

177-179 Albert Street, Waterloo

URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

November 2023 | File No. 15200F

MHBC
PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited ("MHBC Planning") was retained by 14688210 Canada Inc. (the "Owners") to prepare an Urban Design Brief in support of Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the property municipally known as 177-179 Albert Street in the City of Waterloo (the "subject lands").

The subject lands are located on the northwest corner of Albert Street and Seagram Drive, and are 0.16 hectares, with approximately 40m of frontage on Albert Street and 40m of frontage on Seagram Drive (see Figure 1.1). The subject lands currently contain two detached buildings and a small parking lot.

The Owners propose the intensification of the lands with a 24-storey residential apartment with a 5-storey podium base (the "Proposed Development"). The Proposed Development consists of 146 units and 172 bedrooms, with a mix of one and two-bedroom units. 88 bicycle parking spaces and 44 underground vehicle parking spaces are provided, as well as 492 square meters of indoor and outdoor amenity space.

This Urban Design Brief has been prepared according to the City of Waterloo's Terms of Reference and includes the following topics:

- A description of the existing site conditions and surrounding context, including built form, transportation network, and landscape features;
- A detailed review of the Proposed Development, including the vision, building design, circulation, public realm design, and sustainability;
- An outline of the applicable policy context and analysis of the Proposed Development as it relates to the applicable urban design policies; and,
- A summary of the conclusions regarding the proposed redevelopment of the subject lands.

This Urban Design Brief has considered, and must be read in conjunction with, the following plans and studies supporting the applications for Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment:

- Planning Justification Report, prepared by MHBC Planning (dated November 2023)
- Architectural Drawing Package, prepared by WalterFedy (dated November 20, 2023)
- Landscape Drawing Package, prepared by MHBC Planning (dated November 20, 2023)
- Shadow Study Analysis, prepared by Walter Fedy (dated November 20, 2023)
- Functional Servicing & Stormwater Management Report, prepared by Walter Fedy (dated November 10, 2023)
- Civil Drawing Package, prepared by Walter Fedy (dated November 10, 2023)
- Transportation Impact Study and Parking Study, prepared by Paradigm Transportation Solutions (dated November 2023)
- Pedestrian Wind Assessment, prepared by SLR Consulting (dated October 26, 2023)
- Stationary Noise and Environmental Noise Study, prepared by SLR (dated November 22, 2023)

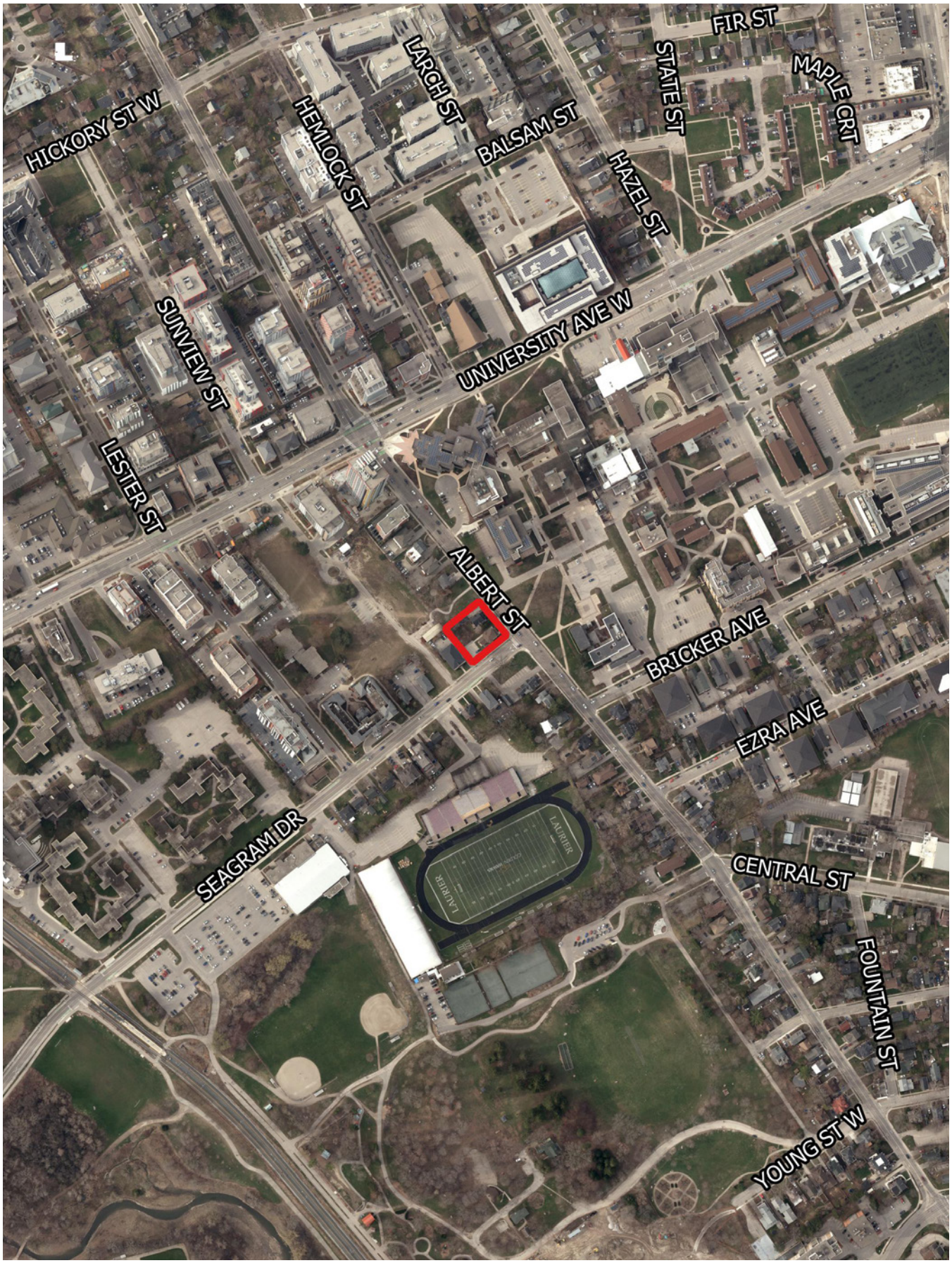


Figure 1.1 - Location of the subject lands at Albert Street and Seagram Drive



2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING CONTEXT

2.1 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The subject lands are comprised of two lots and are municipally addressed as 177-179 Albert Street (see Figures 2.1 to 2.4). The lands are located at the north-west corner of the intersection of Albert Street and Seagram Drive and are 0.162 hectares in size with approximately 40 metres of frontage on Albert Street and 40 metres of frontage on Seagram Drive.

The subject lands are currently developed with two detached buildings, with the building at 177 Albert Street having been converted to office uses. The lands are accessed from both Seagram Drive (177 Albert Street) and Albert Street (179 Albert Street), with a small parking lot along the rear of the Seagram Drive frontage.

The subject lands slope from north to south and from east to west, falling approximately 1m along Albert Street and an additional 2m along Seagram Drive. The subject lands contain limited street trees along the two street frontages, as well as a small thicket at the north-west corner and buffer plantings between the existing buildings.



Figure 2.1 - Subject lands viewed from Seagram Dr



Figure 2.2 - Subject lands viewed from corner of Albert St & Seagram Dr



Figure 2.3 - Subject lands viewed from Albert St

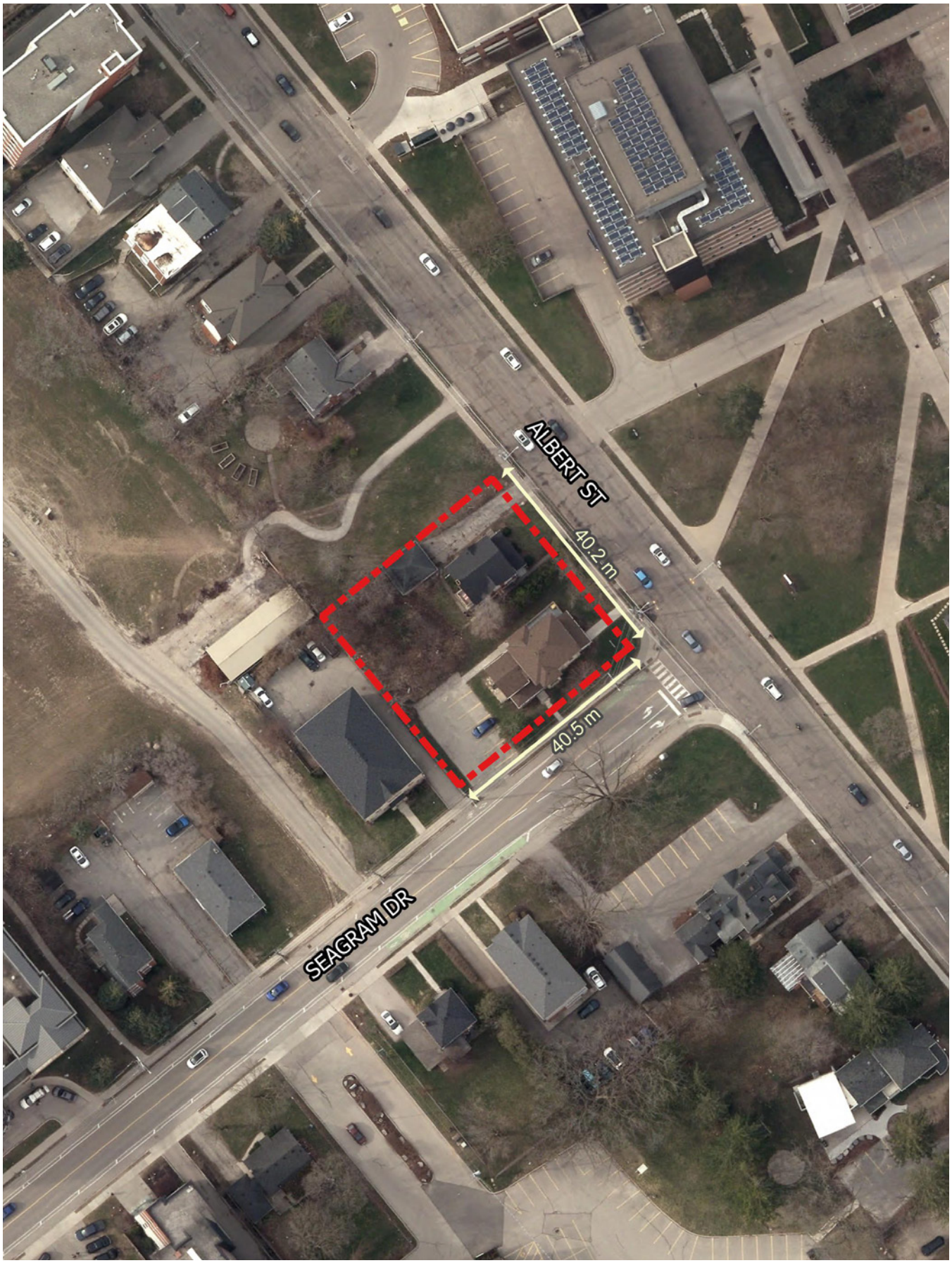


Figure 2.4 - Existing condition of subject lands

2.2 SURROUNDING CONTEXT

Built Form

The subject lands are located in a transitional area between the Albert-McGregor Heritage Conservation District to the south, characterized by low-rise buildings, and the Northdale neighbourhood to the north, characterized by mid to high-rise buildings and the University campuses (see Figures 2.5 to 2.13). The area has rapidly intensified in recent years, shifting from a predominantly low-rise residential form, to a mid-rise and high-rise mixed-use form.

Immediately to the north of the subject lands are vacant lands with a pedestrian pathway that connects from Albert Street to lands owned and operated by Wilfrid Laurier University along Sunview Street. Further to the north are mid-rise and high-rise residential and mixed-use buildings, with the Northdale neighbourhood located across University Avenue West, approximately 200 metres to the north.

To the east of the subject lands is Wilfrid Laurier University, which includes multiple buildings, open spaces, and parking areas. The campus stretches to King Street West, with commercial and employment uses further to the east.

To the south are low and mid-rise buildings along Seagram Drive with the University Stadium and Waterloo Park beyond. Further south lies the MacGregor-Albert Heritage Conservation District and Uptown Waterloo core, which includes a range of retail, entertainment, and cultural uses.

To the west are further institutional and high-rise residential uses, with the University of Waterloo campus and ION LRT station located 400-500 to west along Seagram Drive.

The buildings to the north and west generally range from 2 to 25 storeys, with a mix of slab and tower/podium massing. The tall buildings are generally designed in a modern style with brightly coloured facades, in contrast with the mid-century style of the low-rise forms. The architecture transitions to pre-war and Victorian styles towards the Heritage Conservation District, with predominantly low-rise forms. Buildings are generally setback from the street edge with landscaped boulevards.



Figure 2.5 - Existing low-rise residential south of Seagram Dr



Figure 2.6 - Vacant land and single-detached residential to the north



Figure 2.7 - View from the subject lands toward Wilfird Laurier University



Figure 2.10 - Mixed heritage character of MacGregor-Albert HCD



Figure 2.8 - High-rise residential at Albert St and University Ave W



Figure 2.11 - Waterloo Park to the south of the subject lands



Figure 2.9 - Mixed medium and high-rise forms toward Northdale



Figure 2.12 - Uptown Waterloo

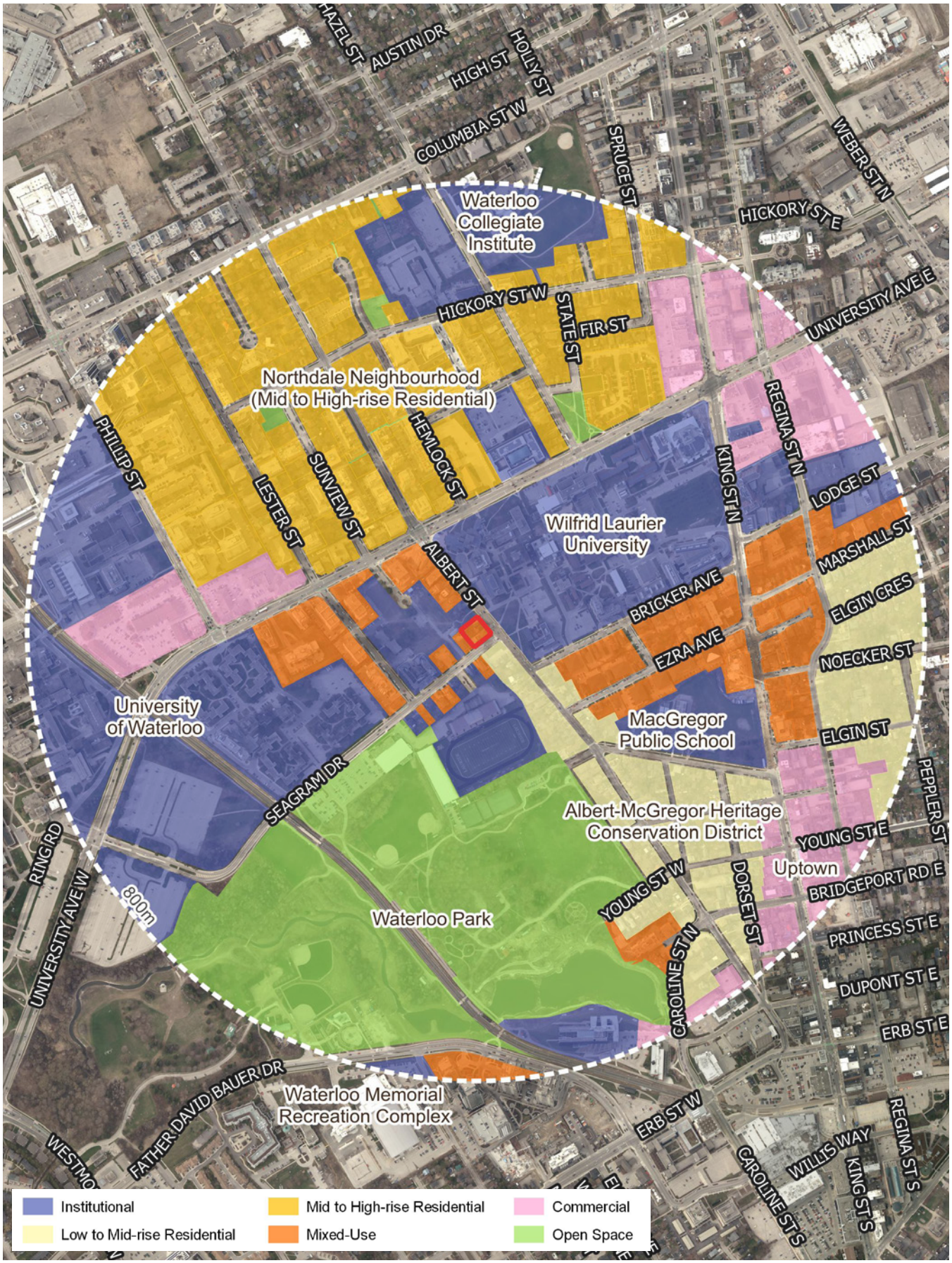


Figure 2.13 - Existing land uses

Circulation

The surrounding area has an irregular street grid, with the Universities and Waterloo Park breaking up the pattern of local streets (see Figure 2.14). Albert Street and Seagram Drive have similar cross sections, with two vehicle lanes, buffered cycling lanes, landscaped boulevards, and concrete sidewalks. Albert Street functions as a Major Collector and Seagram Drive functions as a Minor Collector. Connections to the broader city and region are provided via University Avenue West and King Street North.

The subject lands are approximately 500m from the Laurier-Waterloo Park ION Station and 900m from the University of Waterloo Station and bus terminal, offering regional service and connections to GO Transit and the Greater Toronto Area (see Figure 2.15). Additional Grand River Transit bus service, including the 202 iXpress, is provided along University Avenue, King Street, Bridgeport Road, Caroline Street, and Hazel Street.

The subject lands are well connected to the active transportation network (see Figure 2.16). Both Seagram Drive and Albert Street (north of Seagram Drive) include buffered bike lanes, with additional separated cycling lanes on University Avenue West and King Street North. Connections to the Laurel Trail and Waterloo Park are provided along Seagram Drive, while King Street provides connections to Uptown Waterloo and the Spur Line Trail. The surrounding neighbourhood streets include dual sidewalks, and a signalized pedestrian crossing at Seagram Drive and Albert Street provides access from the subject lands to the Wilfrid Laurier University Campus. While the overall block structure provides barriers to vehicle travel, the large university and park blocks nearby include internal trail and walkways networks that contribute to a fine-grained active transportation network.



Figure 2.14 - Existing vehicle circulation

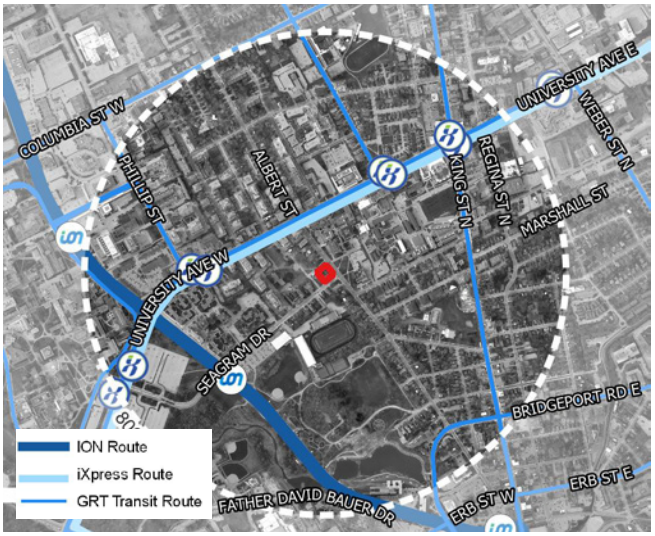


Figure 2.15 - Existing transit routes



Figure 2.16 - Existing pedestrian and cycling routes

Natural Heritage and Open Space

The subject lands are 200m from Waterloo Park and 1.1km from the Waterloo Public Square, providing a range of open space and recreational opportunities (see Figure 2.17). Additional green spaces are available within the university campuses and nearby school yards, including MacGregor Senior Public School. Waterloo Park includes Core and Supporting Natural Features, however there are no significant natural heritage features in the vicinity of the subject lands.

Summary

The subject lands are located in a neighbourhood of mixed character and built form with a range of heights and architectural styles. The site is well connected to the surrounding context and greater region through the vehicle, transit, and active transportation networks. A wide variety of commercial uses and open spaces are also provided through the proximity to Uptown Waterloo, Waterloo Park, and the two university campuses.



Figure 2.17 - Existing parks and open spaces



3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The vision for the Proposed Development includes a high quality and vibrant design for a residential building which represents the efficient use of an underutilized site within a Major Transit Station Area and a Major Corridor.

The following objectives have been identified for the purpose of achieving the vision for the redevelopment:

- Redevelop the underutilized site to provide for a high-density residential development and a more efficient use of the land and infrastructure;
- Support transit in the area, including the Laurier-Waterloo Park ION Station with a transit-oriented development;
- Create an attractive tower form, with high quality architecture on all four facades;
- Develop a well-defined podium that addresses the public realm and that provides clear connection between the sidewalk and building entrances;
- Provide a development that through the combination of massing, orientation, pedestrian entrances, architectural elements, and material selection will result in a development that complements the existing built form.

3.2 SITE PLAN

The Proposed Development consists of a 24-storey residential apartment building with a 5-storey podium base (see Figure 3.1). The development includes 146 units and 172 bedrooms, with a mix of one bedroom and two-bedroom units. This provides a variety of housing choices for future residents wanting to locate close to both Uptown Waterloo and the Universities, in an area with a high concentration of employers and alternative transportation options.

The podium is setback 5.1m from Albert Street, 5.1m from Seagram Drive, 5.0m from the western property line, and 3.0m from the northern property line. The principal building entrance is oriented to Albert Street and is framed by an overhead canopy, with substantial areas along the Albert Street and Seagram Drive frontages available for a high-quality public realm. A landscaped area is included along the northern property line to provide a green transition to the neighbouring properties.

Within the 6-storey podium there are multiple common amenity spaces. On the ground floor there is a proposed fitness centre and study area for residents to use. Each of the podium floors also includes a small amenity room. The 6th floor includes a larger indoor amenity space that connects with the outdoor amenity space on the west and south sides of the tower. The rooftop amenity space overlooks Seagram Drive and will receive the most sun exposure in the evening.

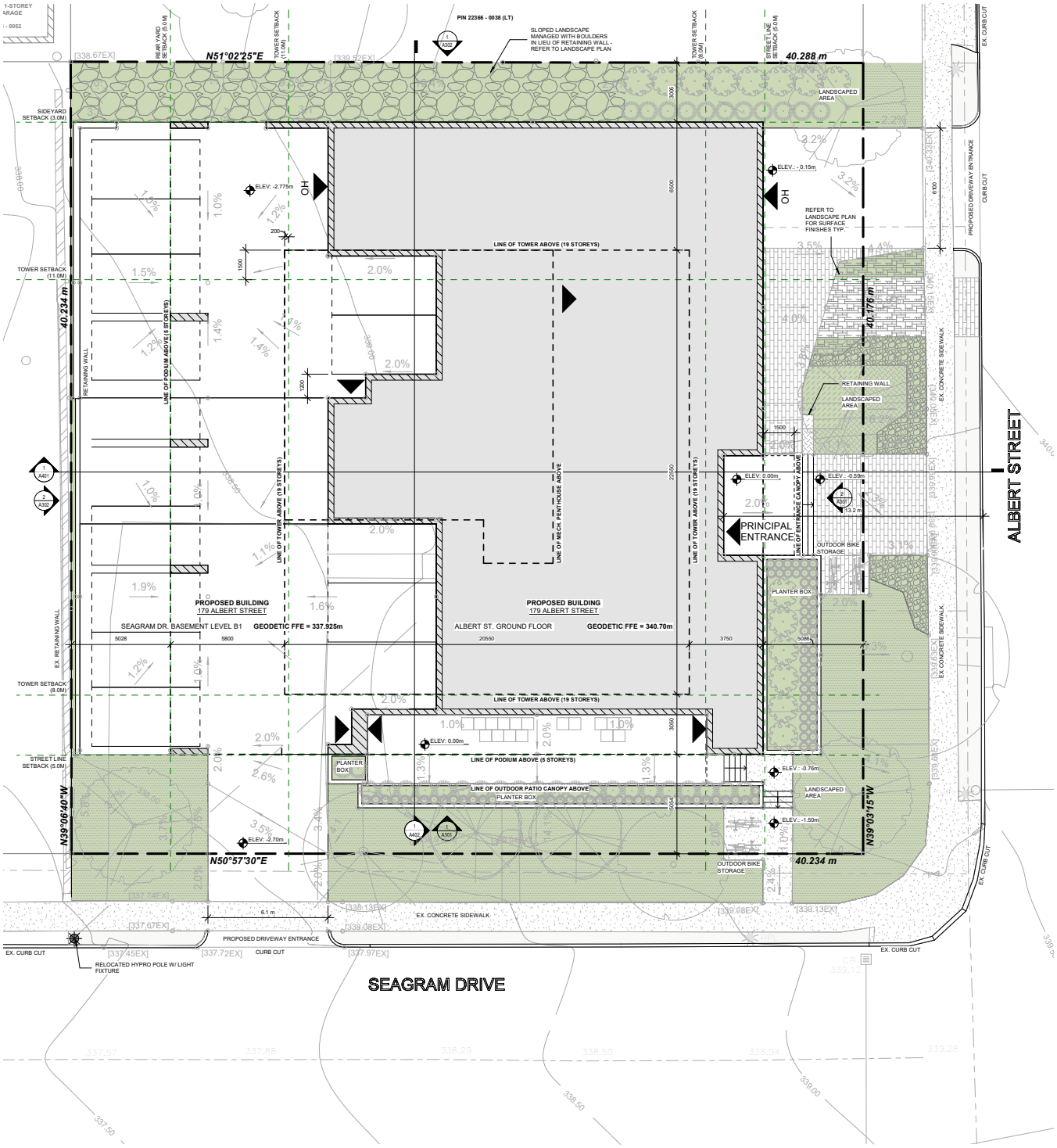


Figure 3.1 - Proposed Site Plan (WalterFedy, Nov 20, 2023)

3.3 BUILDING DESIGN

Built Form and Massing

The proposed building utilizes a podium and point tower form (see Figure 3.2). Due to the small size of the subject lands, the tower floor plate is very slender at 463 square meters. The tower is located toward the corner of Albert Street and Seagram Drive and stepped back from the podium face: Albert Street, 3.75m; Seagram Drive, 3.05m; west property line, 5.0m; north property line, 6.5m. The stepbacks, when combined with the podium setbacks from the north and west property lines, result in tower separation distances of 9.5m from the north property line and 10.8m from the west property line.



Figure 3.2 - Proposed podium and point tower massing (WalterFedy, Nov 20, 2023)

Podium Design

The Proposed Development includes a 5-storey podium base, extending the length of the Albert Street and Seagram Drive frontages. The podium provides a pedestrian-scaled massing along the street that integrates with the mixed low, medium, and high-rise character (see Figure 3.3).

The 5 metre high ground floor includes lobby and amenity spaces uses towards the corner of Albert Street and Seagram Drive, with access to parking and loading areas at the north and west extents. The amenity space at the corner spills out onto an outdoor patio along Seagram Drive. Due to the grade change on site, the Seagram Drive frontage provides access to the B1 level, allowing access to the underground parking. Upper levels include residential units.

The podium features two distinct material palettes. The ground floor features a mix of red brick and vision glass, complementing the surrounding character of single-detached dwellings and Wilfrid Laurier University campus. The high percentage of glazing allows views in and out of the ground floor amenity spaces, creating an active streetscape with natural surveillance. The entrance is well-defined with a coloured overhead canopy.

The upper floors introduce a new design language that references the modern designs in the Northdale neighbourhood. The rhythmic fenestration and white panel facade is broken up by a random pattern of yellow panels. This motif is repeated in the tower design with purple panels, referencing the colour palette of the adjacent university. The podium roof includes an outdoor amenity space accessible via the 6th floor. The integration of the two material palettes reflects the surrounding materials and character of the neighborhood. The brick and modern panels merge both the heritage single detached homes and new high-rises that are found along Albert Street.



Figure 3.3 - Proposed podium design (WalterFedy, Nov 20, 2023)

Tower Design

The tower extends 19 storeys above the 5-storey podium, creating a 24-storey development. The tower provides for appropriate step backs from the 5-storey podium design to maintain a pedestrian scale podium, and provide for a visually appealing tower design (see Figure 3.4).

The tower is located centrally on the podium to provide separation from the two streets (3-meter step backs from the face of the podium) and from the lands to the north and west. Typical floors within the tower include 3 one bedroom and 1 two-bedroom units.

The tower façade design integrates with the design of the podium featuring a regular pattern of white panels and windows, broken up by a random pattern of purple panels. The modern design reflects the design language and vibrant colour palette of the nearby Northdale neighbourhood and includes the traditional colours of Wilfrid Laurier University.



Figure 3.4 - Proposed tower design (WalterFedy, Nov 20, 2023)

Microclimate

A shadow study was prepared by WalterFedy (dated November 16, 2023) (see Figure 3.5). The study concluded that the Proposed Development meets the criteria for shadows on adjacent properties, public spaces, and residential yards. Specifically:

- No more than 50% of adjacent properties would be shaded for more than a total of four hours and will have at least four hours total of sun exposure;
- Public plazas, parks, and open spaces have no new net shadow between 10am and 4pm during the September test times;
- Public sidewalks have a minimum of 50 percent sun coverage between 9 AM and 6 PM during the March and September test times; and,
- Nearby residential yards have a minimum of 3 continuous hours of sun during the March and September test times.

A Pedestrian Wind Assessment was prepared by SLR (dated October 26, 2023)(see Figure 3.6). The study concluded that on-site wind conditions are suitable for the intended year-round use, however wind screens and overhead protection are recommended for the proposed rooftop patio. Wind safety criteria are generally met surrounding the Proposed Development, including a predicted improvement in wind conditions within the Wilfrid Laurier University Campus.

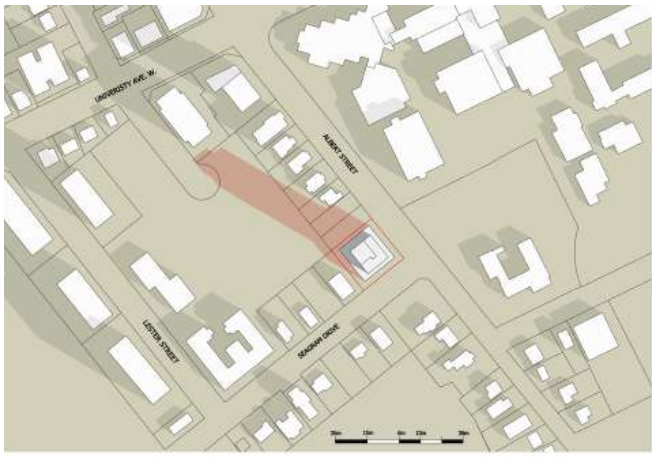


Figure 3.5 - September shadow study results (WalterFedy, Nov 16, 2023)

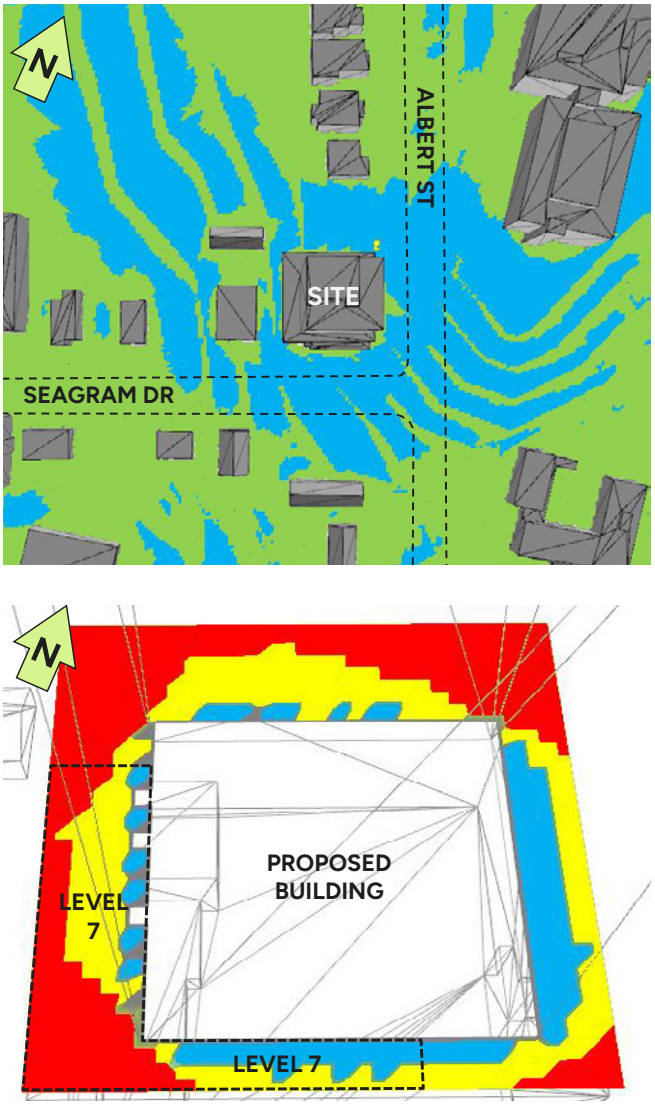


Figure 3.6 - Proposed wind conditions (SLR, Oct 26, 2023)

3.4 ACCESS, CIRCULATION, PARKING, AND SERVICES

Active Transportation

Pedestrian access is provided from Albert Street and connects to the existing sidewalks that surround the site on both Albert Street and Seagram Drive (see Figure 3.7). The principal building entrance is oriented to Albert Street and is framed by an overhead canopy. A secondary pedestrian entrance is provided from the patio oriented to Seagram Drive. The Proposed Development provides barrier free access into the non-residential and residential areas, as well as the landscaped areas along the two street frontages.

The proposed pedestrian circulation and active street frontage will encourage pedestrian interaction and promote active forms of transportation by providing connections to nearby amenities such as Uptown Waterloo, Waterloo Park, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

A large indoor bicycle parking area is also proposed along Seagram Drive, purposely located close to the street to allow for easy access from cycling lanes directly into the building.

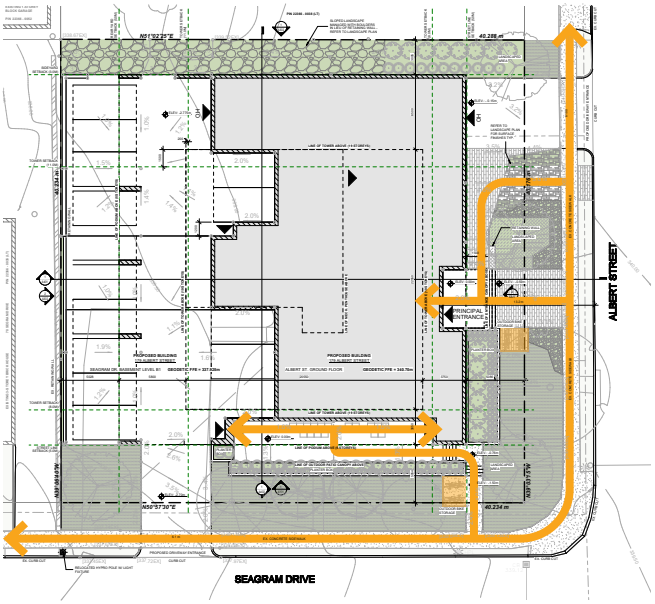


Figure 3.7 - Pedestrian and bicycle circulation

Vehicle and Loading Access

Vehicle access to the Proposed Development is provided from both Albert Street and Seagram Drive (see Figure 3.8). Due to the existing grade change along the two streets, the Albert Street entrance is at the ground floor while the Seagram Drive entrance is at the basement level. The driveway from Albert Street leads to 4 parking spaces and the loading space. These spaces are intended for visitors and short-term deliveries as well as for those moving into the building. Barrier free spaces are also located in this area to provide easy access to the building's elevators. The driveway access from Seagram Drive leads to the remainder of the site's two-level underground parking. The west-facing parking on the B1 level is partially open, with the podium cantilevered above.

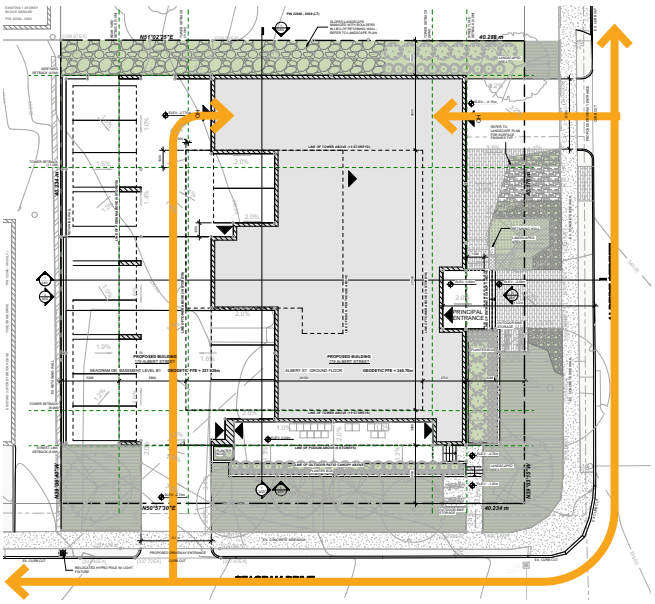


Figure 3.8 - Vehicle circulation

3.5 PUBLIC REALM & LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The proposed landscape design incorporates a balanced distribution of hard and soft landscaping that contributes toward a coordinated site design and streetscape character, creating a sense of place with an aesthetically pleasing comfortable pedestrian environment (see Figures 3.9 to 3.13).

The building's main pedestrian entrance is marked with a broad walkway framed by gardens. Permeable pavers, raised planters, and street trees provide additional landscaping to soften the building edge. The Seagram Drive frontage features a raised outdoor patio which connects with the internal amenity space. A row of street trees is proposed next to the existing sidewalk, with a raised planter separating the patio from the street and incorporating the grade change along the street. The use of large windows and outdoor gathering spaces along the street frontages creates natural surveillance on the public realm, contributing to a sense of safety for pedestrians. Buffer plantings are also included along the northern property line.

The rooftop amenity area is designed to encourage social interaction among future residents, with study nooks and casual seating areas. Overhead pergolas provide sun and wind protection, further creating a comfortable environment, while a linear planting bed along the western edge provides privacy for adjacent lands. The location of the seating area along the Seagram Drive frontage adds to the natural surveillance over the public realm.



Figure 3.9 - Streetscape with natural landsaping



Figure 3.10 - Unique seating configurations



Figure 3.11 - Seating and planting on rooftop patio

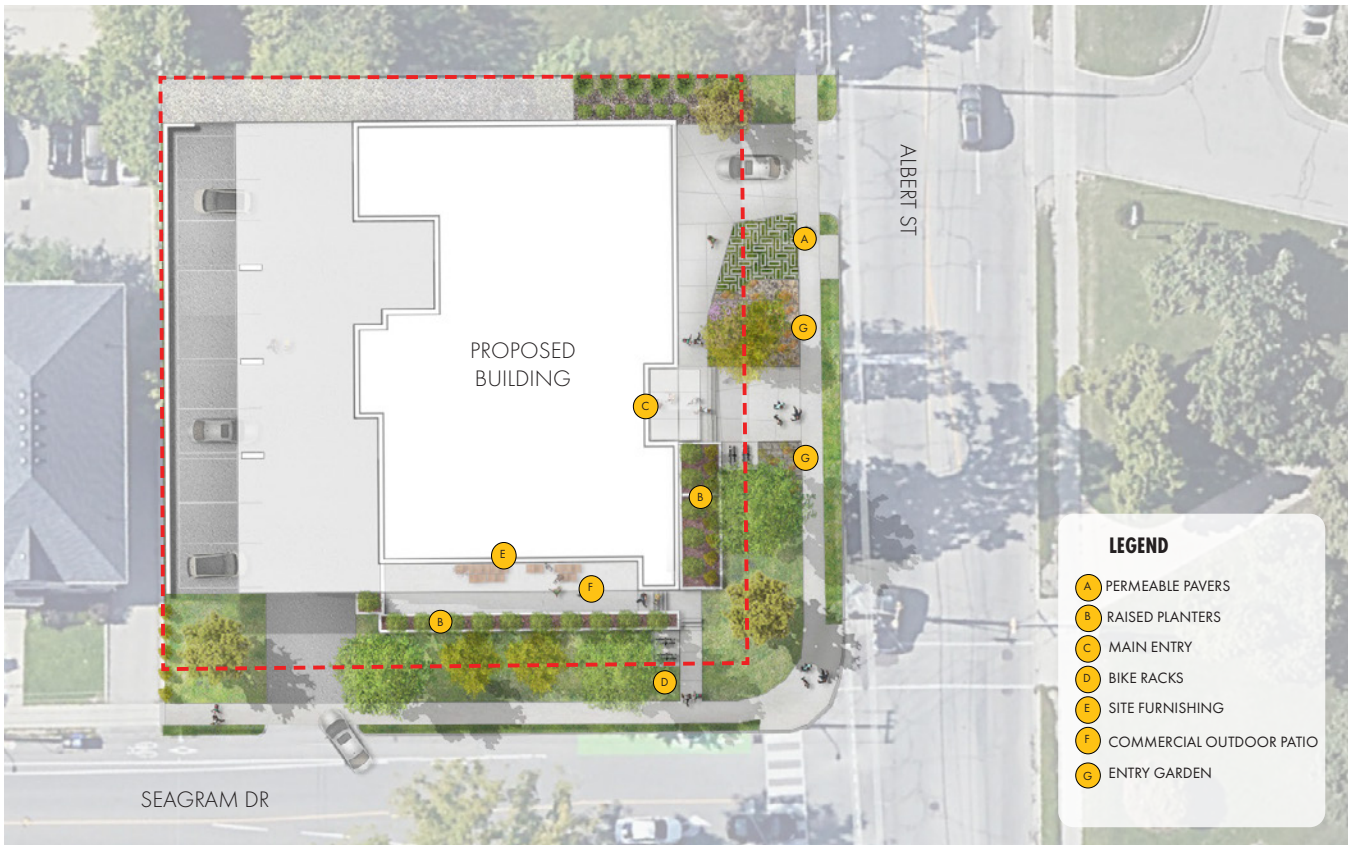


Figure 3.12 - Proposed Landscape Plan



Figure 3.13 - Proposed Rooftop Amenity Plan

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

An Energy Strategy Study was prepared by Walter-Fedy (dated November 9, 2023), which recommended a number of sustainable design measures for the Proposed Development, including photovoltaic panels, domestic hot water heat pumps, triple glazed windows, and stormwater infiltration mitigation measures. The implantation of these measures, as well as other sustainable initiatives, will be further investigated through the detailed design and Site Plan Approval phases.





4.0 POLICY REVIEW

The following section provides a detailed review of the Proposed Development as it relates to the urban design policies of the City of Waterloo Official Plan. As outlined in the provided Record of Consultation, the policy review includes sections 3.11.1 (General Urban Design Policies), 3.11.2 (Urban Design within Nodes and Corridors), and 3.11.4 (Urban Design within Station Areas). A fulsome review of the Proposed Development with regard to the City of Waterloo Urban Design Manual will be undertaken during a subsequent Site Plan Approval application.

4.1 GENERAL URBAN DESIGN POLICIES (3.11.1)

Intensification/Neighborhood Transition: The Proposed Development supports intensification by replacing two single detached homes with a 24 storey building with a variety of unit types. The proposed residential use is compatible with the surrounding area and supports the transition of the area from auto-oriented uses to a compact, urban form. The proposed built form respects the City's design direction for a podium and tower development.

Character: The Proposed Development has an identifiable character and distinct building elements, including a strong base and slender tower. The unique material palette blends the traditional and modern styles of the surrounding area, with additional colour references to the surrounding universities. The large windows at grade along both the Albert Street and Seagram drive frontage provides for interaction between the public and private realm. The building entrance is clearly defined and helps provide shelter from the elements.

Views and Vistas: The Proposed Development takes advantage of its location to provide stunning views to the north, south, east and west. The building will become a prominent part of the Albert Street Corridor, providing a high-quality design that can help establish a new design character for the area. The 6th floor amenity space provides a view of the south and west that includes the beautiful Waterloo Park and the Wilfrid Laurier University sports fields.

Streetscapes/ Street Activity: The podium design has considered and appropriately addressed the Albert Street frontage. The facade has large windows to promote permeability between the public and private realms. The podium is visually appealing in character and has well defined entries into the non-residential and residential space. The detailed landscape design will form part of a future Site Plan approval and can further refine the seamless integration of private and public space along the street frontages.

Safety and Security: The site design has considered, at a high level, CPTED principles. Natural surveillance is provided through abundant glazing on the ground floor and upper podium. The proposed Landscape Plan provides a clear delineation of public and private spaces. The pedestrian circulation network is continuous, avoiding dead ends and entrapment areas. Further refinement of the plans will consider CPTED principles in greater detail as the project moves into the Site Plan Approval process.

Site Circulation/Site Parking: The provided vehicle parking is located underground, with a small portion located under the cantilevered podium on the western property line. Loading areas are internal to the building and screened from view.

Transit–Oriented Design: The site is located near the Laurier-Waterloo Park ION station, the 202 iXpress route, and local bus routes. The site promotes pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, active and interesting streetscapes, human comfort and integrated site amenities.

Universal Design: The site is designed to be universally accessible, providing barrier free access into both the non-residential and residential areas.

Parking: Vehicle parking is located underground, as discussed above, allowing for the optimization of the lands and minimizing the amount of visible parking.

Outdoor Lighting: Outdoor lighting will be designed to be dark sky compliant and provide for safe pedestrian areas. Entrances to the building will be well lit. The

detailed lighting design will be provided through the Site Plan Approval process.

Compatible Development: The proposed building is compatible with surrounding land uses – the lands are planned for high-rise residential development, while surrounding lands are planned for high-rise residential or university uses.

Human Scale Development/Built Form and Massing: The built form reinforces human scale dimensions and proportions through design.

4.2 URBAN DESIGN WITHIN NODES AND CORRIDORS (3.11.2)

Building Design: The design of the proposed building will contribute to a high quality and coordinated streetscape character and context. The principle building façade and entrance faces the primary public street and is designed with articulated building facades.

Interest: The proposed design will result in visual interest and interesting and active spaces.

Skyline: The design of the building will have articulated massing and supporting architectural features that create an interesting and recognizable skyline coordinated with other surrounding tall buildings from many views and vantage points.

Built Form and Massing: The proposed building is located to establish an urban street enclosure and to frame street intersections. The design and massing of the building relates to the surrounding context, street proportions, and human scale dimensions. Where feasible, mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize adverse impacts related to wind, shadowing, visual impacts and to reduce the appearance of bulk through a variety of design and massing strategies.

Infill Development: The Proposed Development is in proportion with the lot size and fits harmoniously into the surrounding character and context. The design of the site and buildings will be compatible with the surrounding character and context, where high-rise development is also planned.

4.3 URBAN DESIGN WITHIN STATION AREAS (3.11.4)

Place Making: The Proposed Development will enhance the public realm and create vibrant, attractive, and safe public and private spaces.

Pedestrian Oriented: The Proposed Development is designed to be safe, accessible, connected, and easy to navigate for people of all abilities. Connectivity to and from transit stops is enhanced through site design. The site is connected to the sidewalk along Albert Street. Lighting, seating and shading details will be further refined through the Site Plan Approval process.

Building Orientation: The Proposed Development is oriented towards the street corner where the greatest amount of pedestrian traffic is anticipated.

Community Character: The Proposed Development is sensitive to the surrounding character of the existing Station Area and will complement the built form and context.

In summary, the Proposed Development will contribute to the surrounding community by providing a higher density residential building within a desirable area that is well connected and pedestrian friendly. The location of the building provides access to commercial areas, open spaces, recreation centres, and three post-secondary institutions. The site is well connected to public transit and within walking distance of Uptown Waterloo. The design of the building reflects the modern and colourful character of the surrounding buildings and creates a vibrant, high-quality residential addition to Albert Street.



5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This Urban Design Brief concludes that the Proposed Development incorporates a high-quality of urban design through the following:

- The Proposed Development presented in this Urban Design Brief will contribute positively to the Major Corridor and Major Transit station Area.

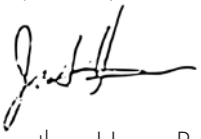
- The Proposed Development provides a range of residential uses, a podium and tower-built form and a high-quality architectural design that will establish a high standard of design for the merging development in the area and support the broader goal of including more transit supportive development.

- The Proposed Development satisfies the direction provided in the City's Official Plan Urban Design policies.

- A future Site Plan Approval application will further refine the design, including site landscaping, and will consider the more detailed guidance provided in the City's Urban Design Manual.

It is our opinion that the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications conform to the City of Waterloo Official Plan and represent good urban design.

Respectfully submitted,



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Senior Urban Designer

MHBC

PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE