MAY
2021

URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

774,778, 780 & 782 Brant Street
769, 779 & 783 Brant Street, 2023, 2027, 2031-2033 Ghent Ave
and 747 & 761 Brant Street
Burlington



PREPARED FOR:
MOLINARO GROUP

GRAZIANI + CORAZZA ARCHITECTS

MOLINARO GROUP

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Urban Design Brief has been prepared by Graziani + Corazza Architects Inc. in support of an application by Molinaro Group. The application seeks to amend the Official Plan and Zoning by-law to permit a 14 storey and a 25 storey residential mixed use towers and podium at 774, 778, 780, and 782 Brant Street, a 25 storey residential mixed use tower and podium at 769, 779, and 783 Brant Street and 2023-2033 Ghent Avenue, and an 8 storey residential mixed use building at 747 and 761 Brant Street in Burlington.

The purpose of this Brief is to describe the proposed urban design character of the buildings, to assess their fit within the context, and to review their conformity with the City's urban design policy framework, including the Tall Buildings Guidelines.



Downtown Urban Growth Centre Boundary, from Burlington Official Plan Schedule B - Comprehensive Land Use Plan

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 Site and Immediate Context

Phase 1 of this application, consisting of 774, 778, 780, and 782 Brant Street on the northwest corner of Brant Street and Ghent Avenue, is a total of 0.67 hectares in size. This site is currently vacant and abuts high-rise residential to the west on Ghent Avenue, and low-rise commercial on Brant Street to the north, and high-rise residential with retail at grade to the south.

Phase 2, located on the northeast corner of the intersection is comprised of 769, 779, and 783 Brant Street and 2023, 2027, 2031-2033 Ghent Avenue, is 0.66 hectares in size. 779 and 783 Brant Street, and 2023 and 2027 Ghent Avenue are currently single detached dwellings; 2031- 2033 Ghent Avenue are a duplex; and the corner parcel, 769 Brant Street, is a ground level parking lot. This site is surrounded by commercial to the west, high-rise residential to the north, and low-rise residential to the east.

On the southeast corner of the intersection, Phase 3 includes 747 and 761 Brant Street. It is 0.38 hectares in size and is currently an institutional facility and low-rise apartment complex, predominantly surrounded by single detached residential to the east.

The remaining southwest corner of this intersection is not part of this application. It is a 17-storey residential mixed-use tower and podium.



Brant Street - view north towards Ghent Avenue



Brant Street - view south towards Ghent Avenue



Ghent Avenue - view east towards Brant Street



Ghent Avenue - view west towards Brant Street

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.2 Tall Buildings in Downtown Burlington

For the purposes of the Burlington Tall Buildings Guidelines, tall buildings are defined as being 11 storeys or greater in height.

Although the general scale of this portion of the Brant Street corridor is low-rise, high-rise residential does exist in this area as seen in the aerial image. As part of the Downtown Urban Growth Centre Boundary it is expected that this area will transition to higher density development in the coming years to accommodate population and employment growth.

Tall buildings in the Downtown Urban Growth Centre boundary fall into one of several categories:

- **'Tower-in-the-park' residential buildings:** Built between the 1960s and 80s, these buildings tend to have large footprints and are set back behind lawns or parking lots, with little relationship to the street. They often take on an elongated 'slab' form. Examples of these include Elizabeth Manor (477 Elizabeth Street), Wellington Place (478 Pearl Street) and Sandpiper (1431 Lakeshore Road).

- **'Tower-podium' mixed use buildings:** A more contemporary form, tower-podium buildings typically consist of a smaller floorplate residential tower atop a large retail or office base. The base, or podium, allows the tower to immediately address the street with an active frontage, while maintaining a lower street wall that is distinguished from the tower. The Burlington Tall Building Guidelines effectively require that new tall buildings take on this form. Aside from the current proposal, examples of these include Bunton's Wharf (1477 Lakeshore Road) and 360 on Pearl (360-390 Pearl Street). (Note that the latter two projects were built before the introduction of Tall Building Guidelines.

- **Hybridized forms:** Some buildings in Burlington have adopted a podium base, with a larger terraced or slab element on top. While preferable to the older tower-in-the-park form, these larger floor plate buildings are not promoted by the present Tall Building Guidelines. An example of this is Harbourview (415 Locust Street).



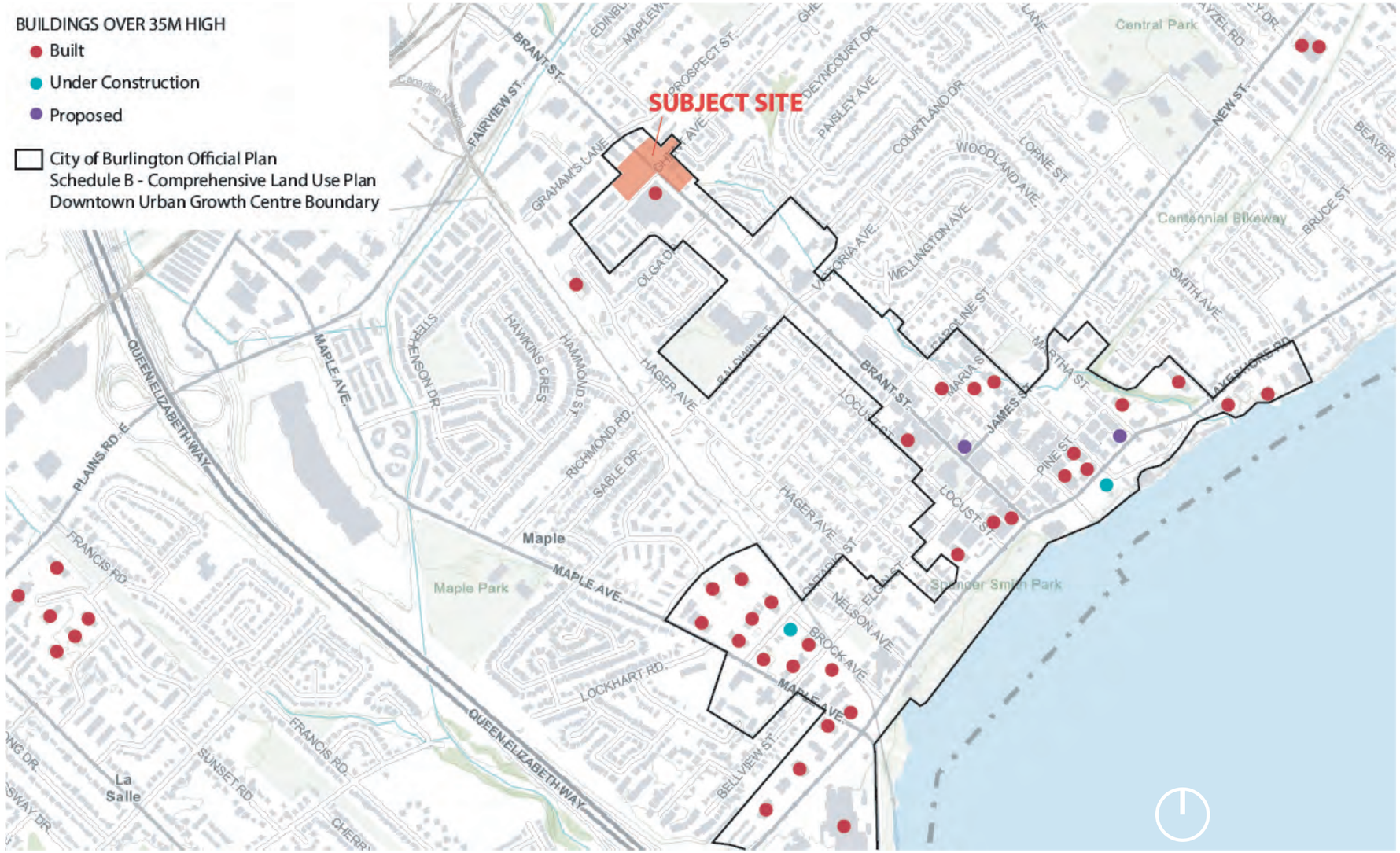
Elizabeth Manor and Wellington Place, existing tall buildings in the 'tower-in-the-park' style



360 on Pearl, existing tall building in the 'tower-podium' style



Harbourview, existing tall buildings in the 'hybridized' style



Location of High-Rise Buildings in Downtown Burlington

3.0 PROPOSAL

The proposed development is comprised of 3 Phases; one each on the east, north and west corners of the intersection at Brant Street and Ghent Avenue.

Phase 1, in the tower-podium style is a mixed-use podium with one 14 storey tower on the west side of the site and one 25 storey tower on the east side at the intersection. The first 3 storeys form a street-related podium element, with a step back occurring at the 4th floor that continues the podium between the two towers to the 10th floor. Both towers have floor plate areas of 750m^2 and are spaced 32.5m apart. Outdoor amenity space is provided above the 3rd and 10th floor podiums. Vehicular service access is from Ghent Avenue, and all parking is located below grade in three levels. Indoor visitor bike parking is also provided in this phase.

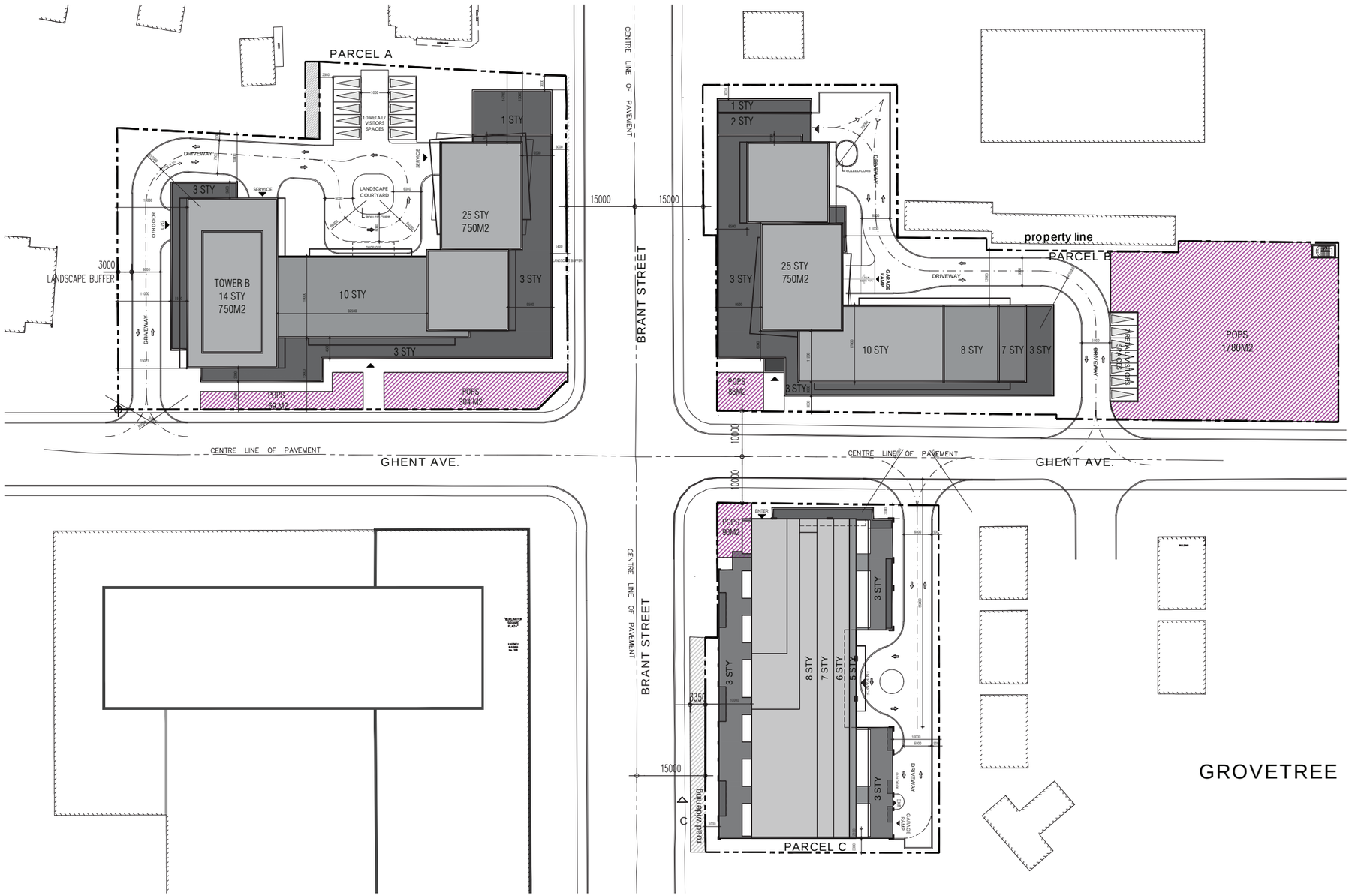
The building includes 794m^2 of retail space at grade with 31,183m^2 of condominium residential units and related spaces within the podium-towers. In total there are 425 units; 274 one bedroom, 129 two bedroom, and 21 three bedroom. The amenity spaces include 1470m^2 indoor and 2460m^2 outdoor, plus 473m^2 publicly accessible private outdoor park space.

Phase 2 has a similar mixed-use residential tower-podium form with a podium step back at the 4th floor and upper-level podium that continues to the 10th floor but tapers to the 8th and 7th floors at the east end of the building. The single 25-storey tower has a floorplate area of 750m^2, and outdoor amenity spaces are provided above the podium step backs, as well as at the ground level on the east end of the site in the form of a private outdoor park space. Vehicular access is from Ghent Avenue, with parking below grade in three levels, as well as 7 spaces at grade next to the park space.

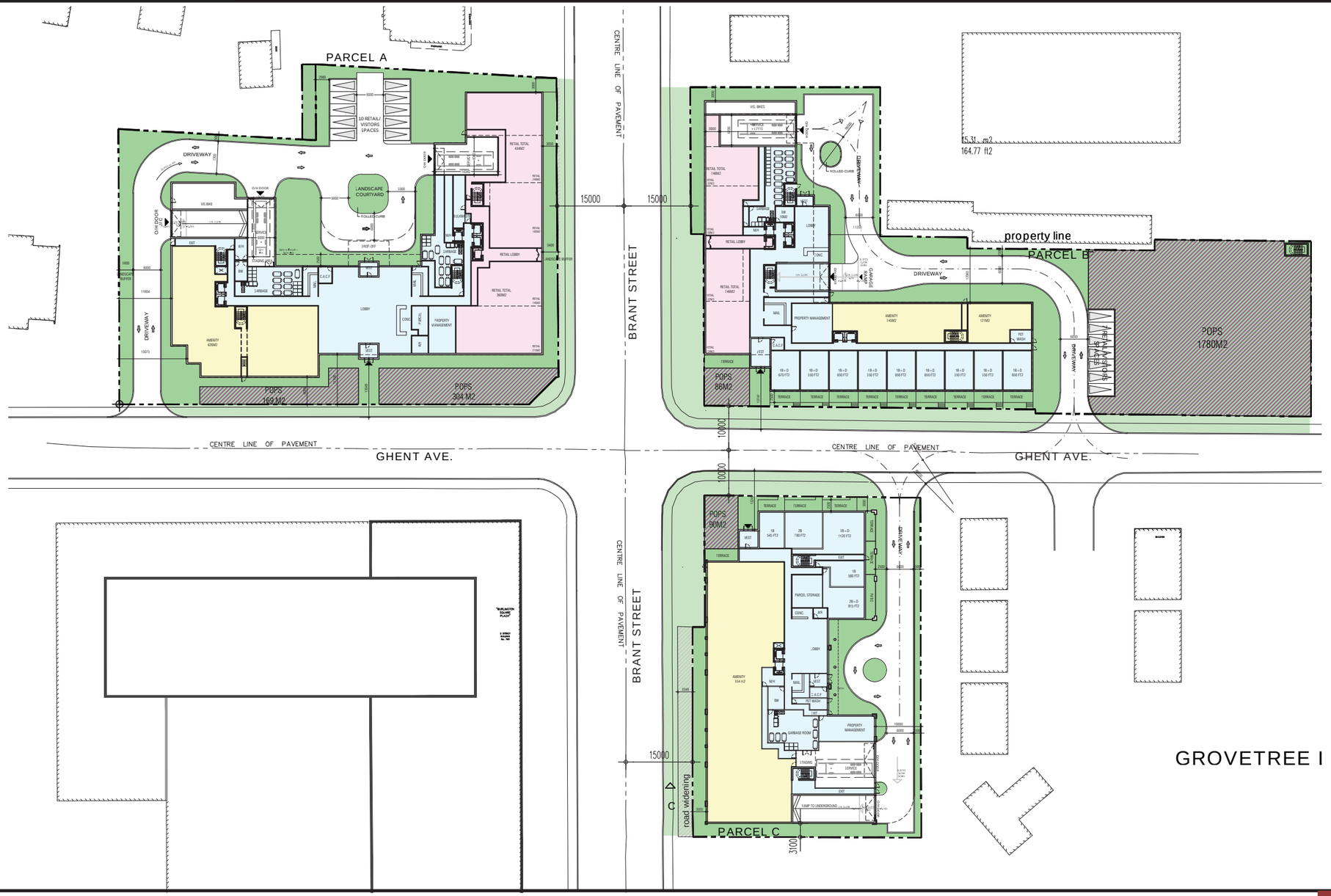
This Phase includes 492m^2 of retail space at grade and 24,173m^2 of condominium residential units at the ground level and above. There are 194 one bedroom units, 103 two bedroom units, and 31 three bedroom units equalling 328 units. The amenity spaces include 876m^2 indoor and 1570m^2 outdoor, plus 1870m^2 publicly accessible private outdoor park space.

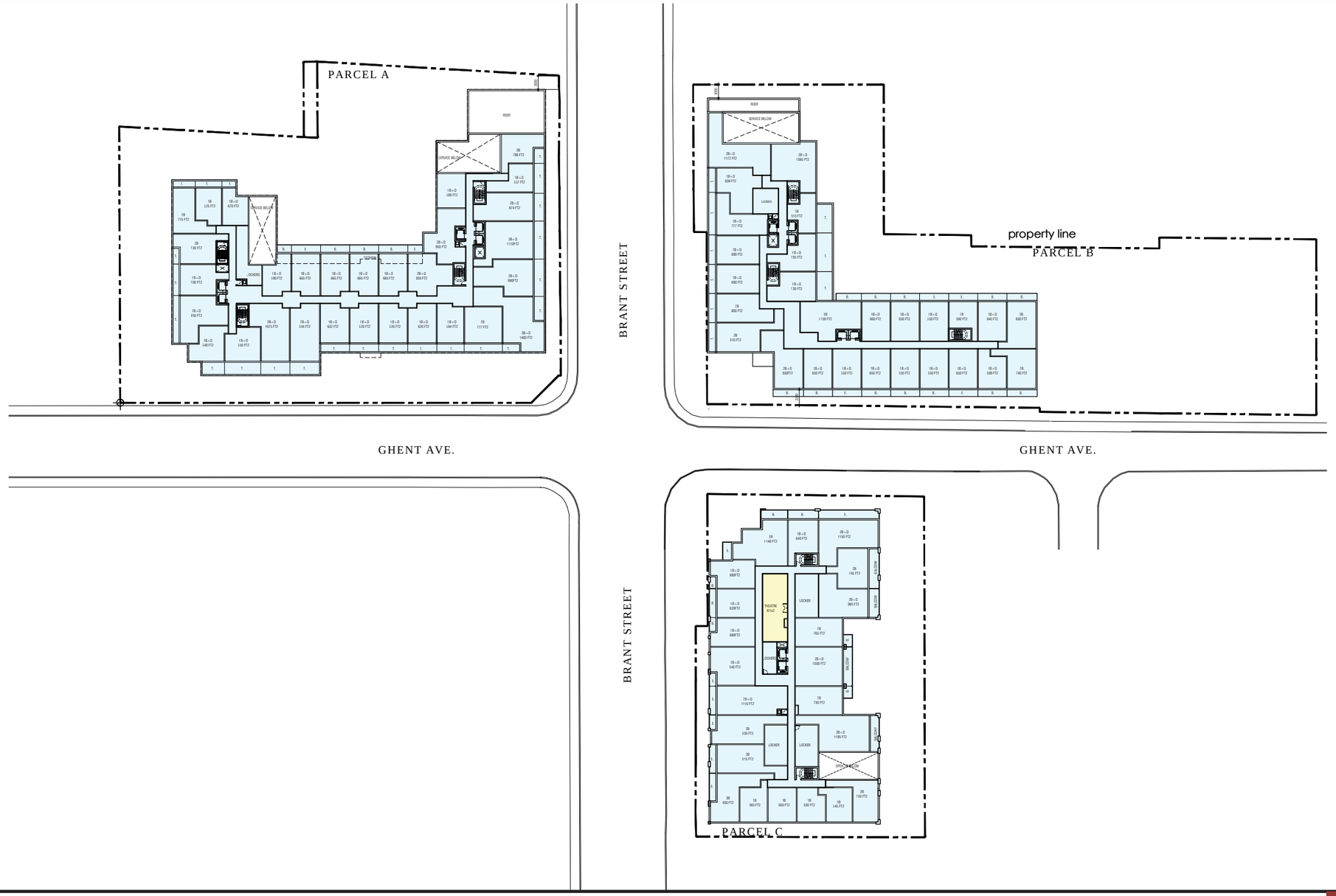
Phase 3 does not include a tower but reflects the podium style of the first two phases. The first 3 storeys form the same street-related podium element, with a step back occurring at the 4th floor but capping at 8 storeys. Vehicular access is from Ghent Avenue only and all parking is below grade in three levels. This building includes 11,061m^2 of ground floor and above condominium residential units. In total there are 128 units; 41 one bedroom, 71 two bedroom, and 16 three bedroom units. There is 1153m^2 of indoor amenity space and 1209 m^2 of outdoor amenity space, plus 90m^2 of publicly accessible private outdoor park space.

With this proposed development encompassing three of the four corners of the intersection, a large functionally integrated public space is created at the ground level. The street related podiums and distinctive towers having related massing and design elements establishes an important node and serves as a gateway to the Downtown Urban Growth Centre area.

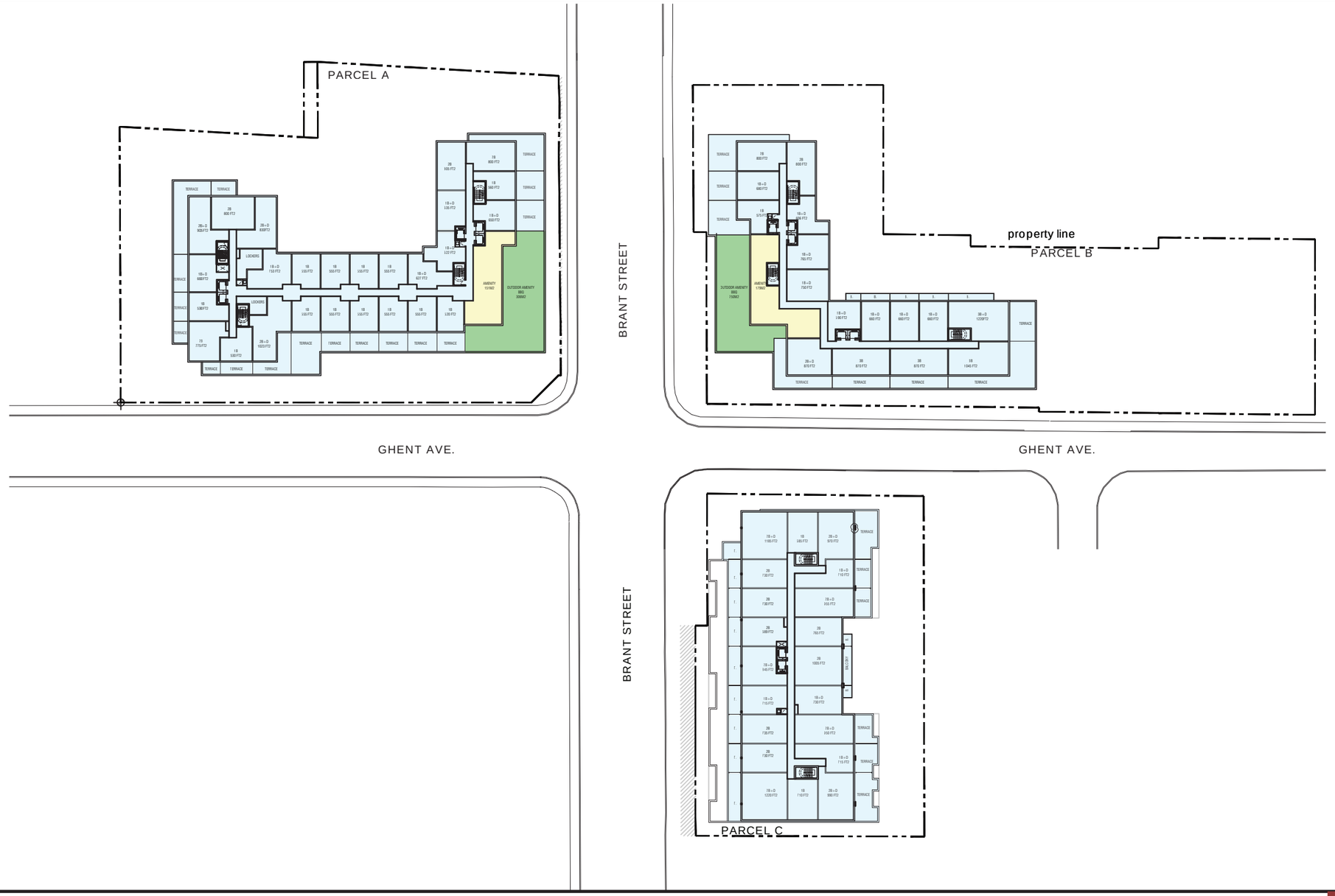

PARCEL A
PARCEL B
PARCEL C
property line
BRANT STREET
CENTRE LINE OF PAVEMENT
GHENT AVE.
CENTRE LINE OF PAVEMENT
GHENT AVE.
15000
15000
10000
10000
3000
LANDSCAPE BUFFER
10 RETAIL/ VISITORS SPACES
DRIVEWAY
SERVICE
LANDSCAPE COURTYARD
ROLLED CURB
1 STY
3 STY
TOWER B
14 STY
750M2
25 STY
750M2
10 STY
3 STY
3 STY
POPS
169M2
POPS
304M2
1 STY
2 STY
3 STY
25 STY
750M2
10 STY
8 STY
7 STY
3 STY
3 STY
POPS
88M2
POPS
1780M2
ENTER
POPS
90M2
3 STY
8 STY
7 STY
6 STY
5 STY
3 STY
3 STY
3350
15000
road widening
DRIVEWAY
GARAGE RAMP
PARCEL C
GROVETREE

Site Plan

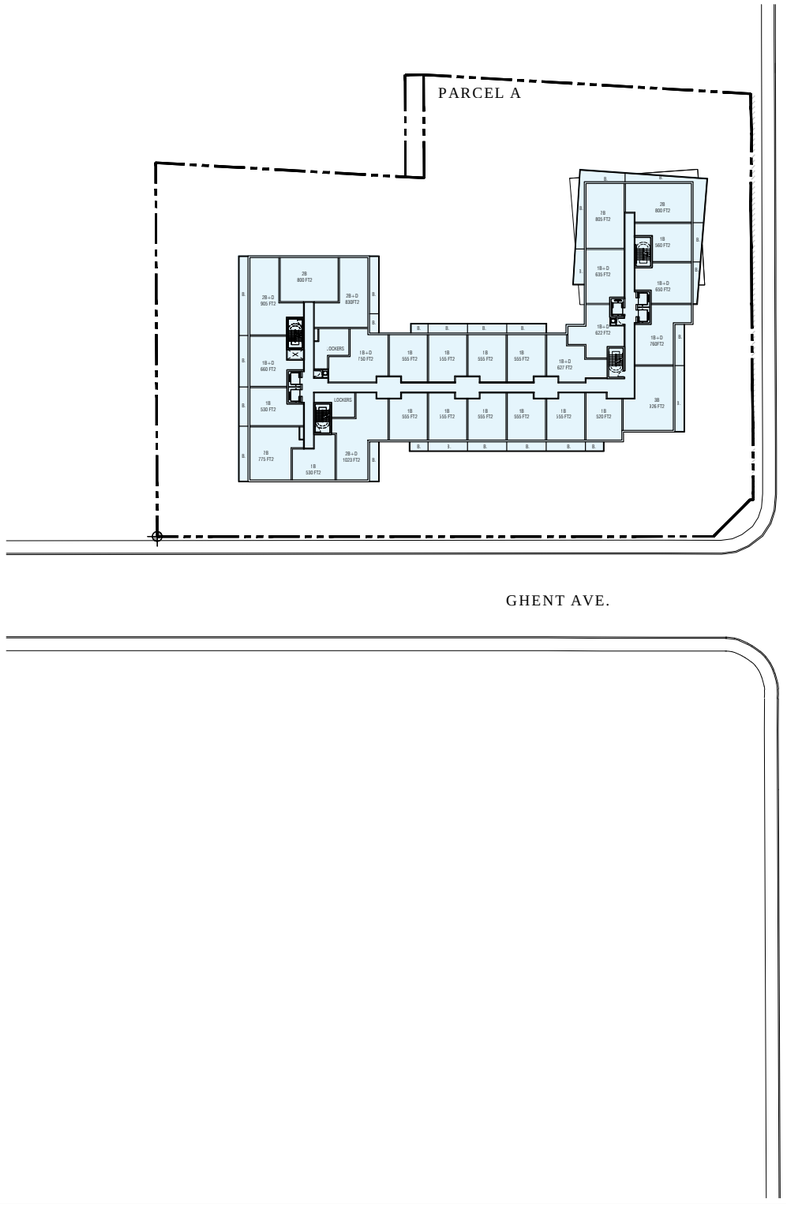

PARCEL A
10 RETAIL/ VISITORS SPACES
DRIVEWAY
LANDSCAPE COURTYARD
ROLLED CURB
RETAIL TOTAL 434M2
RETAIL TOTAL 360M2
RETAIL LOBBY
LOBBY
AMENITY 628M2
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
POPS 169 M2
POPS 304 M2
CENTRE LINE OF PAVEMENT
BRANT STREET
15000
15000
GHENT AVE.
property line
PARCEL B
15.31 m2
164.77 ft2
RETAIL TOTAL 748M2
RETAIL TOTAL 748M2
AMENITY 749M2
AMENITY 121M2
PET WASH
POPS 86M2
POPS 1780M2
10000
PARCEL C
POPS 90M2
road widening
3100
GROVETREE I
Ground Floor


PARCEL A
ROOF
SERVICE BELOW
ELEVATOR
property line
PARCEL B
BRANT STREET
GHENT AVE.
THEATRE 81m2
LOCKER
OFFICE BELOW
PARCEL C

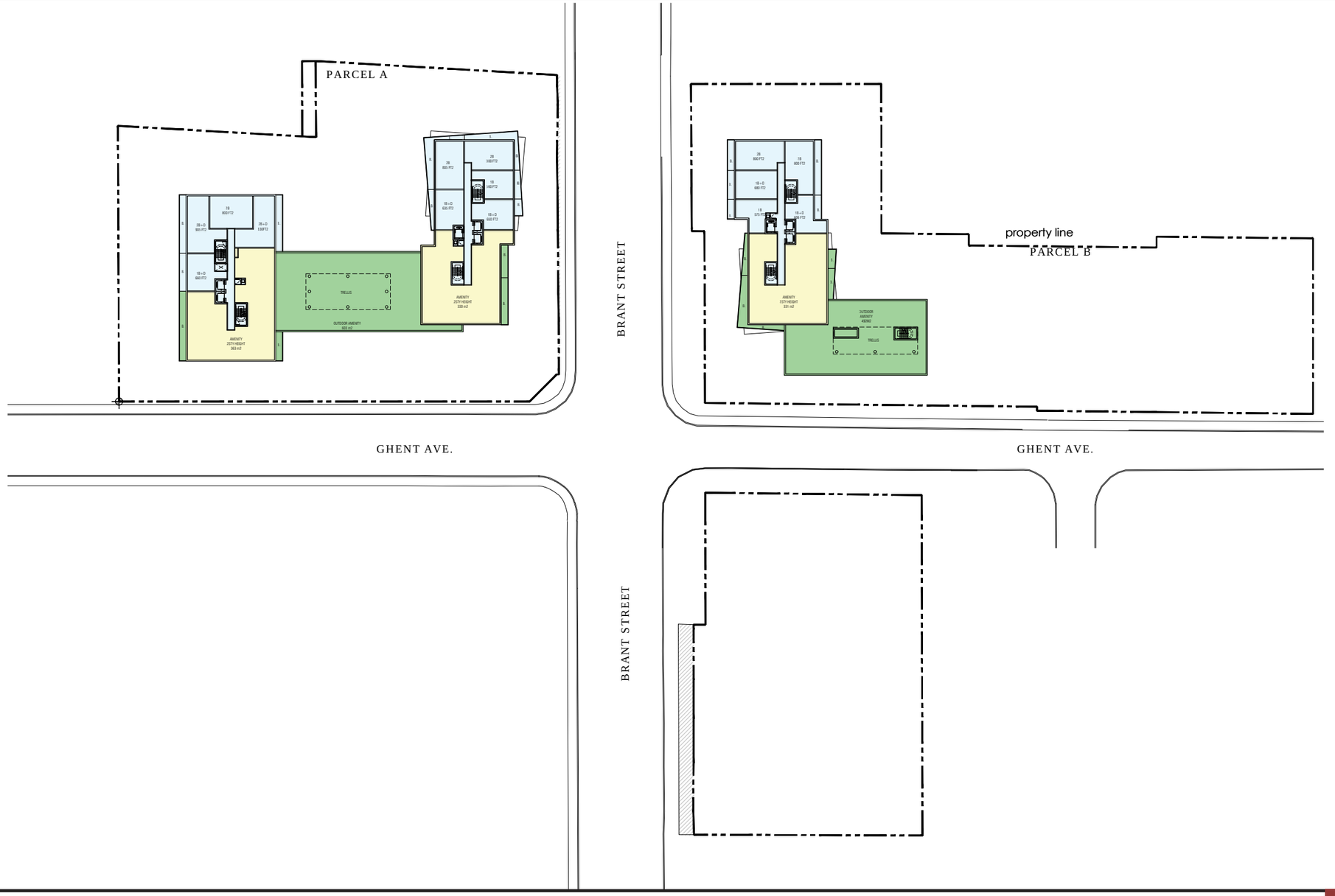
2nd Floor


PARCEL A
property line
PARCEL B
BRANT STREET
GHENT AVE.
PARCEL C

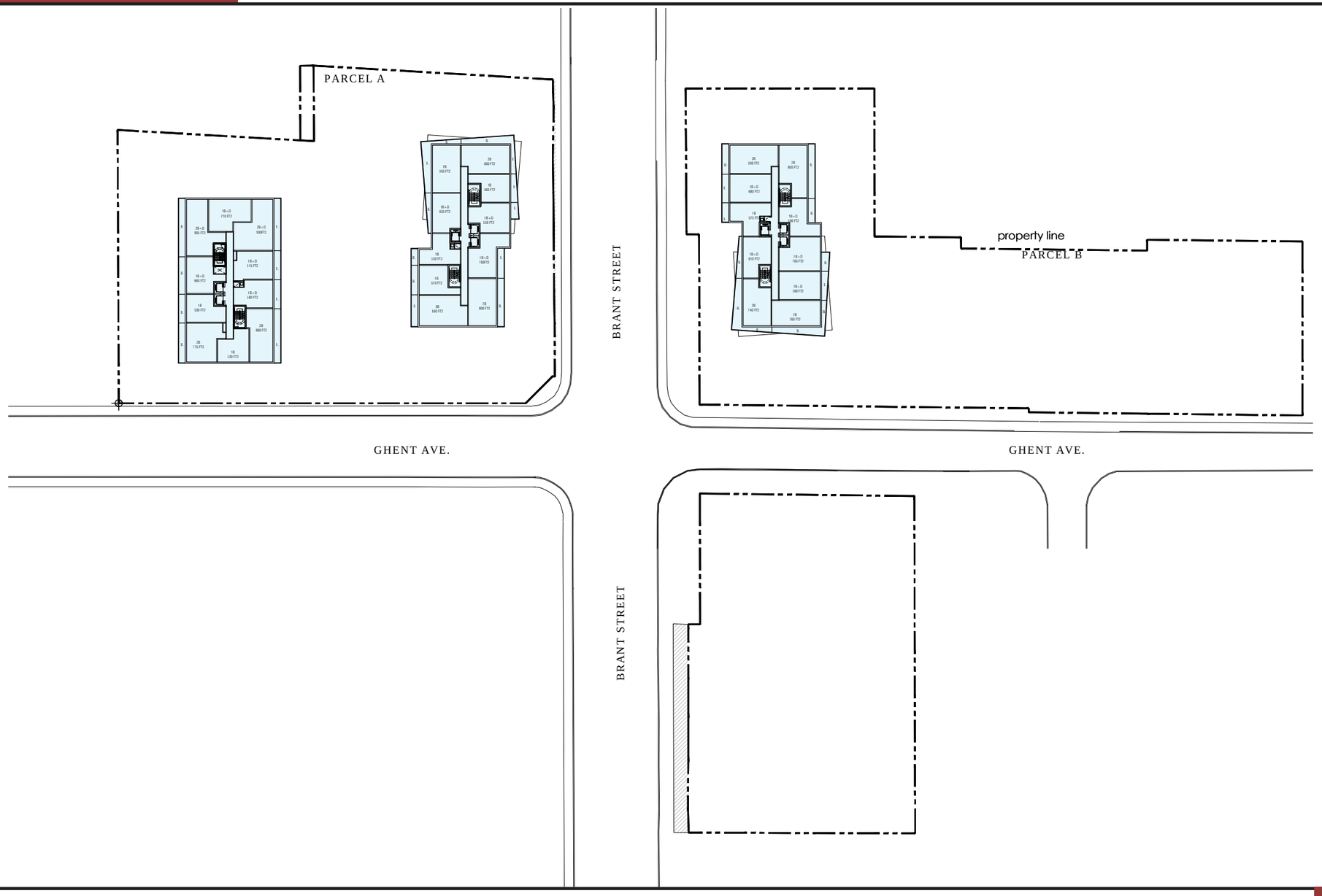
4th Floor


PARCEL A
GHENT AVE.
BRANT STREET
property line
PARCEL B
GHENT AVE.
BRANT STREET
MECH
AMENITY
112 M2
TERRACE
TRELLIS
PARCEL C

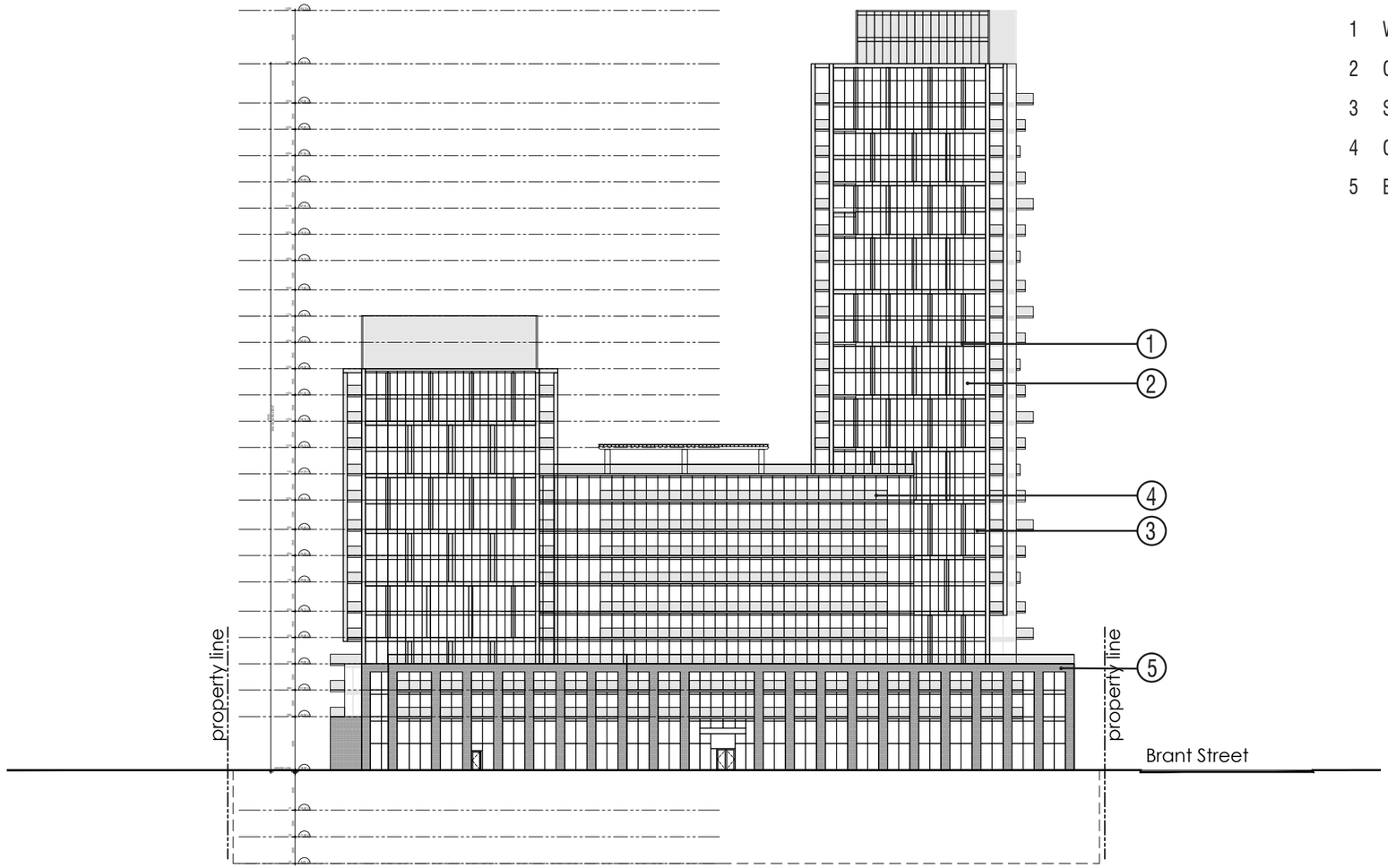
9th Floor


PARCEL A
BRANT STREET
property line
PARCEL B
GHENT AVE.
GHENT AVE.
BRANT STREET
TRELLIS
OUTDOOR AMENITY 603 m2
AMENITY 213TH HEIGHT 363 m2
AMENITY 213TH HEIGHT 330 m2
TRELLIS
AMENITY 213TH HEIGHT 331 m2
OUTDOOR AMENITY 492M2

11th Floor



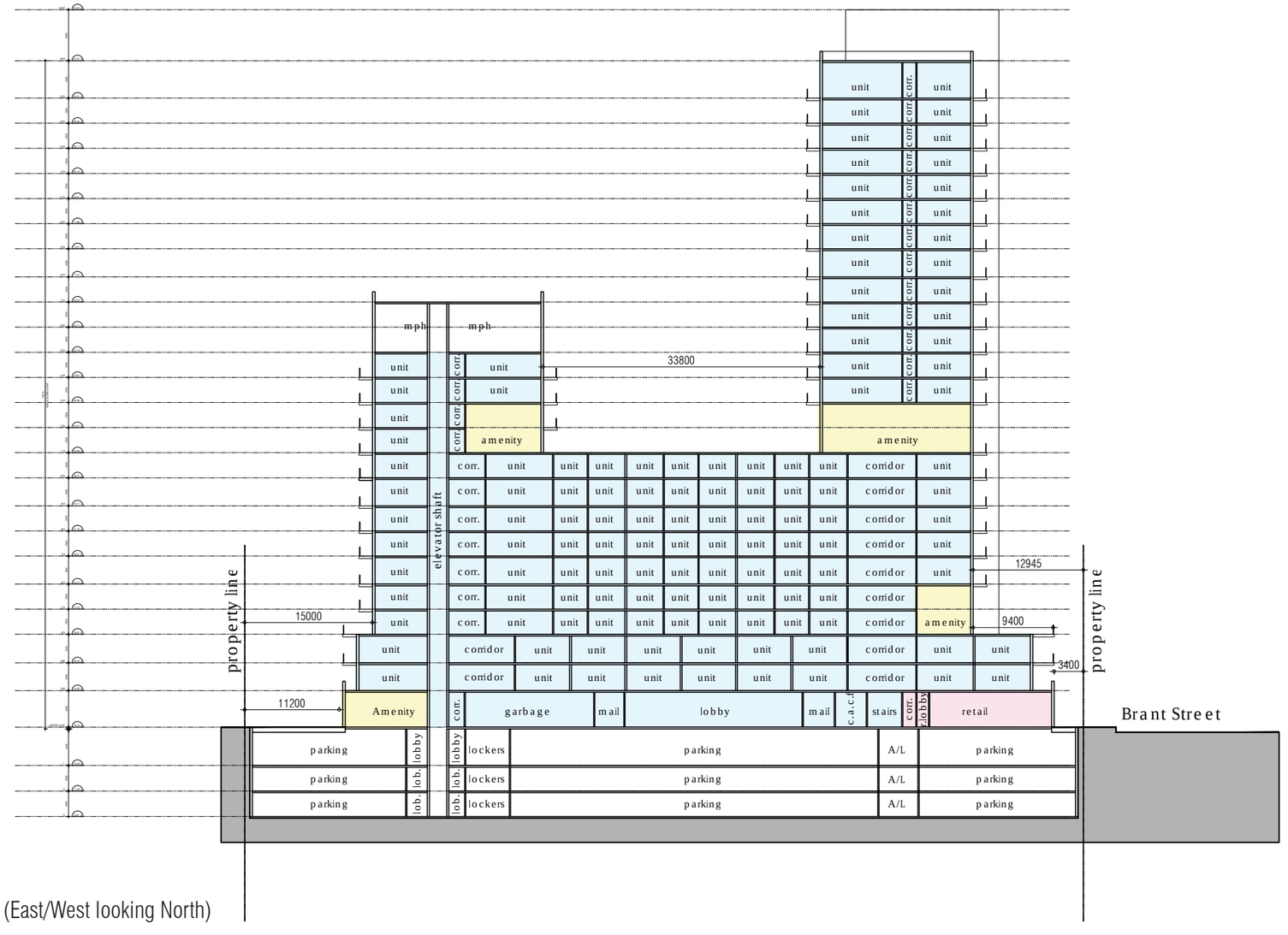
13-25th Floor



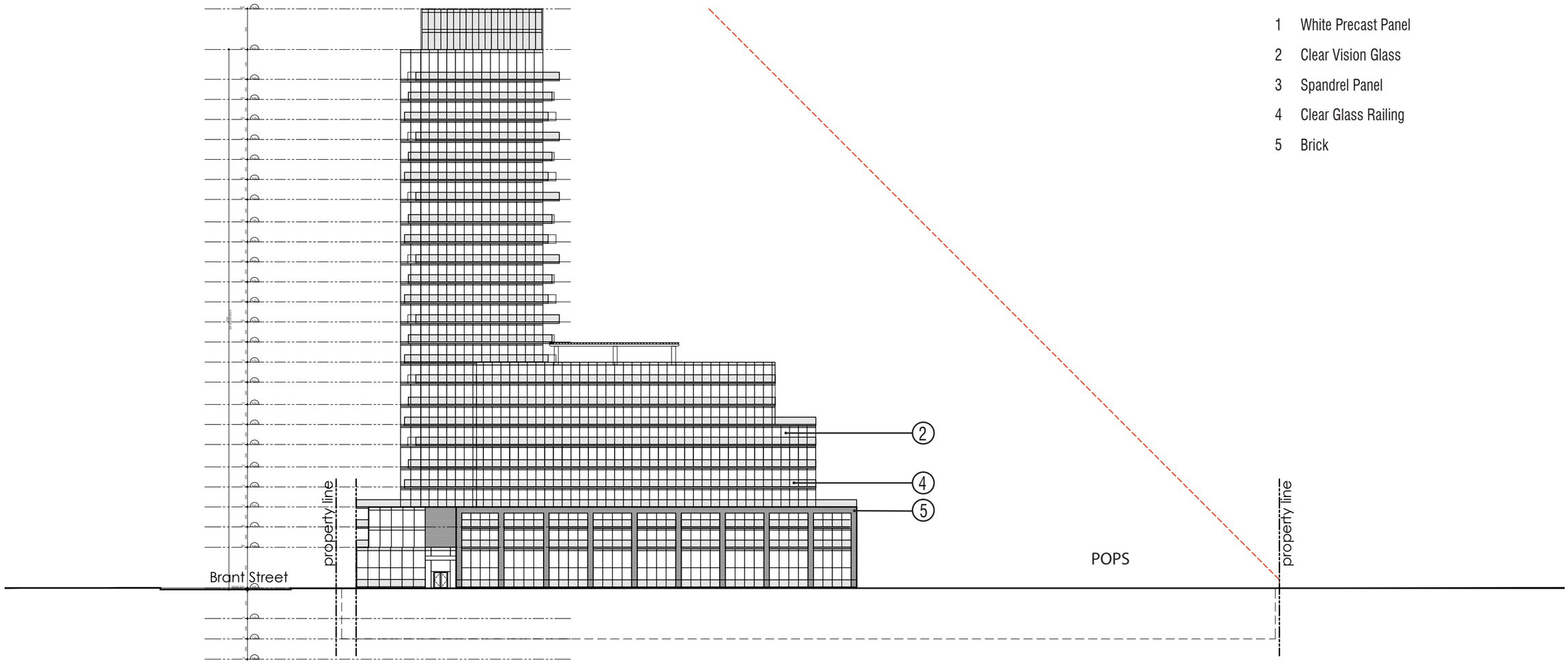
MATERIAL LEGEND

1 White Precast Panel
2 Clear Vision Glass
3 Spandrel Panel
4 Clear Glass Railing
5 Brick

Phase 1 - South Elevation



Phase 1 - Section (East/West looking North)



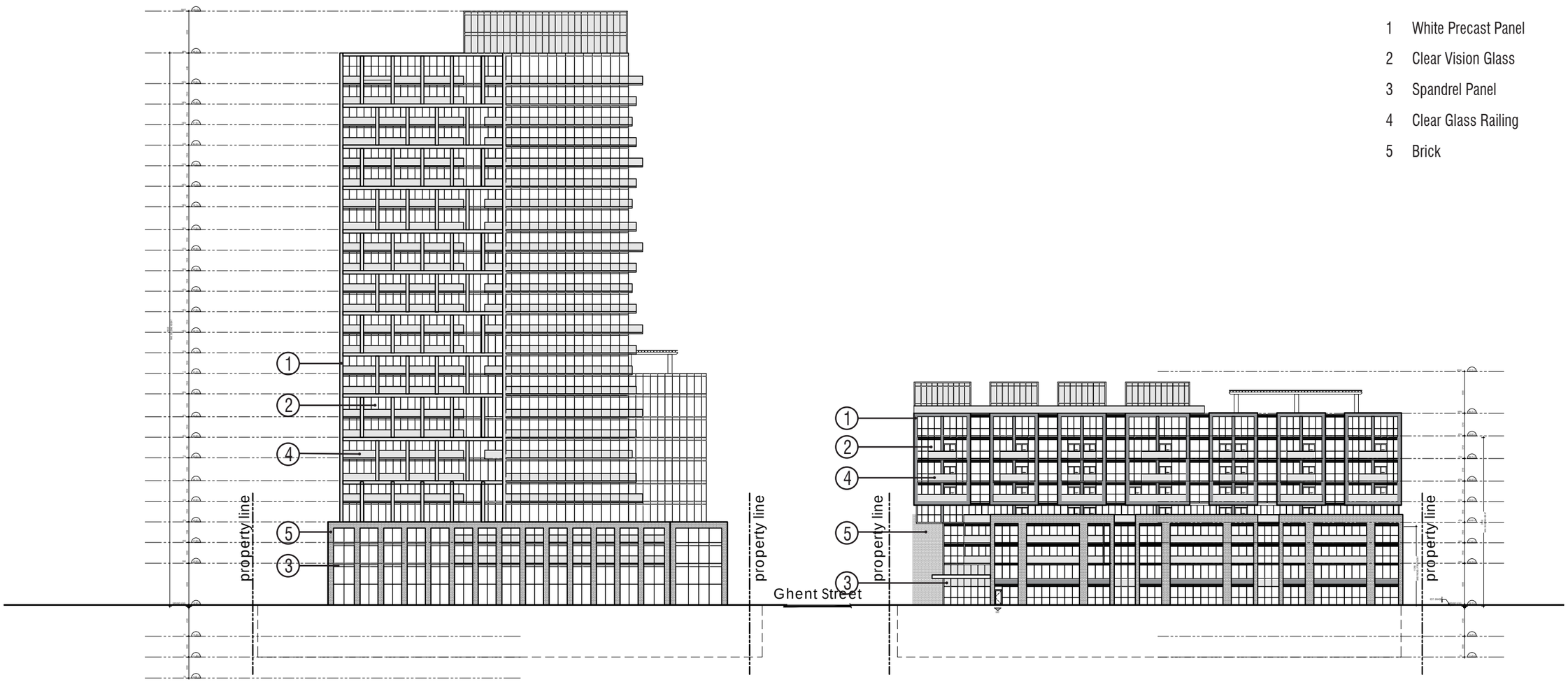
MATERIAL LEGEND

1 White Precast Panel
2 Clear Vision Glass
3 Spandrel Panel
4 Clear Glass Railing
5 Brick

Phase 2 - South Elevation



Phase 2 and 3 - Section (South/North looking West)



MATERIAL LEGEND

1 White Precast Panel
2 Clear Vision Glass
3 Spandrel Panel
4 Clear Glass Railing
5 Brick

Phase 2&3 - West Elevation

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 Architectural Expression

The intersection of Brant Street and Ghent Avenue is seen as a gateway into the downtown core from the north. The proposed sites will complete the intersection with a built form that respects existing character through scale and materiality of the present form along Brant Street. The defined 3 storey podium across the three developments utilizes materials such as precast accents to anchor and unify the sites at the ground level and visually connect them to the surrounding neighbourhood. These podiums also continue the scale of existing structures along Brant Street. The towers on either side of Brant reverse their form to enhance the framing of the intersection and emphasize the gateway. The rectilinear framing paired with the rotating balconies make the towers easily identifiable when approaching from any direction and the form is clearly expressed both entering and leaving the downtown. As the two 25 storey towers create the central focal point, the 14 storey tower of Phase 1 tapers to relate in height to the adjacent property high-rise, as does the podium of Phase 2 scales down at the 8th and 7th floors to contextually fit with the surrounding area. South of Ghent Avenue, the 8 storey midrise structure is an appropriate scale, which terraces down to 3 storeys towards the existing built form.

Collectively, the proposed developments will define the intersection of Brant Street and Ghent Avenue. The architecture utilizes the sculpted form to reinforce this intersection as an entry into Burlington's downtown area.



Rendering of phase 1&2 - view North on Brant Street



Rendering of proposed building on Brant Street - view south towards Ghent Avenue (Phase 1 & 2)



Rendering of proposed building on Brant Street - view east towards Brant Street (Phase 3)



Rendering of proposed building on Ghent Avenue - view west towards Brant Street (Phase 3 & 2)



Rendering of proposed building on Ghent Avenue - view west towards Brant Street (Phase 3, 1 & 2)

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.2 Streetscape, Connectivity and Urban Design

The streetscape of each phase of the proposal will be designed in accordance with the City of Burlington Downtown Streetscape Guidelines, which will significantly enhance the public realm along both Brant Street and Ghent Avenue. Setbacks from the property line along both streets will provide ample space to implement delineated boulevard zones outlined within the Guidelines:

1. The Marketing Zone
2. The Clear Path Zone
3. The Furnishing Zone
4. The Edge Zone

The proposed design will employ all four zones along Brant Street, and the first three zones on Ghent Avenue. As an extension or spill-out area of the adjacent building, the Marketing Zone on both streets will exceed the recommended 2m minimum width. On Brant Street this zone will be allocated to the retailers to customize as they see fit, and on Ghent Avenue to ground floor private residential terraces with raised planters and divider walls. On both streets a generous sized Clear Path Zone is proposed to provide an unobstructed and accessible path-of-travel dedicated to pedestrians. This zone ensures a safe and comfortable walking experience and is set to be a minimum of 1.8m wide. Although the guidelines apply strictly to Brant Street, they are carried out along Ghent, in a slightly modified way so that the proposed streetscape design blends into the immediate neighbourhood. Likewise, the Furnishing Zone will exceed the 1.2m recommended minimum width on both streets and will provide trees, utilities and furnishing such as bike racks, lighting, waste receptacles, and the bus shelter located adjacent to Phase 3 on Brant Street. The Edge Zone on Brant Street will provide a 0.7m buffer area between the faster moving car and bike lanes and the slower moving pedestrian streetscape.

All aspects of the streetscape are designed to be accessible to persons living with disabilities and comply with the City of Burlington Design Standards, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act [AODA] and its regulations, and the Design of Public Spaces Standards. Driveway access points are minimized, and where they cross the pedestrian Clear Path Zone, sidewalks will be continuous and level through the conflict zone.

The design intent is to provide attractive, functional, safe, and accessible streets and open spaces that draw people together. It will create a setting for daily interactions, events and activities that are part of a unique experience for all community members. The implementation of urban design components such as feature paving, streetscape furnishings and public art will help create a lively, safe, and socially active place. Altogether, the high standard of design proposed in this development will greatly enhance the sense of community surrounding this prominent intersection.

4.0 COMPATIBILITY

The proposed development in terms of massing and articulation has been designed to be compatible with its existing and planned urban context. Although the proposed form and magnitude represent a greater level of intensification than permitted as-of-right, it must be recognised that the shape and form of redevelopment is not static and evolves due to market forces, architectural trends and the policy framework implemented by the municipality. The Tall Buildings Guidelines represent the general position and framework established by the City of Burlington to shape redevelopment in tower form.

The proposed urban context is comprised of the scale and character of the public realm at grade, the scale of the podium element and how it addresses the street; the size and height of the tower and its visual effect within the skyline and the micro-climatic impacts that it has on adjacent sites and the public realm of the larger area.

4.1 Podium

Existing buildings along Brant Street and Ghent Avenue have street wall heights that vary from 2 or 3 storeys to 10 storeys. The proposed podium is massed and scaled at 3 storeys for all phases to reinforce and enhance the street-related character along both Brant Street and Ghent Avenue. A benefit of this development encompassing three of the four corners of this intersection is that the podiums create at grade a large and cohesive public space with a properly scaled interface to the existing sidewalks and street frontages.

In addition to residential lobby and amenity for the condominium units, the development will include commercial uses at grade fronting the public streets. Service-related functions and access to below grade parking are organized behind each development away from the public realm. In addition to its scale, the variety of materials and articulation incorporated in the façade of the podium breaks up its mass and creates a fine-grained rhythm compatible with the surrounding buildings. The brick and precast elements create a harmonizing transparency of the glass that envelops the lobbies, retail and amenity spaces. Each elemental form in contemporary linear composition expresses a fresh approach to enhance the streetscape.

4.2 Tower

Skylines develop over time and will always be comprised of a range of building heights and forms, which create a unique character of place. There will always be a tallest building in the skyline, even if that distinction changes over the years as the skyline evolves.

At 25 storeys the proposed development, at least for a period of time, will be the tallest in the area. It is taller than the tower on the south side of the intersection by 8 storeys, which is taller than the next tallest building in the area by 7 storeys. In our opinion, this is an appropriate distinction.

The fact that it has a relatively small floorplate and substantial separation of more than 25m to other existing buildings means that it accentuates the sky view and does not block it, like many of the other existing lower but bulkier slab buildings within the area. Accordingly, its proposed design is visually attractive and fits well within this evolving area of the City. The proposed tower façade is contextual in treatment. Taking cues from the surrounding buildings, the precast elements and rotating glass balconies are organized in a timeless language that speaks to its neighbours.

The incremental micro-climatic impact of the building height on its environment will be investigated in subsequent technical shadow and wind studies.

5.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Burlington Official Plan

The Burlington Official Plan (Consolidated December 2019) makes several broad references to urban design throughout Part III Section 5.3 which addresses Mixed Use Corridors. It expresses a desire to intensify, especially within the vicinity of a major transit station area such as a GO Transit station, and encourage pedestrian-oriented mixed use development. However, it also imposes several restrictions on built form that will require the current application to seek an Official Plan Amendment. These include:

- **5.3.2d)(i):** This limits the density to 1.5 FSI. The proposed Phase 1 has a density of 4.8FSI, Phase 2 a density of 3.7 FSI and Phase 3 a proposed density of 2.9 FSI.
- **5.3.2d)(ii):** This limits the building height to a maximum of 6 storeys. The proposal is for 14 and 25 storeys in Phase 1, 25 storeys in Phase 2, and 8 storeys in Phase 3.

From an urban design perspective, it is our assessment that the height and density limits within Section 5.3.2 do not reflect the existing condition nor necessarily enhance the emerging pattern of building type or height within the Mixed Use Corridors designation. However, as the basis for triggering an urban design review and public approval process of the proposal, we believe that this restriction and threshold has merit.

5.2 Tall Building Guidelines

The Burlington Tall Building Guidelines were adopted by Council in 2017. It does not provide mapping to indicate where tall buildings would be appropriate, but states that the guidelines are applicable across the City where permitted by the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, and should be considered on a site-by-site basis where the intent of guidelines can be met. It provides detailed guidance to a proposed building's podium and tower massing, location, step backs, and materials.

The proposal complies with the guidelines as follows:

Podium Location: The podium is located to frame and create animated street frontage on both Brant Street and Ghent Avenue. At 19m and 9m, on Brant Street and Ghent Avenue respectively, the boulevard widths will exceed the recommended 6m minimum.

Podium Height and Massing: Although the existing street walls on Brant Street and Ghent Avenue vary in height, the 3 storey podium of the proposal reflects the general scale. The guidelines suggest a minimum podium height of 10.5m and maximum podium height of 80% of the adjacent right-of-way width. Ghent Avenue is the smaller of the two rights-of-way at 20m, setting the maximum podium to be no more than 16m. At 10.9m the proposal fits within these guidelines.

Shadows/ sky view: A shadow study shall be conducted to determine that the design and placement of the towers have minimal shadow impact on the surrounding streetscape.

Podium Design and Articulation: The majority of the podium cladding will be 'light', with substantial glazing to provide connectivity between the retail, lobby and indoor amenities, and the street. This is framed by 'heavy' precast elements to anchor the building. The retail entrances front onto Brant Street, and the residential lobbies are highlighted at each of the three corners of the Brant Street and Ghent Avenue intersection. Only inset balconies are provided within the podium. The roof areas of the podium

5.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

not occupied by the towers make use of the elevated platform for outdoor amenity spaces.

Site Design, Open Space and Streetscaping: All parking is located below grade, except for 7 spaces at grade on Phase 2 next to the park space, and 10 spaces on Phase 1. Access to parking, servicing, and loading are at the rear of each site. Publicly accessible open space is situated in Phase 2 and provides a mid-block pedestrian connection through the site. All three sites provide ample publicly accessible privately owned open spaces to enhance the streetscape of the intersection and encourage public use.

Tower Location: A minimum separation distance of 30m has been provided between all three of the proposed towers, as well as between the towers in Phase 1 and the existing tower on the opposite side of Ghent Avenue. The towers are each setback at least 3m from the edge of the 3-storey podium and create outdoor amenity space above the 3rd and 10th storeys. Tower setbacks from adjacent properties of both sites exceeds the 12.5m minimum.

Tower Height and Massing: All proposed towers are slender and do not exceed the 750m^2 maximum floorplate. A wind study will be conducted to ensure that the massing of the towers and their relationship to the podiums will not result in adverse wind effects at street level.

Tower Design and Articulation: The towers will be primarily composed of glazing to minimize perceived mass with precast frames to articulate the unique character of each tower. Rotated extruding balconies create a wave effect and bring visual interest to the intersection.

Rooftop Design and Articulation: The rooftop design serves to further emphasize the sleek profile unique tower form. A stepback of the top floors serves to distinguish the top of the building from the towers and reduce the building profiles.

Mechanical Penthouse: As recommended by the guidelines, the mechanical penthouse of each tower is incorporated into the rooftop design and screened from views from other buildings and the public realm.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In our opinion the form, scale, and character of the proposal represents excellent urban design. The built form is compatible with the existing adjacent tower on the south corner of the intersection, other residential buildings in the surrounding area, and will not have an adverse impact on the community. The mixed-use proposal of residential combined with retail offers an additional vitality and complementary activity to this neighbourhood.

The podiums' low-rise frontage creates a high quality and contemporary façade on Brant Street and Ghent Avenue. The towers are well set back from the podium edge, allowing for ample outdoor amenity space and private terraces. The cohesiveness of the proposal encompassing three quarters of the intersection establishes a clearly distinguishable place creating a neighbourhood node as well as a gateway to the city's downtown area.

Shadow and wind studies will be conducted to ensure minimal affects.

The proposal conforms to the Burlington Tall Buildings Guidelines and is reflective of the broad aims of the Official Plan urban design policies.

Although the proposed development requires Official Plan and Zoning amendments for its height and density, we believe that such approvals are warranted from an urban design perspective and that what is proposed will be a positive addition to Burlington.