



265 Catherine Street, Ottawa

Design Brief

For Brigil

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Design Brief

1.0 Project Summary |

This submission for Site Plan Approval facilitates the redevelopment of the former bus depot site. The development consists of three 26, 36 and 40-storey towers on two 6-storey podiums with a 3-storey townhouse block, park dedication and retail uses split into two phases. The redevelopment of the site is a great opportunity to introduce a mixed-use development.

The proposed development will include, two levels of underground parking and retail at the ground floor along Catherine Street, Lyon Street North, Kent Street and Arlington Avenue in the form of market space. The proposal also includes bicycle storage rooms for residents located on an intermediate level located between the ground and second floors. Visitor bicycle parking spaces will be provided on ringed bike pins in the exterior open spaces. The building is proposed to contain indoor and outdoor amenity spaces located throughout the building located on the Ground Floor, Second Floor, 7th Floor and the adjacent podium roof. Additionally, there will be a sky lounge located at the top of Tower 2.

2.0 Subject Property |

The subject site is located at 265 Catherine Street in Ottawa, Ontario. Located in the GM(1875) S271 zone and the Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan. The lot is approximately 11,361 square metres with a frontage of 92.3m along Catherine Street and 60.7m along Kent Street. The site is bordered by four streets, Catherine Street, Kent Street, Arlington Avenue and Lyon Street North. The property is currently occupied by the former Bus Depot.

3.0 Surrounding Area |

To the south of the site are commercial land uses along Catherine Street, Highway 417 (with an exit at Kent Street) and the northern edge of the Glebe. Low rise residential dwellings are located to the north with a mixed of residential uses along Catherine street and Bay Street to the west of the site. Glashan Public School is located to the east of the site with commercial and residential land uses along Bank Street.

Key destinations around the site include Arlington Park, Glashan Public School, McNabb Recreation Centre and Central Park. The Rideau Canal and Canadian Museum of Nature are east of the property. The subject site is located a block west of Bank Street, which provides access to commercial and retail businesses.

4.0 Development Proposal |

4.1 Site Plan

The proposed site plan provides a north to south vehicular connection in the form of a one-way woonerf from Catherine Street to Arlington Avenue which will provide loading/garbage access and controlled vehicle access. Vehicles will access the parking garage by two ramps accessed from Catherine Street and Arlington Avenue. Both ramps are designed to provide visual clarity when entering and existing the site. The existing on-street parking along Arlington Avenue will remain while a City-proposed dedicated bus lane is planned for Catherine Street.

Pedestrian access is located throughout the site along the sidewalks and woonerf. Residents and visitors are directed to Catherine Street and Lyon Street for the main residential lobbies. A market space is envisioned to be in the retail space adjacent to the park which contains an elevator to provide direct access to visitor parking and a public washroom. The east-west pedestrian open space through the site links to the park dedication and leads to the park located on the east side of Kent Street near Glashan Public School.

As shown in the Site Plan drawing, the required setbacks along each street are compliant per the Zoning By-Law. As per the Ottawa Urban Design Guidelines for High-rise Buildings, the proposal complies with the maximum tower plate of 750 sm and tower separation distances.

4.2 Massing, Scale and Materials

The site is located adjacent to residential and commercial buildings which are 1, 2 and 3 storeys in height. It is located within the Southern Character Sub-Area in the New Official Plan, which encourages high-rise development that will provide a buffer between the Queensway and the established neighbourhood to the north. The proposal is the first development in the area to introduce high-rise development with low-rise and open space areas that will reflect the vision of the Official Plan.

The proposed development includes three, mixed-use, high-rise towers (referred to as Towers 1, 2 and 3), over two 6-storey podiums (Buildings A and B) and a 3-storey townhouse (Building C) along the northwest side of the development facing Arlington Street. Building A Tower 1 is a 26-storey tower, Building B Tower 2 is a 40-storey tower, and Building B Tower 3 is a 35-storey tower with podiums that includes some stepping which range in height from 4 to 6-storeys along Catherine Street. This transition in scale will encourage pedestrian and cyclist activity at the public realm and throughout the woonerf and sidewalks. The shape of Building A's podium was suggested by City staff as a means to frame the park.

The expression of the buildings is characterized by balconies on Towers 1 and 3 with juliet and inset balconies along the podiums. Bird-friendly glazing is proposed to reduce bird impacts. The streetwall along Catherine Street will have variations in building material to create visual interest and distinction. The architectural expression at grade will achieve more visibility to enhance the public realm. Materials planned include; a variety of masonry textures and colours, a lattice-style façade, and accents around windows.



View of the site looking northeast

4.3 Streetscape and Public Realm

The ground floor of the development is designed with pedestrian accessibility and privacy in mind. The north-south publicly accessible link (woonerf) will provide a sense of openness and security with an ease of access for pedestrians and vehicles, so that they do not have to walk around the entire site to reach their destination. The east-west pedestrian link connects the west side of the site which is more residential in nature, to the park at the east side of the site by way of a two-storey exterior link flanking the market and an art space. The east side acts as the public side with connections to retail, open spaces and with the market building framing the park. Other public realm improvements, such as introducing a new street tree canopy and hard landscaping elements will be used to enhance the frontage along the main roads and activate the public areas. Resident amenities located at the roof of the podium will be connected by a bridge linking Building A to Building B. This bridge will form an urban threshold and further characterize the redevelopment.



View looking northwest along Catherine Street



View looking east along Arlington Avenue



South elevation along Catherine Street

4.4 Landscaping

Landscaped open space will continue throughout the site with access from all four streets with a park dedication to the northeast of the development. Publicly accessible open space will make up a minimum of 25% of the site as directed by the Zoning By-law.



View looking southwest from Kent Street and Arlington Avenue

4.5 Shadow Impacts

The towers are positioned to be along the south of the site to minimize the shadow impact to the blocks to the north and to allow for increased access to light. In March and September, the shadows cast by the towers stretch across two blocks to the north starting around 10:00 am, but are fast-moving and no longer impact these blocks after 3:00 pm while in June, the shadow impacts are minimal. Shadows begin to approach the greenspace at the northwest corner of the Glashan Public School site around 1:00 pm in March and September.

4.6 Design Overview

The mixed-use tower development introduces density and public realm improvements to reflect the vision of the area as outlined in the New Official Plan. The building layout uses its form and tower position to mitigate shadow impacts on adjacent low-rise residential areas. The podium form helps to frame the public realm and park area. The main entrances to the towers face the main street sidewalk with bicycle parking for ease of access.

Landscape site design will provide additional enhancement of the main street streetscape. This treatment will provide pedestrian and bicycle access to the surrounding area, parks and Ottawa area.

In summary, the proposed development introduces rental residential units located within the buildings and landscape elements to enhance the public realm and improve the variety of services and amenity offerings in the neighbourhood.

5.0 Accessibility & Sustainability |

The proposed development has incorporated sustainable measures such as barrier free accessibility, site connections, bicycle parking and bird friendly guidelines into the design.

The following features are to be considered for this project:

Accessibility: 15% of the residential units will be provided as accessible, barrier free-style units. These units will be designed to include zero step entrances, larger washrooms and wider doorways with clear passages to washrooms and bedrooms.

Site Connections: Pedestrian pathways have been placed into the publicly accessible open space design along all site frontages with links to the public realm and adjacent roadways. The sidewalks will be continuous and wide, with access to barrier-free podium entrances along Catherine Street, Lyon Street North and Kent Street and will be in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act & City of Ottawa Standards.

Bicycle Storage: Bicycle parking for residents will be provided in weather-protected areas. The bicycle mezzanine level will be accessed from bicycle lobbies located on the ground floor and the stairs up will contain a wheel trough at the side for ease of access. A work bench will be provided in each of the bike parking access lobbies to provide space for bicycle tune-ups.

Bird-Safe Design Guidelines: Clear dotted glass panes will be used at a minimum of 90% for the first 16 m of glass located above grade in accordance with the Bird-Safe Guidelines for Ottawa. The glazing transparency and reflectivity will be minimized. Along rooftop terraces a 4 m glazing treatment will be included from the surface of the roof or the height of adjacent mature vegetation.

Additional Elements: The proposed towers will have reduced window-to-wall ratio and fewer balconies to reduce thermal bridging and provide more fully insulated walls.

6.0 Response to City Objectives |

The following comments were received from the Urban Design Review panelists on 23 June 2022. An official response was provided on 22 August 2022.

1. Stark contrast of high-rise buildings in a predominantly low-rise neighbourhood.

Introducing high-rise development is encouraged in the Official Plan and vision for the area of Catherine Street. The proposed development is the first high-rise site in the Southern Character Sub Area within the Ottawa Official Plan. The Southern Character Sub Area encourages infill and high-rise development that will act as a buffer between the Queensway and residential neighbourhoods to the north.

2. Tower Changes (number of towers and access to light and aspect ratio of tower footprint: rectangular vs square shape).

In the Ottawa Urban Design High-rise Guidelines, three tower developments are permitted. The proposal consists of a variety of different housing types throughout the block and provides additional housing to meet the Ontario housing goals.

Square tower footprints may provide larger tower separation distances but will infringe over the landscaped open space and decrease the access to light on open space areas. As the towers become less rectangular in shape, the podium to tower setbacks are challenged. The proposed massing solution mitigates wind loads at the ground level. Square footprints will be wider and overhang or protrude into the landscaped open space, affecting the light access to the proposed park. Rectangular footprints provide better suite layouts with less wasted circulation space and a higher level of amenity for the resident.

3. Reduction of the Catherine Street podium height and breaking down its mass to avoid “canyon” condition.

During workshop sessions with the community, they expressed a desire to have a street wall along Catherine Street as a separation from the south. Some podiums have been reduced to 4 storeys at the 26 and 40 storey towers. As per the Zoning By-Law, 6-storey podiums are permitted and are still proposed in the development.

4. Height adjustments along Lyon Street North.

- Shift Tower 3 northward closer to Arlington Avenue
- Stepping down of podium towards Arlington Avenue
- Lyon Street side as mid-rise building

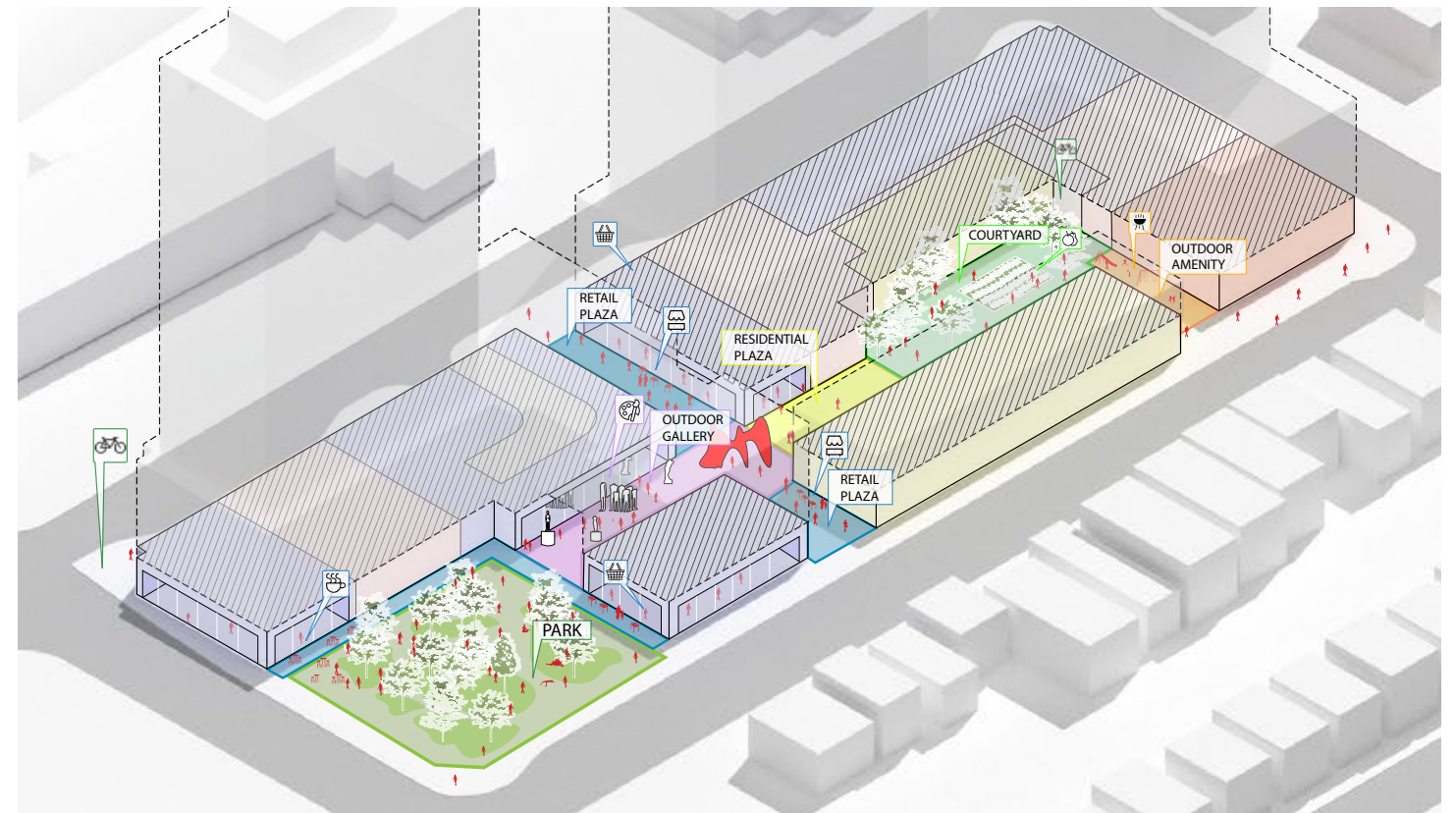
Shifting Tower 3 northward would push the tower and its shadows closer to the low-rise block to the north. This shift will also shorten the end of the podium, which would prevent the tower from appropriately stepping down towards Arlington Avenue.

5. Parkland dedication on opposite diagonal corners of the site. Adjust the east-west pedestrian connection to be diagonal.

The Ottawa Centretown Secondary Plan illustrates two potential green spaces immediately south and southwest of Catherine Street. In order to provide space for additional parkland at the southwest corner, Tower 3 would need to shift north which would negatively increase the shadow impact on the north residential neighbourhood. Adding a second area of parkland dedication would reduce the size of the current offering. The current size and location of the parkland dedication pairs with the open space of the school ground across the street and opens up a large combined area of sky view for the neighbourhood. The 10% parkland dedication area has been included as per the City’s request. Note that this is in addition to the other areas of public access across the site bringing the total up to 25% open space across the site. To consider providing a diagonal access across the site, the podiums would be sharply severed. In addition, it would be very challenging to frame the public park with built fabric as per the specific City request.

6. The north-south pedestrian through-lot connection may not be appropriate.

The Zoning By-Law includes a through-lot north-south connection. The site is long, and without a through-lot connection, pedestrians will have to walk around the entirety of the site to access the park and other internal open spaces which will not be visible from Catherine Street. The additional connection point will provide space for markets, patios and art.



Note:* This diagram illustrating the Ground Floor area is an early concept from the initial Urban Design Review Presentation and may not represent the current layout.