



**280/282 Laurier Avenue East**

Urban Design Brief  
Site Plan Control Revision  
April 18, 2024



Prepared for Smart Living Properties

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April 2024

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This Urban Design Brief is intended to illustrate how the proposed development at 280 Laurier Avenue East represents context sensitive design, implementing the planning policies, plans and guidelines approved by Ottawa City Council.

## 1.2 Application Overview

280 Laurier Holdings Inc. intends to develop a four-storey addition extending the existing building's frontage along Laurier Avenue. The existing property located at 280 Laurier Avenue is within the boundaries of the Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Area and is a Category 4 property, considered 'non-contributing'. This existing six-storey, mid-rise apartment building is also a non-conforming use.

The proposed development, which will have the address of 282 Laurier Avenue East, contemplates a four-storey addition along the east face of the existing six-storey, residential building located on the subject property. A total of 18 dwelling units are proposed with a separate main entrance along the north face accessed from Laurier Avenue. The development also provides for 30 enclosed bicycle parking spaces within the basement level of the existing building and 27 outdoor bicycle parking spaces. These spaces are to be shared between the existing building and proposed addition. No vehicle parking is provided.

To facilitate the proposed development Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control applications were submitted in August 2021. The development proposed as part of the above noted development applications contemplated a three-storey addition, which included the same number of dwellings, however, the proposed development included a different unit mix. As part of an OLT settlement, the zoning was approved in March 2023. The newly proposed development remains compliant with the established Zoning By-law Amendment and a revision to the approved Site Plan Control application is being sought. It should be noted that a Site Plan Agreement was never registered in relation to City Planning File No. D07-12-21-0133.

## 2.0 Site and Surrounding Context

### 2.1 Subject Property

The subject property, municipally known as 280 Laurier Avenue, is a corner lot located on the south side of Laurier Avenue between Sweetland Avenue to the west and Russell Avenue to the east in the Rideau-Vanier (Ward 12). The subject property has a frontage of approximately 28.5 metres along Laurier Avenue, a frontage of approximately 32 metres along Sweetland Avenue with a lot depth of approximately 32 metres and a total site area of approximately 903.43 square metres (Figure 1).

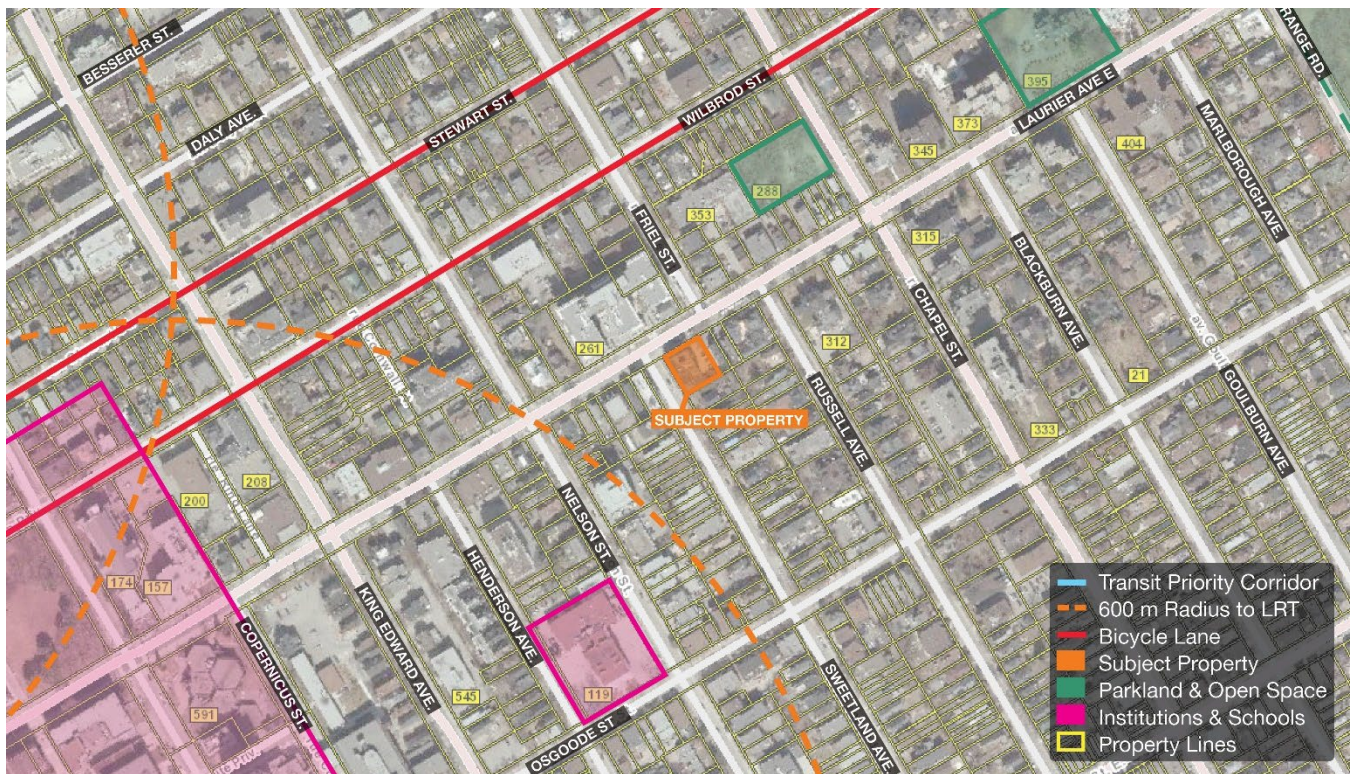


Figure 1: Aerial View of the subject property and surrounding context.

The subject property is currently developed with a mid-rise, residential use building that is six (6) storeys in height. The existing 6-storey building is setback approximately 4 metres from the front lot line along Laurier Avenue. The principal entrance to the building is accessed by a walkway with frontage along Laurier Avenue. The subject property is also located within the Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Character Area but is not designated under Part IV or Part V of the Heritage Act. The Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Character further identifies the property as a Category 4 property. The subject property is located directly north of the Sweetland Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and east of the Wilbrod/Laurier HCD.

A surface parking lot is located along the eastern periphery of the property. Vehicular access to the parking lot is currently off Sweetland Avenue and Laurier Avenue. Waste storage for the existing building is located outdoors along the eastern periphery of the building.

A sidewalk is provided along both the Laurier Avenue and Sweetland Avenue frontages. Wooden poles along the Laurier Avenue are used for street lighting.

Both frontages are landscaped with hardscape and softscape materials including pavers, shrubbery, mature trees, and grass.



Figure 2: Images of the subject property and surrounding area.

## 2.2 Surrounding Area

As a corner lot, the property has frontage on Sweetland Avenue and Laurier Avenue, in the established community of Sandy Hill. Laurier Avenue is identified as a major collector road. The property is also located 250 metres west of King Edward Avenue and 400 metres south of Rideau Street which are both identified as major arterial roads. The area surrounding the property is characterized by a broad mix of uses and building typologies including low-, mid- and high-rise residential and mixed-use buildings, commercial buildings, and institutional uses including the University of Ottawa. Laurier Avenue, King Edward Avenue and Rideau Street all feature a range of daily goods and services while also providing more specialized functions and destinations that serve the needs of others living beyond the borders of the immediate neighbourhood. The property is located approximately 700 metres from the existing Rideau LRT station and is located approximately 450 metres south of the identified Transit Priority Corridor along Rideau Street.

The adjacent land uses can be described as follows:

**North:** Immediately north of the property along the north side of Laurier Avenue is a mid-rise, mixed-use 9-storey building that features ground-floor commercial spaces and residential units above. A local bus stop servicing Route #19 is also located directly north of the property along the north side of Laurier Avenue. Rideau Street is also located north of the property featuring a wide range of mainstreet uses including grocery stores, retail, restaurants, personal services and other uses typically found in a downtown core.

**East:** Directly east of the subject property is a low-rise residential use building that is three (3) storeys in height with frontage along Laurier Avenue. Along the east side of the property, Laurier Avenue features a collection of building typologies and uses that contribute to the Sandy Hill Cultural Heritage Character Area. Several institutional uses along Laurier Avenue include Amnesty International, the Laurier House National Historic Site and several embassies. Further east

is Strathcona Park which provides frontage along the Rideau River. The Adawe Crossing bridge provides a pedestrian and bicycle crossing across the river and into the established Vanier neighbourhood.

**South:** Immediately south of the subject property is a low-rise residential-use building with frontage along Sweetland Avenue. Sweetland Avenue features a collection of low-rise residential use building typologies including duplexes, apartment buildings, semi-detached and detached homes. Buildings located along Sweetland Avenue are within the Sweetland HCD and regulated under Part IV and Part V of the Planning Act. Further south is the Sandy Hill Community Centre, Sandy Hill Arena, as well as the Minto Sports Complex Fitness Centre. The 417 Provincial Highway is approximately 1 kilometre south of the site and can be accessed directly from Nicholas Street.

**West:** Immediately west of the property along the southwest corner of Sweetland Avenue and Laurier Avenue is a low-rise apartment building use which is three (3) storeys in height. Further west is King Edward Avenue which features a wide range of mainstreet uses including retail, restaurants, personal services and other uses typically found in a Downtown core. The University of Ottawa campus is also located further west of the property.

### 2.3 Neighbourhood Amenities

As a site located in the established Sandy Hill neighbourhood and near the Downtown Core, the subject property enjoys close proximity to many neighbourhood amenities including a variety of small and locally oriented commercial uses such as restaurants, retail shops, and coffee shops. The surrounding neighbourhood also benefits from access to one (1) large grocery stores within a 10-minute walk – Loblaw's at 363 Rideau Street. The neighbourhood also benefits from a 15-minute walk to the Rideau Centre. The site is well-served with respect to parks and community facilities being within walking distance of Saint Germain Park to the south, Strathcona Park to the east, and the Rideau River to the east.

A detailed list of neighbourhood amenities including a wide range of uses is listed below:

- / Recreational facilities including the Sandy Hill Arena and the Minto Sports Complex Fitness Centre;
- / Parks including Saint-Germain Park, Strathcona Park, as well as greenspace along the Rideau River on both the east and west side;
- / Institutional uses such as the University of Ottawa, Amnesty International, the Laurier House National Historic Site; and
- / Schools including Francojeunesse School and Culturais Spanish School.

# 3.0 Proposed Development

## 3.1 Development Statistics

280 Laurier Holdings Inc. is proposing to replace the existing surface parking lot and construct a four-storey, 14.5 metre high, residential, apartment addition with a total of 18 dwelling units (12 bachelor, 2 two-bedroom, 3 three-bedroom and 1 four-bedroom). Between the new addition and the existing building, a total of 57 bicycle parking spaces will be provided in lieu of vehicle spaces.

The development will maintain the existing building located on the property and construct the addition along the eastern portion of the property. The existing building contains a total of 2,387 square metres of residential uses in six storeys, while the proposed addition contains a total of 18 dwelling in four-storeys over a total GFA of 968 square meters for a total building GFA of 3,355 square meters on the subject property. As the proposed addition will replace the existing surface parking lot the development does not include any vehicular parking spaces. Combining the additional and the existing building there a total of 30 indoor bicycle spaces and 27 outdoor bicycle spaces proposed. Indoor bicycle parking is proposed to be located within the basement of the existing building with access for residences of both the addition and existing building. Outdoor bicycle parking is proposed mainly in the rear yard with a few spaces out front.

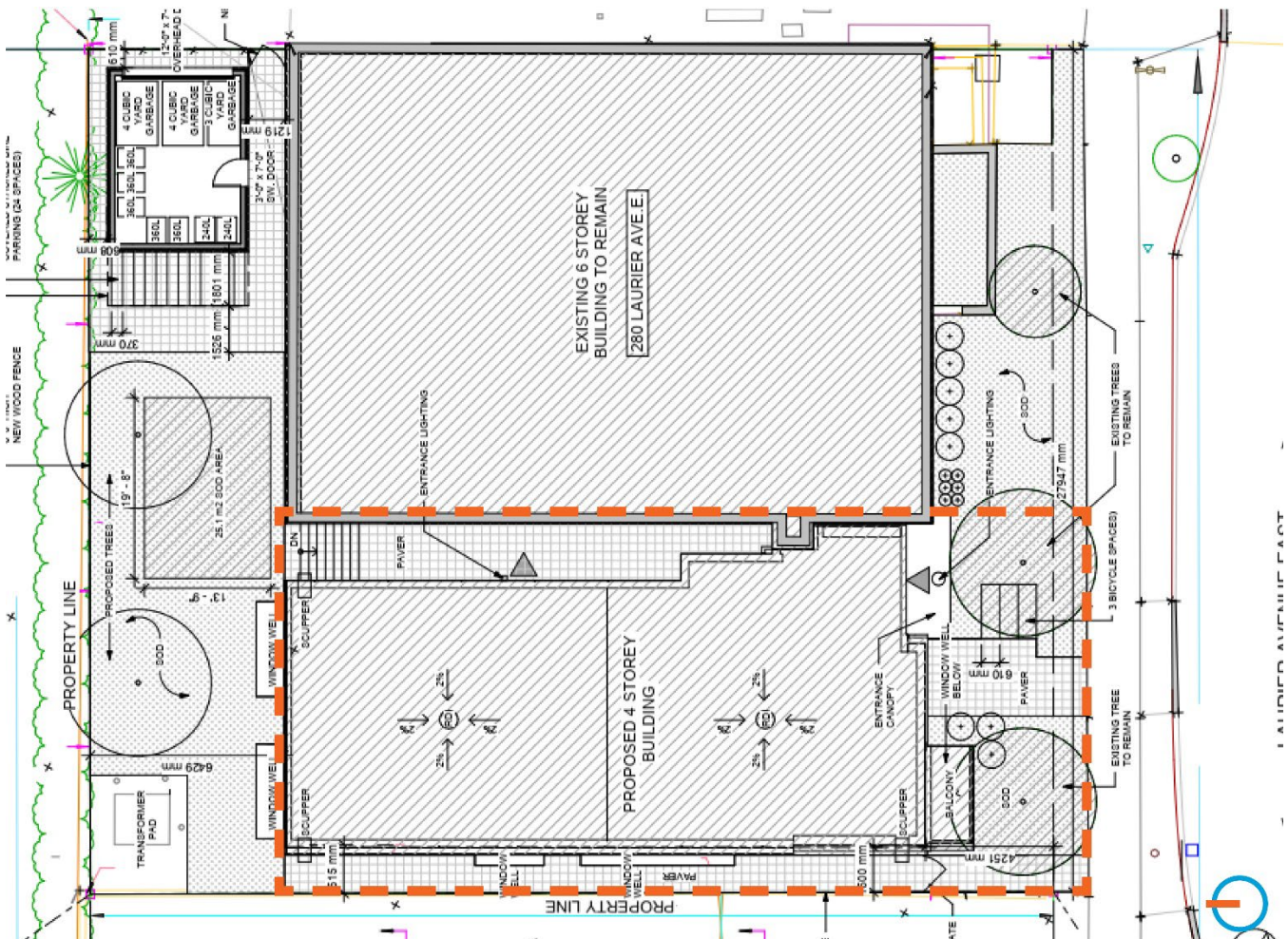


Figure 3: Site Plan of the subject property, with the proposed development highlighted in orange.



The main entrance to the residential units within the existing building from Laurier Avenue will be maintained, while a second and separate entrance providing residential access to the addition is proposed along Laurier Avenue. To access the newly proposed entrance, the development proposes to introduce a separate walkway that runs from the property line along Laurier Avenue to the building face. The proposal also includes the introduction of an enclosed accessory waste structure in the rear yard. Service access for waste collection will be provided from Sweetland Avenue. This enclosed space ensures that impacts to neighbouring properties are minimized.

A common outdoor amenity area is proposed through an outdoor courtyard space within the rear yard which can be accessed from Sweetland Avenue, the east exit door of the existing building and a door proposed along the west face of the addition. This will provide the opportunity for a more intimate outdoor space for all users and a secure area for outdoor bicycle parking. Private balconies are also proposed for some of the units of the addition. A total of 125 square metres of amenity space is provided which conforms to the Zoning By-law.

In designing the proposed development, many components were considered to respond to the existing and planned context, and to ensure liveability for future residents of the development. The following sections outline and describe these considerations.

## 3.2 Building Design

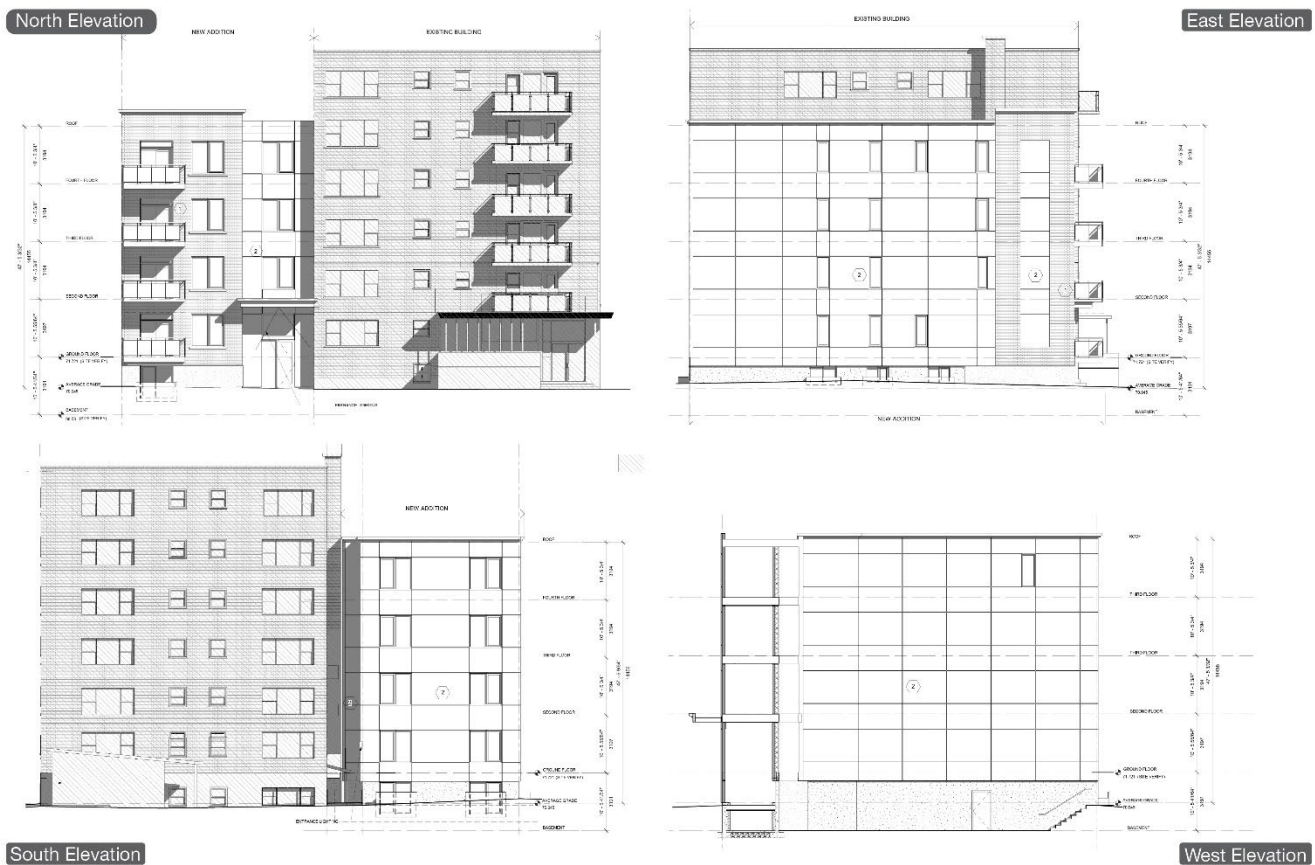


Figure 4: Section-Elevations in each direction of the proposed and existing development.

### 3.2.1 Building Massing and Scale

In response to neighbourhood context the proposed addition provides a transition between the existing mid-rise building on the subject property and the three-storey height of buildings to the east and south. The built form of the proposed development complements the existing building as well as the surrounding neighbourhood.

In addition to the use of various strategically placed setbacks, the mass of the building is further broken up through the use of differing materiality, fenestration and balconies. The residential units facing Laurier Avenue have been designed with balconies typical to what is found within a residential neighbourhood. It is also important to note that balconies are only proposed along the northern interface of the addition to mitigate overlook impacts on existing properties to the west of the property. The rear yard of the neighbouring property to the south sides on to the rear yard of the subject property, thereby mitigating overlook impacts. This is further mitigated by an existing cedar hedge which runs along the interior lot line of the neighbouring property to the south.

### 3.2.2 Views

Views along Laurier Avenue demonstrate how the building's architectural elements mimic those of the existing building and also create a continuous street wall. The residential nature of the building allows for balconies, creating visual interest and architectural articulation, while providing private amenity space for residents. The existing waste storage has been pulled back from the eastern face of the existing building and enclosed in the rear thereby mitigating the visual impact this has on the public realm.

The building design includes a range of materials and colours intended to create a unique and recognizable character for the development. Specifically, the materiality has been chosen to carefully break up the building façade while pulling from the unique colour of the original, existing building. The façade of the addition is fenestrated to create a positive relationship and interface between the building and the public realm while increasing natural light for its residents.



Figure 5: Rendering of the proposed and existing development on the subject property.

## 3.3 Pedestrian Experience and Public Realm

The proposed development includes improvements along the public right-of-way, including Laurier Avenue and Sweetland Avenue. The inclusion of an addition along Laurier Avenue as well as the introduction of an additional entrance advance the animation and pedestrian friendliness along the Laurier Avenue frontage. The removal of the parking lot accesses, new shrubs, hardscape elements and greenery are proposed along this frontage to reconstitute the public realm and create a

more pleasant environment for pedestrians. The treatment of the facade, with generous fenestration provides visual transparency and improved safety for pedestrians in the area. The waste storage has been located away from Laurier Avenue to the rear of the property, avoiding any interruptions in the active frontage along Laurier Avenue East. It is proposed to be clad in materials similar to that the main buildings to provide cohesiveness in pallet to not stand out along the Sweetland frontage.

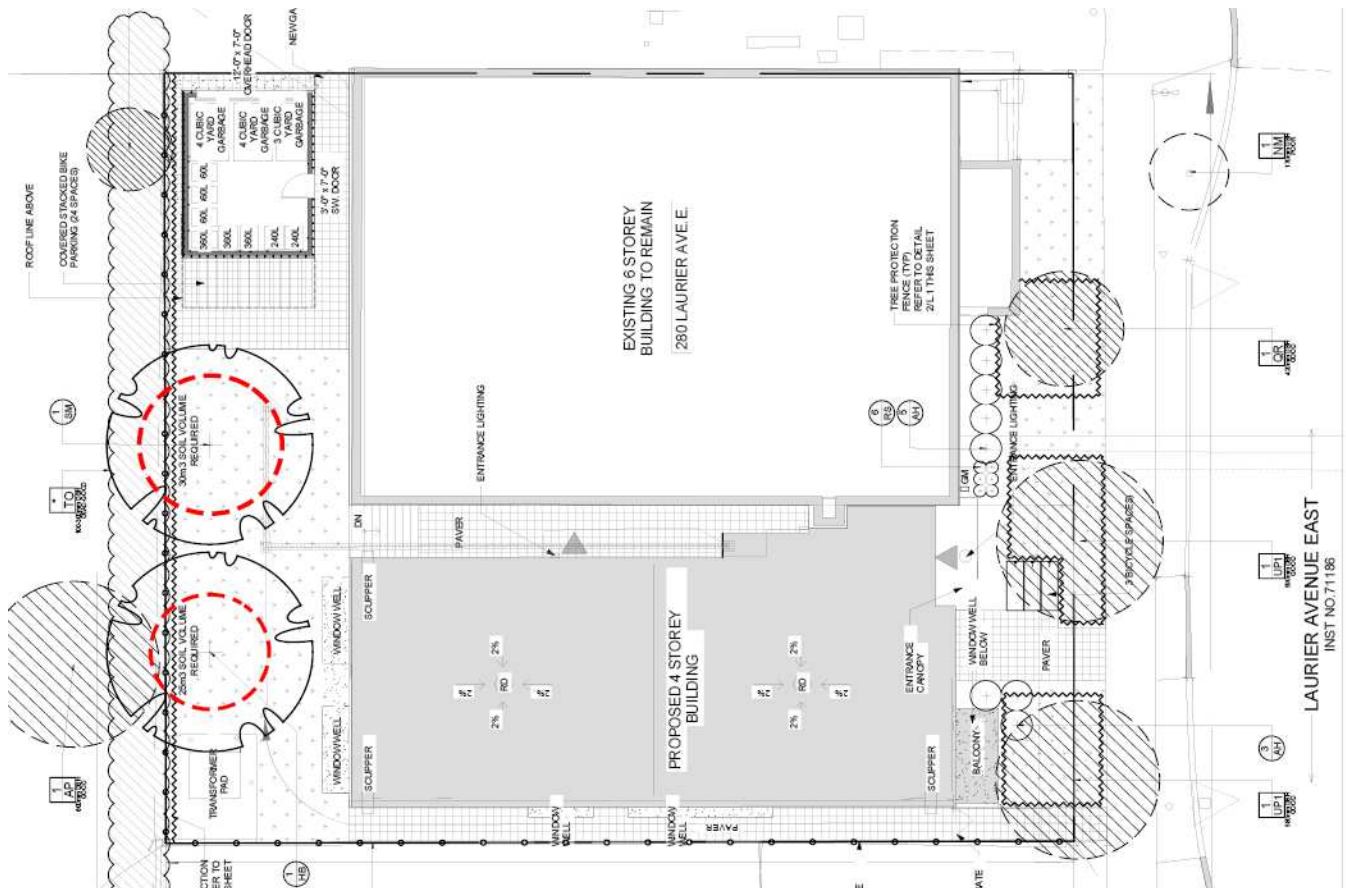


Figure 6: Landscape Plan of the proposed development.

### 3.4 Previously Approved Design

As noted in Section 1.1, Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control applications were approved in March of 2023. The established Urban Exception, 2807, which identifies the requested relief includes the following provisions:

- / An apartment dwelling, midrise, existing as of August 31, 2022, is permitted to expand, and any additions to the existing structure are subject to the performance standards of an apartment dwelling, low-rise in the R4UD zone.
- / Where there is an addition as provided above, the following shall apply to the lot and the said structure:
  - a) Despite Section 101 and 102, vehicle parking spaces are not required.
  - b) Minimum rear yard area required: 180 m<sup>2</sup>
  - c) Minimum rear yard setback: 6.40 m
  - d) Minimum setback for an accessory structure from a side lot line abutting a street along Sweetland Avenue: 0.6 m.
  - e) Despite Section 143, the garbage storage area must be located within the principal building.

The previously approved site plan contemplated a three-storey low-rise residential. That addition followed the rectangular shape of the property and had a total height of 13 metres (Figure 7).

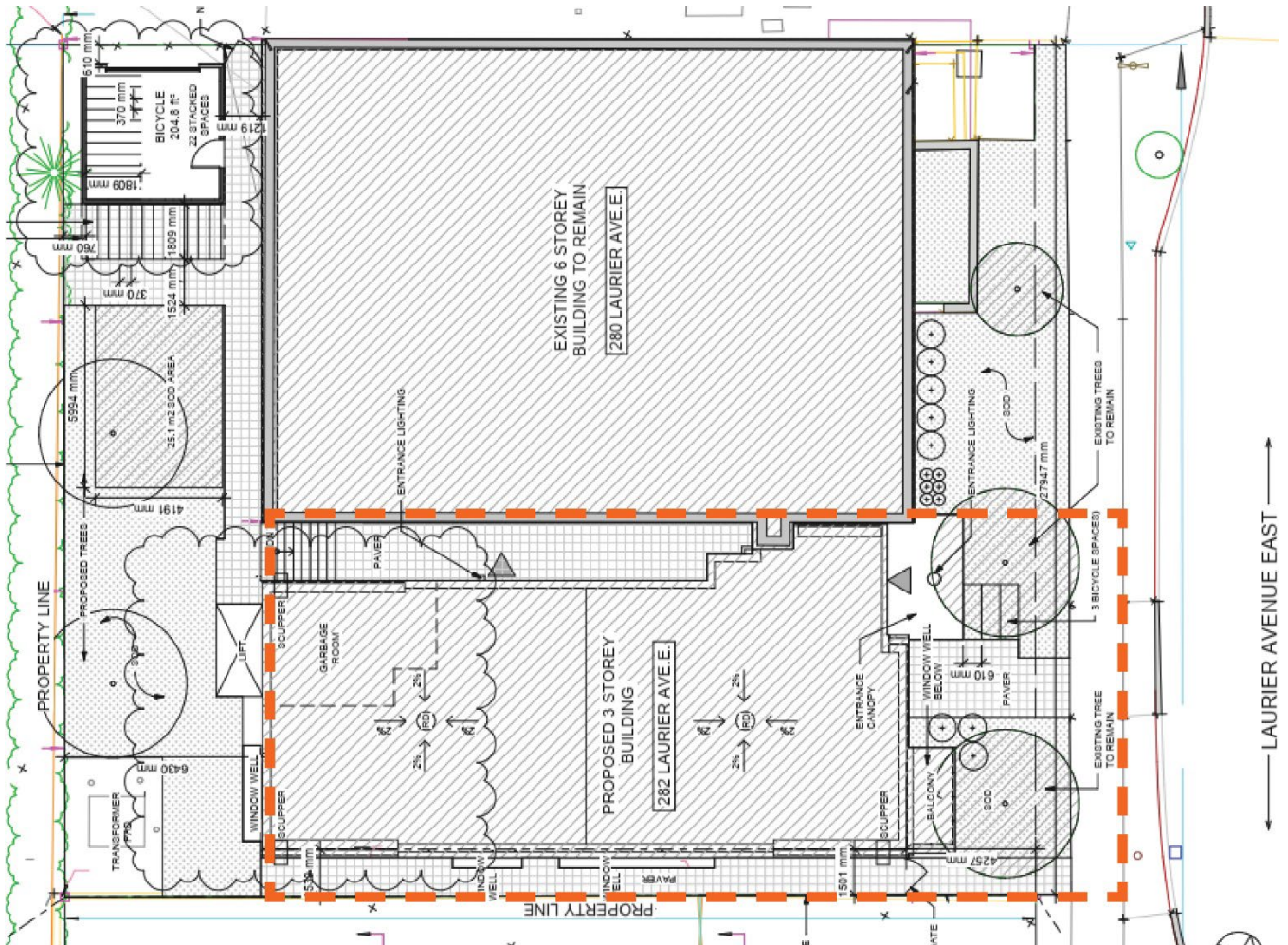


Figure 7: Site Plan of previously approved proposed development.

The previously approved and newly proposed design are very similar. The two occupy the same footprint, include the same number of dwelling units (the unit mix differs), and contemplate the same landscaped and amenity spaces. The inclusion of a fourth floor to the addition is the only change affecting the building massing, increased the height from 13 metres to 14.5 metres. There has also been an improvement from 43 bicycle parking spaces to 57.



Figure 8: North Elevations of the previously approved design (left) and proposed design (right).

# 4.0 Conclusion

This Urban Design Brief for the proposed development at 280/282 Laurier Avenue East concludes that the proposal represents high-quality and context sensitive design. When reviewing the appropriateness of the Site Plan the City should consider the previous approval and that the increase in the height of the addition continues to represent good urban planning and design.

Sincerely



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