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Design Brief

RE: 374 McArthur Avenue

1.0 Project Summary

This submission for Site Plan Control Application aims to Redevelop the existing abandoned single-family home and construct a mid-rise residential apartment building. The proposed new building design will include six (6) residential floors located above the basement level.

Vehicular access to the property is from McArthur Avenue on the west side of the lot. The main entrance is located adjacent to the vehicular access.

The development includes a total 67 residential units of which six (6) units are located on the ground floor and the remaining 61 units on levels 2 to 6. Units range from 451 sq.ft to 891 sq.ft. with unit types varying from one bedrooms to three bedrooms.

In response to traffic considerations, the development includes a total of 30 parking spaces located on the underground parking level. In addition, 34 bicycle parking spaces are also proposed on the ground floor of the building with direct access to the exterior.

The development also includes multiple amenity spaces such as a fitness centre, lounge area and exterior landscaped area on the ground floor as well as an outdoor rooftop patio.

2.0 Subject Property

The subject property is located on McArthur Avenue near the Brant road intersection in a Traditional Mainstreet Zone (TM). The subject property abuts a 3-storey residential building and a 2-storey plus basement residential building to the West and the East, respectively. Both are also located in a TM zoning. Along the South-East edge of the site, the subject property abuts two (2) 1-storey residential homes located in a R4 residential zone.

The size of the lot is approximately 1171 sq.m. as per site plan drawing with a frontage of 20.12m along McArthur Avenue. Currently, the property is occupied by a 2-storey abandoned single family house in serious disrepair. The property as it stands, is in a state of neglect and is characterized by tree stumps, debris, overgrown grass and dense vegetation running along the perimeter of the lot.

3.0 Surrounding Area

The existing surrounding area is very diverse in heights, massing, streetscape, and urban character. The South side of McArthur Avenue between the subject property and Moorvale St. consists mostly of a mix of 1-2 storey commercial buildings, strip mall, public school (Robert E. Wilson) and some residential apartment buildings. To the West on the South side of McArthur, the buildings are mostly residential and vary between 3-4 storeys.

Furthermore, in close proximity to the subject property, accessible from Moorvale St. is the St. Paul's park adjacent to the Ottawa Technical Secondary School.

4.0 Development proposal

4.1 Site Plan

The proposed site plan maintains all vehicular movement to the North-West corner of the property providing a safe distance from the intersection of Brant street. Access to the underground parking level will be provided via an interior ramp equipped with a parabolic mirror and a red light – green light system for added circulation safety.

The main pedestrian entrance is located from McArthur Avenue adjacent to the vehicular entrance on McArthur Avenue.

All building setbacks are compliant to current zoning provisions. Along McArthur Avenue, the proposed building maintains an alignment with the existing residential building on the corner of McArthur / Brant. In both side yards, the building is setback 1.2m from the property line. A more generous setback is provided at the rear to allow for increased landscaping and a more adequate transition with the existing low-rise environment to the South.

4.2 Massing & Material

The proposed building has been carefully and thoughtfully designed to ensure an attractive built form while also achieving a gradual transition with the existing adjacent low-rise developments.

The design takes on the base, middle and top approach to its massing along street facing elevations to enhance both the pedestrian experience at street level and the building's expression / image in the urban fabric. The exterior design at the street front condition consists of a single dark masonry base with three (3) floors of red/brown brick and two (2) floors of light grey concrete panels which helps to soften the upper mass.

The base of the building is designed to animate the street wall and stimulates the pedestrian experience along McArthur Avenue by proposing floor to ceiling glass throughout the amenity space and pedestrian entrance as well as (2) different building wall setbacks from the street to help properly define the public and private spaces as well as visually identify the building's vehicular and pedestrian main entrances.

The other three (3) facades of the building that are not facing the street are composed of the same red / brown brick on the first 4 floors which is broken down vertically through material changes and transitions which helps to reduce and soften the building's mass. A playful rhythm of fiber-cement cladding imitating cedar wood siding as well as charcoal fiber-cement panels are strategically inserted between openings to further articulate the East and West facades and create interest.

As required by zoning provisions, the top two levels of the building forming the top section are stepped back 2 meters at the front along McArthur Avenue and +-0.9m to +-4.4 metres at the rear to form a 45-degree angular plane. This allows to minimize the visual impacts of the building's mass and creates opportunities to introduce outdoor private amenity space. The compositions of the top two floors forming the top section of the building are a blend of dark grey and light grey fiber-cement panels which helps to soften the mass at the top. The colours will replicate the colours introduced in the building's middle section.

The red / brown brick is a token of the various reds, brown and beige brick used on buildings surrounding the site. The design also incorporates a more contemporary window pattern and dimensioning which gives the building a more current look while being sympathetic to the character of the area.

4.3 Streetscape and Public Realm

The base of the building facing McArthur Avenue is designed to maximize pedestrian comfort as well as to animate the street wall with a glass entrance and floor to ceiling glass throughout the fitness centre amenity space allowing for maximum transparency and visual connection with the pedestrian realm.

The pedestrian and vehicular entrances are setback from the front façade which provides permanent weather protection from wind, rain, snow and intense sun.

Furthermore, in order to increase the security on the site, opaque architectural wood gates are proposed in both side-yards towards the front of the property which will limit access to the side yards and rear yard.

4.4 Proposed floor layout

4.4.1 Ground Floor

The front section of the ground floor features a fitness centre facing the street, elevator lobby, lounge area, exit stairs, waste room, bicycle storage room. A total of 6 residential units are proposed at the rear away from street noise for added privacy.

The building's waste room located on the ground floor has direct exterior access. Containers will be brought to the street on pick-up days directly from the waste room via side doors.

4.4.2 Typical residential floors

The remaining 61 units are distributed amongst five (5) upper fully residential floors ranging from 12 to 13 units per floor. Units facing the front and rear are provided with exterior private amenity areas in the form of balconies and terraces.

4.4.3 Rooftop

The proposed rooftop level contains most of the mechanical and electrical rooms and equipment. Accessible through the elevator lobby is a 130 sq.m. communal roof terrace located in the north section of the roof which will help to eliminate overlook issues. The size of the terrace is limited to the minimum requirements for communal amenity space. In addition, the terrace is setback from the roof outline in order to reduce its visibility from street level.

Landscaping at the roof level will consist mostly of planter boxes positioned along the perimeter of the outdoor terrace to help screen the terrace as well as in strategic places to divide the terrace in various spaces. The back portion of the roof will be used solely for rainwater storage.

4.5 Amenity space

The communal amenity spaces for the building tenants are in 4 locations. At grade, a fitness centre facing McArthur Avenue contributes to the streetscape activation. A lounge which allows tenants the opportunity to relax with guests and/or amongst themselves is also provided off the main lobby. At the rear, a generously landscaped area with shrubs, trees and soft landscaping provides tenants with a natural environment to enjoy. The fourth amenity

space is a large roof top patio located at roof level and provides tenants with various areas to enjoy views of the neighbourhood while maximizing social interactions.

4.6 Traffic considerations

4.6.1 Vehicular

The proposed vehicular parking is compliant to zoning provisions and is completely located below grade at the P1 basement level. A total of 30 parking spaces (0.45 per unit) is provided including one (1) handicapped accessible parking.

4.6.2 Bicycle

Bicycle parking is provided at a rate of 0.5 spaces per unit which equals to the required amount based on the zoning regulations.

4.6.3 Public Transportation

McArthur Avenue is also well served by an existing public transit system with multiple bus stops along the length of the road allowing users to access the downtown area quickly and efficiently.

4.7 Landscaping

Landscaping on the property will consist of concrete pavers at the front to create a seamless transition between the building and the street as well as in the side yards in between the egress doors and the existing sidewalk.

At the rear, the landscaping will be composed mostly of sod and peastone to help rainwater management on the site and will also act as a natural buffer between the proposed building and the surrounding properties providing screening and visual interest. Ample trees and shrubs will also be provided in the rear yard.

5.0 Shadow Analysis

Shadow impacts vary significantly from season to season. In the Spring and Fall, the cast shadow from the proposed building is limited in the morning and late afternoon / evening and only to the direct adjacent properties. In the Summer when the angle of the sun is at its highest, shadow impacts are fairly non-existent and only partially affect the lots directly adjacent to the subject property.

The shadow impacts are more significant in Winter when the angle of the sun is at its lowest. As shown, the cast shadows from the proposed building reach properties beyond the adjacent lots.

It is important to note however that even lower height buildings would have the same impact on their surrounding environment.

Overall shadow impacts are not significant given the density of the neighbourhood and size of the lots. Also, the cast shadows project from the proposed building onto the adjacent constructions only affect facades where bedrooms would be located and do not affect living spaces where most would benefit from direct daylight.

6.0 Appendix

6.1 Responses to city comments Pre-UDRP – 2020-08-07

6.1.1 Summary

Comment 1 & 2 : Density in terms of unit count has been reduced from 78 units to 67 units. The proposed building setbacks are fully compliant to zoning regulations and currently allow for sufficient access to daylight thanks to the generous quantity of openings on both sides (East & West). We strongly believe that a future redevelopment of the adjacent lots is improbable given the current zoning regulations as well as the size of the adjacent lots which are either too small (366 Brant St.) or too big (370 McArthur Ave.) to allow a new development that would compromise the livability of this proposed building. Required setback regulations provide minimal requirements that allow new developments to provide minimal acceptable long term livability conditions and as a fully compliant proposal, we believe that this project achieves just that.

6.1.2 Built Form

Comment 1 : The proposed building is fully compliant to current zoning regulations in place for TM zones.

Comment 2 : Option of having a single loaded corridor and carving out the building to provide courtyards has been entertained and analyzed thoroughly. This option was found not to be economically feasible for the project as it does not provide a sufficient unit count and leasable square feet. The proposed building allow for sufficient daylight access as all units are now wider and therefore have more exterior wall frontage.

Comment 3: We believe that the impacts that the proposed building will have on adjacent properties is low. The 366 Brant property is in relatively good shape, the TM zoning does allow for a more significant redevelopment however given the size of the lot and the required setbacks, the development potential is already low. As for the 370 McArthur property, the existing building is in great shape and the size of the lot would allow for a multitude of options whether it be a bar shaped building or a U or L shape building.

6.1.3 Materiality

Comment 1 & 2 : A red / brown brick has been introduced as the main building Cladding to reflect the various red, brown and beige brick used on the surrounding buildings. Dark grey materials are still present on the façade but at a much smaller scale. Most of the building's top section maintains a lighter material both in type and color.

Comment 3 : The scale of the windows has been reduced and are now limited to mainly 4 by 6 feet openings. The design of the windows was modified to propose a window that is further broken down by vertical and horizontal mullions which helps to achieve a more human and residential scale.