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Communication

Heritage Vaughan – October 20, 2021

Item # 4

City Clerk's Office
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, Ontario
L6A 1T1

October 19, 2021
File 9497

Attn: Members of Vaughan Heritage Committee

Dear Sirs and Madams,

**RE: 9929 Keele Street
Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment Applications (OP.20.016
& Z.20.043)**

Weston Consulting is the planning consultant for Sharewell Investments Inc./Trinity Point Developments, the landowner of 9929 Keele Street. The purpose of this written correspondence is to provide a response in relation to the Heritage Vaughan Committee Report, dated October 20, 2021 and to outline our planning opinion in regards to the revised development concept. We have reviewed the Heritage Vaughan Committee Report with our client and have concerns that the report does not provide pertinent information and contains inaccurate details about the height and façade lengths of the proposed design and of the comparable projects within the surrounding area and also omits the dialogue undertaken with Heritage and Urban Design staff to address Heritage Planning comments on the built form and architectural elements, both with the original and revised building design. This letter is intended to provide additional information to assist Heritage Committee members in undertaking a fulsome review of the proposed development to make an informed decision. It also provides an opinion that the proposed development meets the intent of the Village of Maple Heritage Conservation District (Maple HCD), as demonstrated by the Heritage Impact Assessment provided by GBCA Architects and through a comprehensive review of the surrounding area from a planning, heritage, and urban design perspective. Our opinions are based upon the Heritage Impact Assessment and opinions by GBCA Architects.

Background

A Statutory Public Meeting was virtually held on April 7, 2021, to receive comments from the public on the proposed development. There were no comments or written submissions provided by the public on the proposed development and the application was well received by members of Council, as several councillors made positive comments on the proposal.

Through discussions with City Heritage and Urban Design staff, a number of revisions have been made to the building to better meet to intent of the Maple HCD and to address comments received from City of Vaughan Heritage and Urban Design staff. The applicant and their project consultants met with City staff to discuss the revisions on April 28, 2021, July 5, 2021, and August 12, 2021. Heritage comments received April 19, 2021 were discussed with Heritage staff and the project Heritage Consultant, Sharon Vattay of GBCA, with clarification and agreement on the majority of staff heritage comments received.

Building Height, Adjacent Building Heights and Façade Lengths

As part of discussions, staff recommended a maximum building height of 12.2 metres, which results in a ground floor area of 3.2 metres, assuming floors 2-4 are 3 metres in height. In our opinion, and based on the applicant's market research, a 3.2 metre commercial ground floor height is not a viable floor height required by commercial tenants and does not conform to the City's Urban Design requirement of a minimum height of 4.5 metres for commercial ground floor space. In addition, a 3.2 metre ground floor height would eliminate the mezzanine (loft) areas in the ground floor townhouse units, resulting in less livable space and would not be in keeping with staff and Council requests for larger family sized units, which the townhouse units are currently sized to accommodate. We appreciate staff's efforts in discussing viable options for the site. However, given the heights of the adjacent buildings on either side of the site, together with the height of the building at 2396 Major Mackenzie Drive, all of which are at or over 14 metres in height, we are uncertain why staff have concluded that 12.2 metres is a viable option as opposed to other possible options.

Concept Revisions

The revised development concept proposes a 4-storey building with a height of 15.5 metres, which is a 1.5 metre reduction from the original development concept. The original development application contemplated commercial space within the entire ground floor of the development. The proposed "U" shaped building now consists of commercial space at-grade within only the northern half of the development and 114 residential units consisting of 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3-bedroom units that are distributed throughout the remainder of the building. The six dwelling units located on the ground floor within the southern portion of the building will include a mezzanine and street frontages, providing for active frontages, and will be an average of 1,650 sq. ft in size (incl. mezzanine). The ground floor height has been increased to 5.75 metres, to provide for mezzanine space within the first storey of the commercial and residential portions of the building. The mezzanine level will provide storage and/or extra seating area for the commercial space, improving functionality and the mezzanine will increase the livable space of the ground floor grade-related residential units. According to the project architect, the mezzanine area within the commercial area is within the 40% maximum prescribed by the Ontario Building Code so as not to be considered a storey. The mezzanine area within the grade-related dwelling units slightly exceeds the 40% and as such, the Draft Zoning By-law amendment application is requesting that the mezzanine area not be considered a storey. The inclusion of the mezzanine space provides better efficiency of space and a compact built form, which is generally encouraged by the applicable planning framework as detailed in the Planning Justification Report that was provided

as part of the original application in December 2020. The floor heights on storeys 2-4 have also been reduced.

The rear setback has been increased to 9.4 metres, from 9 metres. Additional rear setbacks have been also provided, stepping down now to 2 storeys in the rear as opposed to three. As such, the proposed development now fits within an angular plane as measured from the rear property line. The fourth floor remains stepped back 3 metres from the main wall along the building's frontage and sides. The development has incorporated generous setbacks from adjacent properties and has incorporated appropriate landscaping within the periphery of the site to provide screening. The articulation of the building façade has also been revised to "break up" the length of the building through the introduction of recessed balconies and roof top cornices, to be consistent with the intent of the Maple HCD Urban Design Guidelines and the three-storey façade has been maintained. The length of the proposed building along Keele St. is 108.7 metres as confirmed by the project architect. Within the Heritage Report staff allude to the "frontage" of the building as 132.91 metres but it should be noted that the subject property's *lot* frontage is 132.91 metres.

A digital Materials Sample Board was prepared by Graziani and Corazza Architects for the purposes of the Heritage review, which includes the use of brick, oak, precast and glass for the proposed development. A finer grain review of the building materials will occur at the Site Plan Application stage with both Heritage and Urban Design staff.

Nearby Developments

In our opinion, the proposed development is contextually appropriate, given the surrounding built form. The applicant's surveyor has performed measurements of nearby developments and has determined the as-built heights of adjacent properties. Through this surveying work, it has been determined that the adjacent building at 9973 Keele St. is 14.06 metres in height, while the building at 9901-9907 Keele St. is 13.86 metres in height at the soffit of the pitched roof and 14.35 metres in height at the highest point, as ground truthed by the surveyor. This information is also shown on the elevation drawings prepared by Graziani and Corazza Architects that was provided to the Heritage Committee. The proposed building is 1.64 metres and 1.15 metres taller than the existing buildings on each side (existing built form), which in our opinion is the appropriate metric and existing context that should be considered.

The Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the development located at 2396 Major Mackenzie Drive was settled at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 2011, with City appearing on consent. This development has a height of 14.9 metres, a ground floor height of 5 metres, second and third storey heights of 3 metres and fourth floor height of 3.3 metres. The setbacks at the fourth floor are estimated to be only 1.5 metres. The Site Plan Application was processed and approved by City of Vaughan staff. The ground floor commercial units of this development have no awnings and has a more contemporary architectural design. Based on the opinion of the project Heritage consultant, it does not reflect an historic architectural style traditionally found in the District. There is also extensive use of pre-cast on ground floor and at the third and fourth floor cornices. The Maple HCD was approved by the OMB in 2007, therefore both OMB and City Site Plan approvals occurred with HCD policies in place.

During discussions with Urban Design staff, the project located at 10211 Keele Street was referenced as a good example of building design. The development is a 3-storey mixed-use building with ground floor height of 5 metres, with the second and third storeys at 3.5 metres each. As measured by Google maps, the façade length appears to be approximately 159 metres with no break in in the façade. The ground floor commercial units contain minimal awnings and the building expression is a contemporary architectural design.

In our opinion, the reference to the height and façade length of Vaughan City Hall in the Heritage Staff Report is irrelevant as the building is an institutional building and is not within the Maple HCD boundary, as noted by staff. The façade length along Major Mackenzie is only approximately 69.84 metres as measure from Google Maps. The reference to the 140 m length for City Hall is the façade length of the building as measured along the façade that sits perpendicular to Major Mackenzie Drive.

Staff have stated that the building heights of the two adjacent buildings exceed the prescribed maximum 11.8 metres, according to the Maple HCD Plan, because they were approved before the Maple HCD, which was approved in 2007. However, irrespective of when the adjacent buildings were approved, they represent the existing built form context of which we are of the opinion that our proposed design is compatible with and that should be considered in an evaluation of the urban design and planning merits of the proposed development.

Summary

Given the preceding, we continue to be of the opinion that our proposed design represents a context appropriate development of its own time, which is consistent and conforms with the PPS, Growth Plan, Region of York Official Plan, City of Vaughan Official Plan and the Maple Heritage Conservation District policies, and is appropriate given the adjacent built form context and the site's location within 800 metres of the draft Maple GO Station Major Transit Station Area boundary and Maple GO Station.

We thank Staff for their ongoing consultation with the applicant and their consultant team and we appreciate Heritage Committee's review and consideration of this written submission. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Sandra K. Patano at extension 245 or the undersigned at extension 275.

Yours truly,

Weston Consulting

Per:



Ryan Guetter, BES, MCIP, RPP
Executive Vice President

c. G. DiMartino/J. Baldassarra, Sharewell Investments Inc./Trinity Point Developments

Councillor Marilyn Iafrate, Ward 1
Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management
Nick Borescu, Senior Heritage Planner
Shahrzad Davoudi-Strike, Manager of Urban Design & Cultural Heritage