



PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

September 4th, 2024

Isabel Lima
City of Pickering, City Development Department
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Pickering, ON
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Dear Ms. Lima:

**RE: URBAN DESIGN BRIEF ADDENDUM LETTER
720 GRANITE COURT
CITY OF PICKERING
INTERNAL FILE: 22429 A**

This document represents an addendum to the Urban Design Brief (henceforth referred to as “the Report”) prepared by MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited (“MHBC”) on June 02, 2023 (henceforth referred to as “the Design Report”), as it relates to 720 Granite Court in the City of Pickering (the “Subject Lands”). The Design Report describes the physical arrangement of the development proposal, provides insight into the rationale behind specific design choices within the context of the site, and how the proposal is consistent with and supportive of the design direction of applicable policies and guidelines.

Applications to amend the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law were submitted to the City in June 2023. The original proposal seeks to establish a compact, transit-oriented, mid-rise residential building development on the Subject Lands.

The Original Proposal

The original proposed development represents a range of residential and amenity uses in a 12-storey mid-rise building with a total Gross Floor Area (“GFA”) of 20,096.62 sq. m (216,320 sq. ft), supporting 262 residential units. The proposal includes 65 surface parking and 328 underground parking spaces within 2 levels of underground parking. Additionally, 157 bicycle parking spaces are featured to facilitate active transportation. The original proposal integrates a total of 1,508 sq. m (16,231 sq. ft) indoor and outdoor amenity areas.

The Current Proposal

The current proposed development represents a range of residential, commercial and amenity uses in a 10-storey mid-rise building with a total Gross Floor Area ("GFA") of 20,122.17 sq. m (216,595.04 sq. ft), supporting 262 residential units. The current proposal continues to include 65 visitor parking and 328 resident parking within 2 levels of underground parking. Additionally, 158 bicycle parking spaces are featured. A total of 1,232.17 sq. m of indoor and outdoor amenity areas are proposed on the 1st, 2nd, and 8th levels.

Revisions Changes between the June 2023 revised proposal and the current proposal include:

- An increase in the total GFA from 20,096.62 sq. m (216,320 sq. ft) to 20,122.17 sq. m (216,595.04 sq. ft).
- An increase in the FSI from 1.68 to 1.7.
- A decrease in the number of floors from 12-storey to 10-storey.
- A modified building footprint, expanding towards the north to include the underground parking ramp into the building envelope.
- An added 81 sq. m commercial space and associated entrance next to the underground parking ramp.
- A modification in the total indoor and outdoor amenity area from 1,508 sq. m to 1,232.17 sq. m.
- An added outdoor amenity terrace with an acoustic fence on the ground floor, located to the west next to the moving room.
- A modified landscape area to the south with trees, shrubs, sod areas, benches, and a limited hardscape.
- An increased number of resident parking spaces from 328 to 339 spaces.
- An increased number of bike parking spaces from 157 to 158 spaces.
- An added landscape island with large deciduous shade trees in the center of the surface parking space.
- An added 3.5m low-rise shrubs and decorative grasses vegetation setback from Metrolinx property to the west.
- An added 2.43m-high security fence along the west property line.

In comparing the changes between the original submission and the current submission, it is our opinion that the findings and conclusions of our Urban Design Report, including site design and orientation, built form and transition, architectural details, public realm, and sustainability, continue to apply equitably to this current proposal.

Response to Issue

We have reviewed the comments provided and stated with the response as the following:

1.0 Region of Durham Traffic Impact Study

5. The applicant will be required to dedicate a 10x10m sight triangle where Whites Road and Granite Court intersect.

Response: The current proposal provides a sight triangle at the intersection of Whites Road and Granite Court. Please refer to the Site Plan A-040.

5.0 Metrolinx – August 28, 2023

5. Please include a 3.5 metre vegetation setback, to be measured from the Metrolinx property line on the drawings, as this setback has been established in association with Metrolinx's GO Expansion Program. Limited types of vegetation are allowed within this section such as low rise shrubs and/or decorative grasses.

6. Metrolinx notes the Derailment Protection Report includes a statement about the installation of a 2.43-meter-high security fence along the entire property line. However, the high security fence shall be included within the final landscape/site plan, subject to Metrolinx review and approval.

Response: The current proposal includes a 3.5-meter vegetation setback from the Metrolinx property line to the west. This area will be landscaped with low-rise shrubs and decorative grasses to provide an effective separation distance. Additionally, a 2.43-meter-high security fence is proposed along the west property line. For more details, please refer to the Landscape Plan prepared by MHBC.

6.0 City Engineering – November 6, 2023

Landscape and Parks Development

2. As noted in the comments received from Landscape & Parks Development, the location of the proposed POPS may not be feasible, considering that Granite Court is a gateway into an industrial area and that there is a high volume of large trucks travelling through the Whites Road and Granite Court intersection. Staff request the applicant relocate the proposed POPS, or consider allocating this outdoor space to provide more amenities on the north side of the building. That said, staff request that enhanced landscaping be provided at the corner and along the street edges, to provide privacy and a buffer for the residential units on the ground floor.

14.0 City Planning – December 8, 2023

Privately-Owned-Public Space (POPS)

11. The proposed design and function of the Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS), whose main feature is outdoor seating/dining, does not seem feasible at this location, considering that it is located on a busy street corner and outside of private residential units. If the ground floor units facing this space were commercial use that included eating establishments, this treatment may be more feasible. Although the decorative unit paving, raised planters and trees that are proposed at the south side of the building are nice landscape/architectural features as a corner treatment, we question its functionality as POPS without associated uses to attract people to gather in this space. Granite Court is the gateway into an industrial area and there is a significant amount of truck traffic during regular business hours, making this location less desirable to sit and gather. Perhaps some of this table seating could be located in the private amenity space north of the building.

Response: As shown in the Landscape Plan prepared by MHBC, the current proposal replaces the POPS to the south with a landscape area featuring high-quality materials, benches, and decorative unit paving to address concerns raised by the Public, City Council and Staff, regarding the appropriateness of such a use along Granite Court considering industrial traffic during regular hours. Instead, a more passive outdoor area is proposed, consisting of large trees and shrubs between the building and Granite Court to provide an ample buffer at street level, mitigating visual and noise impacts, protecting privacy, animating the streetwall, and creating a sense of space.

Regarding the amenity area to the north, the proposed outdoor amenity space facilitates various activities and incorporates a range of seating options. This continues to be the case with the current proposal. Considering the proposed commercial space and its entrance are located at the northeast corner at ground level, this area further provides an oasis that accommodates the needs of different residents and visitors, encouraging social congregation. Please refer to the Landscape Plan prepared by MHBC for more details.

14.0 City Planning – December 8, 2023

Building Height

During the processing of this application, and at the open house and statutory public meetings, area residents have consistently expressed concerns with the proposed building height. Their key concerns include, but are not limited to:

- the potential overlook issues and shadowing issues that may occur as a result of the height of the proposed building;*
- the proposed building will stand out visually in a neighbourhood that is composed primarily of detached and semi-detached dwellings; and*
- the height and massing of the proposed building are not in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.*

3. Shadow Impact on Parks and Outdoor Spaces

New development should be designed, located, and massed in such a way that it limits any shadowing on the public realm, parks, and public spaces, to achieve adequate sunlight and comfort in the public realm through all four seasons. On the subject lands and within the surrounding area, the following existing and proposed outdoor spaces may be affected by shadowing:

- public sidewalks, particularly along Whites Road, Granite Court, and Oklahoma Drive;*
- outdoor amenity space that serves Fairport Beach Public School, at the corner of Eyer Drive and Oklahoma Drive;*
- Bidwell Tot Lot, located north of Fairport Beach Public School, off of Eyer Drive;*
- private outdoor amenity space located on the 8th floor of the proposed building; and*
- outdoor amenity spaces located on the subject property at-grade, including private amenity space to the north of the proposed building, privately-owned-public-space (POPS) to the south of the building, and an open field located to the west of the building.*

Staff's Comments on Building Height

5. Additionally, the City of Toronto has developed Performance Standards For Mid-Rise Buildings, to address the position, scale, and massing of proposed development in relation to the surrounding neighbourhood and streetscape. Staff encourage the applicant to consider these performance standards for the design of the proposed building, which include, but are not limited to:

- *providing step backs on buildings taller than 23 metres, to mitigate the perception of height at the pedestrian level and to create buildings that are of a comfortable scale for pedestrians;*
- *ensuring that the building envelope allows for at least 5 hours of consecutive sunlight onto surrounding sidewalks, from March to September;*
- *ensuring buildings provide the highest level of urban design treatment to create beautiful, safe, and accessible pedestrian environments, and great places to shop, work, and live;*
- *ensuring balconies on street-facing façades do not negatively impact the public realm, and are contained within all angular planes; and*
- *ensuring that mechanical penthouses do not penetrate any angular planes.*

6. To address concerns related to overlook, staff request the applicant to provide renderings of the proposed building, from the perspective of a pedestrian standing on the south side of Granite Court and the east side of Whites Road, as well as from the perspective of a pedestrian standing in the rear yard of a residential lot located along Gallant Court, Abingdon Court, and Hampton Court.

Response: The proposed 10-storey building achieves a pedestrian-orientated development and a respectful relationship with the adjacent neighbourhood and streetscape through high-quality urban design, and architectural treatments, resulting in an attractive, safe, and accessible pedestrian environment.

The building height, complemented by appropriate setbacks and stepbacks, contributes to a human-scaled streetscape that enhances the public realm while serving as a gateway and focal point, promoting a unique local identity. Specifically, the building massing integrates height transitions to adjacent neighbourhoods, notably toward the south and east, by progressively shrinking the floor plate, stepping down to a 6-storey podium, and implementing stepbacks on levels 7, and 8. The design also respects the low-rise character of the surrounding context, maintaining 45-degree angular planes measured from the neighbouring properties on opposite sides of the abutting streets, ensuring the protection of privacy, minimizing overlook and protecting sunlight onto adjacent properties. The building envelope, including all balconies and the mechanical penthouse, is contained within these angular planes, as illustrated in Angular Plane Analysis A-035. For a clearer understanding, please refer to the renderings of a pedestrian standing in the rear yard of a residential lot on Perspectives A-037.

A Shadow Impact Study was prepared by Onespace Unlimited Inc. in support of the proposed development application. The study includes hourly shadow tests for key dates: March 21st, June 21st, September 21st, and December 21st. The findings indicate that the incremental shadows cast by the proposed development move quickly across areas such as streets, sidewalks, neighbouring properties, and outdoor amenity spaces, ensuring the development does not result in unacceptable adverse impacts of a planning nature. While the microclimatic impacts of the proposed development are discernible, the benefits, including increased density, enhanced public spaces, and improved transit accessibility, outweigh these effects. Ultimately, the development supports the area's growth objectives while maintaining a balanced relationship with the surrounding environment.

The majority of the design-related comments provided by the Staff are responded to in this letter.

Conclusion

Based on our review of the City of Pickering Official Plan, we believe the current proposal adheres to the vision and design direction for the City of Pickering and the community of West Shore.

Yours truly,

MHBC



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