



Planning and Building Services Department
Heritage and Urban Design (HUD)

March 6, 2025

Memo To: Giuseppe Russo, Planner II
Memo From: James Pavlidis, Urban Designer

Subject: Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-Law Amendment
Applicant Name: IPS Consulting Inc. c/o Dafne Gokcen
Municipal Address: 11 Harris Avenue
City File No.: OPA-25-0001, ZBLA-25-0001

Thank you for the opportunity to review the above noted Planning Act application and its accompanying supporting materials circulated to the Heritage and Urban Design (HUD) section. Urban Design staff have reviewed the materials in the first submission in accordance with the City's *Official Plan* (OP), Council approved *City-wide Urban Design Guidelines* (UDGs), and the *Harris Beech Infill Study* (HBIS).

Proposal Summary:

The subject lands are located west of Yonge Street and south of Harris Avenue. The lands are designated "Regional Mixed-Use Corridor" as per Schedule A2 – Land Use, of the City's Official Plan. The applications request approval of an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment to facilitate a 10-storey, mixed-use building with an approximate GFA of 10,398 square meters and an F.S.I. of 3.26, including 119 residential units, ground-related commercial uses, and three levels of below-grade parking.

General Comments:

The immediate planned and emerging context is characterized by recent approvals for mid-rise built form along the Yonge Street corridor, which provide a gradual transition downward in height and scale towards the interior of the neighbourhood. This portion of Harris Avenue consists of ground-related built forms, such as townhouses. Immediately east of Yonge Street, the context is primarily naturalized, with large countryside parcels that are designated "Oak Ridges Morane Linkage" / "Oak Ridges Morane Countryside", and support detached residential dwellings.

The City Structure policies (Section 3.1.3) of the Official Plan, provide the spatial framework and intensification hierarchy for development within Richmond Hill. The subject lands are located along Yonge Street, which are identified as Regional Corridor per Schedule A1 of the Plan. It is noted that Regional Corridors will accommodate intensification at a scale and intensity generally less than the Key Development Areas. However, the Plan recognizes that the character along the corridors vary, with certain portions that will not intensify or develop in order to maintain its predominant neighbourhood function and/or to protect the Greenway system.

The permitted building height for development on Yonge Street located north of Townwood Drive and south of the Oak Ridges Local Centre designation is between two (2) and six (6) storeys, with the tallest buildings to be directed to the Yonge Street frontage in accordance with Policy 4.6.1.11 of the Plan.

Section 3.4.1 of the Plan sets out design criteria for all development, which includes specific policies for high-rise built form. High-rise buildings are defined in the Plan as structures with a height of 9 storeys or greater. Policy 3.4.1.58 indicates that high-rise buildings shall generally have a slender floorplate above the podium of approximately 750 square metres.

In this regard, the high-rise built form contemplated represents a departure from the emerging intensification patterns in this area of the Regional Mixed-Use Corridor and is not supported by Urban Design staff in its current configuration, given the height contemplated. Detailed comments have been provided below to achieve a sensitive, contextual fit with the immediate low-rise residential context and to align the proposal with the City Structure policies of the Official Plan. The applicant should meaningfully address the comments as part of the next resubmission.

Detailed Comments:

A) Archaeological Assessment		
Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Archeological Potential	The Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment has identified features that indicate archaeological potential and recommends that a Stage 2 Archeological Assessment be conducted. The applicant should complete the required Stage 2 assessment. Please note that the applicant shall submit a clearance letter from the Ministry of Culture and Multiculturalism once the report has been accepted and entered into the Public Register of Archaeological Reports.	OP 3.4.3.3
B) Site Organization		
Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Landscape Buffer	The Site Plan and Landscape Plan indicate that a considerable portion of the site will be hardscaped to facilitate vehicular circulation. It is noted that the extent of the paved area will be in proximity to the south lot line and no meaningful buffer is provided between the subject lands and the existing low-rise residential immediately adjacent. The applicant should provide an appropriate landscape buffer and plantings to sufficiently mitigate noise, air quality concerns, and unattractive views from neighboring properties.	OP 3.4.1.43, 3.4.1.55.c UDG 6.5.16
2. At-grade Amenity Space	The current site configuration does not afford opportunity for meaningful at-grade amenity space. The applicant should explore design strategies that minimize the extent of hardscape on the site and maximize softscape / at-grade amenity space. Moreover, the addition of meaningful, at-grade amenity space will assist in providing an appropriate response to the abutting low-rise residential context.	UDGs 6.5.17, 6.5.18, 6.5.19, 6.5.20

B) Site Organization

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
3. Parking Ramp	The applicant should integrate the ramp to below-grade parking within the massing of the building to improve the interior organization of the site and maximize areas for at-grade amenity for the predominantly residential building.	UDG 6.5.14, 6.6.19
4. Low Impact Development Features	Incorporating L.I.D. features on site is strongly encouraged. This may be addressed through a future Site Plan application. For additional information, refer to the Sustainability Metrics Program guidebook.	UDGs 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 6.5.15, 6.5.33
5. Unsightly Elements	It is noted that unsightly elements such as exhaust vents, transformers and other utilities should be in less prominent areas, away from view of the public realm, preferably with other 'back of house' functions. An exhaust shaft is indicated near the south east corner of the site. The applicant should consider relocating this element or screen with landscape planting to reduce the visual impact on the Yonge Street frontage.	OP 3.4.1.43 UDGs 5.9.2, 5.9.6
6. Grade-Related Residential	The A-103 Ground Floor Plan indicates that two ground-related residential units are contemplated along Harris Avenue. The applicant should ensure that grade-related units are directly accessible from the public sidewalk to better interface with the public realm and provide a higher sense of security and ownership. Consider a secondary entrance to the units, should the principal entrance be required from an internal corridor.	OP 3.4.1.37.a.iv UDGs 6.5.6, 6.5.7

C) Massing and Built Form

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Height	<p>The development proposes a height and density exceeding what is permitted in the City's Official Plan and does not align with the City Structure policies. Moreover, the height proposed is more appropriate for other, more urbanized areas of the Regional Mixed-Use Corridor.</p> <p>The applicant should reduce the overall height and scale of the development from 10 storeys to no more than 8 storeys, to align with the City Structure policies of the Plan and to achieve a more context sensitive fit with the surrounding low-rise residential neighbourhood. Please note that the maximum mid-rise building height is 8 storeys.</p>	OP 3.1.3 UDG 6.5.27
2. Floorplates	High-rise residential buildings shall be designed to generally have a slender floorplate of approximately 750 square metres above the base	OP 3.4.1.58 UDG 6.6.44

C) Massing and Built Form

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	building. The applicant should revise the size of floorplates above the fourth floor to ensure they are generally 750 square metres.	
3. Building Stepback	<p>Further to the above, Policy 3.4.1.59 requires high-rise development to be designed with a stepback of the building above the base building, to provide a clearly discernible top to the streetwall. The applicant should provide a minimum stepback of 3.0m above the fourth storey to reduce the perception of taller volumes.</p> <p>Staff may consider other design strategies which articulate a clear base building, provided that the height of the building be reduced from 10 storeys to no more than 8 storeys.</p>	OP 3.4.1.59, 3.4.1.37.a.ii UDGs 6.6.5, 6.5.2
4. Angular Plane	The A-300 North Elevation and A-302 East Elevation drawing provide a 45-degree angular plane analysis, which is struck from the lot line, immediately abutting the Neighbourhood designation. While a structure up to 15 metres in height may protrude into the angular plane (as per City-initiated Official Plan Amendment 59), staff have observed additional building projections above the first 15 metres. The applicant should revise the proposed massing to ensure adherence to the angular plane policies of the Plan.	OP 3.4.1.55.a.ii UDGs 3.5.5, 3.5.33
5. Shadow Study	Staff note that shadow study modeling has been prepared and submitted. However, a summary letter, detailing how the shadow impact evaluation of the proposal has been met, should accompany the modeling. For additional information, refer to the Sun and Shadow Study – Terms of Reference available on the City’s Urban Design webpage.	OP 3.4.1.41 UDG 6.6.7
6. Wind Study	<p>The CFD Wind Study indicates that with the introduction of the proposal’s massing, Harris Avenue is predicted to have windier conditions in comparison to existing conditions. However, the wind comfort conditions are predicted to be suitable for a mix of sitting and standing throughout the year for the subject lands, the public realm, and the parcel at 12030 Yonge Street, to the north. The conditions are considered to be acceptable.</p> <p>Section 5.2 considers the wind comfort conditions within the common amenity terrace at the MPH level and predicts conditions to be suitable for sitting to the east, south, and west, and suitable for standing central to the terrace. The study notes that the roof-top amenity area was modeled with a 1.8m tall windscreen along the perimeter of the terrace, and</p>	OP 3.4.1.42

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	<p>recommends additional mitigation inboard of the terrace perimeter and targeted around sensitive areas to improve comfort levels on the MPH level. The extent of the mitigation measures is dependant on the ultimate programming of the amenity space, which may be coordinated and developed as part of a future Site Plan Application.</p> <p>Section 5.4 of the study notes that future changes of the surroundings (i.e. construction or demolition of built form) may cause changes to the wind effects and local flow patterns. Staff note recent approvals for an 8-storey mid-rise building immediately north of the subject lands at 12030 Yonge Street (neighbouring Surface Parking lot / Dealership).</p> <p>The applicant should include the massing of this approval within the CFD modeling to determine whether any adverse wind conditions are produced by the proposed building's massing within the public realm, adjacent parcels, or on the subject lands.</p> <p>Moreover, and considering comments C)1, 2, 3, the applicant should remodel the massing for an 8-storey mid-rise built form as recommended and update the Wind Study.</p>	
7. Building and Sustainable Design	<p>Mid- and High-rise buildings should be designed with well-articulated façades that provide a pedestrian scale, enhance the public realm, create visual interest, and prioritize sustainability. A careful balance between environmental considerations, functional requirements, and contextual responsiveness must be struck in order to contribute to the building's overall sustainability and performance.</p> <p>Generally speaking, staff are amenable to the modern approach to the design of the building. However, the large expanses of vision and spandrel glazing, particularly along the east, west, and south elevations, sets the proposed building apart from the surrounding neighbourhood context. Staff note that the north elevation features a more appropriate ratio of glazing to other cladding materials. In this regard, please consider an overall architectural composition with careful consideration for proportions (i.e. window to wall ratio), rhythm, and material selection that relates well to the surrounding low-rise residential context (i.e. brick, stone, precast, etc.).</p> <p>Moreover, given the Greenway system context (Oak Ridges Moraine) immediately east of Yonge Street, the applicant should revise the building</p>	OP 3.2.3.39, 3.4.1.37.a.i UDG 3.3, 6.5.38

C) Massing and Built Form

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	design to ensure a total window surface area of no more than 40% to ensure bird safe design and operational emissions. This can be addressed at the Site Plan Application stage.	
8. Bird Safe Treatment	Further to the above, be advised that bird-safe design is mandatory for all lands subject to Site Plan Approval. For additional information, refer to the Bird-Safe Design Standards found on the City's Urban Design webpage . Please note all required standards and the accompanying supporting material to demonstrate bird-safe design has been incorporated. This comment should be addressed through a future Site Plan Application.	Required Information, OP 3.2.3.21

For future submissions, please have the applicant indicate how the comments in this memorandum have been addressed using a chart or spreadsheet format. Relevant drawing packages and any additional supporting materials that are required to address the comments above, or where changes are proposed, shall be provided in subsequent submissions.

Regards,



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