will provide lateral views of the river. The proposed balconies are individual well spaced units, not a continuous balcony.

Recessed balconies create a tunnel or narrower field of view, more perpendicular to the length of the building, Views to the river would only be available at the balcony railing.

Recessed balconies also reduce the level of natural light at the living room patio doors, creating darker unit interiors.

In addition, recessed balconies;

- Cost more to build (more wall, more corners)
- Are less energy efficient (more exterior wall & corners)
- Reduce liveable floor area.
- Cause construction & waterproofing issues at the ground floor slab.

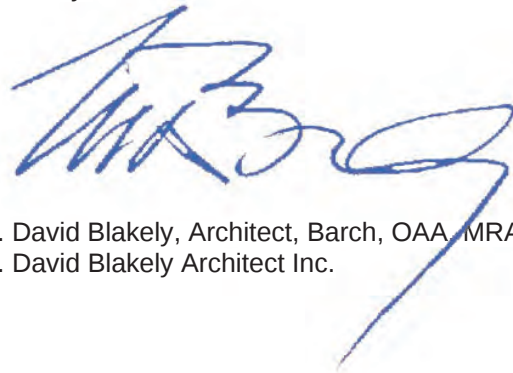
Conclusion

The proposed development responds to the site and the evolving character of Riverdale Avenue.

The site plan maintains separation between buildings, has an active, well detailed pedestrian level, provides landscaping and trees along the street, and locates the multi-use vehicular access to the side. The courtyard creates a functional shared amenity space and a visual connection through the site to the River Walk.

The proposed building is contemporary, context-sensitive and compatible with both the existing neighbourhood and its anticipated evolution. It will contribute positively to the streetscape and establish an appropriate precedent for future redevelopment along this block

Sincerely,



M. David Blakely, Architect, BArch, OAA, MRAIC
M. David Blakely Architect Inc.

Attachments

- Fig. 1 thru 7 (7 Pages)
- Street Renderings 1,2 & 3 (3 Pages)
- SK-SP1 – Partial Site Plan – Entrance Courtyard
- A200 – Existing Streetscape Elevation (1 Page)

Cc: Tony Kazarian - tony.k@akgmanagement.com
JSS Riverdale Holdings Inc. - jssrhi.manager@gmail.com

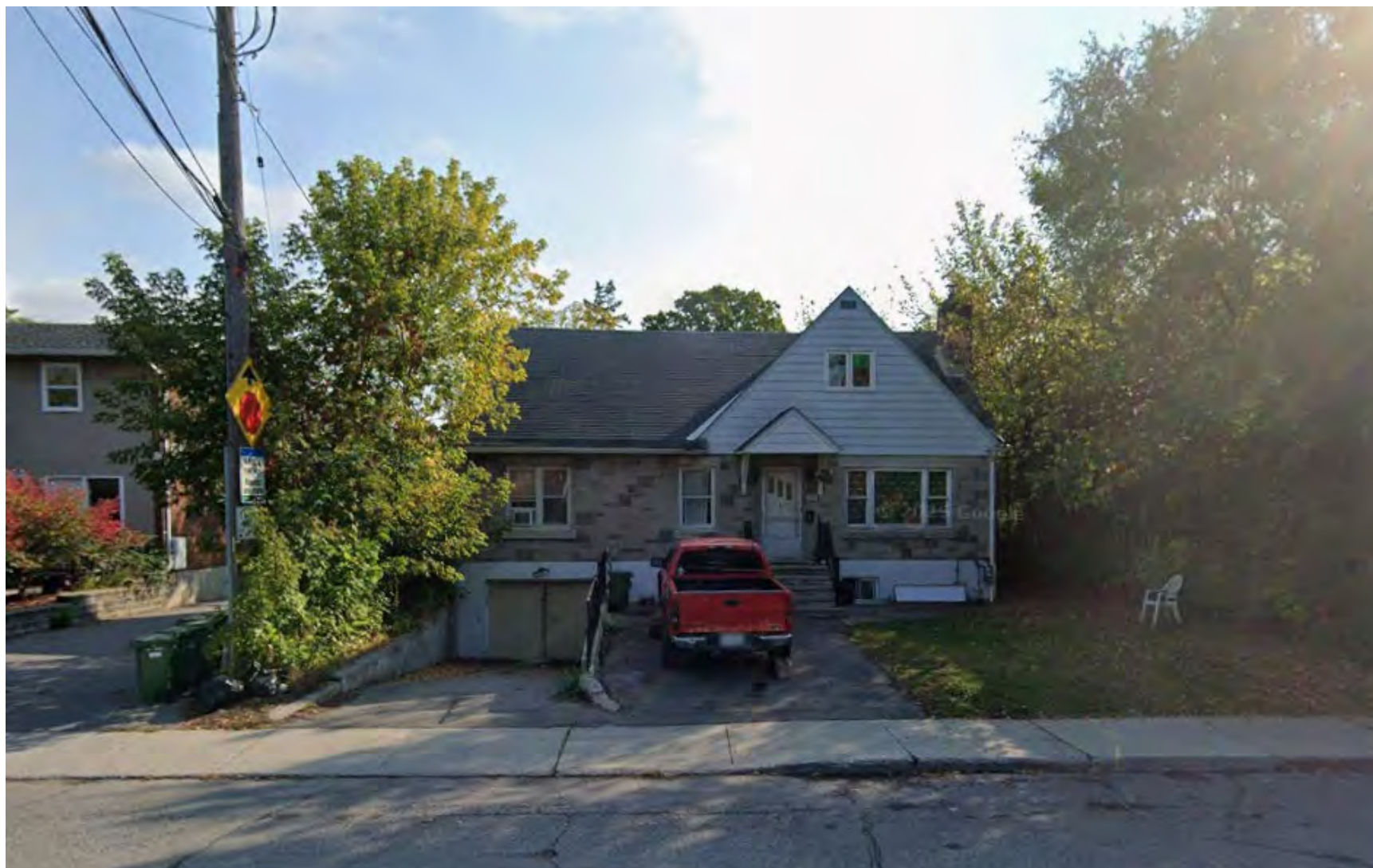


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Street Rendering #1



Street Rendering #2

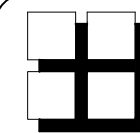


Street Rendering #3

RIVERDALE AVENUE

Approximate Crown of Asphalt

- LEGEND:**
- BUILDING ABOVE
 - EXISTING TREE TO REMAIN
 - EXISTING TREE TO REMAIN
 - PROPOSED TREE
 - BIKE RACKS (VISITOR)
- WOONERF SRFACE MATERIALS:**
- SMOOTH SURFACE PAVERS
 - COBBLESTONE TYPE PAVERS
TECHO-BLOC VILLAGIO OR APPROVED ALTERNATE

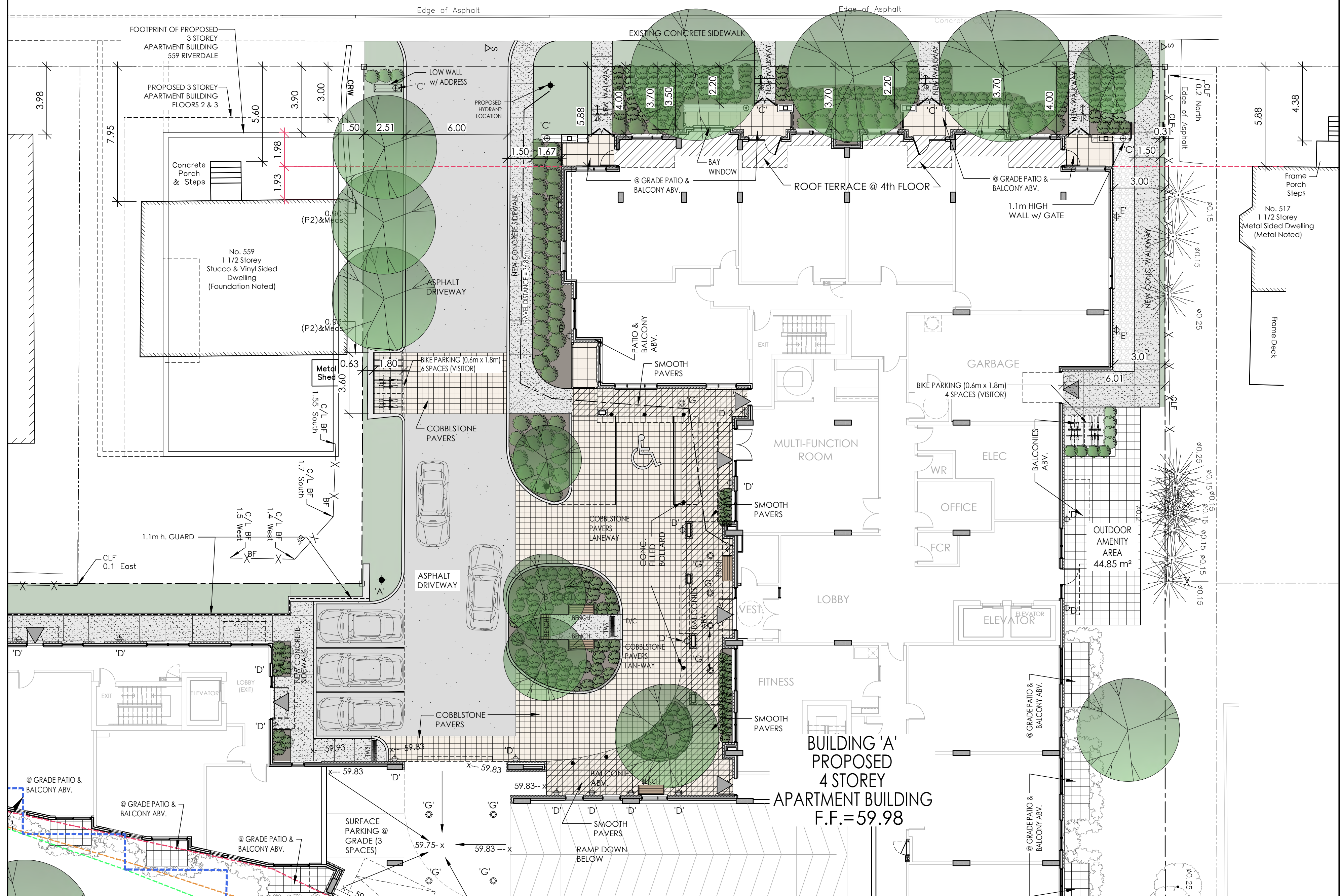


**M. David Blakely
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- GENERAL NOTES:**
- 1 - THE CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHECKING AND VERIFYING ALL DIMENSIONS. ANY DISCREPANCY MUST BE REPORTED TO M. DAVID BLAKELY ARCHITECT INC.
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BRICK LINTELS	OPENINGS UP TO	L SIZE
	5'-0"	L 3 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 5/16"
	7'-0"	L 4" x 3 1/2" x 5/16"
	8'-0"	L 5" x 3 1/2" x 5/16"
	9'-0"	L 5" x 3 1/2" x 3/8"
	10'-0"	L 6" x 4" x 3/8"
	6 min.	BEARING EACH END



A PARTIAL SITE PLAN - ENTRANCE COURTYARD
SCALE= 1:150

* SEE DRAWINGS SP-1, A2, A5 & A6 FOR EXTERIOR LIGHTING SCHEDULE *

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5.	28/06/26	FOR SITE PLAN CONTROL	JB
4.	17/06/26	EXTERIOR SITE LIGHTING ADDED	JB
3.	10/06/26	REV. PER COMMENTS	JB
2.	04/06/26	REV. PER COMMENTS FOR COORDINATION	JB
1.	21/05/26	FOR REVIEW & COORDINATION	JB

REVISIONS		
A	-	DETAIL NUMBER
B	-	SHEET NUMBER (DETAIL REQUIRED)
C	-	SHEET NUMBER (DETAIL LOCATION)

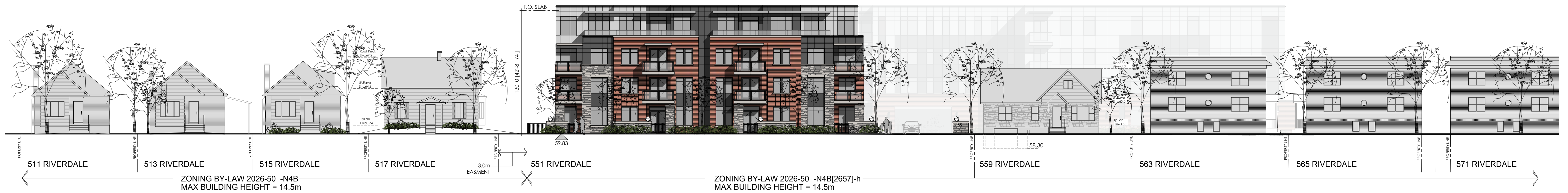


PROJECT:
PROPOSED 4 STOREY APARTMENT
551 RIVERDALE AVE.
OTTAWA, ONT.

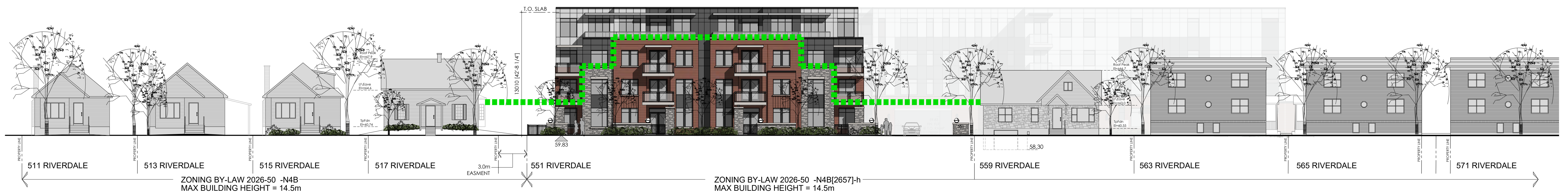
CLIENT:
JSS RIVERDALE HOLDINGS INC.
24-551 RIVERDALE AVE.
OTTAWA, ON, K1S 1S3

DRAWING TITLE:
**PARTIAL SITE PLAN
ENTRANCE COURTYARD**

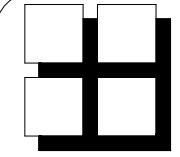
DATE: DEC. 2025	SCALE: 1:150	SK-SP1
DRAWN BY: JB	CHECKED BY: MDB	



1 EXISTING STREET ELEVATION w/ PROPOSED BUILDING 551 RIVERDALE
A200 SCALE: 1:200



2 PROPOSED BUILDING (551 RIVERDALE) - RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING STREETScape
A200 SCALE: 1:200

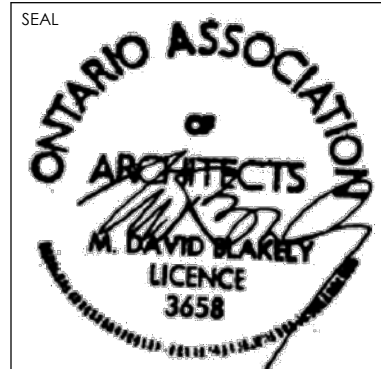


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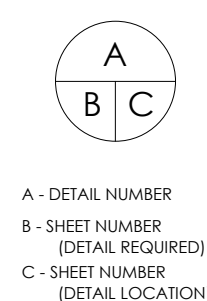
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SEAL



NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	INIT.
1.	28/07/26	FOR SITE PLAN CONTROL	JB
REVISIONS			

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	INIT.
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24.			
REVISIONS			



A - DETAIL NUMBER
B - SHEET NUMBER (DETAIL REQUIRED)
C - SHEET NUMBER (DETAIL LOCATION)

PROJECT: PROPOSED
4 STOREY - 92 UNIT APARTMENT
551 RIVERDALE AVE.
OTTAWA, ONT.
CLIENT: JSS RIVERDALE HOLDINGS INC.
24-551 RIVERDALE AVE.
OTTAWA, ON, K1S 1S3

DRAWING TITLE: EXISTING STREETScape
ELEVATION
DATE: JULY, 2026
SCALE: 1 : 200
DRAWN BY: JB
CHECKED: MDB
SHEET NO. REV NO.: A200