MAY
2021

URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

1134 and 1167 PLAINS ROAD EAST
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 two 22 and 30 storey residential towers and podium at 1134 Plains Road East, and two 30 and 35 storey residential towers and podium at 1167 Plains Road East in Burlington.

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


PHASE 1
PHASE 2
MAPLE AVENUE
PLAINS ROAD EAST
QUEEN ELIZABETH WAY
FAIRVIEW STREET

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 Site and Immediate Context

Phases 1 and 2 of the application, at 1167 and 1134 Plains Road East respectively, are each 0.8 hectares in size. Both Phases front onto Plains Road East, and Phase 2 has side yard frontage on Fairview Street. The sites are within the Burlington Official Plan's Mixed Use Corridor – Employment designation, with a portion of Phase 2 in Mixed Use Corridor – Commercial Corridor.

Phase 1 is vacant land and Phase 2 is currently occupied by a low-rise commercial building that has been annexed onto the former Davis Homestead.

Both sites abut the Queen Elizabeth Way to the west. To the north, Phase 1 neighbours the CN rail line and a commercial storage lot. The parcel immediately across Plains Road East is currently vacant. Beyond this, the immediate vicinity is predominantly commercial uses.

The existing buildings along Plains Road East and Fairview Street are one or two storeys and are situated far back from the street, thus have little to no impact on the public realm or their adjacent sites. In combination with the stark presence of the QEW, this area has become void of community character with the exception of the heritage structure currently located on the site. Though this creates a challenge in creating a compatible neighbourhood design, it also presents great potential in setting a precedent for community character in this area.



Subject Site, as seen from Plains Road East looking south



QEW offramp at Fairview Street and Plains Road East, view towards north



Fairview Street at Plains Road East, view towards west



QEW onramp over Fairview Street, view towards north

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.2 Davis Homestead Heritage Preservation

Situated in the centre of the Phase 2 site is the former Davis Homestead, a 2.5 storey red brick Victorian Vernacular structure built in 1883 by the grandson of British Loyalists who settled in this area. The City of Burlington maintains a Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Resources of properties that are designated under the Heritage Act and an additional list of properties that are considered to have heritage value but have not been designated. The Davis Homestead is listed on the register under Section 2 as non-designated.

As an important cultural resource to Burlington, the approach of the proposed development is to keep the building as a stand-alone structure and relocate it to the more prominent corner location of Plains Road East and Fairview Street. This provides the opportunity for it to be used as an identifiable piece of the development, with the possibility of it having a public use and a greater appreciation by more people.

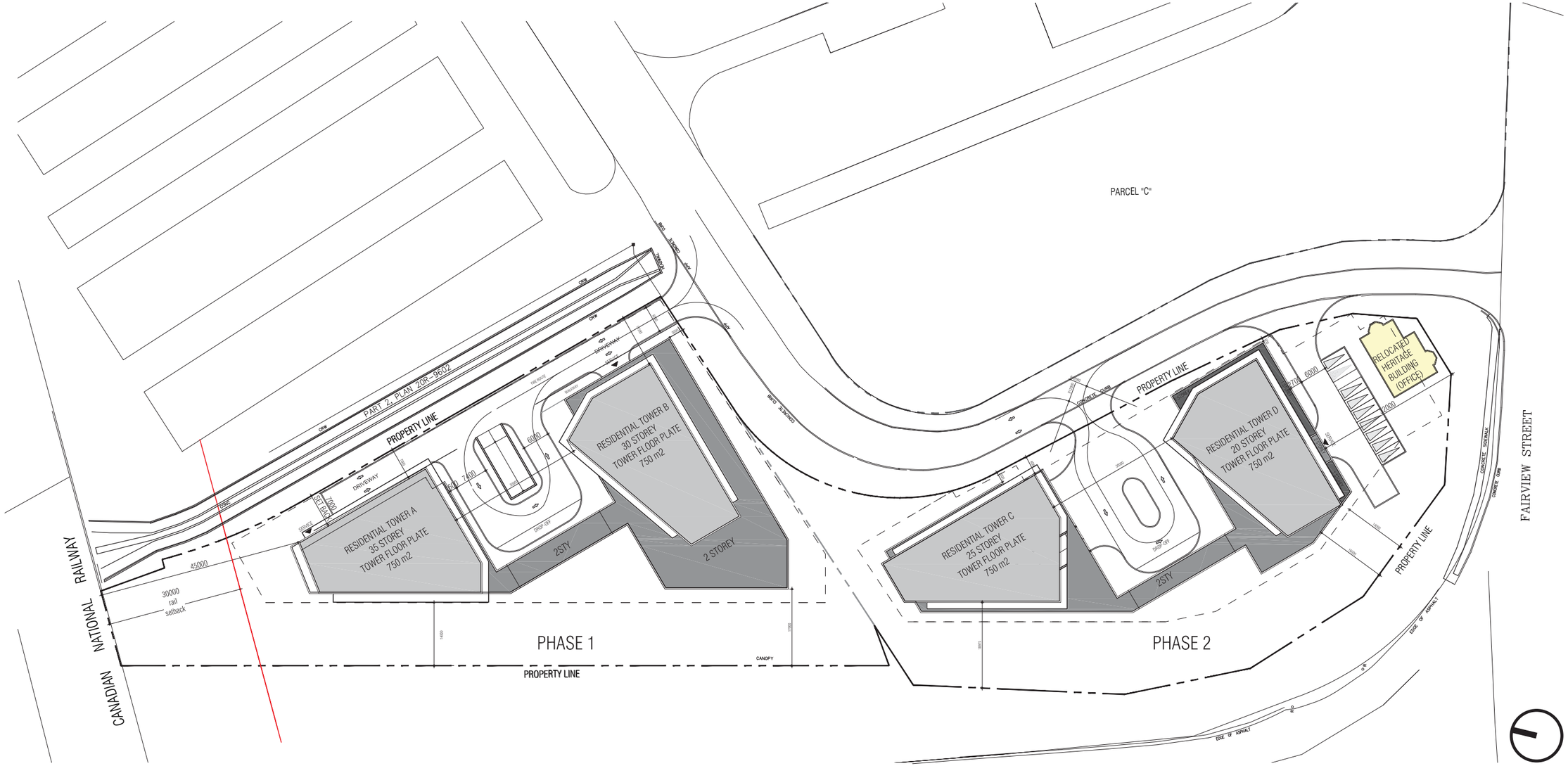


3.0 PROPOSAL

The proposed developments each comprise of residential double towers and podium design. In both Phases, the first 2 storeys form a street related podium element, with a step back occurring at the 3rd floor forming the floorplates for the 750m^2 towers. Retail is located on the ground floor of each Phase. Amenity space is provided inside on the ground, 2nd and 3rd floors and outside above the 2-storey podium. Vehicular access is from Plains Road East, and parking is located six and five levels below grade. An additional 9 parking spaces are provided outside at ground level next to the relocated heritage structure.

Phase 1's towers are 30 and 35 storeys high and are spaced 30m apart. It has 41,834m^2 of condominium residential units, including 347 one bedroom and 213 two bedroom, and 27 three bedroom, totalling 587 units. It has 791m^2 of retail space, 2577m^2 of indoor amenity space, and 2879m^2 of outdoor amenity space located at the ground level and on the 3rd floor.

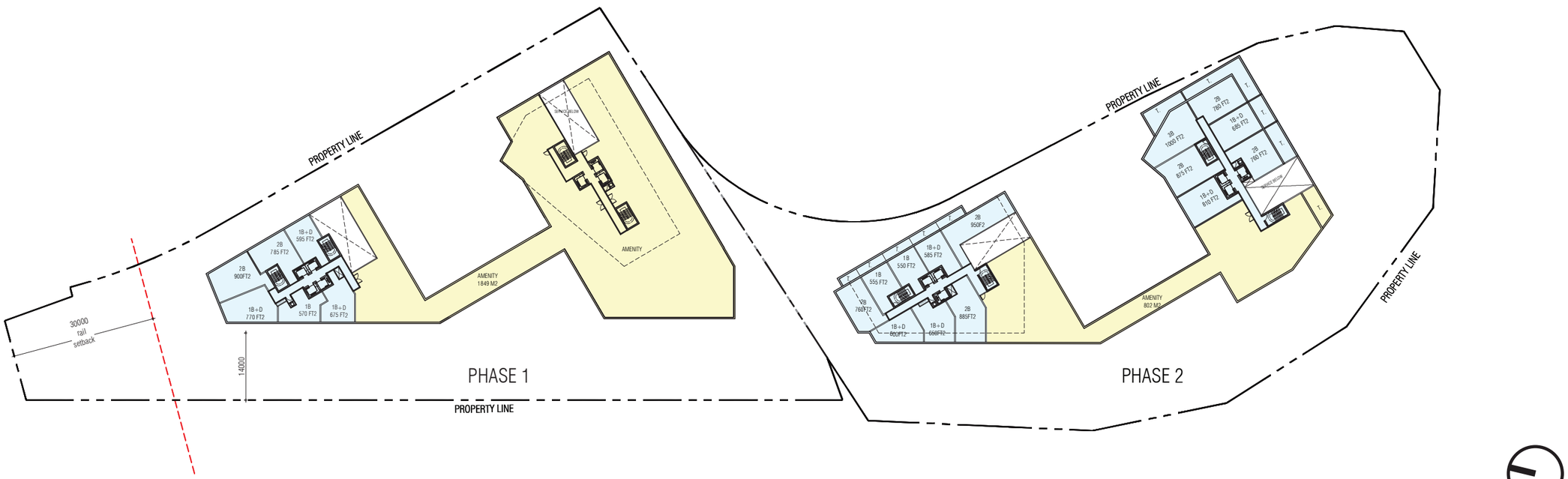
In Phase 2, the towers are 22 and 30 storeys in height and also spaced 30m apart. It has 34,559m^2 of condominium residential units, including 219 one bedroom, 187 two bedroom, and 56 three bedroom, totaling 462 units. It has 207m^2 of retail space, 2039m^2 of indoor amenity space, and 2071m^2 of outdoor amenity space located at the ground level and on the 3rd floor.


PARCEL "C"
PART 2, PLAN 20R-9602
PROPERTY LINE
RESIDENTIAL TOWER A
35 STOREY
TOWER FLOOR PLATE
750 m2
RESIDENTIAL TOWER B
30 STOREY
TOWER FLOOR PLATE
750 m2
RESIDENTIAL TOWER C
25 STOREY
TOWER FLOOR PLATE
750 m2
RESIDENTIAL TOWER D
20 STOREY
TOWER FLOOR PLATE
750 m2
1
RELOCATED
HERITAGE
BUILDING
(OFFICE)
DRIVEWAY
DROP-OFF
2STY
2 STOREY
PHASE 1
PHASE 2
CANOPY
PROPERTY LINE
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAY
FAIRVIEW STREEET
45000
30000
rail
setback
6000
7400
CONCRETE SIDEWALK
CURB
EDGE OF ASPHALT

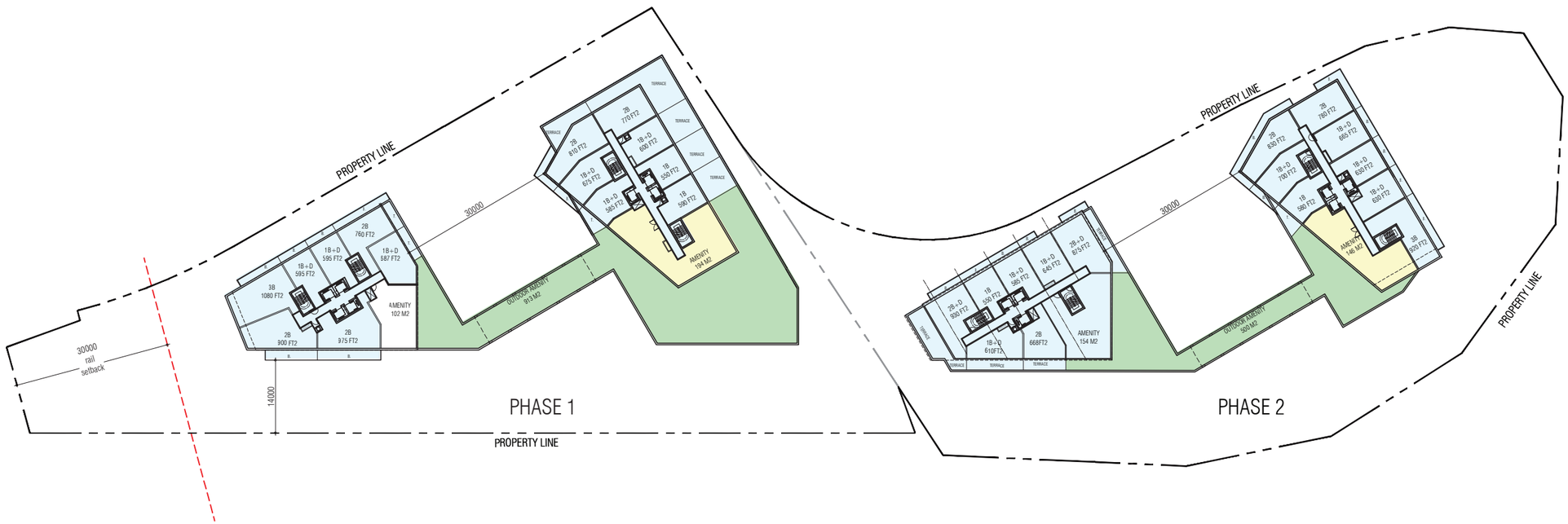
Site Plan



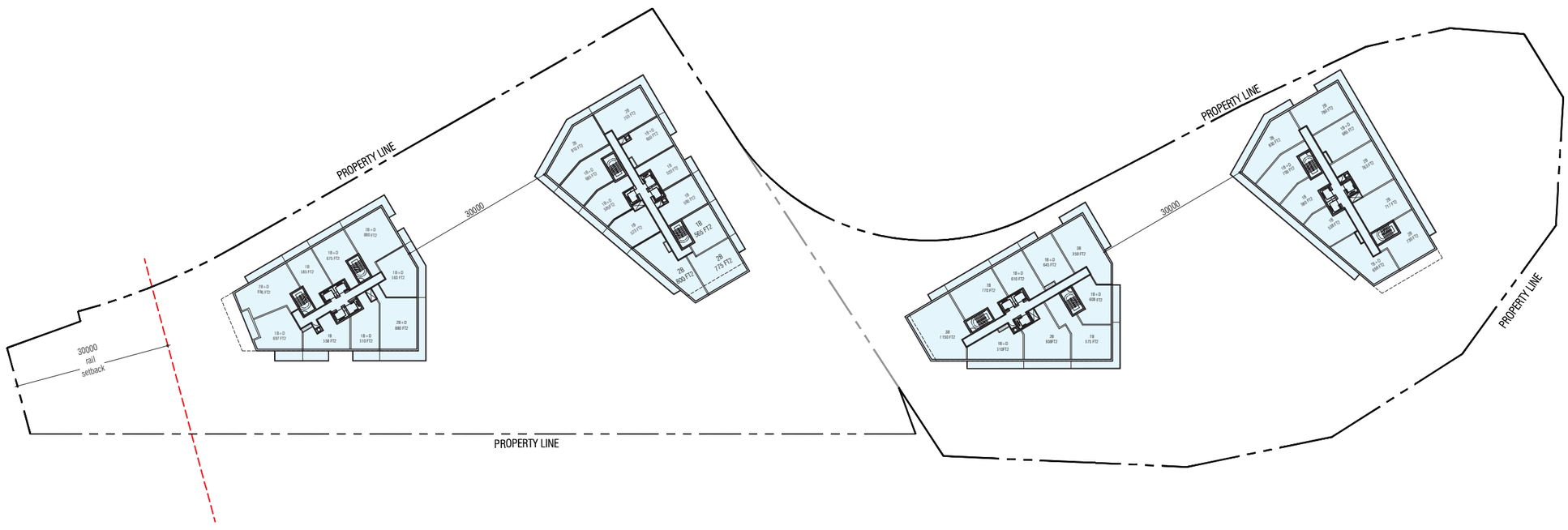
Ground Floor



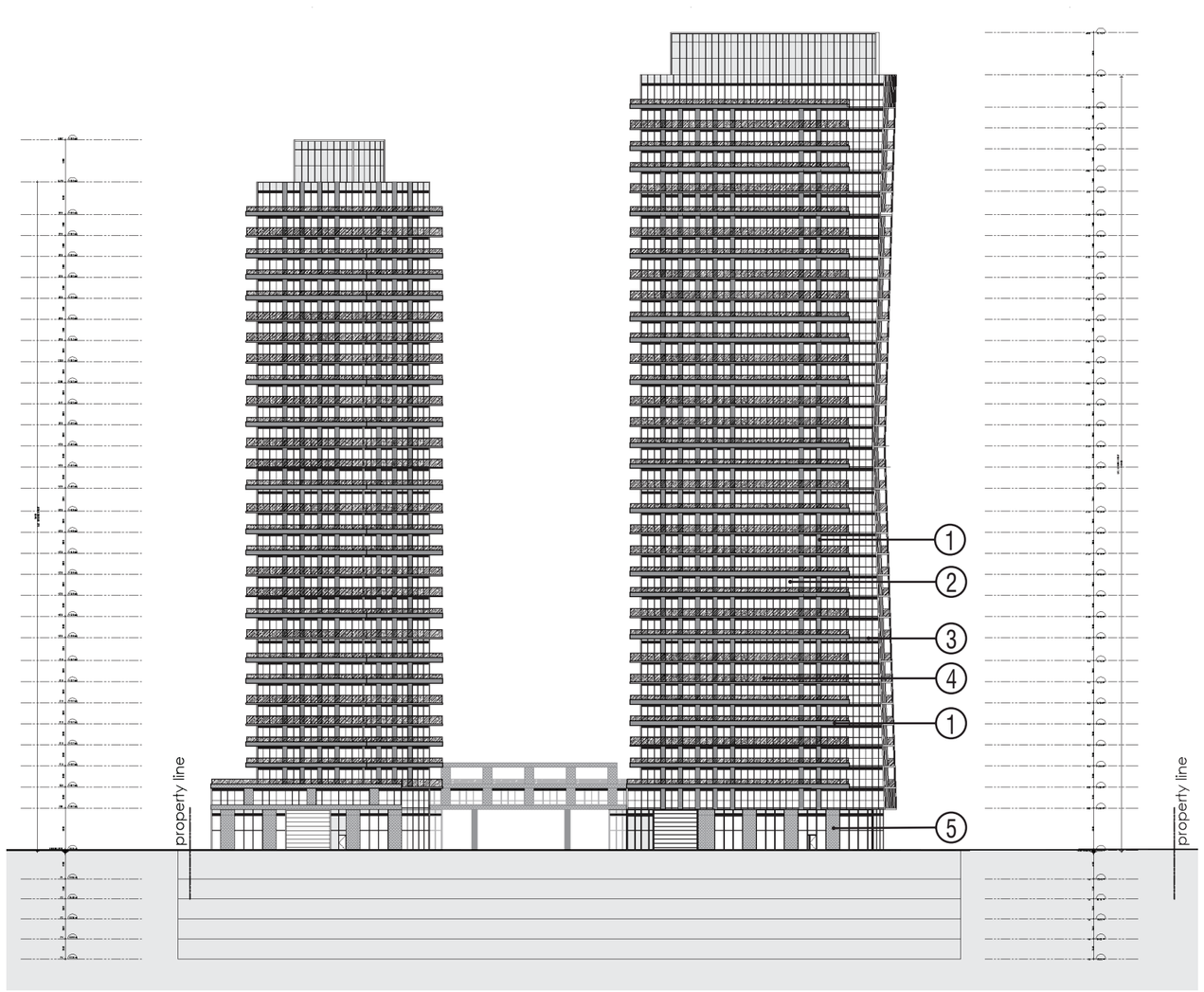
Second Floor


PROPERTY LINE
30000
3B
1080 FT2
1B + D
595 FT2
1B + D
595 FT2
2B
760 FT2
1B + D
587 FT2
4MENITY
102 M2
2B
900 FT2
2B
975 FT2
OUTDOOR AMENITY
913 M2
AMENITY
194 M2
2B
770 FT2
1B + D
650 FT2
1B
550 FT2
1B
580 FT2
1B + D
675 FT2
1B + D
585 FT2
2B
610 FT2
TERRACE
30000
rail
setback
14000
PHASE 1
PROPERTY LINE
PROPERTY LINE
30000
2B
630 FT2
1B + D
700 FT2
1B + D
645 FT2
1B
585 FT2
2B + D
935 FT2
1B + D
615 FT2
1B + D
610FT2
2B
668FT2
AMENITY
154 M2
OUTDOOR AMENITY
580 M2
3B
780 FT2
1B + D
665 FT2
1B + D
630 FT2
1B + D
630 FT2
1B
580 FT2
AMENITY
146 M2
3B
970 FT2
PHASE 2
PROPERTY LINE

Third Floor



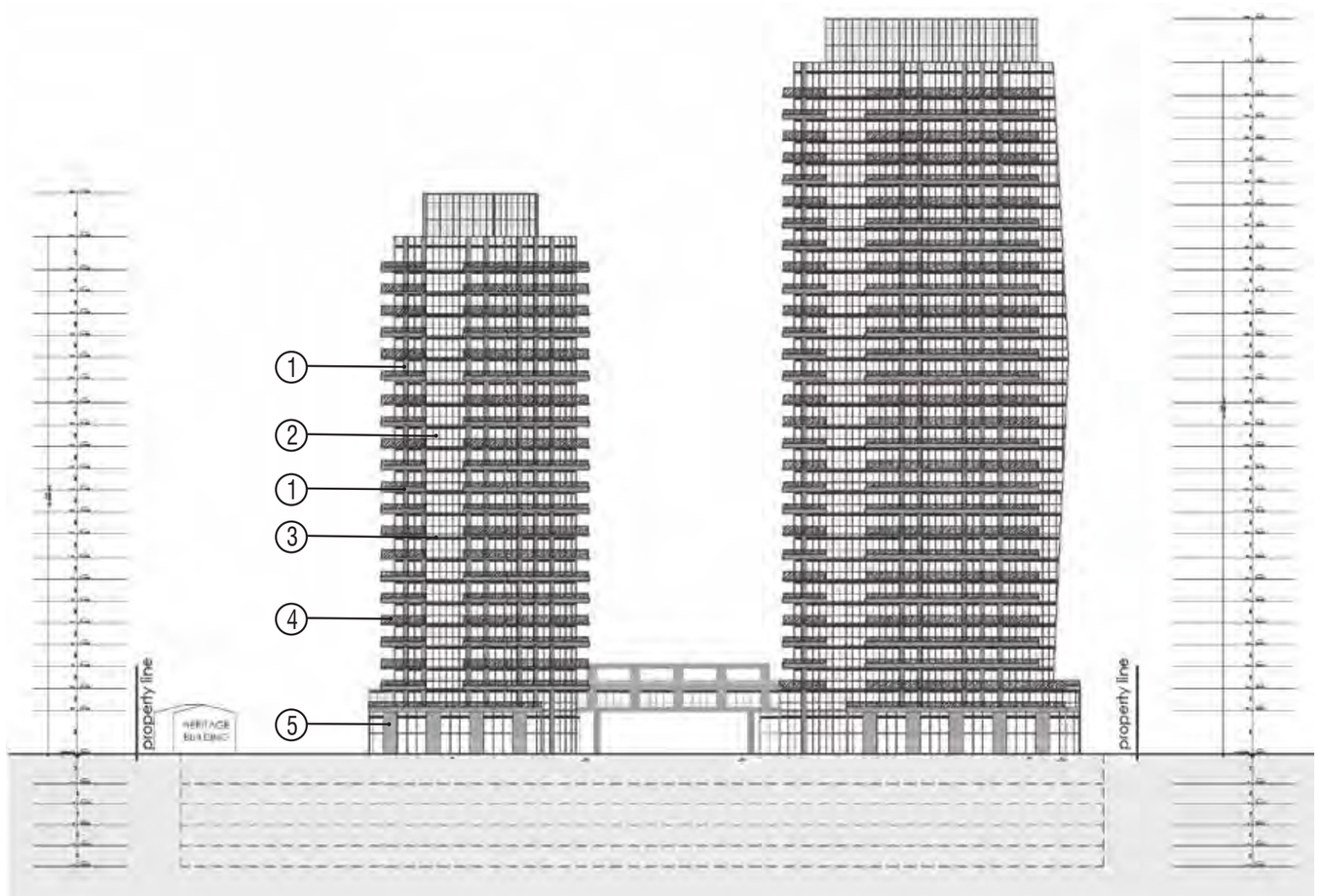
Typical Floor



MATERIAL LEGEND

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

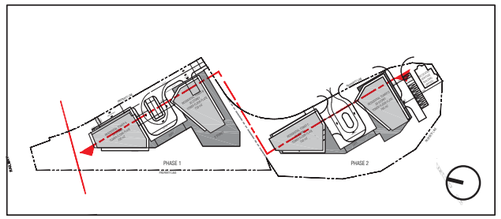
Phase 1 - East Elevation



MATERIAL LEGEND

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

Phase 2 - East Elevation



Overall Section

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 Architectural Expression

The architectural expression is clean and sculptural. The podium defines the street edge, with retail, amenity space, and residential units screening the servicing and loading areas from the public realm. The Heritage building will be relocated to have maximum exposure at the corner of Plains Road East and Fairview Street.

In plan, the towers are shaped to maximize clear views by not having any two faces looking directly into each other. This similar approach is expressed in elevation, giving the towers a non static sculpted built form that changes based on where they are viewed from. Whether being approached along the highways, or viewed from various vantage points throughout the City, the towers are seen as a collection of four dynamic sculpted elements.



Rendering of Phase 1, as seen from Plains Road East



Rendering of Phase 2, as seen from Plains Road East

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.2 Streetscape, Connectivity and Urban Design

Currently, there is little pedestrian circulation in the vicinity of the site. The main pedestrian route departing from the proposed development will be a new sidewalk along Plains Road East, which will provide an accessible connection to the intersection of Plains Road East and Fairview Street. This leads to:

- Mapleview Shopping Centre located to the south, across Fairview St.
- IKEA plaza, to the West, along Fairview St.
- Longo's Plaza, to the East, along Fairview St.

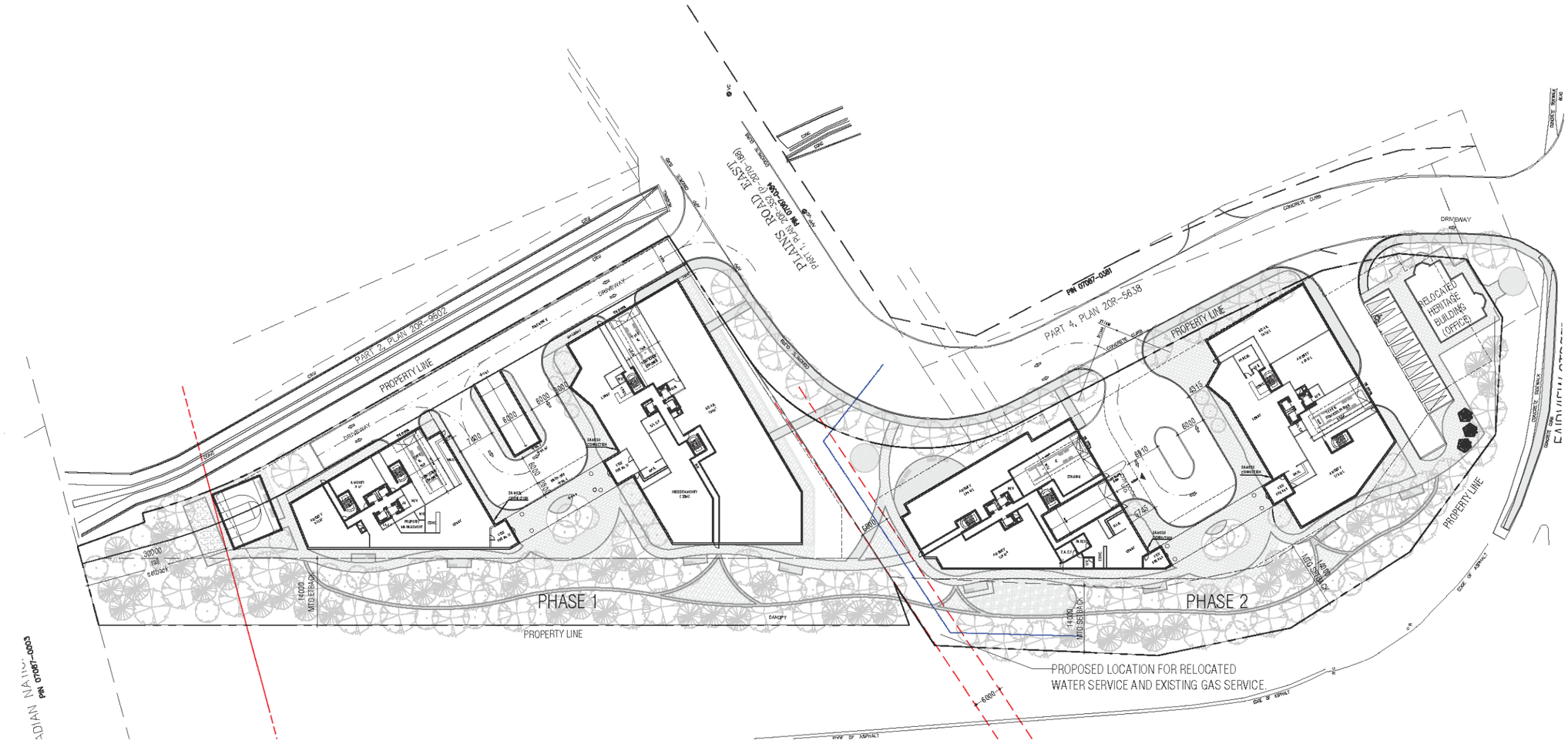
Sidewalks and crossings are provided on Fairview Street, except pedestrian crossings at the two QEW on-ramps on the north side of Fairview Street heading west towards the IKEA Plaza. Sidewalks are not present along Plains Road East.

An existing painted bike lane along Fairview Street ensures a safe connection to the city's cycling network. A future on-road bike lane along Plains Road East is also expected to be implemented as part of the City of Burlington Cycling Plan.

The site is strategically located in an area that provides linkage to major highways with easy access to public transit, from where just a short bus trip to the nearest GO station is required.

In order to achieve design excellence, the programming will be further detailed with proposed urban features that emphasize a high-quality built environment and innovative design that recognizes land use compatibility. The design will ensure that the built environment protects and conserves cultural heritage resources.

The design supports public transit and active transportation through the connections to pedestrian and cycling environments. The natural environment and public realm are enhanced with a generous open space located within the 14m setback between the buildings and the property line. This will be accessible and programmed to people of all ages and abilities.



Conceptual Landscape Plan - Phase 1 and 2

4.0 COMPATIBILITY

The proposed development in terms of massing and articulation has been designed to enhance the existing urban context and create a prominent street level presence and vitality. 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.

The 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

The proposed podium is massed and scaled at 2 storeys for both Phases to create an enhanced street-related character along with the relocated heritage structure on Plains Road East. At grade, the podium creates a properly scaled interface with the existing structure and the proposed sidewalks and street frontages.

Service-related functions and access to underground parking are organized to the side of 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 appropriate to street level massing. The combined elements of precast, brick and metal create a harmonizing transparency of the glass that envelop 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.

With towers ranging from 22 to 35 storeys the proposed development, at least for a period of time, will be the tallest in the area. In our opinion, this is an appropriate distinction.

The fact that the towers have a relatively small floorplate and substantial separation of more than 25m from each other 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 City. 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. The precast elements and angular glass facades are organized in a timeless language that will stand out as a landmark for this community.

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 a few broad references to urban design throughout Part III Section 5.3.3 Mixed Use Corridors – Commercial Corridor and Section 5.3.4 Mixed Use Corridors - Employment. It expresses a desire to intensify, especially within the vicinity of a major transit station area such as a GO Transit station and encourages pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development. However, the prohibition of residential uses in the Mixed-Use Corridors – Employment designation will require the current application to seek an Official Plan Amendment.

From an urban design perspective, it is our assessment that the introduction of the residential use to this site in its physical form and in regards to height and density will not have a negative affect on the surrounding area. Rather, the proposed development will contribute to a more walkable environment with its proximity to surrounding commercial establishments, will enhance the street level public realm with appropriately scaled podiums designed with high quality materials, and will provide a notable neighbourhood landmark with the distinctive forms of the towers.

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 establish animated street frontage on Plains Road East. At 10m the boulevard width will exceed the recommended 6m minimum. As no streetwall is established, the podium is set back at grade by more than 6m to create a boulevard wide enough for pedestrians, street trees and landscaping. The podiums are broken up between the towers to enhance the permeability of the massing and create mid-block pedestrian connections to the outdoor amenity space behind the buildings.

Podium Height and Massing: Where no streetwall exists, the guidelines suggest a minimum podium height of 10.5m and maximum podium height of 80% of the adjacent right-of-way width. Plains Road East has a right-of-way of 20m setting the maximum podium to be no more than 16m. At 9m the proposal fits within these guidelines. Additionally, the height of the ground floor is 6.0m, exceeding the 4.5m recommended minimum.

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 podium features a mixture of cladding materials. The majority of the cladding will be 'light', with substantial glazing to provide connectivity between the lobby, retail. and indoor amenities, and the street. This is framed by 'heavy' brick and precast elements to anchor the building. The roof areas of the podium not occupied by the towers make use of the elevated platform for outdoor amenity space. Balconies will be recessed where located in the podium.

5.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Site Design, Open Space and Streetscaping: All parking is located inside each building below grade, except for 9 spaces provided at grade for the relocated heritage structure. Access to parking, servicing, and loading are either to the side of the building away from the street or set back within the podium where they are not the main focus.

Tower Location: A minimum separation distance of 30m has been provided between all four of the proposed towers. They are each setback 3m from the edge of the 2-storey podium except where they extend the edge to draw focus to the building entrances.

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 the street level.

Tower Design and Articulation: The towers will be primarily composed of glazing to minimize perceived mass with precast panels along select balcony edges to articulate the unique character of each tower. Extruding balconies are used to emphasize the angles of each tower floorplate and bring visual interest to the intersection. The sculpted form of each tower is in direct response to the site dynamics in the plan and is utilized to maximize views. The resulting form provides a unique built form for the area of the city.

Rooftop Design and Articulation: The rooftop design serves to further emphasize the sleek profile and unique angles to each tower. 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 as an extension of the angled tower forms.

6.0 CONCLUSION

In our opinion the form, scale, and character of the proposal represent excellent urban design. The proposed development adds a desired street-related and pedestrian-oriented form to this section of Plains Road East and Fairview Street and will not have an adverse impact on the community.

The podiums' low-rise frontage creates a high quality and contemporary façade on Plains Road East. The towers are well set back from the podium edge, allowing for ample outdoor amenity space and private terraces. Shadow and wind studies will be conducted to ensure minimal affects.

The relocated heritage structure as a free standing built form is an appropriate solution.

The proposal conforms with 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, we believe that such approvals are warranted from an urban design perspective and that what is proposed will be a positive addition to Burlington.