

Accora Village
WOODRIDGE TOWERS
70-80 Woodridge Crescent
Ottawa ON

City of Ottawa
Urban Design Review Panel
UDRP Submission
20 Sept 2023

DESIGN NARRATIVE



bbb architects ottawa inc.



FOTENN Planning + Design

Montréal Inc.

Application Overview

Ferguslea Properties Limited own and manage the Accora Village properties in Ottawa's west end and have retained bbb architects Ottawa Inc., WAA Landscape Architects of Montreal, and Fotenn Planning + Design of Ottawa to prepare this application for the City of Ottawa's Urban Design Review Panel concerning their vacant properties 70 & 80 Woodridge Crescent in the City of Ottawa. Pre-consultation with City planning officials was held previously for Zoning, Official Plan and general planning comments. This subsequent UDRP submission consists of four parts:

- this four page Design Narrative;
- a thirty-three page Illustrative Drawing Package;
- the Adequacy of Services Study by WSP;
- the Pedestrian Level Wind Study by Gradient Wind.

Site Context

The subject lands, known municipally as 70 and 80 Woodridge Crescent, are located in the Bay Ward (Ward 18) in the City of Ottawa. The entirety of the property is located on the south-west side of Woodridge Crescent and has approximately 397.74 metres frontage and a total area of 83.3 hectares. The vacant portion of the property (where the proposed development is located) comprises approximately 0.39 hectares and a frontage of 63 metres. The subject property is currently vacant of development and void of significant vegetation. The property abuts the existing Bayshore Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station, which is currently being redeveloped into a Light Rail Transit (LRT) station will be a critical gateway from public transit into Accora Village.



Figure 1: Aerial Image of Subject Property and Surrounding Context.

The area directly north of the subject property is Accora Village, a rental community also owned and operated by Ferguslea Properties. Housing types in Accora Village include townhouses, garden homes and low to high-rise apartments. Additional uses within the rental community include two schools, a park, and recreational facilities. The property to the west of the site is Accora Village's recently renovated Cobalt Tower apartment building with the Village's recreational centre beyond that, near the creek.

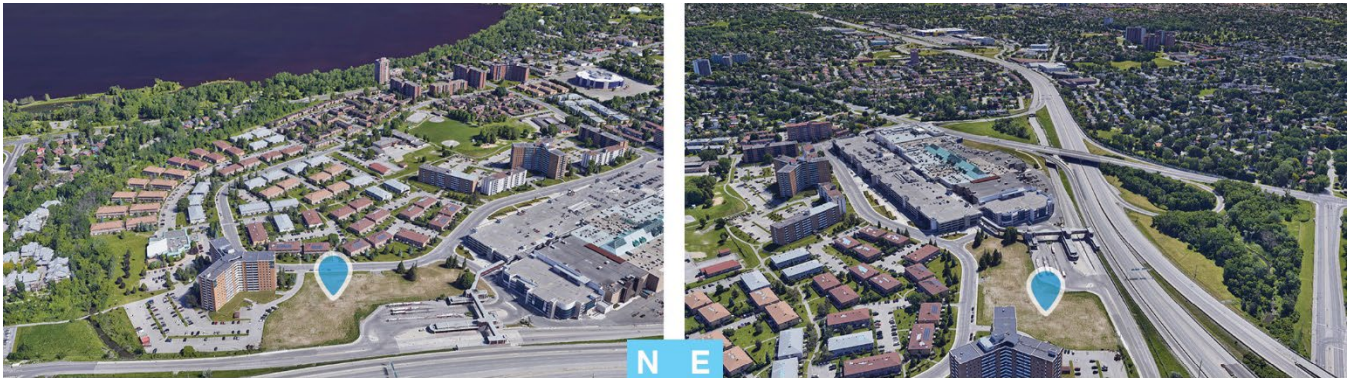


Figure 2: Area Context Views to the North and East

The property abutting the subject lands to east, 100 Bayshore Drive, is presently seeking Site Plan Control to develop two (2) high-rise residential towers. The proposed towers are 27 and 30 storeys respectively and include 554 residential units. Further east is the Bayshore Shopping Centre with its perimeter structured parkage garage creating the main image for a long stretch of Woodridge Crescent.. Directly south of the subject property is the Transit Way used exclusively for BRT, and Highway 417. Highway 416 northbound ends with a prime axial vantage point to the 70-80 Woodridge property. This development's skyline image must pay respect to these long views at one of the key entry approaches to the nation's capital.

Development Summary

Ferguslea Properties Limited feel this property is a significant opportunity for them to enhance and continue to rebrand their long established Accora Village. As a community built to support their residents with various rental housing models, recreational facilities and outdoor amenities, this south-east corner property will become their new Gateway to the Village and the flagship building to their community.

The proposal is to first create a proper space to be this Gateway. True public realm as a face to the LRT patrons and as a front lawn for the residents of the village. This space is defined with two flanking two-storey podium buildings hosting retail, services and common amenities for the Village. The podiums carry two (2) residential towers of 40 (north tower) and 37 storeys (west tower) offset to the property's perimeter to maximise the public outdoor space. Offsetting and rotating the two towers allows for the greatest amount of unobstructed views from the units as well as framing the public realm in an appropriate manner.

With regards to parking, 448 underground parking stalls are proposed, in addition to 8 at-grade visitor stalls. The resident parking is split across two underground levels, with a parking ratio between 0.78-0.88 stalls per dwelling (dependant on unit mix). The development proposes 120 bicycle parking stalls between the two buildings. Each building proposes 20 covered at-grade parking stalls and 40 underground stalls.

The amount of landscaping and outdoor space offered is only possible by removing all the typical asphalt parking and burying 430 cars below grade. Each tower does have its own entry drop off and visitor parking at grade with welcoming lobbies in the podium blocks as well as its own loading docks. This permits a completely independent tower module offering Ferguslea the opportunity to phase the construction easily.



Public Realm, Amenity Space and Connectivity

The 70 & 80 Woodridge Crescent site will serve as an important gateway to Accora Village. The landscape design centres around an inner courtyard nestled between the common podiums and their two multi-storey towers. This courtyard, thoughtfully adorned with mature trees, strikes a balance between openness and shelter, providing a serene and comfortable space. Notably, it will act as a buffer against noise and pollution.

stemming from the Highway 417 and the Transitway/ LRT station. This dynamic area encompasses two levels: an urban plaza with inviting lounge spaces on the upper tier and a park with a children's playground in a natural setting below.

The courtyard will double as a much-needed parkland for the entire community, poised to become the heart of Accora Village. In the spirit of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) found in many North American cities, this courtyard will be accessible to all, fostering inclusivity. It demonstrates a commitment to promoting active mobility and a healthy lifestyle by incorporating walking pathways and bicycle routes both across and around the site. At the core of the landscape design concept is a central spine arching across the enclosed space between the towers, serving as both a thoroughfare and a destination. Commuters from the bus station and shoppers at the mall will find convenient pathways that traverse or encircle the site, transforming the journey into a delightful stroll and a positive exposure of the new face of Accora Village.

Sustainability and the Long View of Development

Ferguslea (and formerly Minto) have created, managed, loved, and evolved Accora Village for two generations now. Their commitment is deep and sincere and so is their view on developing this land in a responsible and sustainable manner of the next generation of residents. Although the project is just in the conceptual design stage, many of the initial planning and landscape design ideas are setting the tone for a better development than just another residential tower scheme.

The use of durable materials and sustainable strategies requires elements that not only withstand the test of time but also add an enduring aesthetic quality to the design. Utilising low-maintenance landscaping, creating attractive spaces that are easy to care throughout the seasons ensures that the Accora landscapes will remain vibrant through the years. The approach embodies a harmonious coexistence between nature and urban living. Rooted in ecological responsibility, this public realm prioritize practices that enhance both the natural environment and the well-being of residents.

- **Noble and Durable Materials:**
Prioritize the use of noble, local, and durable materials that contribute to both aesthetics and long-term sustainability, minimizing the need for replacements and resource consumption.
- **Low Maintenance:**

The designs are consciously low-maintenance, reducing the environmental footprint associated with landscaping while ensuring lasting, sustainable beauty.

- **Native Planting:**

As an advocate for native planting to restore biodiversity and preserve habitats, the design will minimize maintenance, fertilizing, and water requirements, aligning with our sustainability engagements.

- **Dark Skies:**

The use of cut-off lighting minimizes light pollution, conserves energy, and respects natural circadian rhythms, underscoring our commitment to eco-conscious design.

- **Eco-Responsible Water Management:** We address water runoff through innovative techniques that efficiently manage water resources, ensuring sustainability in every aspect of our landscape design. This includes smart irrigation systems, permeable surfaces to minimize runoff, and rainwater collection systems. By collecting rainwater, we not only reduce water waste but also promote responsible water use.

- **Light Mineral Surfaces:**

These surfaces reduce heat absorption, promote rainwater infiltration, and bolster urban ecosystem resilience, in line with our sustainability initiatives.

- **Neighborhood Connectivity:**

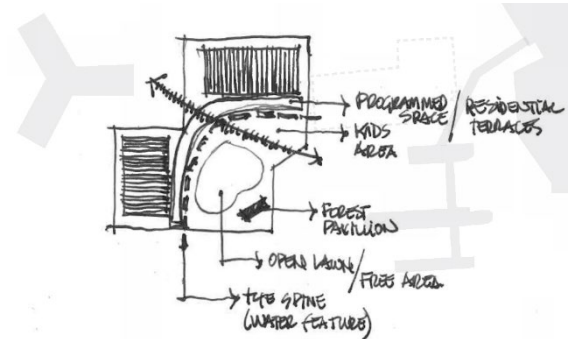
Prioritizing community cohesion and promoting eco-responsible urban living with this development will extend beyond our property lines, to the benefit of the entire village and Ottawa's west end communities beyond.

- **Smart Land Formation:**

We will employ a strategic approach to land formation, utilizing a smart game of cut and fill. This method not only minimizes the environmental impact but also reduces cost, and maximizes the site's potential for sustainability, aligning with our commitment to responsible land use. The lowered landscape lawn and the raised perimeter berms will directly benefit from this approach of keeping excavated soils near the site.

- **Urban Forest:**

There is consideration to discuss with City along the easement to establishment of an urban forest to frame the property and the multi-use path. This urban forest serves as a vital habitat for local fauna and significantly enhances biodiversity. This lush greenery contributes to the site's overall ecological balance, but also shelters residents from sound pollution and the wind factor.



Design Features

The accompanying package of *Illustrative Drawings* expands on this brief summary of our initial planning and design biases. The key points of design that make this development proposal unique include:

Redefine Woodridge Crescent

The southern side of Woodridge has been dominated by the continual expansion of Bayshore Mall and its structured parking garage. As opposed to just using sidewalk trees and asphalt parking, the podium of the north tower has been positioned to properly define the streetface. The setback is more urban and the sidewalk and treed boulevard ensures that it is an easily accessible pedestrian space.

Keep the Cars to the Edges

Given that the neighbouring Cobalt Tower is also an Accora Village building, the existing driveway off Woodridge is being used to access both towers' entry drop-offs, the below grade parking garage and the loading dock. No vehicles will pass much beyond 10m from the western perimeter, leaving the rest of the site open for public realm landscaping.

Front Yard vs. Back Yard

The orientation of the central space and towers is intentionally set to face the LRT station as opposed to Woodridge, offering exposure of and access to Accora village. WAA have delicately subdivided this space to have this large public lawn with urban connections, a medium scaled spine arching to both podiums, and smaller, more intimate programmed spaces off more intended for the tower residents and uses.

