

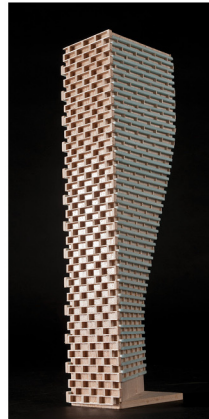
# GRADIENTWIND

ENGINEERS & SCIENTISTS

## PEDESTRIAN LEVEL WIND STUDY

1954 Gemstone  
(311 Somerset Street West)  
Ottawa, Ontario

Report: 21-024-PLW



March 1, 2021

PREPARED FOR

The Somerset O'Connor Limited Partnership  
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Ottawa, ON K2P 1B9

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes a pedestrian level wind (PLW) study undertaken to satisfy the requirements for a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) application for the proposed development commonly referred to as “1954 Gemstone”, located at 311 Somerset Street West in Ottawa, Ontario (hereinafter referred to as “subject site”). Our mandate within this study is to investigate pedestrian wind comfort and safety within and surrounding the subject site, and to identify any areas where wind conditions may interfere with certain pedestrian activities so that mitigation measures may be considered, as required.

The study involves simulation of wind speeds for selected wind directions in a three-dimensional (3D) computer model using the computational fluid dynamics (CFD) technique, combined with meteorological data integration, to assess pedestrian wind comfort and safety within and surrounding the subject site according to City of Ottawa wind comfort and safety criteria. The results and recommendations derived from these considerations are detailed in the main body of the report (Section 5), illustrated in Figures 3A-8B, and summarized as follows:

- 1) All grade-level areas within and surrounding the subject site will be acceptable for the intended pedestrian uses throughout the year. Specifically, wind conditions over surrounding sidewalks, walkways, transit stops, and building access points, are considered acceptable for the intended pedestrian uses throughout the year.
- 2) The amenity terraces are predicted to be suitable for sitting during the typical use period of late spring through early autumn, which is considered acceptable. This includes the Level 10 amenity terrace, and both the low deck and high deck of the rooftop amenity terrace.
- 3) Within the context of typical weather patterns, which exclude anomalous localized storm events such as tornadoes and downbursts, no pedestrian areas within and surrounding the subject site were found to experience conditions that could be considered uncomfortable or dangerous.
- 4) Regarding primary and secondary building access points, wind conditions predicted in this study are only applicable to pedestrian comfort and safety. As such, the results should not be construed to indicate wind loading on doors and associated hardware.



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Gradient Wind Engineering Inc. (Gradient Wind) was retained by The Somerset O'Connor Limited Partnership to undertake a pedestrian level wind (PLW) study to satisfy the requirements for a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) application for the proposed development commonly referred to as "1954 Gemstone", located at 311 Somerset Street West in Ottawa (hereinafter referred to as "subject site"). Our mandate within this study is to investigate pedestrian wind comfort and safety within and surrounding the subject site, and to identify any areas where wind conditions may interfere with certain pedestrian activities so that mitigation measures may be considered, as required.

Our work is based on industry standard computer simulations using the computational fluid dynamics (CFD) technique and data analysis procedures, City of Ottawa wind comfort and safety criteria, architectural drawings prepared by Figurr Architects Collective, in January 2021, surrounding street layouts and existing and approved future building massing information obtained from the City of Ottawa, as well as recent satellite imagery.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The subject site is located at 311 Somerset Street West in Ottawa, Ontario on the southeast corner of a rectangular parcel of land bounded by O'Connor Street to the east, Somerset Street West to the south, Bank Street to the west, and Cooper Street to the north. The development comprises a 16-storey building plus mechanical penthouse. The development includes two levels of underground parking.

The ground floor comprises commercial space at the southeast and northeast corners, a residential lobby at the southwest corner, a conference room along the east elevation, and shared building support spaces throughout the rest of the level. Vehicular access to underground parking is provided at the northwest corner from O'Connor Street via a laneway along the north elevation. The higher levels are reserved for residential occupancy except for Level 10 and the penthouse level (Level 17). Level 10 provides a gym, a multipurpose room, and an outdoor amenity terrace along the south, and residential units on the rest of the level. In addition to mechanical space, Level 17 provides an outdoor amenity space divided into a raised, high deck with a swimming pool to the north, and a low deck to the east. The floorplates set back on the south at Level 10 and on the north and east at Level 17 to provide for the amenity terraces.

The near-field surroundings (defined as an area within 200 metres (m) of the subject site) include a mix of mostly mid- and high-rise buildings from the west clockwise to the northwest, and a mix of low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings in the remaining compass directions. The far-field surroundings (defined as an area beyond the near-field but within a 2-kilometre (km) radius of the subject site) are characterized by a mix of low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings from the north clockwise to the east, by a mix of mostly low- and mid-rise buildings, with isolated high-rise buildings from the east clockwise to the west, and by a mix of mostly high-rise buildings and the open exposure of the Ottawa River for the remaining compass directions. The downtown Ottawa core lies approximately 300 m to the north, while Lebreton Flats lies approximately 1.4 km to the west. The Rideau Canal flows southeast to northwest approximately 850 m to the northeast of the subject site, and the Ottawa River flows southwest to northeast approximately 1.2 km to the northwest.

Key areas under consideration include surrounding sidewalks, walkways, bus stops, and building access points. Figure 1 illustrates the subject site and surrounding context, while Figures 2A-2D illustrate the computational model used to conduct the study.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

The principal objectives of this study are to (i) determine pedestrian level wind comfort and safety conditions at key areas within and surrounding the development site; (ii) identify areas where wind conditions may interfere with the intended uses of outdoor spaces; and (iii) recommend suitable mitigation measures, where required.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

The approach followed to quantify pedestrian wind conditions over the site is based on CFD simulations of wind speeds across the study site within a virtual environment, meteorological analysis of the Ottawa area wind climate, and synthesis of computational data with City of Ottawa wind comfort and safety criteria<sup>1</sup>. The following sections describe the analysis procedures, including a discussion of the noted pedestrian wind criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Ottawa Terms of References: Wind Analysis  
[https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/default/files/torwindanalysis\\_en.pdf](https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/default/files/torwindanalysis_en.pdf)

#### 4.1 Computer-Based Context Modelling

A computer based PLW study was performed to determine the influence of the wind environment on pedestrian comfort over the proposed development site. Pedestrian comfort predictions, based on the mechanical effects of wind, were determined by combining measured wind speed data from CFD simulations with statistical weather data obtained from Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier International Airport. The general concept and approach to CFD modelling is to represent building and topographic details in the immediate vicinity of the study site on the surrounding model, and to create suitable atmospheric wind profiles at the model boundary. The wind profiles are designed to have similar mean and turbulent wind properties consistent with actual site exposures.

An industry standard practice is to omit trees, vegetation, and other existing and planned landscape elements from the model due to the difficulty of providing accurate seasonal representation of vegetation. The omission of trees and other landscaping elements produces slightly more conservative (i.e., windier) wind speed values.

#### 4.2 Wind Speed Measurements

The PLW analysis was performed by simulating wind flows and gathering velocity data over a CFD model of the site for 12 wind directions. The CFD simulation model was centered on the study building, complete with surrounding massing within a diameter of approximately 820 m.

Mean and peak wind speed data obtained over the study site for each wind direction were interpolated to 36 wind directions at 10° intervals, representing the full compass azimuth. Measured wind speeds approximately 1.5 m above local grade and the common elevated amenity terraces were referenced to the wind speed at gradient height to generate mean and peak velocity ratios, which were used to calculate full-scale values. Gradient height represents the theoretical depth of the boundary layer of the earth's atmosphere, above which the mean wind speed remains constant. Further details of the wind flow simulation technique are presented in Appendix A.

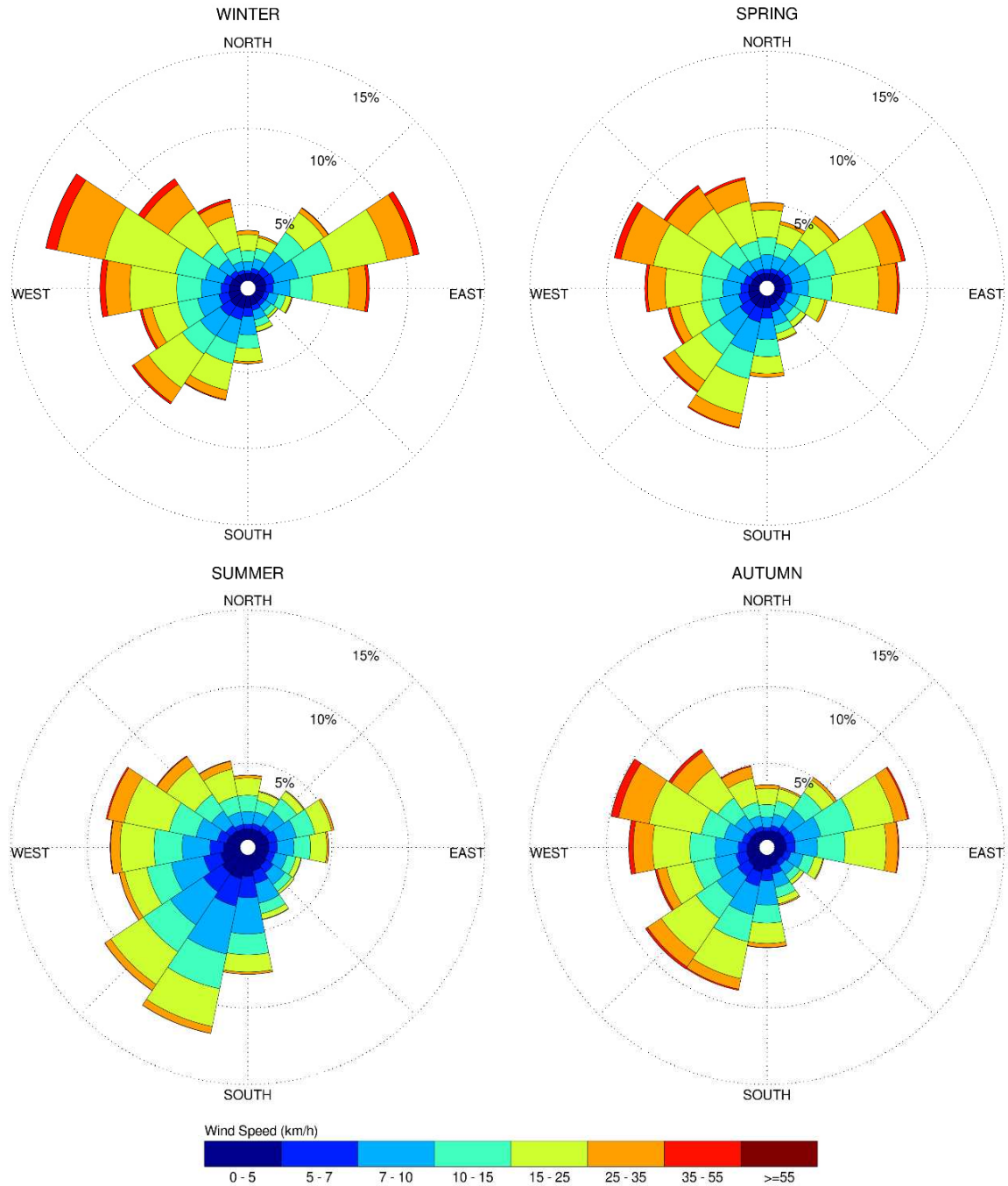
### 4.3 Meteorological Data Analysis

A statistical model for winds in Ottawa was developed from approximately 40 years of hourly meteorological wind data recorded at Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier International Airport and obtained from Environment and Climate Change Canada. Wind speed and direction data were analyzed for each month of the year to determine the statistically prominent wind directions and corresponding speeds, and to characterize similarities between monthly weather patterns.

The statistical model of the Ottawa area wind climate, which indicates the directional character of local winds on a seasonal basis, is illustrated on the following page. The plots illustrate seasonal distribution of measured wind speeds and directions in kilometers per hour (km/h). Probabilities of occurrence of different wind speeds are represented as stacked polar bars in sixteen azimuth divisions. The radial direction represents the percentage of time for various wind speed ranges per wind direction during the measurement period. The preferred wind speeds and directions can be identified by the longer length of the bars. For Ottawa, the most common winds occur for westerly wind directions, followed by those from the east, while the most common wind speeds are below 36 km/h. The directional preference and relative magnitude of wind speed changes somewhat from season to season.



## SEASONAL DISTRIBUTION OF WIND OTTAWA MACDONALD-CARTIER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



### Notes:

1. Radial distances indicate percentage of time of wind events.
2. Wind speeds are mean hourly in km/h, measured at 10 m above the ground.



#### 4.4 Pedestrian Comfort and Safety Criteria – City of Ottawa

Pedestrian comfort and safety criteria are based on the mechanical effects of wind without consideration of other meteorological conditions (i.e., temperature, relative humidity). The comfort criteria assume that pedestrians are appropriately dressed for a specified outdoor activity during any given season. Five pedestrian comfort classes are based on 20% non-exceedance mean wind speed ranges, which include (1) Sitting; (2) Standing; (3) Strolling; (4) Walking; and (5) Uncomfortable. More specifically, the comfort classes and associated mean wind speed ranges are summarized as follows:

- 1) **Sitting:** Mean wind speeds no greater than 10 km/h occurring at least 80% of the time. The equivalent gust wind speed is approximately 16 km/h.
- 2) **Standing:** Mean wind speeds no greater than 14 km/h occurring at least 80% of the time. The equivalent gust wind speed is approximately 22 km/h.
- 3) **Strolling:** Mean wind speeds no greater than 17 km/h occurring at least 80% of the time. The equivalent gust wind speed is approximately 27 km/h.
- 4) **Walking:** Mean wind speeds no greater than 20 km/h occurring at least 80% of the time. The equivalent gust wind speed is approximately 32 km/h.
- 5) **Uncomfortable:** Uncomfortable conditions are characterized by predicted values that fall below the 80% target for walking. Brisk walking and exercise, such as jogging, would be acceptable for moderate excesses of this criterion.

The pedestrian safety wind speed criterion is based on the approximate threshold that would cause a vulnerable member of the population to fall. A 0.1% exceedance gust wind speed of 90 km/h is classified as dangerous. The gust speeds, and equivalent mean speeds, are selected based on 'The Beaufort Scale', presented on the following page, which describes the effects of forces produced by varying wind speed levels on objects. Gust speeds are included because pedestrians tend to be more sensitive to wind gusts than to steady winds for lower wind speed ranges. For strong winds approaching dangerous levels, this effect is less important because the mean wind can also create problems for pedestrians.

## THE BEAUFORT SCALE

Number	Description	Wind Speed (km/h)		Description
		Mean	Gust	
2	Light Breeze	6-11	9-17	Wind felt on faces
3	Gentle Breeze	12-19	18-29	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion; wind extends light flags
4	Moderate Breeze	20-28	30-42	Wind raises dust and loose paper; small branches are moved
5	Fresh Breeze	29-38	43-57	Small trees in leaf begin to sway
6	Strong Breeze	39-49	58-74	Large branches in motion; Whistling heard in electrical wires; umbrellas used with difficulty
7	Moderate Gale	50-61	75-92	Whole trees in motion; inconvenient walking against wind
8	Gale	62-74	93-111	Breaks twigs off trees; generally impedes progress

Experience and research on people’s perception of mechanical wind effects has shown that if the wind speed levels are exceeded for more than 20% of the time, the activity level would be judged to be uncomfortable by most people. For instance, if a mean wind speed of 10 km/h were exceeded for more than 20% of the time most pedestrians would judge that location to be too windy for sitting. Similarly, if mean wind speed of 20 km/h at a location were exceeded for more than 20% of the time, walking or less vigorous activities would be considered uncomfortable. As these criteria are based on subjective reactions of a population to wind forces, their application is partly based on experience and judgment.

Once the pedestrian wind speed predictions have been established throughout the site, the assessment of pedestrian comfort involves determining the suitability of the predicted wind conditions for discrete regions within and surrounding the subject site. This step involves comparing the predicted comfort classes to the desired comfort classes, which are dictated by the location type for each region (i.e., a sidewalk, building entrance, amenity space, or other). An overview of common pedestrian location types and their desired comfort classes are summarized on the following page.



**DESIRED PEDESTRIAN COMFORT CLASSES FOR VARIOUS LOCATION TYPES**

Location Types	Desired Comfort Classes
Primary Building Entrance	Standing
Secondary Building Access Point	Standing / Strolling / Walking
Primary Public Sidewalk	Strolling / Walking
Secondary Public Sidewalk / Bicycle Path	Walking
Outdoor Amenity Space	Sitting / Standing / Strolling
Café / Patio / Bench / Garden	Sitting
Transit Stop	Sitting / Standing
Public Park / Plaza	Standing / Strolling
Garage / Service Entrance	Walking
Parking Lot	Strolling / Walking
Vehicular Drop-Off Zone	Standing / Strolling / Walking

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following discussion of predicted pedestrian wind conditions is accompanied by Figures 3A-3D illustrating seasonal wind comfort conditions at grade level. Wind conditions are presented as continuous contours of wind comfort within and surrounding the subject site. The colour contours indicate various wind comfort classes predicted for certain regions, which correspond to the City of Ottawa wind comfort criteria in Section 4.4. Wind conditions comfortable for sitting or more sedentary activities are represented by the colour green, standing are represented by yellow, strolling by orange, and walking by blue. Uncomfortable conditions are represented by magenta.

Regarding the amenity terraces, Figures 4A-8B illustrate seasonal wind comfort conditions and the percentage of time the roof areas are predicted to be suitable for sitting. Figures identified as subset ‘A’ represent wind comfort based on the definitions in Section 4.4, as noted above, while the figures identified as subset ‘B’ represent percentage of time suitable for sitting. Pedestrian conditions are summarized below for each area of interest.

## 5.1 Wind Comfort Conditions – Grade Level

**Sidewalks and Laneways:** Wind conditions on the nearby sidewalks along O’Connor Street and Somerset Street West, as well as the laneways along the north and west elevations are predicted to be suitable for sitting throughout the year. The noted conditions are considered acceptable.

**Building Entrances:** Conditions in the vicinity of all building entrances are predicted to be suitable for sitting throughout the year. This includes the residential lobby entrance from Somerset Street West, the commercial building entrances along O’Connor Street, and the secondary building entrances along the north and west elevations. The noted conditions are considered acceptable.

## 5.2 Wind Comfort Conditions – Common Amenity Terraces

**Amenity Terrace, Level 10:** Conditions over the Level 10 amenity terrace, on the south side of the development, are predicted to be suitable for sitting during the typical use period of late spring through early autumn, becoming suitable for a mix of sitting and standing throughout the remainder of the year.

**Rooftop Amenity Terrace, Low Deck:** Regarding the low deck of the rooftop amenity terrace, wind conditions are predicted to be suitable for sitting throughout the year. These conditions are considered acceptable according to the comfort criteria in Section 4.4.

**Rooftop Amenity Terrace, High Deck:** Regarding the high deck of the rooftop amenity terrace, which includes a swimming pool, wind conditions are predicted to be suitable for sitting during the typical use period of late spring through early autumn, becoming mostly for standing throughout the remainder of the year. These conditions are considered acceptable according to the comfort criteria in Section 4.4.

## 5.3 Wind Safety

Within the context of typical weather patterns, which exclude anomalous localized storm events such as tornadoes and downbursts, no pedestrian areas surrounding the subject site at grade level or on the common elevated amenity terraces were found to experience conditions that could be considered dangerous, as defined in Section 4.4.

## 5.4 Applicability of Results

Wind conditions over surrounding sidewalks beyond the subject site, as well as at nearby primary building entrances, will be acceptable for their intended pedestrian uses during each seasonal period upon the introduction of the subject site. Pedestrian wind comfort and safety have been quantified for the specific configuration of existing and foreseeable construction around the study site. Future changes (i.e., construction or demolition) of these surroundings may cause changes to the wind effects in two ways, namely: (i) changes beyond the immediate vicinity of the site would alter the wind profile approaching the site; and (ii) development in proximity to the site would cause changes to local flow patterns. In general, development in urban centers generally creates reduction in the mean wind speeds and localized increases in the gustiness of the wind.

Regarding primary and secondary building access points, wind conditions predicted in this study are only applicable to pedestrian comfort and safety. As such, the results should not be construed to indicate wind loading on doors and associated hardware.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A complete summary of the predicted wind conditions is provided in Section 5 and illustrated in Figures 3A-8B. Based on computer simulations using the CFD technique, meteorological data analysis of the Ottawa wind climate, City of Ottawa wind comfort and safety criteria, and experience with numerous similar developments in Ottawa, we conclude the following:

- 1) All grade-level areas within and surrounding the subject site will be acceptable for the intended pedestrian uses throughout the year. Specifically, wind conditions over surrounding sidewalks, walkways, transit stops, and building access points, are considered acceptable for the intended pedestrian uses throughout the year.
- 2) The amenity terraces are predicted to be suitable for sitting during the typical use period of late spring through early autumn, which is considered acceptable. This includes the Level 10 amenity terrace, and both the low deck and high deck of the rooftop amenity terrace.

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- 3) Within the context of typical weather patterns, which exclude anomalous localized storm events such as tornadoes and downbursts, no pedestrian areas within and surrounding the subject site were found to experience conditions that could be considered uncomfortable or dangerous.
- 4) Regarding primary and secondary building access points, wind conditions predicted in this study are only applicable to pedestrian comfort and safety. As such, the results should not be construed to indicate wind loading on doors and associated hardware.

This concludes our PLW study and report. Please advise the undersigned of any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

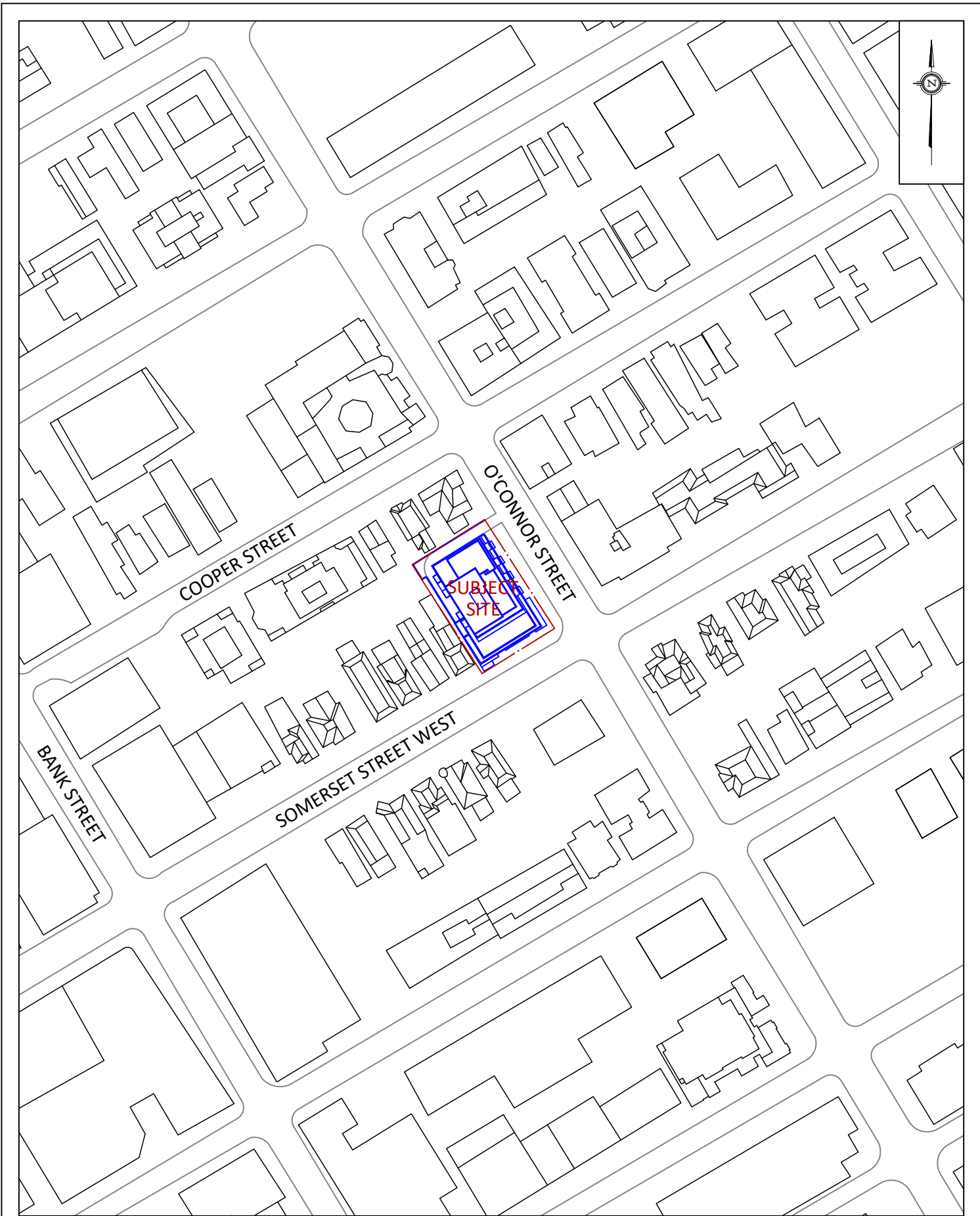
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Principal



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PROJECT

311 SOMERSET STREET WEST, OTTAWA  
PEDESTRIAN LEVEL WIND STUDY

SCALE

1:1750

DRAWING NO.

21-024-PLW-1

DATE

FEBRUARY 12, 2021

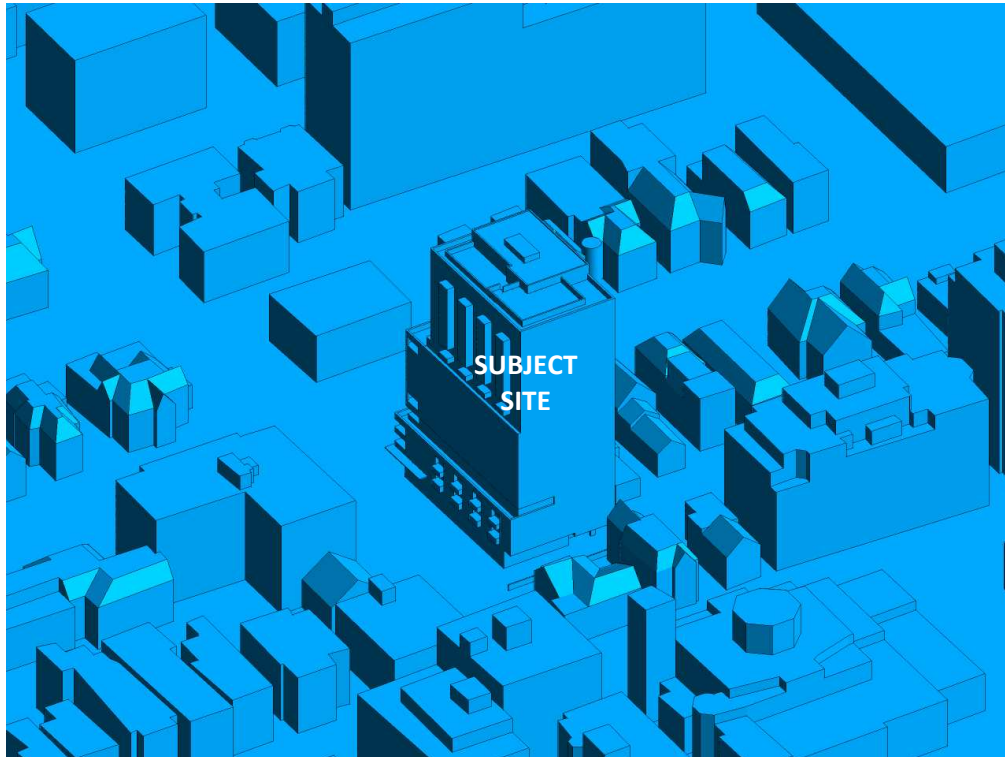
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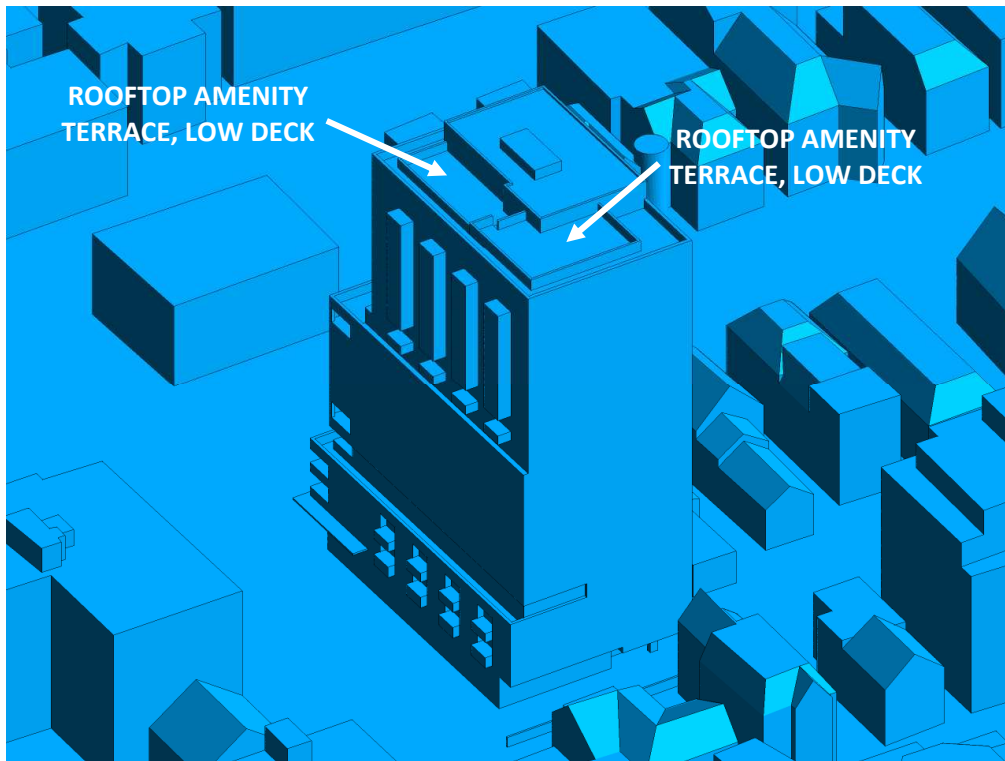
DESCRIPTION

FIGURE 1:  
SITE PLAN AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT



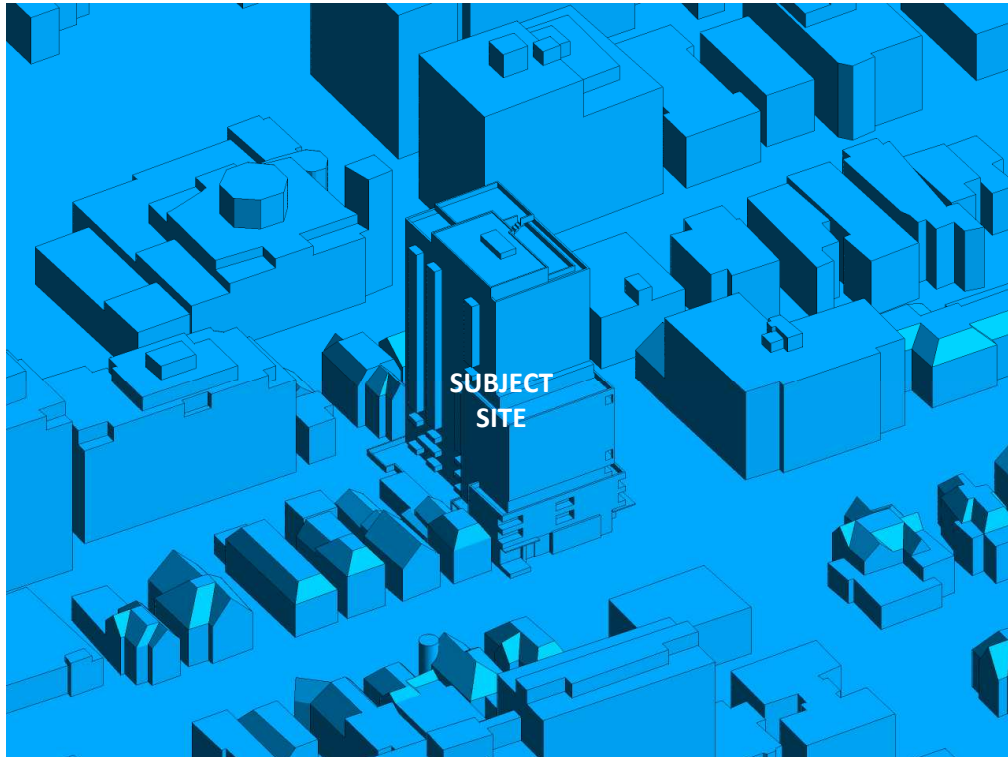


**FIGURE 2A: COMPUTATIONAL MODEL, NORTH PERSPECTIVE**

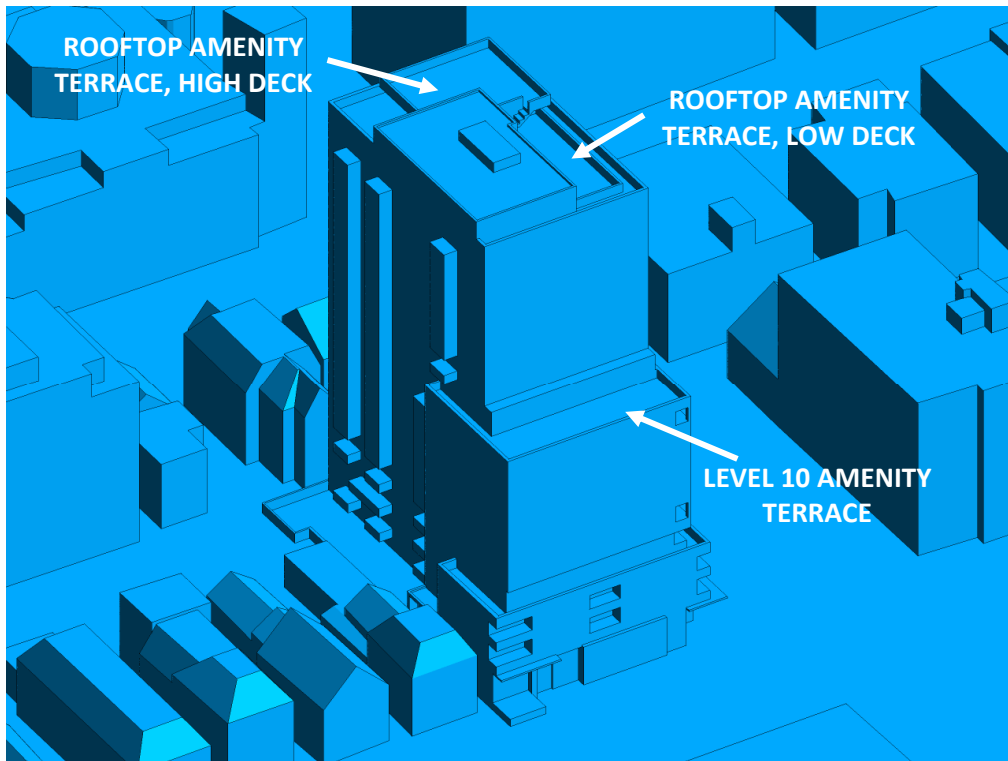


**FIGURE 2B: CLOSE UP OF FIGURE 2A**



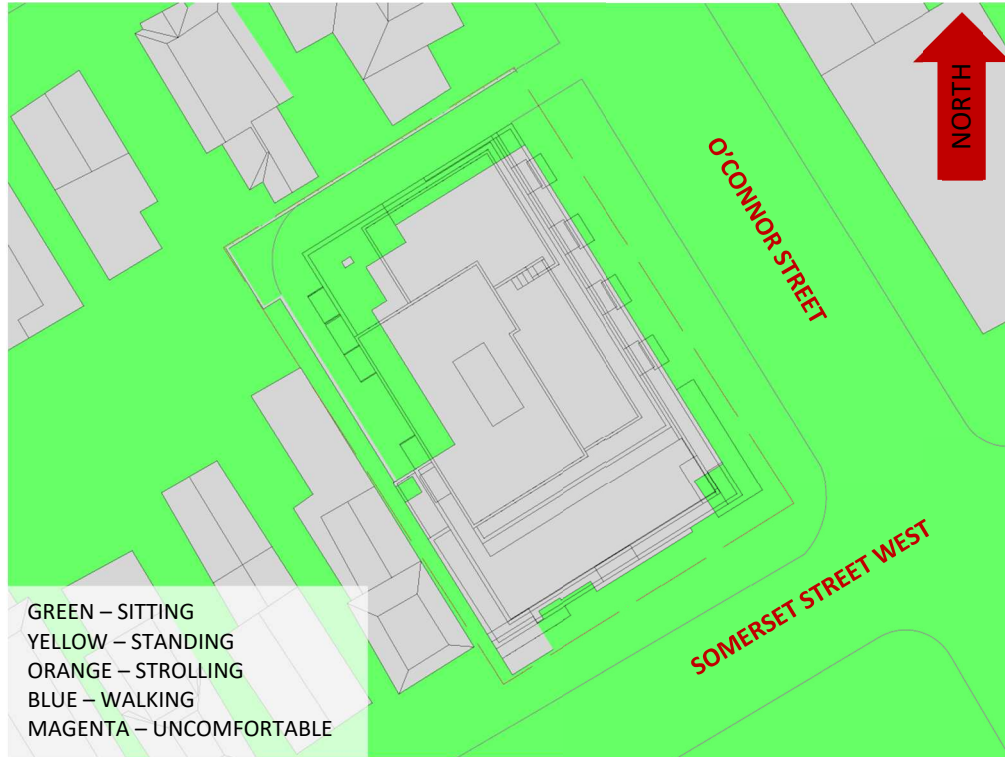


**FIGURE 2C: COMPUTATIONAL MODEL, SOUTH PERSPECTIVE**



**FIGURE 2D: CLOSE UP OF FIGURE 2C**



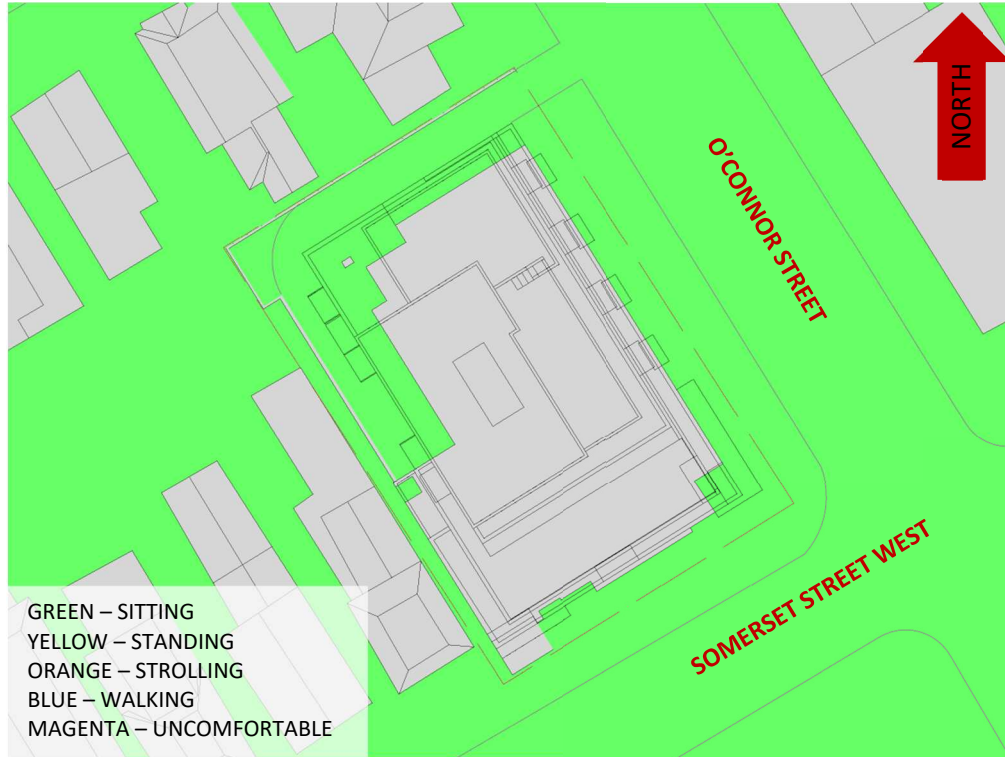


**FIGURE 3A: SPRING – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, GRADE LEVEL**



**FIGURE 3B: SUMMER – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, GRADE LEVEL**





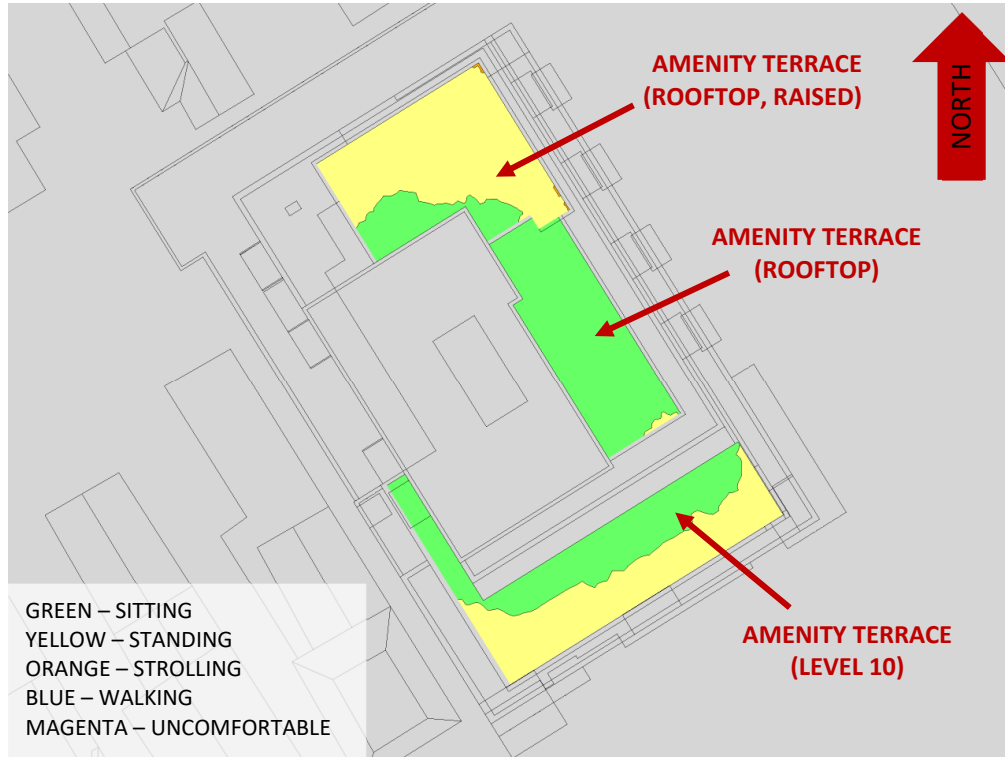
**FIGURE 3C: AUTUMN – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, GRADE LEVEL**



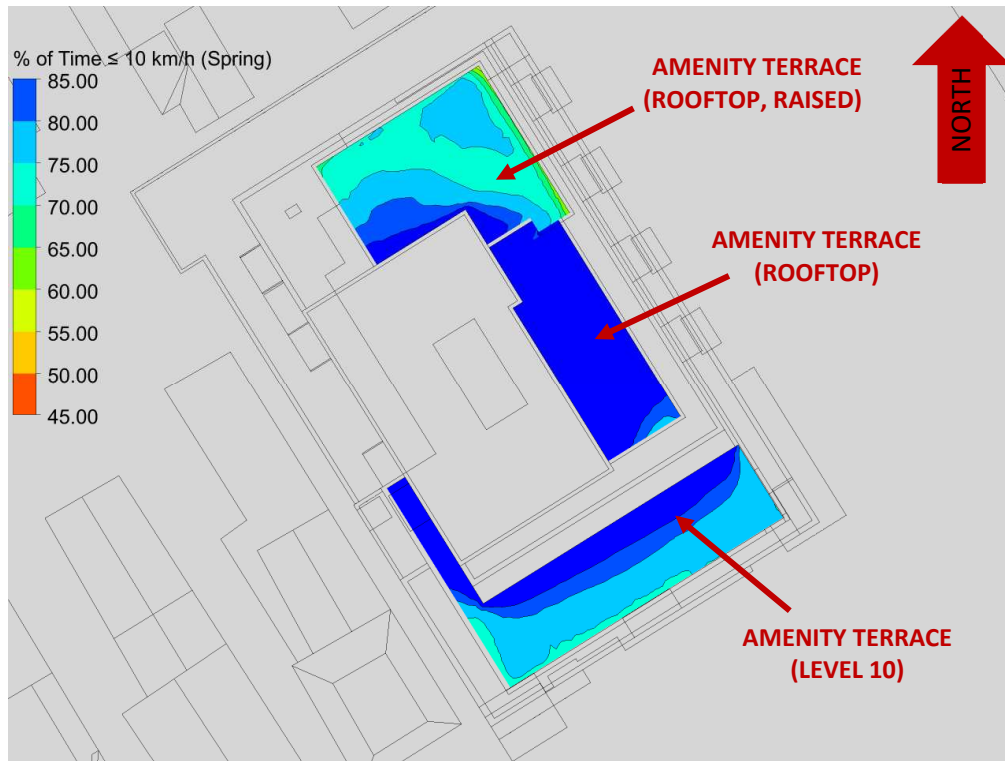
**FIGURE 3D: WINTER – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, GRADE LEVEL**



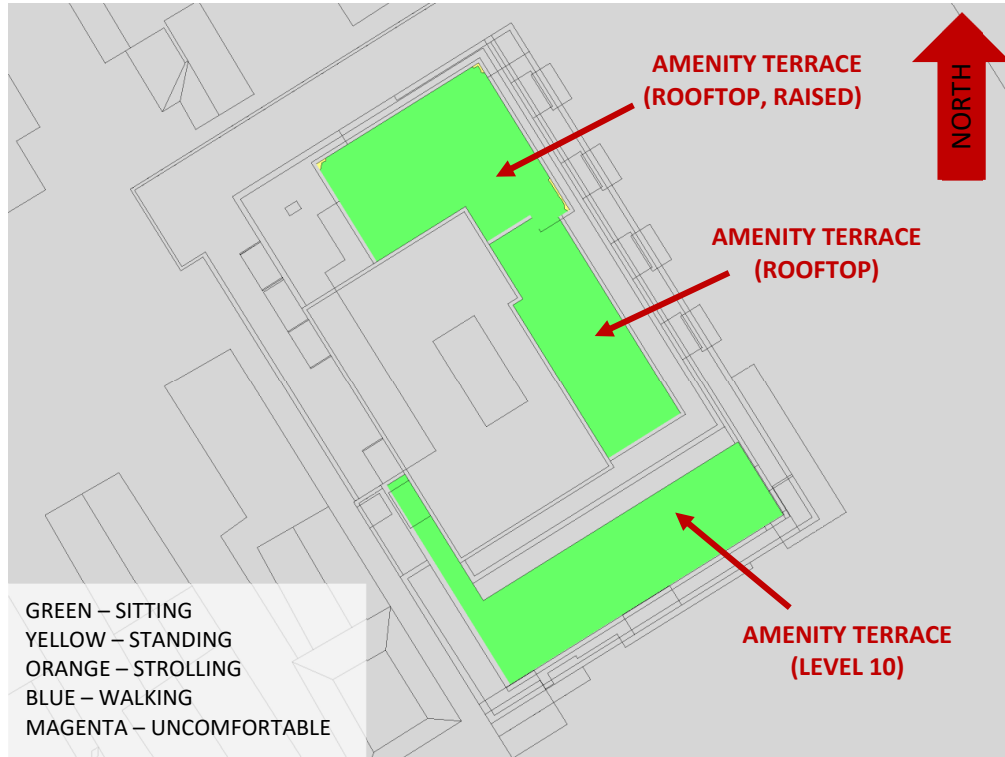




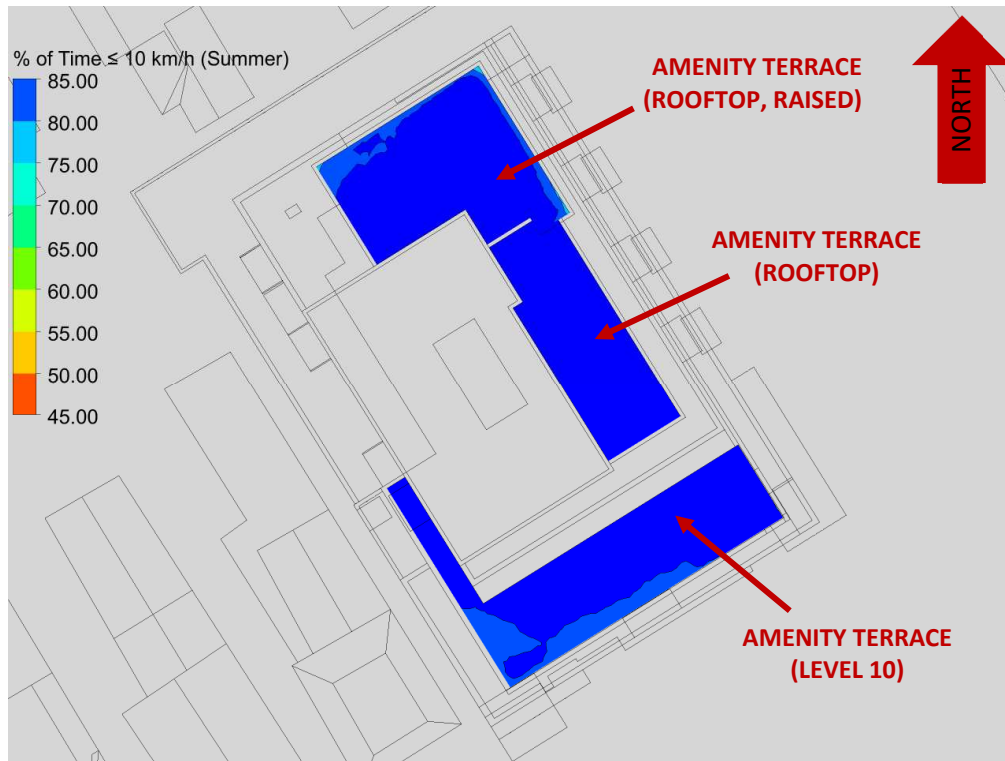
**FIGURE 4A: SPRING – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, AMENITY TERRACES**



**FIGURE 4B: SPRING – PERCENTAGE OF TIME SUITABLE FOR SITTING, AMENITY TERRACES**

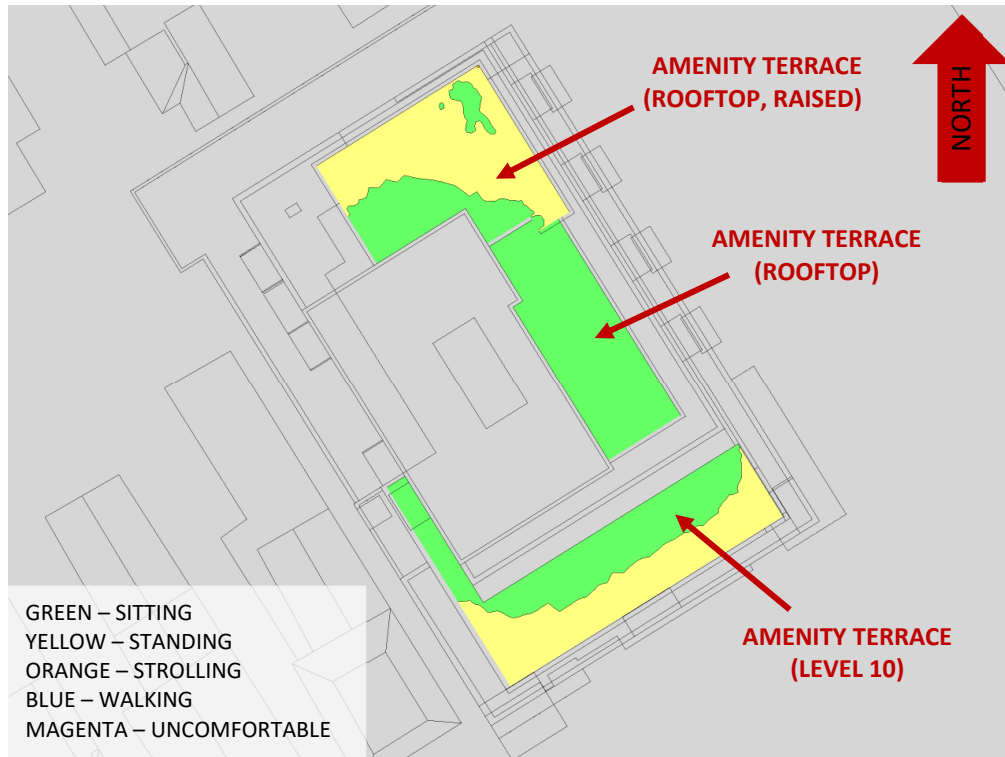


**FIGURE 5A: SUMMER – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, AMENITY TERRACES**

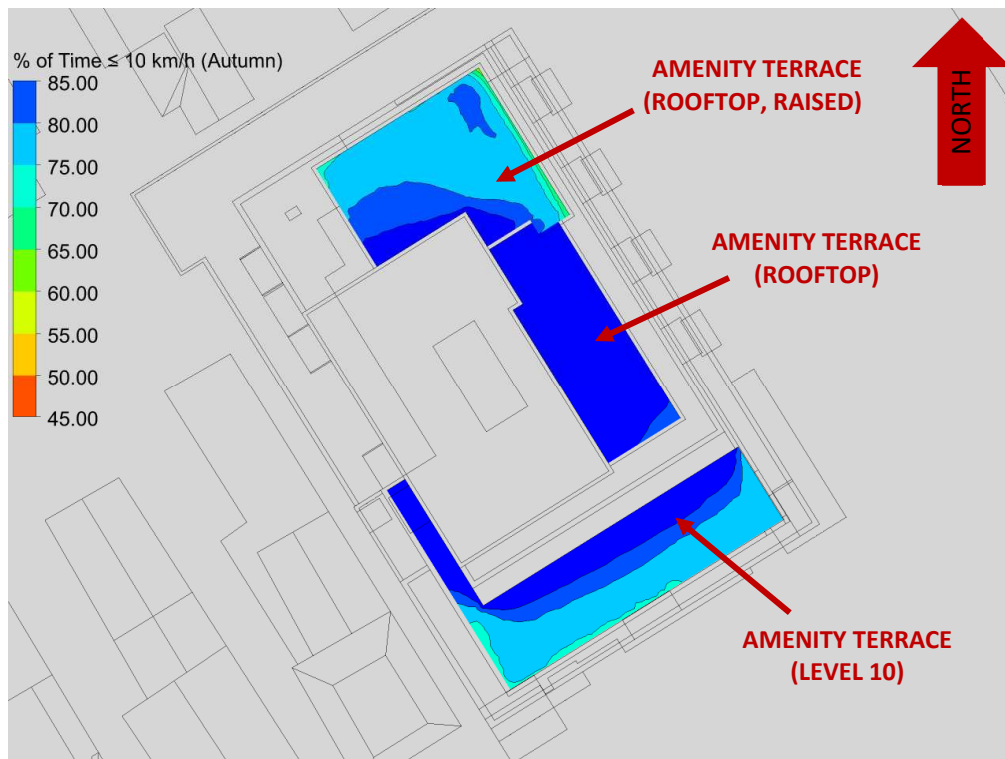


**FIGURE 5B: SUMMER – PERCENTAGE OF TIME SUITABLE FOR SITTING, AMENITY TERRACES**





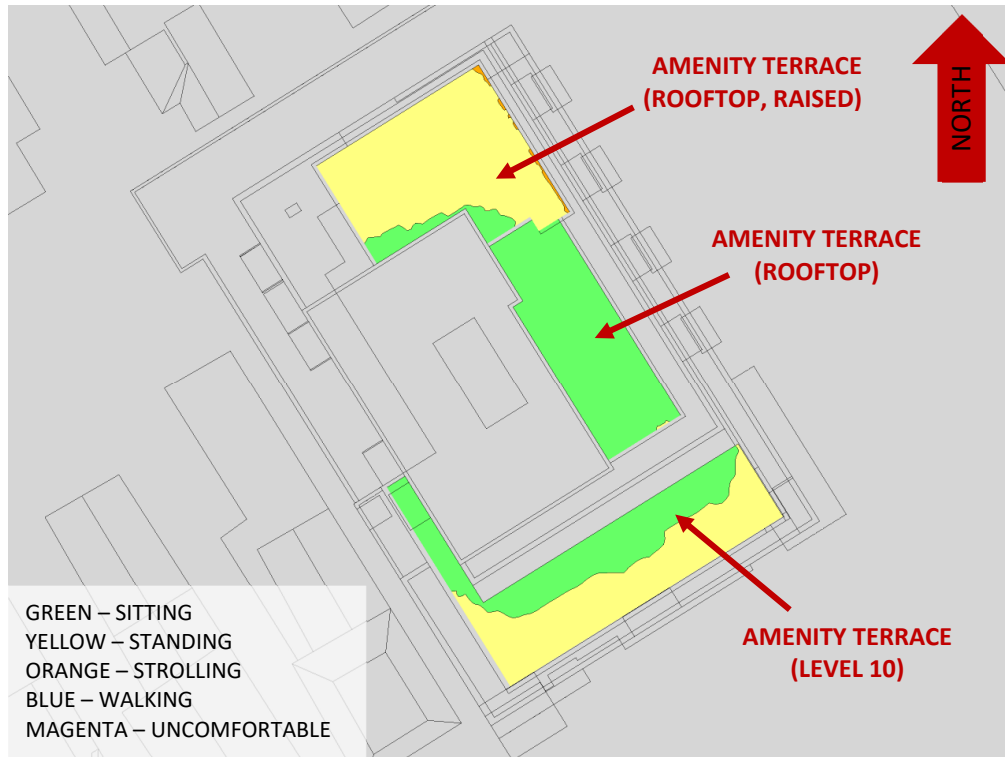
**FIGURE 6A: AUTUMN – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, AMENITY TERRACES**



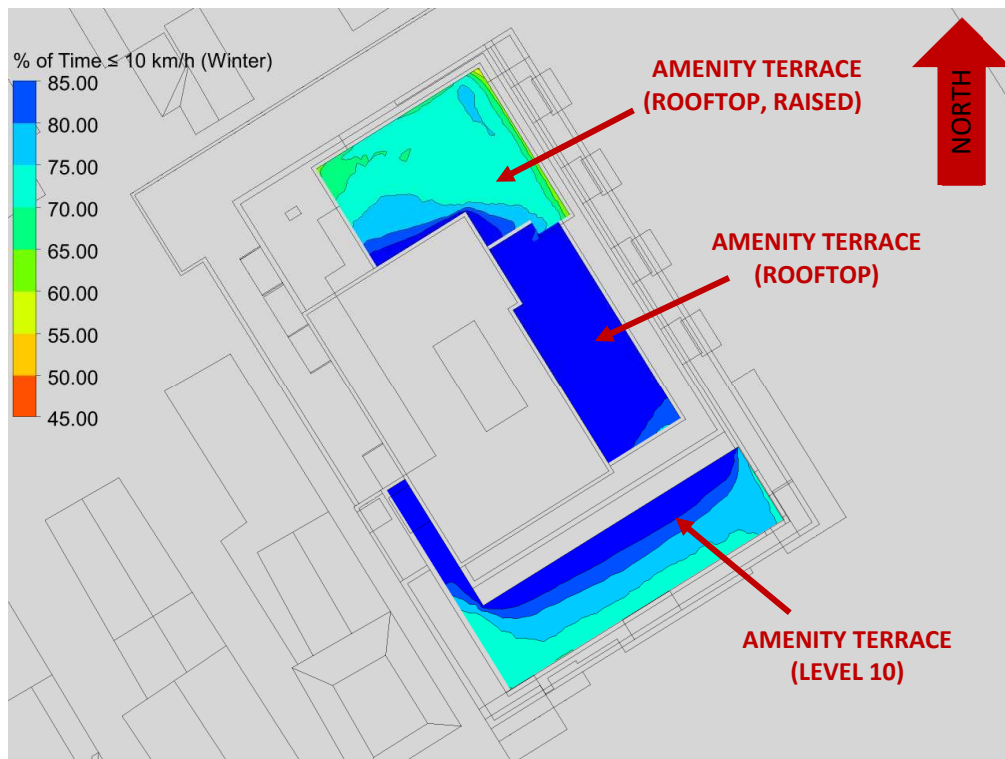
**FIGURE 6B: AUTUMN – PERCENTAGE OF TIME SUITABLE FOR SITTING, AMENITY TERRACES**





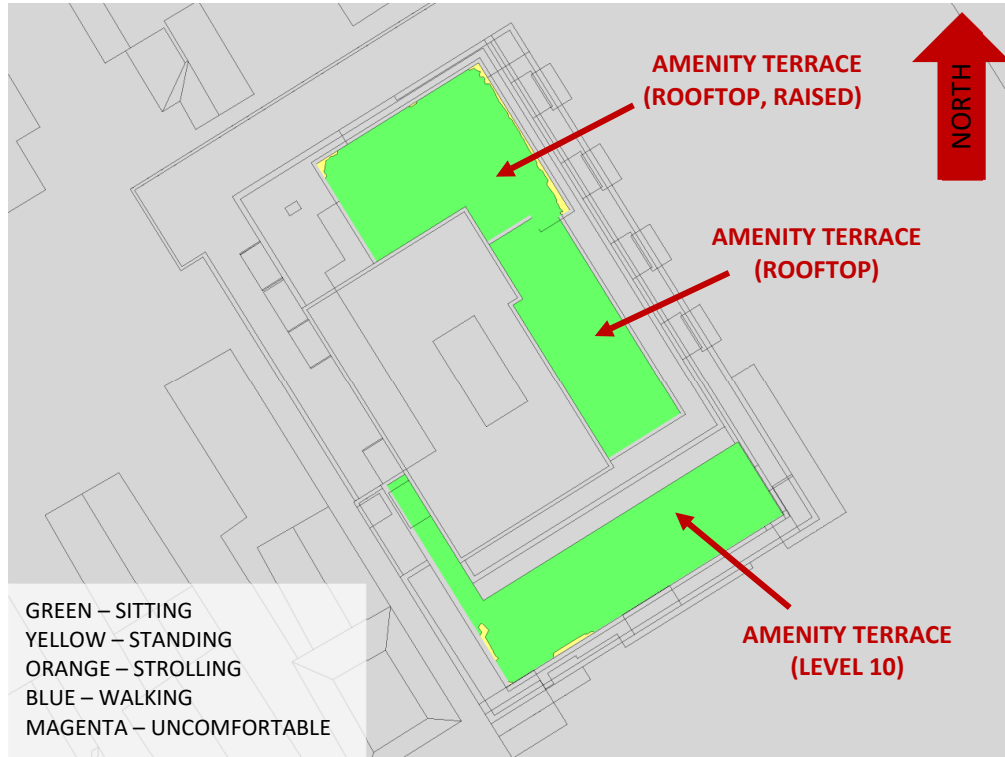


**FIGURE 7A: WINTER – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, AMENITY TERRACES**

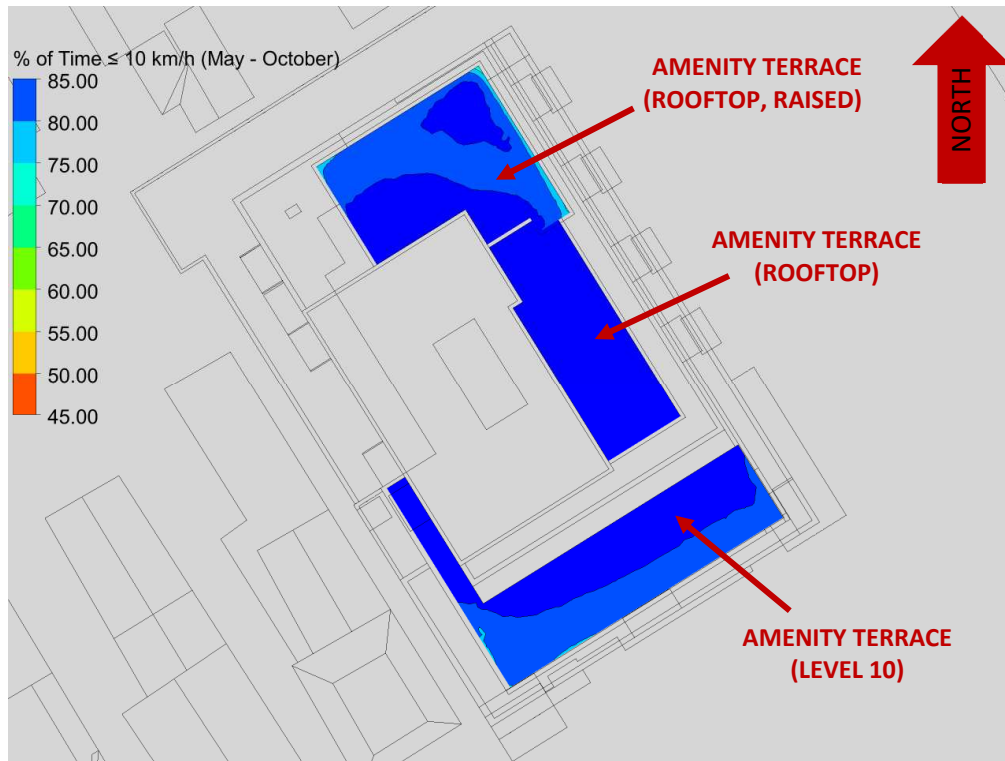


**FIGURE 7B: WINTER – PERCENTAGE OF TIME SUITABLE FOR SITTING, AMENITY TERRACES**





**FIGURE 8A: MAY-OCT – WIND COMFORT CLASSES, AMENITY TERRACES**

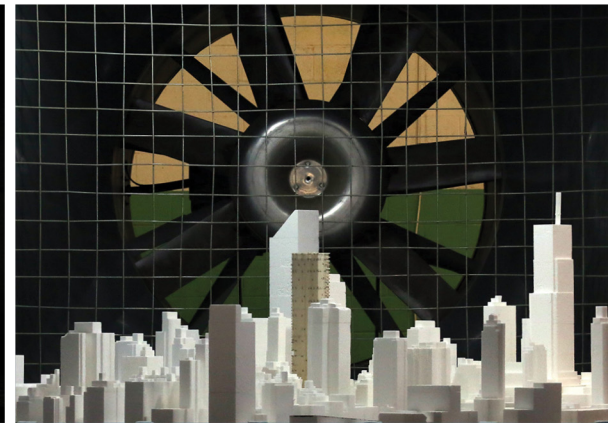
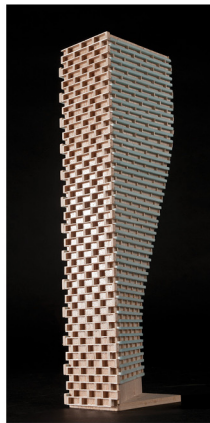


**FIGURE 8B: MAY-OCT – PERCENTAGE OF TIME SUITABLE FOR SITTING, AMENITY TERRACES**



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## APPENDIX A

### SIMULATION OF THE ATMOSPHERIC BOUNDARY LAYER

## SIMULATION OF THE ATMOSPHERIC BOUNDARY LAYER

The atmospheric boundary layer (ABL) is defined by the velocity and turbulence profiles according to industry standard practices. The mean wind profile can be represented, to a good approximation, by a power law relation, Equation (1), giving height above ground versus wind speed [1], [2].

$$U = U_g \left( \frac{Z}{Z_g} \right)^\alpha \quad \text{Equation (1)}$$

where,  $U$  = mean wind speed,  $U_g$  = gradient wind speed,  $Z$  = height above ground,  $Z_g$  = depth of the boundary layer (gradient height), and  $\alpha$  is the power law exponent.

For the model,  $U_g$  is set to 6.5 metres per second (m/s), which approximately corresponds to the 60% mean wind speed for Ottawa based on historical climate data and statistical analyses. When the results are normalized by this velocity, they are relatively insensitive to the selection of gradient wind speed.

$Z_g$  is set to 540 m. The selection of gradient height is relatively unimportant, so long as it exceeds the building heights surrounding the subject site. The value has been selected to correspond to our physical wind tunnel reference value.

$\alpha$  is determined based on the upstream exposure of the far-field surroundings (i.e., the area that it not captured within the simulation model).

Table 1 presents the values of  $\alpha$  used in this study, while Table 2 presents several reference values of  $\alpha$ . When the upstream exposure of the far-field surroundings is a mixture of multiple types of terrain, the  $\alpha$  values are a weighted average with terrain that is closer to the subject site given greater weight.

**TABLE 1: UPSTREAM EXPOSURE (ALPHA VALUE) VS TRUE WIND DIRECTION**

Wind Direction (Degrees True)	Alpha Value ( $\alpha$ )
0	0.31
49	0.27
74	0.26
103	0.24
167	0.24
197	0.24
217	0.24
237	0.24
262	0.25
282	0.31
302	0.32
324	0.31

**TABLE 2: DEFINITION OF UPSTREAM EXPOSURE (ALPHA VALUE)**

Upstream Exposure Type	Alpha Value ( $\alpha$ )
Open Water	0.14-0.15
Open Field	0.16-0.19
Light Suburban	0.21-0.24
Heavy Suburban	0.24-0.27
Light Urban	0.28-0.30
Heavy Urban	0.31-0.33

The turbulence model in the computational fluid dynamics (CFD) simulations is a two-equation shear-stress transport (SST) model, and thus the ABL turbulence profile requires that two parameters be defined at the inlet of the domain. The turbulence profile is defined following the recommendations of the Architectural Institute of Japan for flat terrain [3].

$$I(Z) = \begin{cases} 0.1 \left(\frac{Z}{Z_g}\right)^{-\alpha-0.05}, & Z > 10 \text{ m} \\ 0.1 \left(\frac{10}{Z_g}\right)^{-\alpha-0.05}, & Z \leq 10 \text{ m} \end{cases} \quad \text{Equation (2)}$$

$$L_t(Z) = \begin{cases} 100 \text{ m} \sqrt{\frac{Z}{30}}, & Z > 30 \text{ m} \\ 100 \text{ m}, & Z \leq 30 \text{ m} \end{cases} \quad \text{Equation (3)}$$

where,  $I$  = turbulence intensity,  $L_t$  = turbulence length scale,  $Z$  = height above ground, and  $\alpha$  is the power law exponent used for the velocity profile in Equation (1).

Boundary conditions on all other domain boundaries are defined as follows: the ground is a no-slip surface; the side walls of the domain have a symmetry boundary condition; the top of the domain has a specified shear, which maintains a constant wind speed at gradient height; and the outlet has a static pressure boundary condition.

## REFERENCES

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