

January 30, 2025

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

Subject: Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications
Applicant Name: KLM Planning Partners Inc.
Municipal Address: 0 Longworth Avenue (12460 Leslie Street)
City File No.: OPA-24-0003, ZBLA-24-0005

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)*, the *Design Guide: At-Grade Retail Uses (DGRUs)*, and the Council approved *City-wide Urban Design Guidelines (UDGs)* and *West Gormley Architectural Control Guidelines (WG ACGs)*.

Proposal Summary:

The subject lands are located west of Leslie Street and south of Longworth Avenue and are subject to the West Gormley Secondary Plan. The lands are designated Neighbourhood Commercial as per Schedule A – Land Use of the Secondary Plan. The immediate planned and emerging context is characterized by low-rise residential consisting of 2-storey single detached dwellings and street-related townhouses. Beyond this, the settlement area is bounded to the north and east by the Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Core and Linkage Areas. Given the prominent location, the subject lands are identified as a Community Gateway within the City-approved Architectural Control Guidelines for West Gormley.

The applications request approval of an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment to facilitate two 'L' -shaped, 5-storey (19.45m) mixed-use buildings with approximately 201 residential units and ground-related commercial. Pedestrian access is proposed to be obtained via Leslie Street and Longworth Avenue, with vehicular access from Longworth Avenue. Both at-grade and below-grade parking is contemplated, with a total of 381 stalls proposed.

General Comments:

The West Gormley Community has been designed as a complete community; careful consideration has been given to the location of a range of uses, including the location of the institutional (school), parks and open space, and neighbourhood commercial blocks, to support the community. Together, these elements create a strong neighbourhood centre which encourages active transportation throughout the surrounding neighbourhood. The West Gormley Secondary Plan contains policies that support housing choices and provide opportunities for a mix and range of housing types to achieve a balanced community, compact residential development, and efficient use of land, services, community facilities, and related infrastructure.

Generally, Urban Design staff are supportive of mixed-use development and the contemporary expression that is proposed. However, detailed comments have been provided below, which the applicant should meaningfully address.

Detailed Comments:

A) Urban Design Brief		
Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Site & Building Design	<p>Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the Urban Design Brief describe the proposals siting and orientation. However, the rationale for the current configuration has not been provided, nor any assessment on how the proposed design provides transition to the adjacent lands to achieve a context-sensitive fit, that minimizes impact on the surrounding residential neighbourhood. The applicant should elaborate and provide further detail.</p>	Clarification
B) Site Organization		
Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Building 'B' Configuration	<p>Street and building relationships play an important role in establishing a human scale and connection to the public realm. Moreover, corner sites should be designed to address both public frontages through the siting, massing, and enhanced articulation of buildings.</p> <p>Staff have observed that Building 'A' has been sited to frame the public realm along both Leslie Street and Longworth Avenue, appropriately addressing the corner; whereas Building 'B' has been sited at the southwest corner of the site, with much of the massing interfacing along the west and south lot lines. Only a small portion of Building 'B' frames the public realm.</p> <p>To further address and articulate a legible pedestrian streetwall along the Leslie Street frontage, the applicant should reorient the massing of Building 'B' towards the public street, aligning the east elevation with that of Building 'A', and directing the tallest volume away from the low-rise residential context, gently transitioning down in scale. Refer to the annotated Site Plan, appended below.</p>	OP 3.4.1.30, 3.4.1.31, UDGs 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 6.2.1, 6.5.1, 6.5.17
2. Building 'B' West Setback	<p>The Site Plan indicates Building 'B' is setback 7.48m from the west lot line. However, the applicant should consider increasing this setback to achieve an appropriate transition to the neighbourhood.</p>	UDGs 6.2.8, 6.5.33,
3. Surface Parking	<p>Surface parking is contemplated between Buildings 'A' and 'B', adjacent the east lot line. Staff note such parking will be highly visible from Leslie Street. The applicant should relocate surface parking below-grade, or at a minimum, should explore design strategies that visually screen surface parking from the public realm.</p>	OP 3.4.1.49 UDG 6.5.11,

B) Site Organization

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
4. At-Grade Amenity Space	The current site configuration does not afford meaningful at-grade amenity space for Building 'B'. Moreover, the draft Zoning By-law Amendment provisions a minimum amenity space ratio of 1.5 square metres per unit. Staff note that typically 2.0 square metres per unit is accepted. In this regard, an opportunity exists to increase and provide a more substantial central amenity space, siting Building 'B' to positively define the shape and function of the open space. Please see comment B).1 above.	UDG 6.2.5, 6.5.17, 6.5.18, 6.5.20, 6.5.21
5. Unsightly Elements	It is noted that unsightly elements such as exhaust vents, transformers and other utilities should be located in less prominent areas, away from view of the public realm, preferably with other 'back of house' functions. The applicant should relocate intake and exhaust vents within the interior of the site, or screen them with landscape planting to reduce their visual impact on adjacent streetscapes.	OP 3.4.1.43 UDG 5.9.2, 5.9.6
6. Retail and Streetscape Activation	<p>The Neighbourhood Commercial block is envisioned as a means for residents of the larger subdivision to meet their daily needs through active transportation., any re-designation of the lands should maintain the general intent of the original land use designation through the provision of adequate retail space.</p> <p>Further to comment B)1., the applicant should increase the area of ground-related retail provided within Building 'B' to afford maximum flexibility to support a range of tenants, and to animate the streetscape.</p> <p>Additional opportunities exist for retail uses to expand outdoors, through strategically placed patios that enrich the pedestrian experience along the Leslie Street frontage.</p>	OP 8.4.2 UDGs 6.5.3, 6.5.5, 6.5.20, DGRUs 2.7.4, 2.7.5

C) Massing and Built Form

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Building Height	<p>The siting, massing, and scale of the buildings should be sensitive to that of the adjacent low-rise residential context.</p> <p>Further to comment B)1., it is strongly recommended that the height of the building 'B' along the south lot line be reduced from five to three storeys,</p>	OP 3.1.3.4 UDG 3.5.1, 6.2.8

C) Massing and Built Form

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
2. Ground Floor Height	<p>to appropriately transition in height and scale, and positively interface with the low-rise residential dwellings immediately adjacent.</p> <p>Further to the above, the SPA301-304 Elevation drawings indicate that the ground floor height of Building 'A' and 'B' is 7.0m. Staff note that to accommodate retail commercial uses, ground floor height should be 4.5m. Given the surrounding planned and emerging low-rise residential context, the applicant should reduce the height of the ground floor to no more than 5.0m, to decrease the overall height of the buildings and achieve an appropriate scale. See annotated Building 'A' South Elevation, appended below.</p>	UDG 3.5.1, 6.5.5, 6.2.6, DGRU 2.1.1
3. Streetwall Height and Step Backs	<p>Staff note that the scale and continuity of the streetwall are important elements in providing a comfortable human scale. The Elevation drawings indicate a pedestrian streetwall height of three storeys, with step backs of 1.5m provided above the third and fourth storeys.</p> <p>Generally speaking, staff are amenable to the proposed streetwall height of three stories. However, the stepback above the third storey should be increased to a minimum of 3.0m, with the fourth and fifth storey wall planes aligned with one another, to achieve a clearly discernible top to the streetwall. See annotated Building 'A' North Elevation, appended below.</p>	OP 3.4.1.59 UDGs 6.2.6, 6.5.2
4. Facing Distances	<p>Further to comment B)1., to ensure appropriate light, privacy, and skyviews, a facing distance of no less than 15m should be incorporated between Building 'A' and 'B', along the Leslie Street frontage</p>	UDGs 3.4.3, 6.2.6, 6.4.22
5. Balconies	<p>The Elevation drawings indicate balconies are contemplated at the second and third storeys. However, it is unclear whether these balconies will project outward or be inset. The applicant should clarify.</p>	Clarification
6. Weather Protection	<p>It is unclear from the Elevation drawings and Ground Floor plan, whether any weather protection, such as canopies, awnings, etc., is contemplated at shared entrances, at-grade retail or residential units. The applicant should clarify and illustrate on relevant drawings at the Site Plan Application stage</p>	Clarification OP 3.4.1.39 UDG 6.2.10, 6.5.41, DGRU 2.7.7
7. Bird Safe Treatment	<p>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</p>	Required Information, OP 3.2.3.21

C) Massing and Built Form

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
	demonstrate bird-safe design has been incorporated. This comment may be addressed through a future Site Plan Application.	
8. 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.	OP, 3.1.9.3.3, 3.2.3.17, UDG 3.3
9. Window Bays	The draft Zoning By-law Amendment includes a provision (6.1.i.) to permit projections of 'Window bays' over any minimum required setback. However, it is not evident from the architectural set how such a provision is utilized or necessary. The applicant should clarify the intent of this provision and the rationale for its inclusion within the draft instrument.	Clarification

D) Public Realm Interface

Issue	HUD Staff Comments	Reference
1. Entry Feature	Subject to constraints related to the 6.0m easement at the corner of Leslie Street and Longworth Avenue, the applicant is encouraged to explore an entry feature within the pedestrian forecourt, adjacent the daylight triangle, as a means to highlight the entrance to the community. In this regard, consider locating a public art feature in this location.	OP 3.4.1.22 UDG 3.8.1, 6.5.25

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.

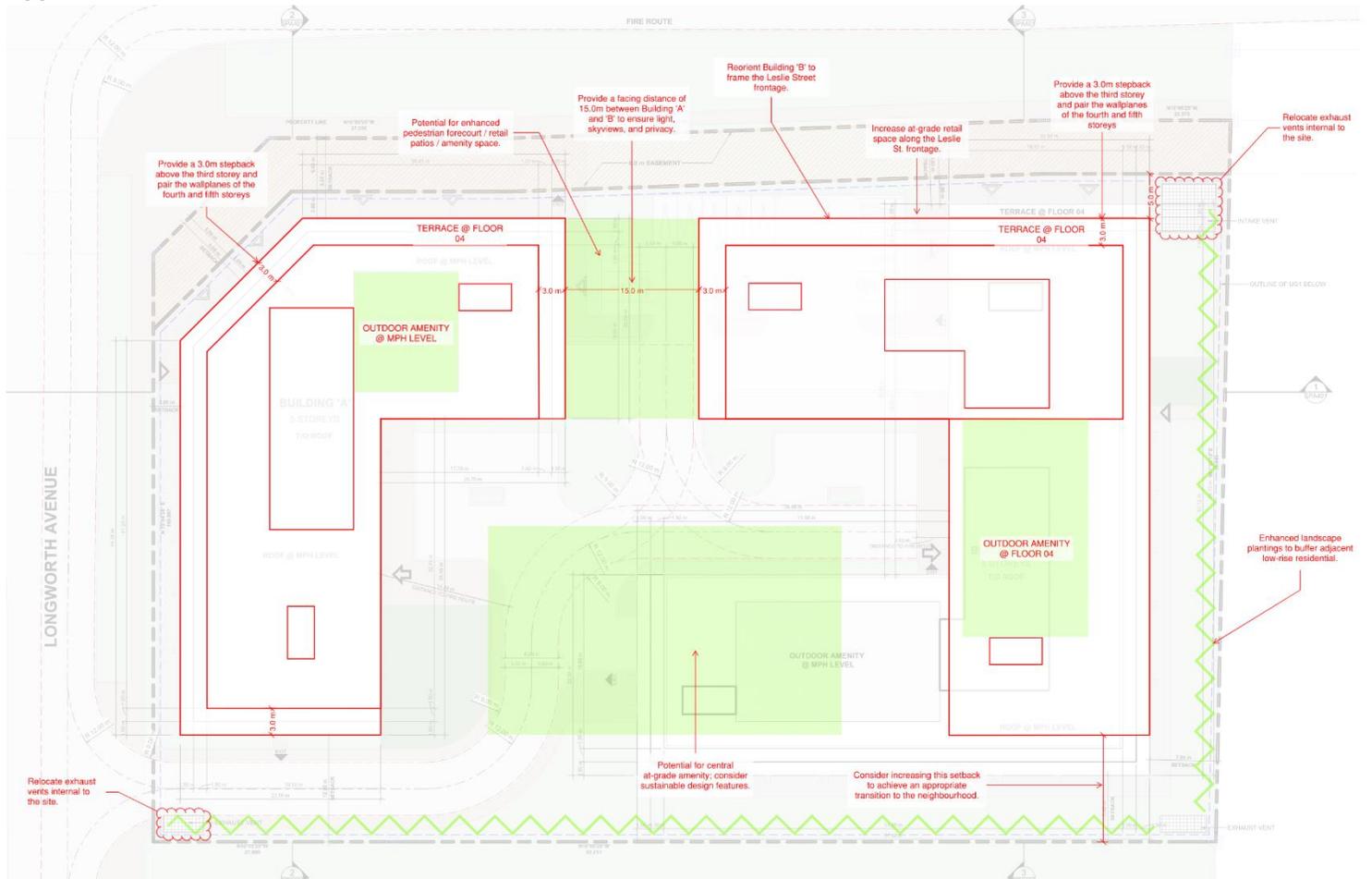
Regards,



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Urban Designer

Heritage and Urban Design Section,
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Appendix:

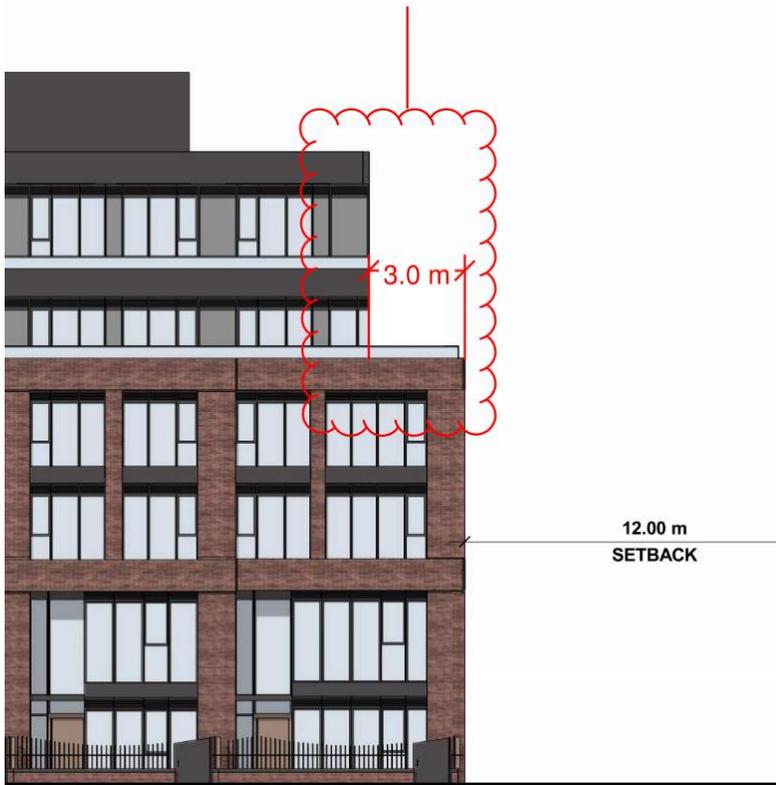


Annotated Site Plan: Reconfigure the siting and massing of Building 'B' to frame the Leslie Street frontage, continue the pedestrian streetwall, achieve appropriate massing, scale, transition and interface with the adjacent low-rise residential context to the south.



Annotated Building 'A' South Elevation: To decrease the overall height and achieve an appropriate scale, lower the ground floor heights of buildings from 7m to 5m; maintain the minimum required vertical clearance for waste collection vehicles.

Provide a stepback of 3m above the third storey and pair the wallplanes of the fourth and fifth storeys to ensure a legible pedestrian streetwall.



Annotated Building 'A' North Elevation: To articulate a legible pedestrian streetwall, provide a stepback of 3m above the third storey and pair the wallplanes of the fourth and fifth storeys with one another. Balconies at the fifth storey are encouraged but should not project beyond the main face (ie: the streetwall) of the building.