

261 & 265 Columbus Avenue Planning Rationale Report



Figure 1 - South facing front elevation of proposed building

Attention: Anne O'Connor

City of Ottawa
Planning Department
110 Laurier Avenue West,
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P, 1J1



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designing urban alternatives

I am writing on behalf of my clients, the owners of the property located at 261 & 265 Columbus Ave. in Vanier (Overbrook-McArthur). My clients wish to demolish the existing two houses and detached garages to build a 3.5 storey apartment building with 34 units and parking in the side and rear of the building.

The lot is on a gentle slope and the main entrance on the front of the building is a half level above grade. A ramp in the front yard and an elevator allows barrier free access to units on all floors. Half-basement units have large window wells. Five parking stalls are located in the side of the buildings and hidden behind the eastern portion of the facade. The rear yard is designed to accommodate 8 parking spaces, together with amenity space.

This area is in transition as new developments replace old and often very poorly maintained single family housing stock. It is a neighbourhood that was developed after World War II, with 60' by 120' lots making up blocks that are about 12 lots long. The subject properties of this rationale are four blocks away from the Rideau River and one block north of the Overbrook Community Centre. The area is zoned R4, but the immediate block remains largely single-family homes, with few homes that have been split into apartments. There are currently no secondary plans, community plans, or policy plans that further regulate the subject properties.

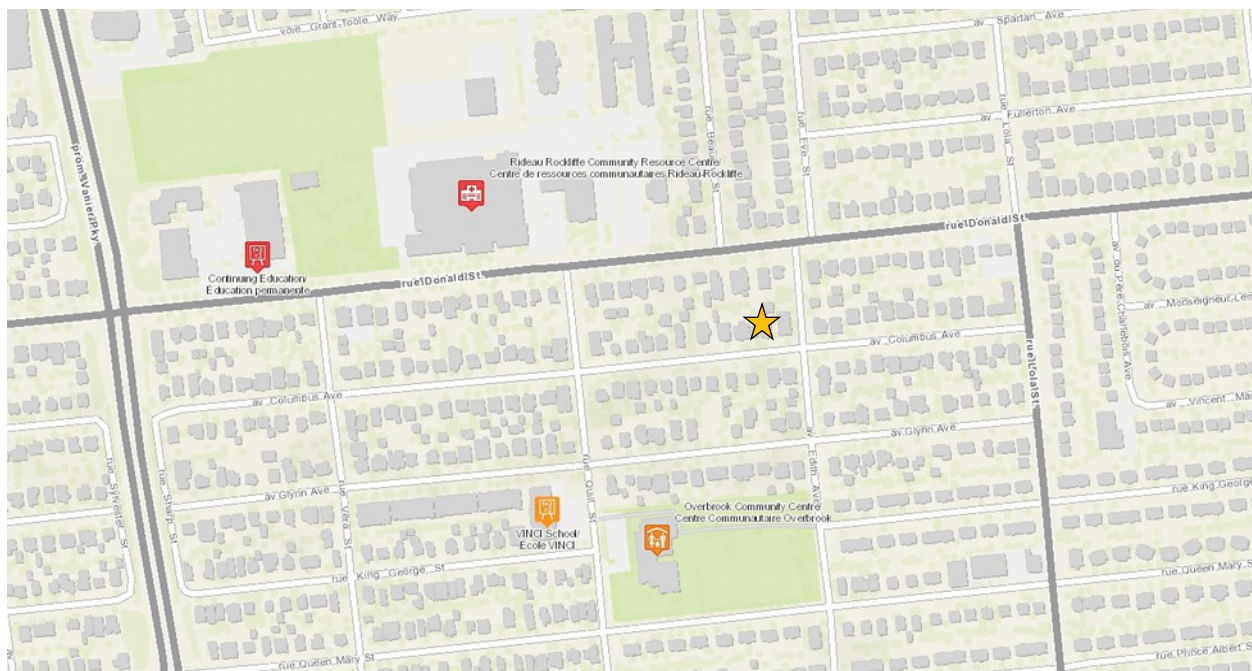


Figure 2 – Subject Property Location



Figure 3 – Aerial Photo – 1928 from geoOttawa



Figure 4 – Aerial Photo – 1958 from geoOttawa

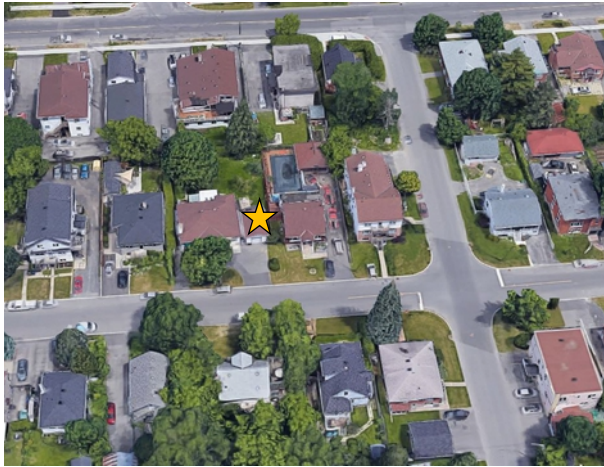


Figure 5 – Site looking north

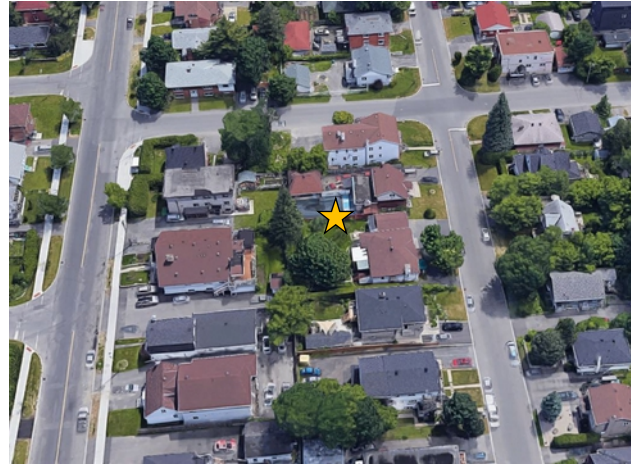


Figure 6 – Site looking east

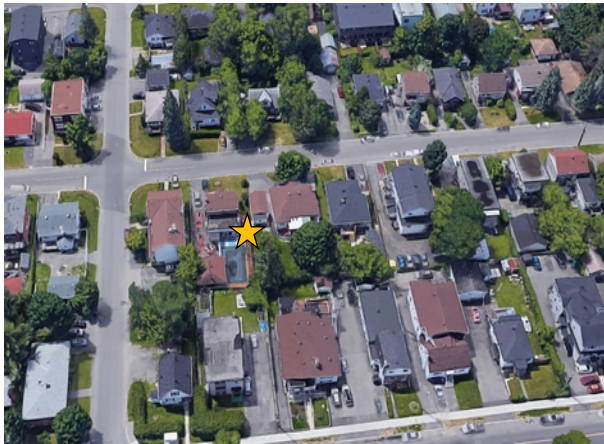


Figure 7 – Site looking south

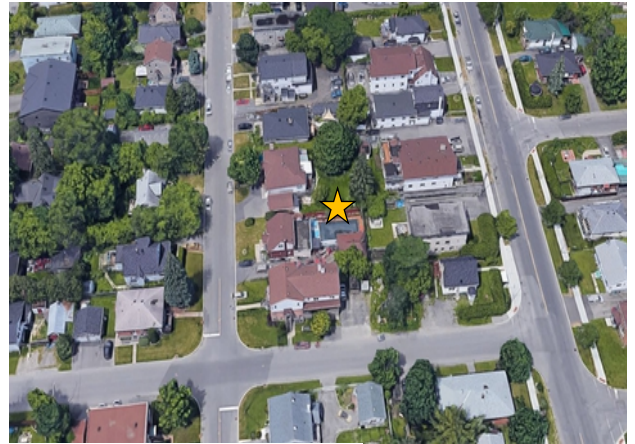


Figure 8 – Site looking west

Surrounding this site, the community in Ward 13, Rideau-Rockcliffe continues to undergo change. Similar in scale, a 3.5 storey – 25 unit – building is under construction by our client at 324 & 326 Donald Street, within a block of the subject properties. This project is almost completely framed at the time of this proposal. Another project

completed by our client is on the corner of Ontario St and Marguerite Ave, which is a 3 story multi-unit building between this proposal's site and the Rideau River.

The central location of this neighbourhood and proximity to downtown offers exciting potential for new growth. The location for this proposed 3.5 storey apartment is 1km from the Adawe Crossing Bridge and Rideau Sports Center. Further, access to the City's extensive bike paths is 550m away, connecting the subject property to the rest of the city.



Figure 9 – King George Street Institutional



Figure10– Glynn Avenue Residential

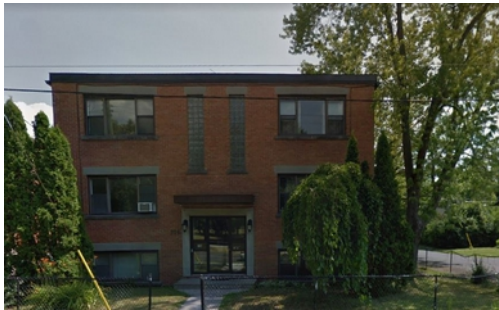


Figure11 – Donald St. Brick Residential



Figure12 – Donald St. Brick Institutional

R4 Zoning and Existing Context

Although this neighbourhood contains mainly single family homes, it is zoned R4, and targetting for low-rise residential development, as per our proposal. There is a significant difference between what exists and what the zoning allows and the Official Plan's intent for the area. As a result, this neighbourhood is likely in the early stages of dramatic change, with many new buildings of a massing similar to this proposal to be built in the next decade.

In order to fit well with the existing context, the proposed apartment has been designed to be sensitive to its existing context. The grading of the property matches the patterns of neighbours, where the front lawn slopes up towards the building. The homes in the neighbourhood also frequently use front steps at the main entrance of the house,





Figure13 – Columbus Avenue facing west – one of the subject properties is located on the right of the image.



Figure14 – Columbus Avenue facing east – subject properties are just off the left side of the image.

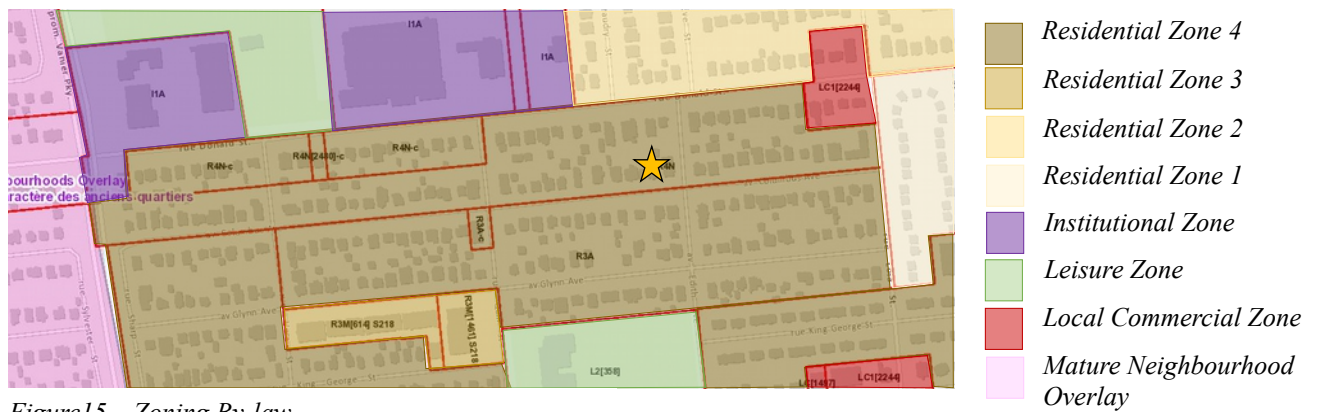


Figure15 – Zoning By-law

informing the inclusion of a set of stairs at the front entrance. The massing of the proposed building is broken into three sections that match the scale of the surrounding homes, and its architectural expression also reflects the details and materials of surrounding context. These details are reflected in the use of brick and inclusion of lintels.

Every effort has been made in designing this larger building to fit within the existing smaller grained context. The proposed apartment will provide a mixture of smaller rental units in a variety of unit sizes to meet the needs of Ottawa's growing population. The units range from bachelor apartments to 2-bedroom units, accommodating individuals and small families. There are also 5 accessible units to meet Ottawa's requirements for barrier free accommodations.

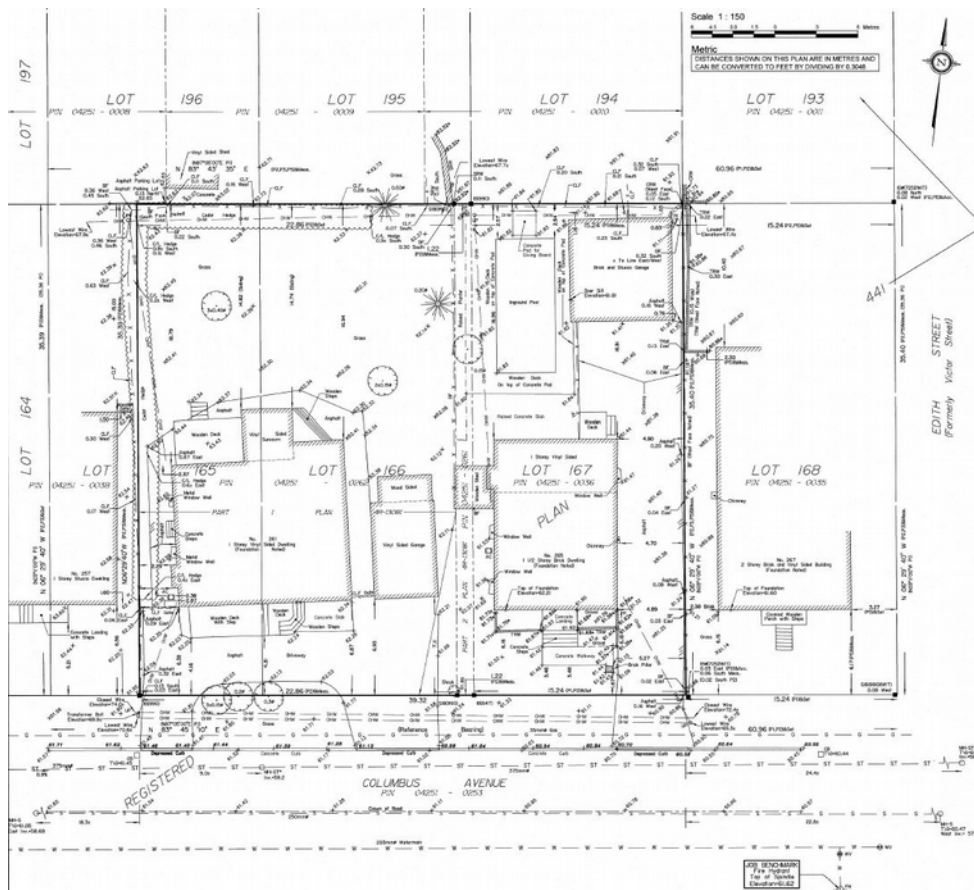


Figure 16 – 261 & 265 Columbus Avenue Site Survey.

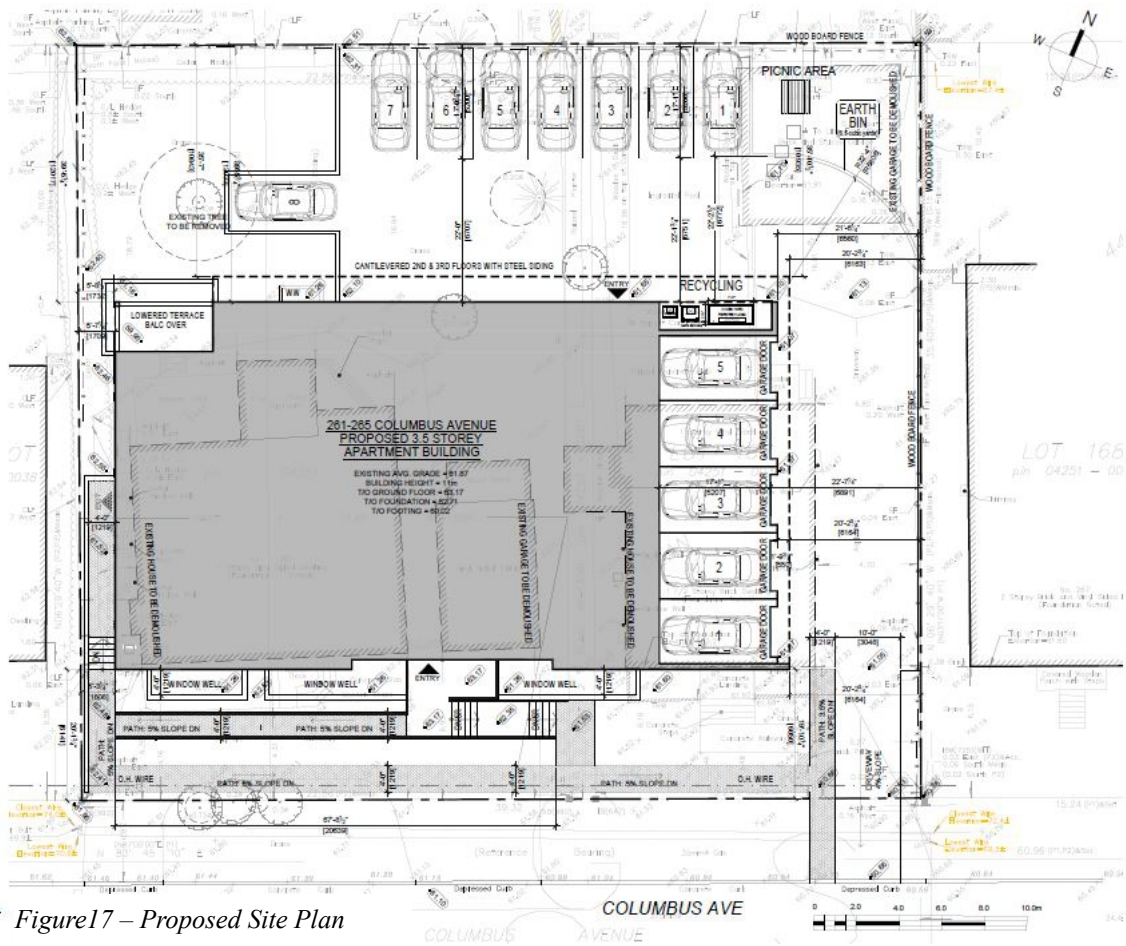


Figure 17 – Proposed Site Plan

Under current zoning our site is required to have 13.2 (pro-rated to 13) on-site parking spaces, and 17 bicycle spaces, in keeping with the Official Plan intent to encourage transit use. Five of the provided spaces are hidden behind the eastern part of the façade under the building, with the remaining stalls located along the rear lot line. The bicycle spots are in the basement of the building, located adjacent to the stairs. It is accessed via a half flight of stairs down with a wheel ramp for ease of access. The space provided is generous with an area for bicycle repair and maintenance.

The existing two homes on the site have a combined driveway width of 11.1m. Once this paving is removed and the curbside is relaid, the width will decrease to 3.1m, allowing the street parking capacity to increase by 1 car.

Zoning

The proposed building is zoning compliant, meeting requirements for setbacks, height, amenities, landscaping, and parking.

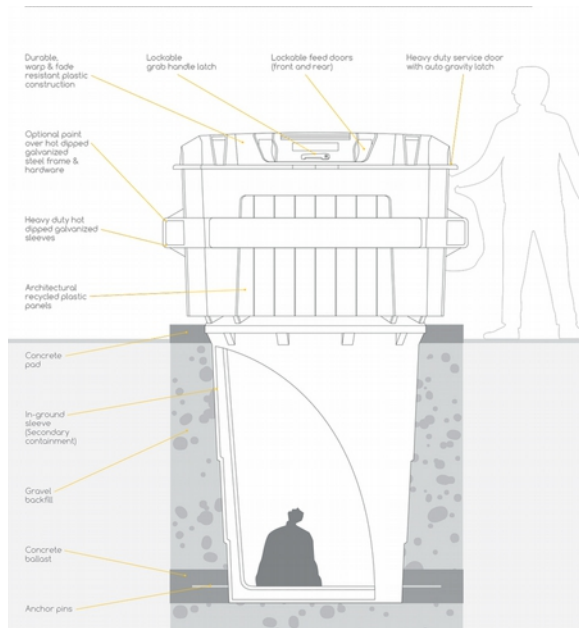


Figure 18 – Earth Bin Section



Figure 19 – Earth Bin headquarters in Ottawa, ON

Garbage Management

To maintain a tidy appearance and control odour, the use of an earth bin in the north eastern corner of the properties and a recycling alcove at the end of the covered parking has been included in the design. Earth bins are inground containers which are anchored into the ground. Due to their size, latch system, and anchors, they prevent wind or animals from carrying garbage from the bin. Using the ground temperature, waste is cooled to reduce the odour escaping from the garbage. These bins are also designed so that any front loading truck can tip the bin into the bed of its truck.

Creating a purpose built controlled access location for the recycling maintains a tidy appearance along the front and sides of the building, where apartments can be problematic for accumulating waste. There is a gate that allows for ventilation. By using bins instead of built in collectors, the design allows for future flexibility as city regulations for recycling change.

Landscaping

There are existing overhead wires along Columbus Avenue. Consequently, small trees will be planted along the road, under the wires to maintain continuity along the street. The landscaping of the front lawn will include plantings to diminish the appearance of the access ramp.



Figure20 – Proposed Building

The City of Ottawa Official Plan provides a complete set of policies and guidelines to evaluate development proposals such as the one that is subject to this report. To this end, several sections of the Official Plan were consulted to ensure compliance. Below is a collection of excerpts relative to the compliance of this project to the Official Plan.

The City also needs to pursue a more affordable pattern of growth based on higher densities and increased use of transit. This pattern allows for more efficient use of municipal infrastructure and reduces the need to build and maintain roads over their lifecycle. This pattern is compact and allows for more efficient delivery of municipal services such as solid waste collection and emergency services that are costly to provide over large areas.

Response: This proposal represents a more affordable pattern of growth. Low-rise apartment buildings are more easily integrated into existing urban fabric and may be added to the existing urban areas without requiring developers to acquire large parcels of land. The provision of smaller units with comparatively lower costs in the community provides the opportunity for a diverse community, and occupants being able to live closer to work.

Concentrating growth within the designated urban area also allows for a pattern and density of development that supports walking, cycling and transit as viable and attractive alternatives to the private automobile.

Growth will be distributed throughout the urban area to strengthen the city's livable communities through

- *Intensification and infill; and*
- *New development on vacant land in designated growth areas that contributes to the completion of an existing community or builds a new community(ies).*

Response: The proposal represents the intensification of the subject properties.

R4 zoning allows for a larger range of housing options for development. These range from detached homes to low rise buildings (up to four storeys). The proximity to downtown support the need for denser development in the area. The nearby existing bike and walking paths connect people to the Sandy Hill community and Downtown Ottawa.

To enhance the sense of community by creating and maintaining places with their own distinct identity.

Response: This proposal uses a form and material palette that is common and familiar within the area. Existing institutional buildings are commonly brick and have been converted into residential buildings.

If you require any further information, please call me at 613-853-2822.

Regards,



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