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2025

# URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

5523-5555 Fraser St./  
5578 George St.

and

5584 Fraser St.

City of Niagara Falls



**CL PLANNING  
& DESIGN LTD.**

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**SECTION**



**INTRODUCTION**



## 1.0

# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the Brief

This Urban Design Brief (Brief) has been prepared by CL Planning & Design Ltd. on behalf of Rita Visca (registered owner) in support of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications to support the redevelopment of two parcels of land municipally addressed as,

- 5523-5555 Fraser St., 5578 George St. (Building 1)
- 5584 Fraser St. (Building 2)

in the City of Niagara Falls, Ontario. The development sites are located west of Stanley Avenue, just north of the Fairview Cemetery. The development consists of two new apartment dwellings (one on each site) accessed by the existing local roads of Fraser and George Streets.

The purpose of this Brief is to illustrate the design aspects of the proposed development and demonstrate site design, connectivity, public realm, and built form compatibility both within the site and the surrounding area. The Brief identifies the overall vision for the development, site context and analysis and the individual elements of the design plan based on consideration for good urban design principles and practices. The Brief also highlights the ability of the proposal to implement relevant urban design direction set out by the Niagara Region Model Urban Design Guidelines.

As described within this Brief, the proposal represents good urban design in the context of applicable policy direction, providing for high quality, compatible residential infill within a predominantly low-density single-family residential neighbourhood.

This Brief is intended to complement and support the Planning Justification Report (PJR) and other background technical studies in support of the Planning Applications.

Building elevations and renderings within this Brief have been prepared by ACK Architects Studio Inc.

## 1.2 Structure of the Brief

This Brief is structured as follows:

### Section 1: Introduction

Provides an introduction to the purpose and structure of the Brief.

### Section 2: Proposal, Vision & Principles

Describes the vision for the development and the key objectives and design principles used to guide the site and design process and to support the realization of the vision.

### Section 3: Policy Context & Site Analysis

Identifies the applicable policy framework and relevant urban design guidelines appropriate to the proposed design. The site analysis documents opportunities and challenges within the immediate neighbourhood and broader context and how the design responds to those conditions.

### Section 4: Design Considerations

Provides an analysis of how the proposed urban design plan implements the key design principles and addresses key design considerations with respect to context; transition of built form; active transportation; integration with streetscape; vehicular access and parking; landscape and amenity areas; buffering, setbacks and screening; and, detailed architectural features, details, and treatments.

### Section 5: Conclusion

Provides a conclusion, demonstrating the ability of the proposed development to achieve its vision and design principles and support design direction from the Region.

**SECTION**



# **PROPOSAL, VISION & PRINCIPLES**

## 2.1 Vision

The proposed developments are envisioned to create compatible new infill dwellings that enrich the existing character of the surrounding neighbourhood, stimulate the public realm, and provide affordable high-quality rental housing within close vicinity to parkland, open spaces and trails, as well as surrounding community services and public facilities.

The proposed development is guided by the following main objectives:



**Accommodate compatible infill within the heart of an existing residential neighbourhood that respects the established community fabric through site organization, connectivity, and built form.**



**Contribute to a high-quality public realm, improving the existing streetscape and creating a better and more coherent sense of place.**



**Contribute to the creation of a healthy, walkable and more complete community that helps support an evolving mixed-use district close to downtown and the City's Major Transit Station Area.**



**Provide for a more compact built form and an injection of rental housing options through the development of smaller units that are appropriately located and massed to fit within their context.**



## 2.2 Key Principles

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In order for a good design plan to make sense, it must first do so from a regional perspective, recognizing that everything is connected to everything else. Every site is part of a much larger regional context that helps shape its form, character and identity. Context is defined at the region, city, street and building levels. Within each of these levels, important physical, social, economic and cultural forces are at work.

Below the regional layer, district anatomy identifies a grouping of streets, blocks, buildings and landmarks that distinguish themselves from other districts in an area or city. What makes districts unique and distinguishes them from neighbourhoods is that they normally have a variety of land uses whereas neighbourhoods consist primarily of residential uses.

Neighbourhoods are about the core of the community. They are about creating “home” streets where residents come first for safety, fun and social interaction. This layer focuses on human dimension and the important consideration of lot dimensions, scale and edge design.

The street is the artery or life blood of the neighbourhood. As local streets (Fraser and George), the pedestrian (and bicycle) comes first. Integration with public sidewalks are vital to safely exploring the area on foot. Taming the car and fitting the car into a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape is a challenge, but a priority and key principle as well.

The buildings themselves should help define the space and enrich the relationships within that space (e.g. provision of common areas for social interaction).

- Buildings should have a defined top, middle and bottom that help define the anatomy and establish the contextual scale.
- The components of the building (e.g. posts, beams windows, etc.) should have balanced proportions so they are pleasing to the eye.
- The form and massing (i.e. how it fits on the site in volume and look) should be harmonious with the patterns of the adjoining buildings but not necessarily the same.
- Vivid colours and quality materials should be used at edges and to help accent key areas or spaces.
- The building should be well-oriented to the street, ensuring that an active entrance and windows face the street, close to pedestrians, the sidewalk and the public realm.
- Providing transparency, or being able to “see” into and out of a building is important for safety and to create a sense of pedestrian scale on the street.
- Enclosing the street or creating a street wall with the building will frame the street and better define its character.
- Divide the building vertically and horizontally to create human scale.
- For street animation, façade detailing in vertical and horizontal planes (e.g. wood framing, brick, extended balconies, indented wall sections) provides necessary variety and human scale to the building.

## 2.3 Development Proposal

The development proposal includes the redevelopment of 6 lots along the north side of Fraser St. (Building 1) and the development of a vacant land parcel along the south side of Fraser St. (Building 2):



### **Building 1** (5523-5555 Fraser St. / 5578 George St.)

- 4 storey Apartment Dwelling
- 31 rental units
- 18 (1-bedroom units); 13 (2-bedroom units)

### **Building 2** (5584 Fraser St.)

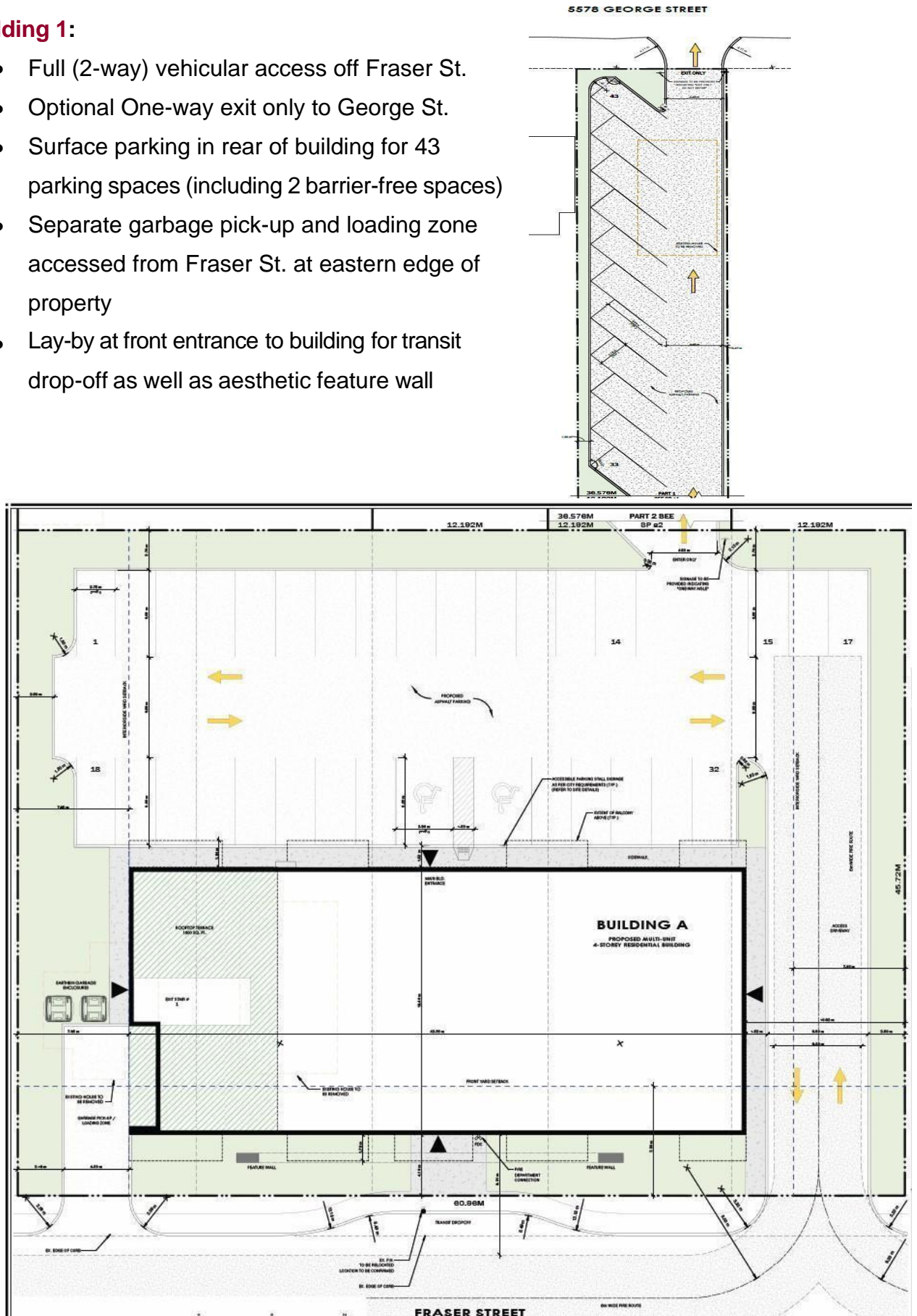
- 4 storey Apartment Dwelling
- 18 rental units
- 12 (1-bedroom units); 6 (2-bedroom units)



## 2.4 Site Plans

### Building 1:

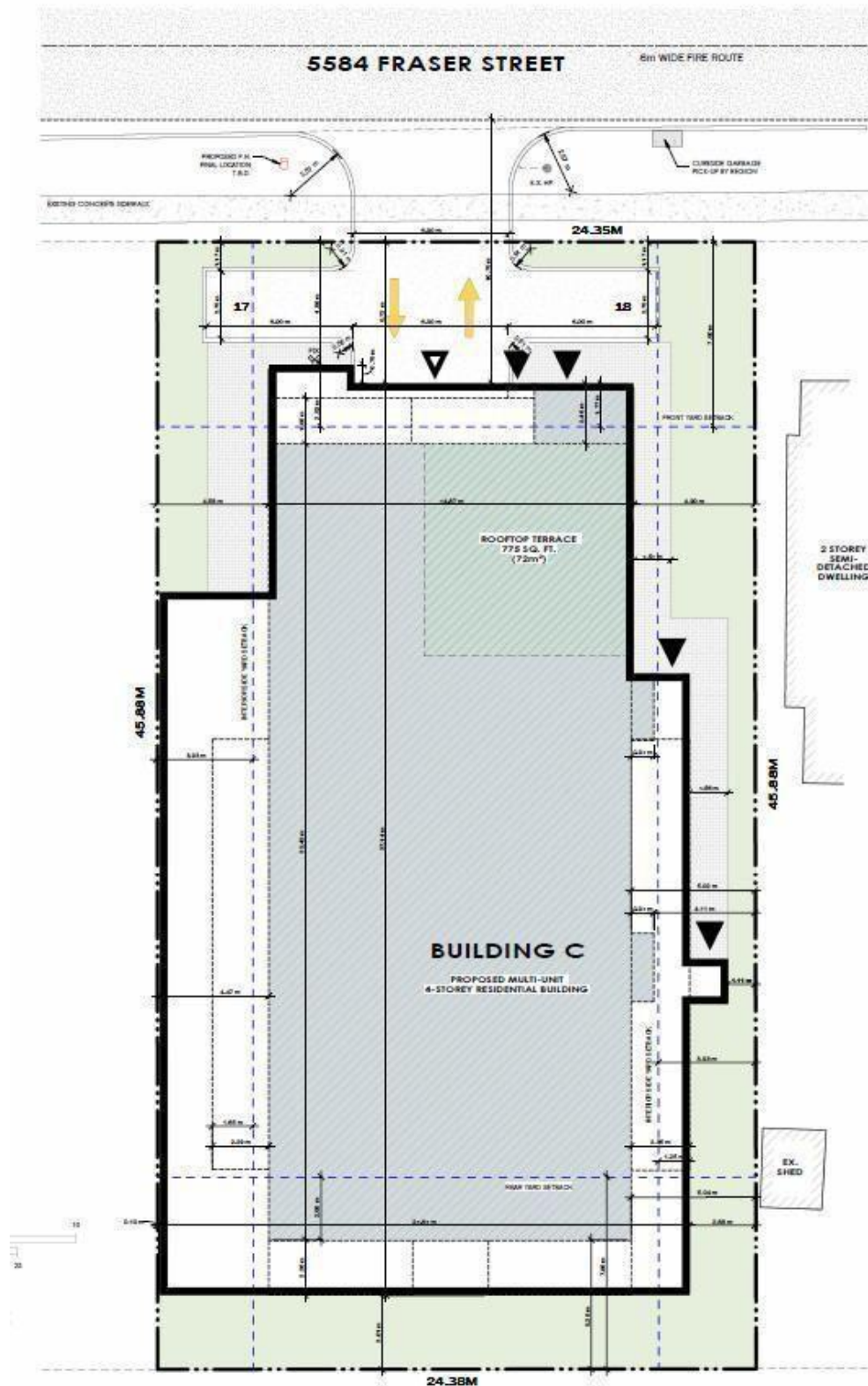
- Full (2-way) vehicular access off Fraser St.
- Optional One-way exit only to George St.
- Surface parking in rear of building for 43 parking spaces (including 2 barrier-free spaces)
- Separate garbage pick-up and loading zone accessed from Fraser St. at eastern edge of property
- Lay-by at front entrance to building for transit drop-off as well as aesthetic feature wall





## Building 2:

- Full (2-way) vehicular access off Fraser St. into 1<sup>st</sup> storey interior parking garage
- 16 interior parking spaces provided; 2 outdoor front yard spaces (1 interior barrier-free)
- Curbside garbage pick-up to be arranged with Region





**SECTION**



# **POLICY CONTEXT & SITE ANALYSIS**

## 3.1 Policy Context

There are a number of policy layers and guidelines that have been considered in support of the proposed urban design plans for the subject properties:

- Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024)
- Niagara Official Plan (2022)
- Niagara Region Model Urban Design Guidelines
- City of Niagara Falls Official Plan

### 3.1.1 Provincial Planning Statement

Although the PPS does not provide specific guidance or direction on urban design, it does provide general policy guidance on matters pertaining to growth and development. Specifically, *“settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development”* and *“growth should be focused in, where applicable, strategic growth areas, including major transit station areas.”*



The subject property is not within a major transit station area but is less than 2km away. This is important in the context that *“planning authorities shall support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities.”* Further, land use patterns within settlement areas should be based on densities and a mix of land uses which:

- Efficiently use land and resources;
- Optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities;
- Support active transportation;
- Are transit-supportive, as appropriate.

The PPS also provides direction on housing and the requirement for planning authorities to provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities by:

- Establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households;
- Permitting and facilitating all types of residential intensification, including the development and introduction of new housing options within previously developed areas, and redevelopment, which results in a net increase in residential units...;
- Promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and support the use of active transportation; and
- Requiring transit-supportive development and prioritizing intensification...in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations.

### **3.1.2 Niagara Official Plan**

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In the support of a vibrant region, “*urban design policies are intended to assist in achieving a high quality built environment through the design of the built form and mobility networks.*” The implementation of good urban design is intended to be achieved by district or secondary plans at the local level (neither apply to this specific neighbourhood), therefore the Region’s Model Urban Design Guidelines are to be used as the appropriate tool. (Implementation and conformity with these guidelines will be reviewed in detail under Section 4.0.). Section 6.2 of the Region’s Plan does provide general policy direction with respect to excellence in design with a focus on the public realm and active transportation. Relevant policies include:

6.2.1.1 Excellence and innovation shall be promoted in architecture, landscape architecture, site planning, streetscape design, and overall community design to ensure built environments are attractive, walkable, accessible, diverse and functional.

6.2.1.5 The public realm shall be enhanced through urban design and improvements, and investment that contributes to safe, attractive complete streets and desirable communities.

6.2.1.6 Active transportation shall be promoted through the cohesive and collaborative design of streets, building interfaces and public spaces.

6.2.1.8 The Region shall promote:

- a) the creation of liveable and vibrant urban areas and streets;
- b) community design that:
  - iii) encourages a mix of land uses, a vibrant public realm and compact built form;
- d) well-designed buildings, high quality streetscapes, and attractive public spaces that create neighbourhood character and strengthen community identity and diversity.



### 3.1.3 City of Niagara Falls Official Plan

The relevant policy framework can be found under Part 3 (Section 5 – Urban Design Strategy) in the City’s Official Plan. The preamble reads *“It is the intent of this Plan to create a more compact and interconnected pedestrian-oriented and transit-supportive community. The built environment consists of the public realm and private properties, both of which have to be designed to work harmoniously together.”* The specific policies of Section 5 build upon the Region’s policies by providing more detailed direction on matters pertaining to new development, redevelopment projects, parking, streetscaping and landscaping.

**5.1** New development, redevelopment and public works projects shall utilize building, streetscaping and landscaping designs to improve the built and social environment of the City and to enhance quality of life. Development should integrate and be compatible with the surrounding area including natural and cultural heritage features.

**5.1.1** The design of new development and redevelopment shall specifically address height, setbacks, massing, siting and architecture of existing buildings in order to provide a compatible relationship with development in an area.

**5.1.2** Development shall be designed and oriented to the pedestrian. As such, buildings shall be set as close to the street as possible.

**5.1.5** Parking areas are to be minimized within the front yard of development sites. Parking shall primarily be located in the rear or sideyards of development sites with sufficient landscaping utilized to create an effective buffer to abutting lands.

**5.2** Streetscaping should serve to improve the pedestrian experience of an area through the use of amenities such as widened sidewalks, decorative street lighting, rest areas, tree planting and other landscaping features.

**5.2.1** The provision of adequate and accessible space for pedestrians, cyclists and transit are to be considered in the design of streets.

**5.3** Landscaping and open space amenity areas can provide an opportunity to enhance the visual image of properties along the streetscape and should be incorporated in development projects to complement boulevard plantings.

**5.3.1** The orientation of landscaping within development sites should be toward public use areas, realizing the importance of the effective placement and maintenance of such landscaping in creating attractive amenity areas and entranceways.

**5.3.4** Landscaping, together with other design measures, can assist in mitigating the impacts of development on surrounding lands. The City shall encourage the utilization of adequate buffering, screening and other landscaping measures to ensure separation between potentially incompatible uses.

**5.4** Parking areas should be designed efficiently to minimize the extent of pavement and provide the opportunity for additional landscaping.



**5.7** The City may prepare urban design plans or neighbourhood plans to implement the Urban Design Policies on specific areas. In the absence of such plans, reference should be made to Niagara Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines.

## 3.2 Site Analysis

The subject properties are located within a very small residential neighbourhood. This neighbourhood is supported by two (2) local streets that have been in existence for at least 90 years. The following historic aerial photo shows the traces of this early residential enclave dating to at least 1934:

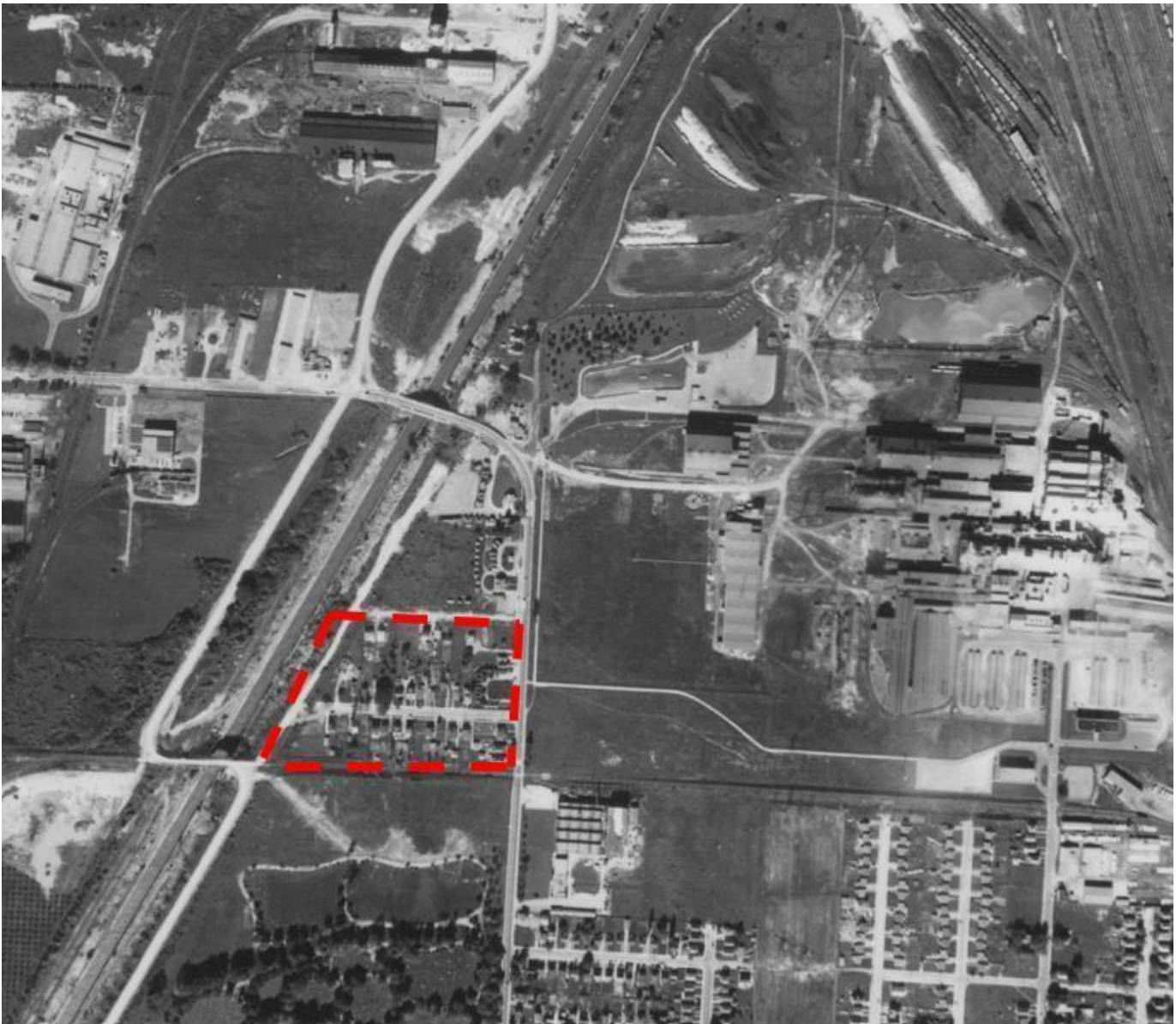
**Figure 1 – 1934 Aerial Photo**



Important observations include the presence of the Fairview Cemetery and historic railway corridor to the south; Stanley Avenue and Thorold Stone Rd. as early arterials; the hydro canal bordering the west; the prevalence of the former Cyanamid plant; and the Bridge St. residential area. Early industrial uses can be found on the eastern edge of Stanley Ave. but no industry to the north or west. This Fraser/George residential enclave (delineated in red above) likely supported the Cyanamid plant with workers as Fraser St. appears to extend easterly to the plant.

By 1954-55, George St. is more discernible and commercial/retail uses have been established along the west side of Stanley Ave. north of the subject site. Industrial uses emerge north and west of the hydro canal (Lubrizol, now Oleo Energies Inc.). The industrial use on the east side of Stanley immediately opposite Fraser St. is no longer present (now CW Palmer Memorial Park).

**Figure 2–1954-55 Aerial Photo**





A comparison of 1971 (left) and 2023 (right) aerial photos is provided below:

**Figure3 – 1971/2023 Aerial Photos**



By 1971, the predominance of single detached dwellings in the interior of Fraser and George Streets is evident with commercial/industrial uses flanking the west side of Stanley Avenue. In the 50 years since, the triangle north of George St. (bounded by Stanley Ave., Thorold Stone Rd. and the hydro canal) is formalized with two larger plazas (mostly retail units) and the industrial use – Niagara Battery & Tire – which comprises half of the block face. This small neighbourhood is now fully developed with a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses. It has evolved and developed as a unique and distinct enclave surrounded by a well-connected open space & trails system, public transit and community amenities (see Figure 4).

Despite primarily residential uses on the south side of George St., the streetscape is fairly disorganized, characterized by front yard parking on both sides of the street, and no sidewalks. It is visually unappealing and unconducive to walking:





Fraser St., by contrast, has sidewalks on both sides of the street and a more defined rhythm and pattern in its built form. Although some of the buildings have been replaced since the 1934 aerial, the newer dwellings have maintained that consistency in street edge:



Rather ironically, the two subject properties provide a break in that built form rhythm through either vacancy (5584 Fraser St. below left) or the siting of commercial “front yard” parking (5523-5555 Fraser St. on below right):





**Figure4–Community Amenities**

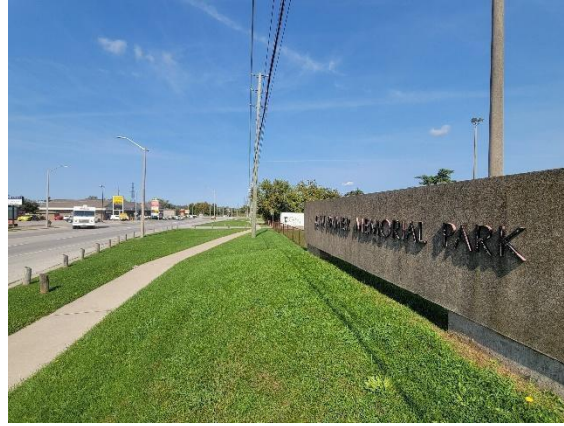


Enclosed by two (2) major arterials, the subject properties are in close proximity to existing transit with convenient access to the downtown and Niagara Falls Go Station to the southeast and the Stamford major commercial district to the northwest. Numerous transit stops are located along Stanley Avenue, one at the intersection with Fraser St. and another at George St.

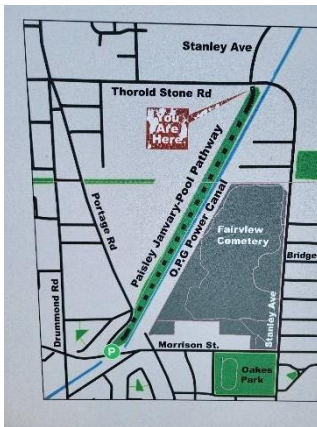




Active park space (CW Palmer Memorial Park ball diamonds) is located directly across Stanley Avenue – designated Open Space in the City’s Official Plan and similarly zoned Open Space in the Zoning By-law (No. 79-200). The Gale Centre, within walking distance of 500m, has four pads of ice as well as community space.



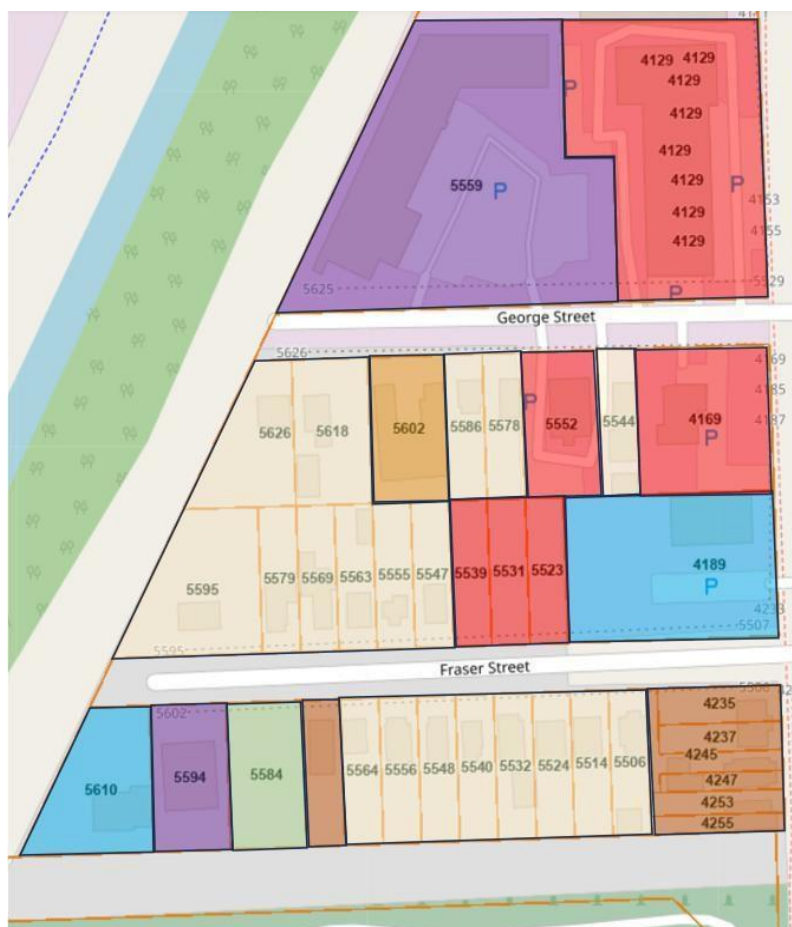
Opportunities for active transportation are in abundance. The Paisley January-Pool Pathway (Millenium Trail) on the west side of the hydro canal is part of the Region’s extensive strategic cycling network that also utilizes Thorold Stone Rd. with a future connection to the downtown and westerly to Stamford. This Regional system is also connected a short distance east to the Niagara River Recreation Trail which forms part of a much larger provincial cycling network. The City is also embarking on the conversion of the historic NS&T rail corridor (that spans much of the City east to west) into a multi-use trail that can be conveniently accessed at Thorold Stone Rd.



Although Stanley Avenue is not part of the Region’s cycling network, it was recently upgraded to a 4-lane arterial with double-sided bike lanes. It also has sidewalks on both sides:

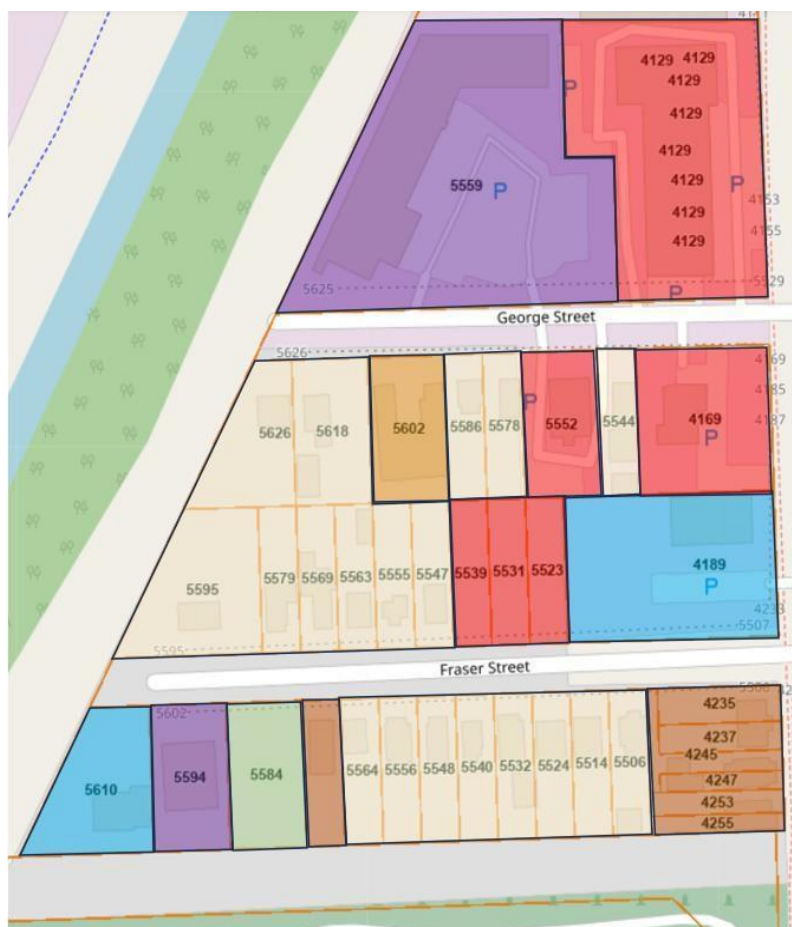









## Figure 6—Actual Land Use



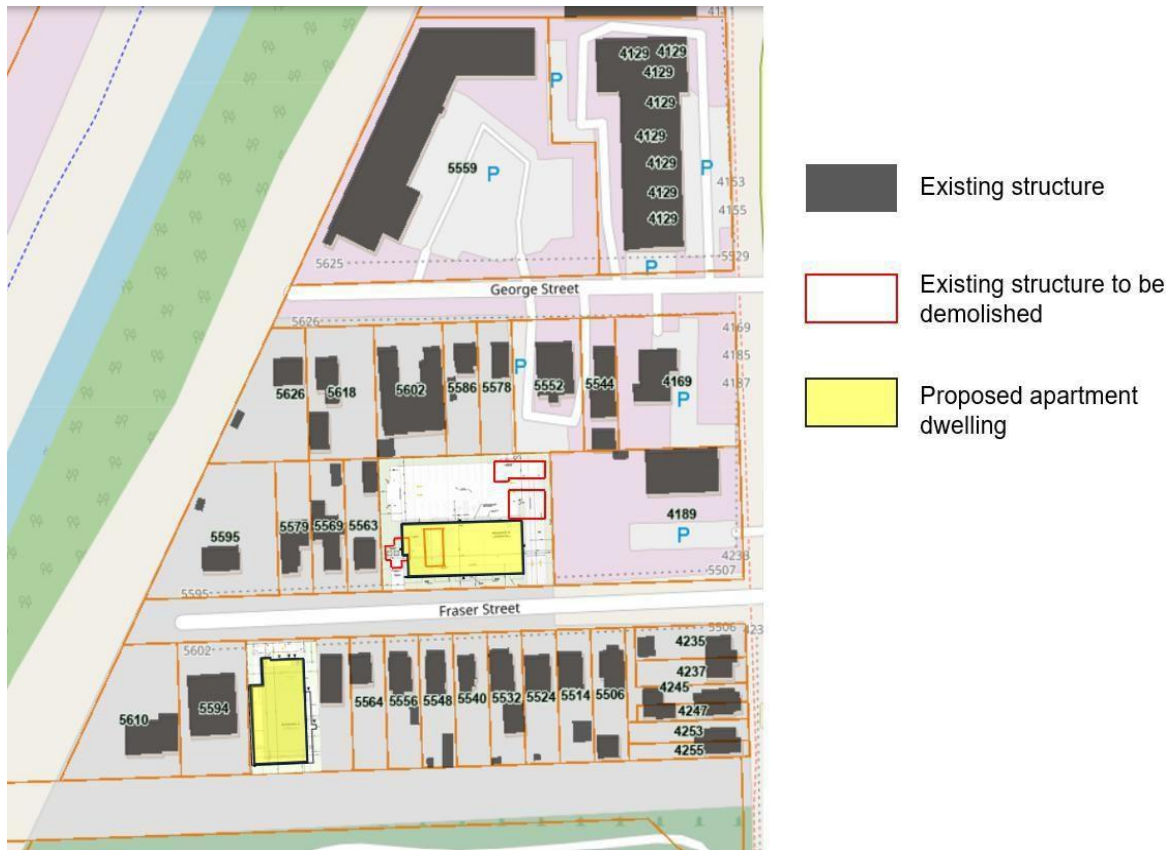
Despite this PI zoning, the actual land use reflects far more diversity, including long-standing residential uses south of George St., and other institutional uses (place of worship, former Legion branch). The PI zone itself permits a diverse range of uses that are generally compatible with residential uses including printing establishments, consulting offices, and a range of automotive-related uses. The only industrial use along Fraser St. is at 5594 (Streamline Auto & Marine Upholstery) which has no ECA approval, and includes operations confined within the shop building with no adverse effects on adjacent properties. The only vacant property is 5584 Fraser St., which is subject to this application.

### Figure 6—Actual Land Use



|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
|  | Single Detached           |
|  | Semi-Detached             |
|  | Institutional             |
|  | Commercial                |
|  | Industrial                |
|  | Commercial /<br>Apartment |
|  | Vacant                    |



**Figure 7–Bulk, Massing, Form, Lot Fabric**

The neighbourhood is characterized by a range of lot sizes and shapes, which allows for diversity in building size and form. The footprints of the proposed apartment dwellings are not out of character for this neighbourhood as larger buildings have developed at 5602 George; 5552 George; 5544 George; 4169 Stanley Ave.; 4189 Stanley Ave. The proposed building at 5584 Fraser St. will be adjacent to the existing largest building on Fraser (5594).

The typical lot is rectilinear with angled lots bordering the western perimeter due to the hydro canal corridor. Both Fraser and George Sts. dead-end as a result of this corridor. There is no current connection or permeability between Fraser and George.

The lots are predominately 12m (40ft.) by 45m (150ft.) deep, characterized by single detached dwellings (below photo). The majority are 1 ½ - 2 storeys tall (hip or gable roofs) with single car driveways leading to rear yard garages. Parking appears to be ample, but there is a significant amount of on-street parking. There is a consistency of building front yard setback, ranging between 5 – 8m.





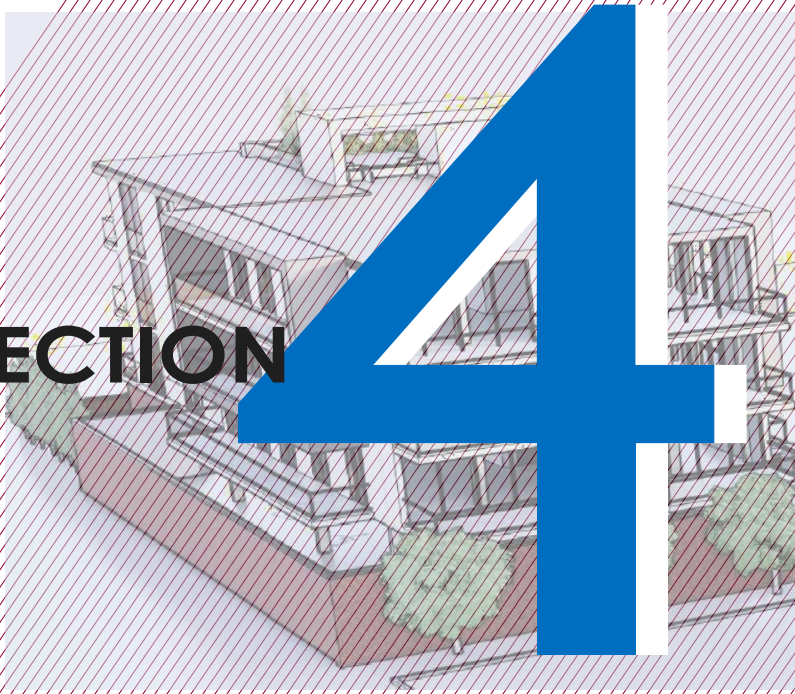
There are a few double lots in the neighbourhood, including the one at 5584 Fraser St (proposed Building 2) with a frontage of 24.35m. Building 1 is proposed to occupy five (12m) lots with an overall frontage of 60.96m. It is a unique situation that the applicant owns five (5) contiguous lots, which represents half of the lots along the north side of Fraser St. This land assembly occurred many years ago by a former owner and while it has allowed the Visca's to operate a commercial/industrial use on the property (that includes two other properties along George St.), the presence of this commercial surface parking (especially combined with the adjacent church parking lot), results in an unframed street edge of 104m – almost half of the entire 212m block length.



A barbed-wire chain link fence (for security purposes) currently frames the walk between the dwellings at the west end of Fraser St. and Stanley Ave. There is a real opportunity to better enrich this streetscape and create a far more inviting and walkable street.



**SECTION**



# **DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**



## 4.0

# Design Considerations

The following section demonstrates how the proposed site and built form have been guided by the vision, objectives and key principles of Section 2. The following analysis also highlights how the proposals support the design direction provided by the Region within their Model Urban Design Guidelines, which include both public and private realm directives. The following sub-sections assess how the proposed developments are appropriate for the two subject sites with respect to:

## 4.1 Smart Growth Principles

## 4.2 Public Realm

- 4.2.1 Neighbourhood Structure
- 4.2.2 Sidewalks & Streetscaping
- 4.2.3 Environmental Sustainability

## 4.3 Private Realm

- 4.3.1 Residential
- 4.3.2 Building Variation & Density
- 4.3.3 Orientation
- 4.3.4 Setbacks
- 4.3.5 Building Height
- 4.3.6 Architectural Features
- 4.3.7 Apartment & Mixed-Use Buildings

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendments (R5C for Building 1, and R5F for Building 2) also seek special provisions with respect to the following regulations. Rationale for these provisions is analyzed within the analysis of the Model Urban Design Guidelines.

### Building 1:

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Front Yard –                                       | 4.19m from 7.5m        |
| Lot Coverage –                                     | 33.66% from 30%        |
| Landscaped Open Space –                            | 20.5% from 40%         |
| Min. Amenity Area for an Apartment Dwelling Unit – | 555sq.m. from 620sq.m. |

### Building 2:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Lot Frontage -  | 24.35m from 45m                          |
| Front Yard -  | 4.98m from 7.5m                          |
| Rear Yard –   | 5.28m from 10m                           |
| Int. Side Yard (West) -                                 | 0.1m from 3.93m                          |
| Int. Side Yard (East) -                                 | 1.11m from 3.93m                         |
| Lot Coverage -  | 71.2% from 30%                           |
| Landscaped Open Space -                                 | 21.1% from 55%                           |
| Max. Projection for Balcony Into a Required Side Yard - | 1.65m (west) and 1.25m (east) from 0.45m |
| Parking -   | 18 spaces from 25                        |

## 4.1 Smart Growth Principles

The Region identifies 10 high-level smart growth principles in structuring specific urban design guidelines under the public and private realms.

On a broad level, the proposed design plans implement at least nine of these principles. The new apartment dwellings will (emphasis in red italics):

1. Create a mix of land uses:
  - Introduce a ***different building form and type*** to the area contributing to a more vital, attractive neighbourhood character.
  - Provide multiple family housing forms to ***balance*** a predominately low rise, single use neighbourhood
2. Promote compact built form
  - Increase density to better support transit systems
  - Reduce land and optimize servicing
  - Place ***higher density buildings in close proximity to parks, transit, recreation and public service facilities***
  - Provide an ***innovative design solution*** (e.g. interior parking within building) to reduce land supply otherwise required for outdoor surface parking
3. Offer a range of housing opportunities and choices
  - ***Diversify housing*** in the neighbourhood offering people of different generations, with varying housing needs, to live closer together
4. Produce walkable neighbourhoods and communities
  - Provide ***eyes on the street*** helping to make the neighbourhood safer
  - Add comfort to the streetscape realm, providing for a more pleasing and interesting walk
5. Foster attractive communities and a sense of place
  - Provide a highly attractive street edge and ***better frame the public realm***
  - Provide ***positive infill*** that respects the original community fabric
  - Attractive investment which can help sustain higher property values and support a ***higher quality of life*** in this community
6. Preserve farmland and natural resources
  - Maximize land use efficiently reducing the need to expand settlement boundaries and develop farmland (tied to compact built form)
  - Implement ***sustainable design measures (energy efficiency)*** to help minimize energy consumption
7. Direct development into existing communities
  - ***Reinvest in an established community***, taking advantage of roads, utilities, schools, recreation centres, parks, trails, and other public amenities that taxpayers have already paid to establish.



8. Provide a variety of transportation choices
  - Reduce dependency on the private automobile
  - Provide ***housing options for seniors*** (who may not be able to drive any longer) and others who may not be able to afford a car in ***close proximity to planned transit***
9. Encourage community stakeholder collaboration
  - Include input from local area residents (***a neighbourhood open house was held on January 23, 2025***)
  - Continue to receive input from stakeholders and interested members of the public through the review and approval process (It is acknowledged that Site Plan approval is also required following OPA/ZBA consideration, allowing for a more detailed evaluation of specific design measures).

## 4.2 Public Realm

The public realm is associated with large scale planning and design issues with an emphasis placed on creating pedestrian-friendly streetscapes with high-quality interfaces. Specifically, does the proposed development provide a positive impact on the existing neighbourhood and built fabric?

**Figure 8– Building 1 in Neighbourhood Context**



**Figure9–Building 2 in Neighbourhood Context**

### 4.2.1 Neighbourhood Structure

**3a.3 Block Design** – To maximize connections for vehicular and especially pedestrian traffic, streets should be based on a grid pattern. In existing neighbourhoods, opportunities should be pursued to connect ending streets to adjacent or new development. The number of connections should be maximized for permeability.

#### 3a.4 Lot Size & Variety

An appropriate balance of large and small lot sizes is ideal to promote a variety of development types, sizes and designs. Within standard size residential blocks, it is possible to achieve a range of housing forms and densities, including detached, semi-detached, townhouses and also apartment buildings within the same block.

#### 3a.6 Transit Supportive Design

Provide a mix of land uses and higher residential densities at key locations to generate pedestrian traffic and activity throughout the day, making transit a viable option. Compact development forms support transit. Transit facilities should be located within a short walking distance of most residential, commercial, and employment uses (approx. 200m).

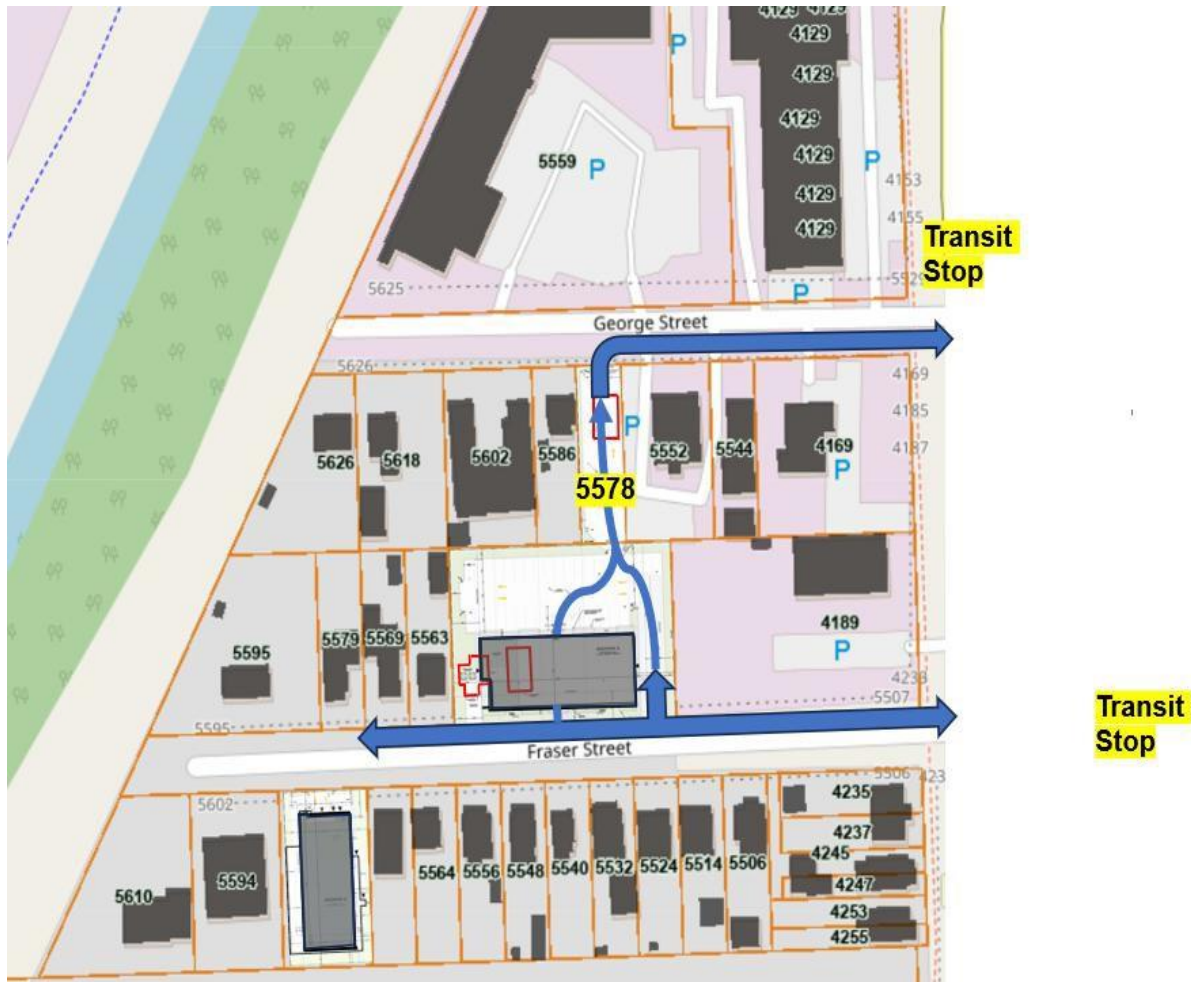
**Response:** A range of lot sizes exists in the neighbourhood, however only single and semi-detached dwellings are accommodated as an existing housing form. The opportunity to provide larger multiple dwellings (apartments) is afforded by a larger lot at 5584 Fraser St., and the assembly of 5 smaller lots (5523-5555 Fraser St.) under one owner.

The neighbourhood currently consists of two parallel streets (Fraser and George) with no connectivity.



By including 5578 George St. in the redevelopment plan (as shown in Figure 10 below), it provides a vehicular connection (one-way) between Fraser and George Sts., and full permeability for future residents and other pedestrians seeking north-south travel. This is important given there are transit stops at both Fraser St. and George St. at the intersection of Stanley Ave. Providing a vehicular exit to George St. from the site is also desirable given that George is predominately industrial (Niagara Battery & Tire) with other automotive-related uses at 5552 George and 4169 Stanley Ave. There is only one residential dwelling (at 5544) between the point of exit and Stanley Ave.

**Figure 10–Connectivity**

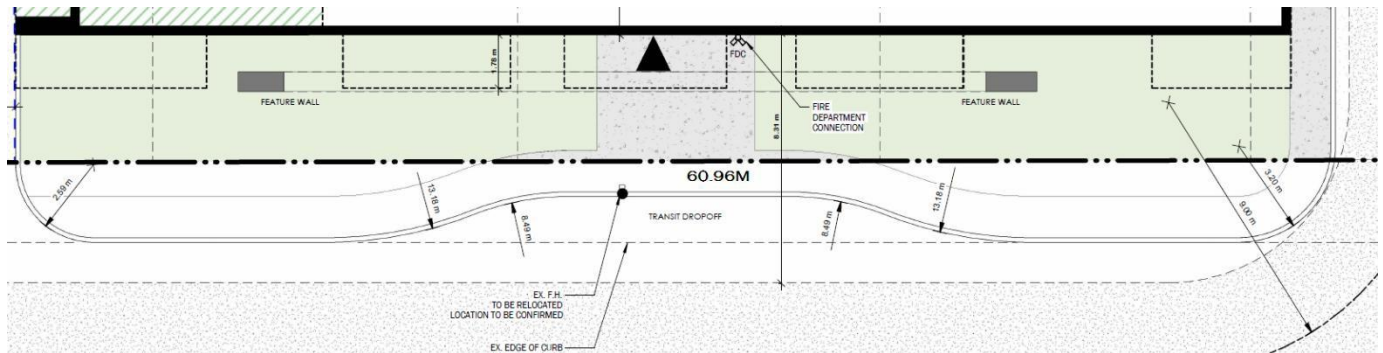


## 4.2.2 Sidewalks & Streetscaping

### 3c Sidewalks & Streetscaping–

Sidewalks should be designed and utilized as high-quality public spaces, promoting active use by residents and visitors and enhancing pedestrian experiences. Sidewalks should provide safe environments, allowing unobstructed pedestrian movements along and across the street. They should be located so that the majority of residents are conveniently connected between destinations (including other land uses) and transit facilities.

**Response:** Sidewalks are already provided on both sides of Fraser St. It is anticipated that the sidewalk directly abutting the fronts of both new apartment dwellings will be reconstructed in concert with other on-site works. For example, a lay-by will be provided for transit drop-off (see below) in front of Building 1, requiring the new sidewalk to jog closer to the new apartment dwelling to provide for this allowance. Principal access points to both dwellings are provided in close proximity to the public sidewalks on Fraser. Internal walkways that wrap around the proposed buildings are also provided for greater connection between the parking areas, access doors and the public sidewalk system and realm.



## 4.2.3 Environmental Sustainability

### 3h.1 Environmental Sustainability

**Conserve Land:** Development of the public realm should be compact and intensification should occur within existing urban areas to reduce pressure on natural features, open spaces, rural and agricultural lands.

**Conserve Energy:** The design of blocks, streets, transit facilities, collocation of uses, and recycling can help to reduce energy consumption at the local level. The collocation of complementary uses reduces the need to travel long distances, thereby conserving energy and reducing the dependency on the automobile.

**Promote Alternative Modes of Travel:** Alternative modes of travel such as walking, bicycling and public transit can be promoted through the design of high quality streets with adequate sidewalks, bicycle lanes and transit facilities.

**Response:** The proposed developments will increase the density of the subject sites; one from a vacant lot (5584 Fraser) and the other from a predominately commercial parking lot. This intensification will put a greater number of people in close proximity to transit and other complementary uses, including the commercial/retail plazas just north of the sites. Bicycle parking stalls can be provided outside near the principal entrance, or internally, potentially within common rooms or areas. The close proximity of these development sites to such an extensive parks, open space, and trail network is a key rationale for providing reductions in the minimum amount of landscaped open space and amenity areas attributed to the apartment dwelling units.



## 4.3 Private Realm

The private realm is associated with the design of areas within the private property boundaries. The focus is on elements that interface with or are clearly visible from the public realm (including facades, parking lots, driveways, entrances) as well as the height and massing in relation to neighbouring buildings.

**Figure 11 – Building 1 Perspective**



### 4.3.1 Residential

#### 4a.1 Design Principles

**Positive Image:** A positive residential image is a key design consideration of enhancing the quality and character of the overall streetscape and neighbourhood. Housing should incorporate architectural design elements to create a positive street image. Elements such as front-attached garages or blank walls must be avoided.

**Context Sensitive:** The mass, scale, and architectural elements of residential buildings should be sensitive to adjoining areas. Design elements such as the height, building mass and architectural features should complement the overall neighbourhood character.

**Housing Variety & Choice:** A full range of housing types (i.e., detached, semi-detached, townhouse, apartments) and tenures (for sale, rent, affordable, and aged-care) should be provided so as to provide options for a wide range of residents/family types (i.e. single parents, couples, families with children, seniors, people with special needs, and others). A range of housing types will address changes in market conditions and provide flexibility for people at a variety of income levels.

**Environmentally Sustainable:** Residential development should be designed to achieve a high degree of environmental sustainability and address opportunities for solar orientation and water runoff minimization.

**Figure 12 – Building 2 Perspective**



**Response:** The proposed developments will significantly enhance the attractiveness of Fraser St. The use of various building materials (glass, brick, stone, stucco) and colours will animate the streetscape and provide visual interest in otherwise vacant and/or vacuous spaces. These buildings will project a fresh, positive street image and may help inject new life and investment in the community. The streetscape has remained unchanged in decades as most of the existing building stock pre-dates WWII, or slightly succeeds it. Overall, the design elements of the proposed contemporary apartment dwellings will complement the neighbourhood character, while not replicating it.

The dwellings will most certainly provide more diversity in the housing form, type and tenure in the neighbourhood, including affordable rental housing (target of at least 15% of units). This will provide increased housing opportunities for people of varying ages and flexibility for different income levels.

Although the proposed 4-storey dwellings are slightly taller than the 1 ½ - 2 storey single and semi-detached dwellings that populate the neighbourhood, this is an appropriate height and scale in the context of compact form and intensification policies. It is recognized that the existing zoning (PI) permits a building height of 12.0m (40ft.), whereas the proposed heights of 15.3m (50ft.) and 15.7m (51.5ft.) are only slightly taller, on account of the rooftop terraces. The actual roof line heights are proposed at 40ft (see below graphic). Further, a 40-50ft. residential building is likely to be more compatible with a 2-storey residential dwelling than a 40ft. industrial building.



### 4.3.2 Building Variation & Density

#### 4a.2 Building Variation & Density

a) Housing variety should be achieved on each street and block as a means of strengthening neighbourhood character and identity. Repetition of house type, size and design (style, elevation, materials, etc.) should therefore be avoided.

b) A full range of housing types (i.e., detached, semidetached, townhouse, apartments) should be provided to promote variety and diversity, and to address changes in market conditions.

c) Identical house elevations should not be located on adjacent or opposite lots, including flanking lots. Identical elevations, either in design or color, should not comprise more than 25% of the same street.

d) Residential density should be increased at appropriate locations to promote transit use. Density is the ratio of residential units on a given area of land, and is typically measured in dwelling units per acre. The following table outlines the target net densities (area exclusive of roads) for common housing types.

##### Type and Density

Single Detached up to 10 units/acre

Semi-Detached up to 20 units/acre

Townhouse up to 40 units/acre

Apartment over 25 units/acre

e) The highest density development should occur at appropriate locations. Appropriate locations include areas that benefit from increased population and have a variety of movement and travel options, including:

- the centre of a neighbourhood;
- larger public open spaces (e.g. neighbourhood parks);
- transit facilities or major transit corridors; and
- larger institutional uses (eg. universities).

f) High density development should transition to adjacent areas through appropriate setbacks and building form.

**Response:** These guidelines reinforce the desire for diversity in housing type and form within a neighbourhood to strengthen identity and character.

The proposed density of Building 1 (37 units/acre) is more aligned with a townhouse density threshold. It will be centrally located, stretching along the north side of Fraser St., adjacent to an institutional use (expansive parking lot) and the Stanley Ave. corridor (transit route). In this context, it is an appropriate location.

Building 2 will have a much higher density (66 units/acre) however its location at the end of Fraser St. will provide more visual surveillance in an area that needs it. It is proposed adjacent to an industrial use (below left), across from a well screened single detached dwelling (below centre) and an existing semi-detached dwelling with minimal glazing on its western façade (below right):





### 4.3.3 Orientation

#### 4a.3 Orientation

a) All housing should face adjacent streets and open spaces. Rear lotting should not be permitted unless it is required to achieve a reasonable design objective (such as to limit access to environmentally sensitive open space).

b) Dwellings on corner and flanking lots should be designed so both exposed façades are oriented towards the street. At these locations, building elements and design should emphasize their visibility and potential role as landmark or orienting structures within the community.

**Response:** The proposed dwellings have excellent front yard orientation that will frame the street and “fill in the gaps” that currently exist along the Fraser streetscape. Although the site locations are not corner lots, it is expected that these two new dwellings will serve as landmark structures within the neighbourhood, particularly in concert with one another; Building 1 (below left) along the north side of the street, and Building 2 (below left) at the southwestern corner of the neighbourhood.

**Figure 13–Street Orientation**



## 4.3.4 Setbacks

### 4a.4 Setbacks

The intention of the following residential setback guidelines is to promote appropriate front, side and rear yard setbacks to control lot coverage, provide adequate private open space, situate buildings in close proximity to the right-of-way, and to ensure adequate separation between adjoining buildings.

#### Front Yard

a) All residential front yards should have a minimum 1.5 metre “no encroachment” area. The balance of the setback may be encroached with non-interior building elements including porches, steps, roof elements, etc.

b) A range of front yard setbacks along any street is recommended in order to achieve a diversity of setbacks on the streetscape. However, front yard setbacks should generally be a minimum of 2.5 metres and a maximum of 4.5m.

#### Side Yard

c) Side yard setbacks should be a minimum of 1.2m, but 3.5m for lots with a garage located in the rear yard accessed by a driveway.

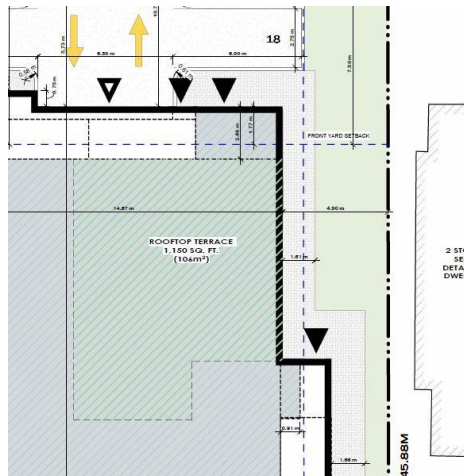
d) On a lot abutting a non-residential use (including a walkway) the minimum interior side yard setback should be 3.5m.

**Response:** The front yard setback requirement in the requested R5C and F zones is 7.5m. Special provisions are being sought to allow front yards of 4.19m (Building 1) and 4.98m (Building 2) which is more aligned with the recommended setback of 4.5m under the Model Urban Design Guidelines. The Guidelines actually encourage as minimal a front yard setback as possible (2.5m). The front yard setbacks of the existing residential dwellings on the north side of Fraser St. are approximately 8m; on the south side of Fraser 5m. The proposed setbacks will maintain a consistency of street edge recognizing that variation is recommended to achieve diversity.

Building 1 is proposed to have interior side yards of 7.65m (west) and 10.92m (east). Both setbacks comply with the R5 zone requirements, as there is extensive street frontage to accommodate the proposed apartment dwelling. The 4-storey dwelling will interface with an existing 2 storey residence at 5563 Fraser St., however, the eastern façade of the 5563 residence has only one window at ground floor level (below left). Further, no balconies are proposed along the west side of the apartment dwelling (below middle and right), so there should be minimal concern regarding overlook from the proposed rooftop terrace amenity area:









## 4.3.5 Building Height

### 4a.6 Building Height

a) The following table summarizes the range of appropriate heights for typical housing types.

#### Type and Height

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Single Detached | 2 ~ 3 storeys  |
| Semi-Detached   | 2~ 3 storeys   |
| Townhouse (Row) | 3 ~ 5 storeys  |
| Apartment       | 5 ~ 8+ storeys |

b) The design of tall buildings should respond to potential negative impacts on adjacent properties, including overshadowing, overlooking, wind-tunnel effects. Therefore, building height and mass should be appropriate to the type and nature of adjoining development.

c) Height transition should be incorporated into the design of tall buildings, especially when situated adjacent to low density - low rise areas.

d) Buildings over 3 storeys should have a base building height of no greater than 2 storeys above adjacent development. Upper floors should step back to reduce visual impact and building mass as perceived at street level and from adjoining properties. The total building height, and upper floor step-backs should be designed according to appropriate visual angular plane analysis.

**Response:** The proposed 4-storey apartment dwellings are not categorized as tall or high-rise buildings as 40ft. is generally considered to be at a human scale. This is consistent with the guidance above indicating that 4 storeys is more akin to a townhouse housing type. No wind or shadow studies were required by the Pre-Consultation Record.

Notwithstanding, the design of the proposed apartments articulates a defined bottom, middle and top, with vertical and horizontal divisions to create a less imposing presence on the streetscape. Façade detailing and colouring in the vertical and horizontal planes (e.g. brick, glass, extended balconies, indented and/or angled wall sections) will provide necessary variety and human scale to the building.

## 4.3.6 Architectural Features

### 4a.7 Architectural Features

The intent of the Architectural Feature guidelines is to achieve a visually rich residential building fabric that promotes a distinct neighbourhood image through the use of materials, building form, and architectural styles.

a) Architecture expressed throughout residential buildings should be varied and recognize its local context.

b) Despite the use of various architectural styles, quality should be consistent and building materials and finishes should be complementary.

- c) Consistent rhythms of similar but not identical details and architectural elements should be used to reinforce the streetscape and a strong neighbourhood image.
- d) The front façade of dwellings and garage treatments should maximize the presence of the habitable building façade. A high standard of design, detail and variety of materials should be combined to create front building façades with a distinct street presence.
- e) Flanking walls should include at least 20% surface window area.
- h) Changes in the use of wall facing materials should occur at wall setbacks or projections, or to articulate the transition between the building base, middle and top.
- i) Wall materials should be selected based on energy and maintenance efficiency.
- j) Buildings facing or flanking a street, lane or open space should provide a generous amount of window openings to encourage strong visual connections between the private dwelling and public realm.
- k) Front dwelling façades should include between 30 to 40% surface window areas.
- l) Bay windows are encouraged as they increase visibility from private dwellings to the public realm and add to the building character.
- m) Window design should be primarily an expression of the interior dwelling use. Creative arrangements of windows should have a functional role in providing natural ventilation and light, views, and privacy to the individual and adjacent dwellings.
- u) Duplex and multiplex dwellings should provide porches and decks as outdoor amenity spaces for upper units.
- w) A variety of roof shapes should occur in each residential block. However, roof forms should apply a consistent roofline in mass and height to adjacent buildings.
- x) Roof materials/colours should complement the building materials and the proposed building design.
- z) Townhouse and multiplex dwellings should express individuality of address through defined roof forms that express individual dwellings and contribute to a residential character for the overall development.

**Figure 14– Birds Eye Perspectives**



Figure 15–Front Perspectives



**Response:** The proposed renderings present **well-designed contemporary buildings** with strong architectural features, high visual appeal, and functional elements intended to contribute to a vibrant urban environment. While both buildings have highly similar designs, their contrasting orientations (front facades) to the street will provide unique visual appeal.

#### DESIGN & FORM



- The buildings have a strong geometric composition, with distinct rectangular framing elements that create depth.
- Asymmetrical massing is used effectively, with cantilevered balconies and extended roof sections adding dynamic visual appeal.
- The design emphasizes openness and transparency, utilizing floor-to-ceiling glass to blur the boundary between indoor and outdoor spaces.

#### MATERIAL & TEXTURE



- A combination of glass, steel, concrete, wood, and brick adds texture and contrast.
- Glass railings on balconies enhance the modern aesthetic while maintaining unobstructed views.
- Warm wooden soffits under the overhangs introduce a natural element that balances the industrial feel of the metal and glass.
- Dark brick cladding on the lower level grounds the structure and adds an urban, durable aesthetic.

#### FUNCTIONALITY & USABILITY



- Ground-level transparency and recessed entryways help suggest a mixed-use function, including communal spaces.
- Multiple outdoor balconies and rooftop terraces offer private outdoor areas for residents and natural surveillance (eyes on street).
- The extended roof overhangs provide shading, which will help regulate indoor temperatures and improve energy efficiency.





## URBAN INTEGRATION

- The building designs are pedestrian-friendly, with large windows at street level enhancing engagement with the surroundings.
- Landscaping elements, such as trees and seating areas, contribute to public space activation and encourage social interaction.
- The curved sidewalk and planted areas aim to integrate the structure smoothly with the existing street environment.

Overall, the proposed architectural design of the two apartment dwellings will help establish a visually dynamic and cohesive neighborhood identity by integrating high-quality materials, diverse building forms, and contemporary architectural styles. The design approach achieves conformity with the architectural guidelines of Section 4a.7 with a particular emphasis on respecting the local context, and creating a rich and engaging streetscape. Other specific highlights include:

- A consistent rhythm of complementary yet distinct architectural elements reinforces the neighborhood character.
- Front façades and garage treatments prioritize the presence of habitable spaces, incorporating high-quality materials, intricate detailing, and a diverse palette to enhance street appeal.
- Flanking walls feature well over 20% window area, fostering connectivity between indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Transitions in wall materials are strategically placed at setbacks and projections, defining the base, middle, and top of each structure.
- Materials have been selected with energy efficiency and long-term maintenance in mind.
- Buildings fronting streets incorporate ample window openings, strengthening visual interaction between the private and public realms.
- Primary façades include well over 30-40% window coverage, ensuring natural light, visibility, and aesthetic balance.
- Bay windows contribute to both visual interest and improved sightlines to the public realm.
- Window placements are thoughtfully arranged to enhance interior functionality by optimizing ventilation, natural light, and privacy.
- The incorporation of balconies will provide functional outdoor spaces for upper units.
- A variety of roof forms create visual interest within each residential block while maintaining consistency in scale and massing.
- Roof materials and colors are carefully chosen to complement the overall architectural composition.
- The flat roofs help express individuality, reinforcing a sense of identity within the neighbourhood.

## 4.3.7 Apartment & Mixed-Use Buildings

### 4a.9 Apartment & Mixed-Use Buildings

The following guidelines are intended to provide apartment buildings that respect the human scale of residential and mixed-use areas. Human scale should be reinforced through appropriate building height, mass and architectural design.

- a) The impact of tall buildings on open spaces and adjacent properties should be minimized through adequate height and mass transition, separation, and landscaping.
- b) Buildings should have a strong relationship to the street, both by use or form.
- e) High quality pedestrian infrastructure should be provided on all public streets and public spaces adjacent to apartment development to support vibrant street environments, pedestrian access and comfort.
- f) Ground floor units should have individual at grade access where possible. Upper floor units should be emphasized through articulations of the exterior wall plane and roof, and the use of pronounced building elements including bay windows, balconies and dormers.
- g) Primary building entrances should clearly address the street with large entry awnings and provide visibility to interior lobbies to allow for safe and convenient arrival and departure from the building.
- j) Outdoor amenity areas may be provided as an external garden area, rooftop terrace. Roof terraces require planting, screening, and wind shelter to promote comfort and safety.

### 4a.10 Apartment Building Parking Areas

- a) Parking areas as part of apartment building development should be located underground, integrated within the building or structured parking.
- b) Access to underground or structured parking should be provided at the interior of the lot - not at the corner.
- d) Surface parking must not be located between the public ROW and the front of the adjacent primary building.
- e) Where surface parking areas are required, design guidelines outlined in Section 4e should apply.
- g) Parking within a structure should be screened from view at sidewalk level, and the street-level wall should be enhanced by architectural detailing, artwork, landscaping, or similar treatment that will add visual interest.
- h) The calculation of parking space requirements allocated for a development should take account the following considerations:
  - public parking stock with spare capacity within walking distance of the development site.
  - availability of transit within walking distance of the development site.
  - availability of sharing parking between different uses that require parking at different times of the day.

**Response:** The buildings align well with the guidelines, particularly in terms of massing, articulation, pedestrian engagement, and parking.

### Human Scale & Massing

- The buildings maintain a mid-rise height, which respects human scale and transitions well with adjacent land uses and existing development.
- The siting of the two buildings provides increased setbacks where they interface with adjacent residential dwellings and a decreased setback (Building 2) where it is located adjacent to an industrial use.
- The use of balconies and varying facade materials helps break up the mass and create visual interest.

### Relationship to the Street

- Both buildings have a strong street presence with large windows and entrances facing the sidewalk.
- The use of brick at street level, including decorative feature walls adds a sense of pedestrian scale and warmth.
- The main entrances are highly visible, prominent and inviting.

### Pedestrian-Friendly Design

- There are sidewalks and landscaping elements (trees and planters) that contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Large windows and transparent materials enhance street engagement.

### Articulated Upper Floors & Balconies

- Balconies and articulated window arrangements on the upper floors create a sense of depth and variation.
- The use of overhangs, projections, and changes in materials reinforce architectural articulation.

### Outdoor Amenity Space

- The addition of rooftop terraces provides outdoor amenity space in a communal setting (for increased social interaction) while balconies provide individual settings.

### Parking

- Surface parking (for Building 1) is well screened from the public ROW, hidden behind the building, while parking for Building 2 is integrated within the building, at ground level. It will be shielded from public view by the use of brick walls and façade treatments.
- A special provision for a reduced parking requirement for Building 2 is appropriate given the close proximity of transit within 200m of the site.



**SECTION**



**CONCLUSION**

## 5.0

## Conclusion

The proposed developments at 5523-5555 Fraser St. / 5578 George St., and 5584 Fraser St. will achieve the vision, design objectives and key principles established by this design plan. These compatible new infill dwellings will help enrich the existing character of the surrounding neighbourhood, contribute to a high-quality public realm, and provide affordable high-quality rental housing within close vicinity to parkland, open spaces and trails, as well as surrounding community services and public facilities. Community improvements in terms of walkability, connectivity and safety should also be realized.

These new developments conform to the applicable planning and urban design policy framework, including the PPS, Regional and City Plans, and the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines.

In achieving context-sensitive fit and compatibility, a number of special provisions related to reduced yards, open space, amenity areas, and parking and increased lot coverages are being sought by the requested R5 zoning categories. These are considered appropriate in achieving the optimum design solution for each property.

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### Report Prepared and Reviewed By:



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