

Urban Design Brief
Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment

7701 Lundy's Lane
Niagara Falls, ON

November 2024

Upper Canada Consultants
3-30 Hannover Drive
St. Catharines, ON. L2W 1A3



UCC Project No. 23141

Contents

PREFACE	3
VISION AND PRINCIPLES.....	4
POLICY CONTEXT	4
Policy Analysis	4
Provincial Planning Statement	4
Niagara Official Plan.....	5
Niagara Falls Official Plan.....	5
SITE ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.....	6
Site Overview	6
Area Context	8
URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS	12
Site Design.....	12
Design Overview	12
Design Analysis.....	13
Building Design.....	14
Design Overview	14
Design Analysis.....	16
CONCLUSION.....	17

PREFACE

This Urban Design Brief (Brief) has been prepared by Upper Canada Consultants (UCC) on behalf of 10743186 Canada Corporation, the owner the 7701 Lundy's Lane in the City of Niagara Falls (the subject lands).

The applications propose the conversion of the existing motel on the property for 96 permanent residential dwelling units, and the construction of a new 6-storey building containing 42 residential apartment units, for a total of 138 residential dwelling units.

This Brief has been prepared to provide design overview and rationale for the proposed development in accordance with the applicable Urban Design policies in the City's Official Plan, and other land use documents. This Brief has been prepared in general accordance with the City's Terms of Reference for Urban Design Briefs.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The applications propose the adaptive re-use of an existing building and property to accommodate purpose-built affordable rental housing units. The development leverages the existing site characteristics, while also enhancing the design and functionality of the property.

The existing building is proposed to be renovated to enable its use for permanent residential accommodations. Some cosmetic enhancements are proposed, with an emphasis on minimizing costs to ensure the units remain affordable.

The proposed six-story apartment building increases the availability of affordable housing provided on the property, and enhances the interaction with the public realm by creating a more direct interface with Lundy's Lane, while also shielding a large amount of the surface parking area from public view.

Improvements to the parking area will also be made to enhance landscape buffering between the parking lot and the public sidewalk.

POLICY CONTEXT

Policy Analysis

Provincial Planning Statement

The subject lands are located within a designated Settlement Area, and area also considered to be within a Strategic Growth Area within the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS). Growth and development are focused to settlement areas in general, with strategic growth areas intended to accommodate higher density forms of intensification and development based on targets established by the local planning authority.

The PPS encourages the provision of an appropriate range and mix of land uses which efficiently use land and infrastructure, and support active and multi-modal transportation options. The PPS also encourages the provision of an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected needs of current and future residents, including housing that is affordable, accessible, and equitable.

The proposal is consistent with this policy direction as it proposes residential intensification which makes for efficient use of land and infrastructure, supports multi-modal transportation options, and contributes to the provision of a full range and mix of housing options, including housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households.

Niagara Official Plan

The subject lands are located within the Delineated Built-up Area within the Niagara Official Plan (NOP). The NOP has assigned the City of Niagara Falls a minimum intensification target of 50% within the municipality's existing Built-up Areas.

Land uses within Urban Areas, including the Delineated Built-up Area should: support a compact built-form and a mix of land uses to support the creation of complete communities; accommodate a diverse range and mix of housing types, unit sizes and densities to accommodate future and current market-based and affordable housing needs; support built-forms, land use patterns and street configurations that minimize land consumption, reduce the cost of municipal water and wastewater systems and services; and support opportunities for intensification including a mix of residential built-forms in appropriate locations to ensure compatibility with established residential areas.

The proposed development conforms with the Region's growth management strategy as it proposes intensified residential land uses which provide for the efficient use of land and infrastructure, and contribute to the provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing.

Niagara Falls Official Plan

The subject lands are designated as Tourist Commercial uses under the City's Official Plan. The lands are also located along the Lundy's Lane intensification corridor.

In general, the Official Plan supports intensification, compact and efficient land use patterns, the provision of a mix of land uses, including a range and mix of residential housing options, including the provision of affordable housing. The Official Plan also contains established targets for the provision of affordable housing.

The proposed development provides intensified residential uses within an intensification corridor, and contributes to the provision of housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households in accordance with the City's Housing Strategy.

Stand-alone residential uses are permitted within the Tourist Commercial designation. The proposed development conforms with the maximum building height of 6-storeys permitted within this designation. The submitted Official Plan Amendment seeks permission to increase the maximum density permitted on the property. The requested amendment is evaluated in the Planning Justification Report.

SITE ANALYSIS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Site Overview

The lands subject to the development applications are municipally addressed as 7701 Lundy's Lane in the City of Niagara Falls and are located on the north side of Lundy's Lane, immediately west of Beaverdams Road. An aerial photo of the subject lands is provided in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 - Aerial View of the Subject Lands (Niagara Navigator, 2023 Imagery)

The subject lands are approximately 0.7 hectares in area, and irregular in shape as a result of the geometry of Beaverdams Road. The site is generally flat.

The subject lands are currently developed with a two-storey motel containing guest rooms, reception and administration areas, retail space and a wedding chapel. The existing development limits the amount of vegetation on site. Some small gardens are present in front of the building, as well as within the parking area.

The existing site is typical for a mid-century motel where the building is located towards the perimeter of the site, and organized into a U-shape to provide for an inner courtyard containing the parking and amenity areas, including an in-ground swimming pool. The building is 2-storeys in height with a peaked roof. The ground floor units have direct access to the parking area. The second-floor units open to a mezzanine. The building features white and tan brick and white cladding and brown asphalt roofing.

See Figures 2-4 for photos of the existing site.



Figure 2 - Area of the subject lands where the 6-storey apartment building will be located. The driveway entrance shown in this photo will be removed.



Figure 3 - The subject lands, viewed from Lundy's Lane. The site has minimal interaction with the street and is visually dominated by the parking area.



Figure 4 - The easterly facade of the building, viewed from Beaverdams Road

Area Context

Figure 5 shows the subject lands in their surrounding context. The subject lands are located within a commercial corridor centred along Lundy's Lane, which begins approximately at Garner Road. The outlet mall anchors the commercial corridor on the east side where the QEW and hydro canal physically separate the commercial corridor to the east.

This corridor is recognizable by the large number of hotels and motels, similar to the subject property. The corridor also contains several restaurants, and small service-commercial-type uses. Commercial building heights in the vicinity range from 1-3 storeys. Commercial developments in the area are typically characterized by large, street-facing parking areas, often with limited visual buffering from the street. Buildings have minimal interaction with the pedestrian realm as they tend to be separated from the sidewalk by their parking areas. See **Figures 6-9** for photos of the surrounding area.

The lotting pattern along Lundy's Lane features larger and deeper parcels, typical of the commercial "strip" development that characterizes this corridor.

Areas to the north and south of the commercial corridor predominately contain low-density residential neighbourhoods. Other notable land uses in the vicinity include several schools, a church and the Lundy's Lane Cemetery. The subject lands have very limited interaction with these uses as the subject lands are entirely surrounded by commercial uses within the corridor.

The road network in the study area is defined by the originally established grid pattern for Stamford Township. Within the study area Lundy's Lane forms a continuous 1km block face along the original Stamford Township Lot 133, between Kalar Road and McLeod Road; and is only interrupted by Beaverdams Road which predates the established grid pattern.

The subject lands have strong access to public transportation which provide local and Regional linkages. The 116/216 route serves the subject property, with a westbound stop located immediately in front of the subject property. Sidewalks are also provided on both sides of Lundy's Lane which enable pedestrian access to multiple destinations including commercial, parks and open space and institutional uses.



Figure 5 - Subject Lands with 400m Radius



Figure 6 - Lundy's Lane streetscape, viewed towards the east along the subject lands' frontage



Figure 7 - Commercial developments along Lundy's Lane tend to emphasize vehicle parking at the expense of a well-designed and clearly defined street edge



Figure 8 - This area of Lund'y Lane contains a large number of motels which usually feature large, street-facing parking areas with the buildings located further away from the street.



Figure 9 – While landscaping helps to soften the interaction between the public and private realms, this development still prioritizes parking at the expense of a well-defined and activated street wall.

URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

The following section presents the design rationale for the proposed development, comparing it to key urban design principles outlined in the Lundy's Lane Urban Design Guidelines (LLUDG) and the Niagara Region Model Design Guidelines (NRMUDG).

Site Design

Design Overview

The proposed development represents a retrofit to the existing development rather than a complete redevelopment of the site. **Figure 10** provides an overview of the proposed changes.

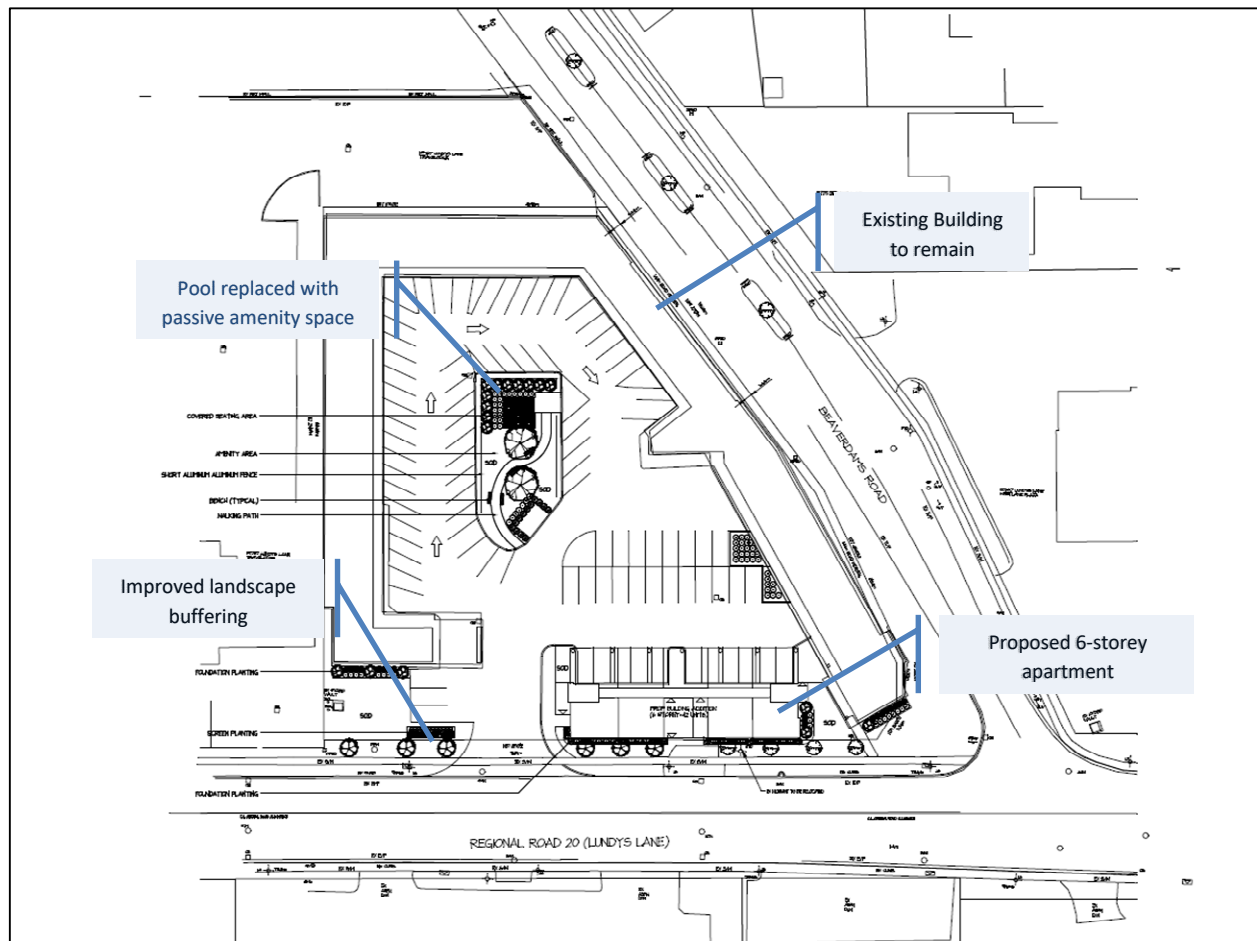


Figure 10 - Proposed Site Plan with Landscaping (Landscape Florida)

The original building will be preserved in its original location, with some renovations to make it suitable for permanent residential uses, while minimizing total costs to keep the units affordable.

A new 6-storey apartment building is proposed to be constructed in the southern portion of the site, along Lundy's Lane.

Some modifications to “courtyard” are containing the parking and outdoor amenity areas are also proposed. These modifications involve removal of one of the driveway accesses to Lundy’s Lane, and providing a wider landscape strip between the parking area and the sidewalk to meet current Zoning standards. A conceptual Landscape Plan has been prepared which shows how the landscape buffers can accommodate trees and other buffer plantings. The landscape plan also proposes to replace the inground pool with passive amenity space which can be utilized year-round.

Design Analysis

The proposed development represents an overall improvement to the design characteristic of the site.

The proposed development significantly enhances the design character of the site. The building placement aligns with the LLUDG, which encourage new structures closer to the street for a pedestrian-friendly streetscape along Lundy’s Lane. Likewise, the NRMUDG advocate for minimal setbacks to establish a relationship between the building and sidewalk.

The site modifications also help to improve the urban design characteristics of the parking areas per LLUDG guidance. Parking is encouraged to be located behind buildings, or otherwise screened from public view. The existing streetscape on Lundy’s Lane is dominated by large, street facing parking areas. The proposed development, including building and landscaping will implement direction from the LLUDG and NRMUDG by providing visual barriers and physical buffers from the private parking area.

In summary, the proposed development greatly enhances the site’s design and support LLUDG and NRMUDG goals for the achievement of a pedestrian-focused streetscape.

Building Design

Design Overview

The conceptual rendering (**Figure 11**) depicts a proposed six-story apartment building which has a footprint of 566.5 square meters (6,100 square feet). The ground floor features a vestibule, elevators, amenity areas, and bicycle parking facing Lundy's Lane, with covered parking at the rear (see **Figure 12**). Floors two through six house residential units, and each end wall includes stairwells (see **Figure 13**). The stairwells and elevator shafts extend above the roofline, adding visual variation. The exterior showcases neutral tones with coloured accents, varied textures, and large windows, especially for the ground-floor amenities which further enhance the building's visual appeal.



Figure 11 - Conceptual Perspective Viewed from Lundy's Lane (MZE Architects)

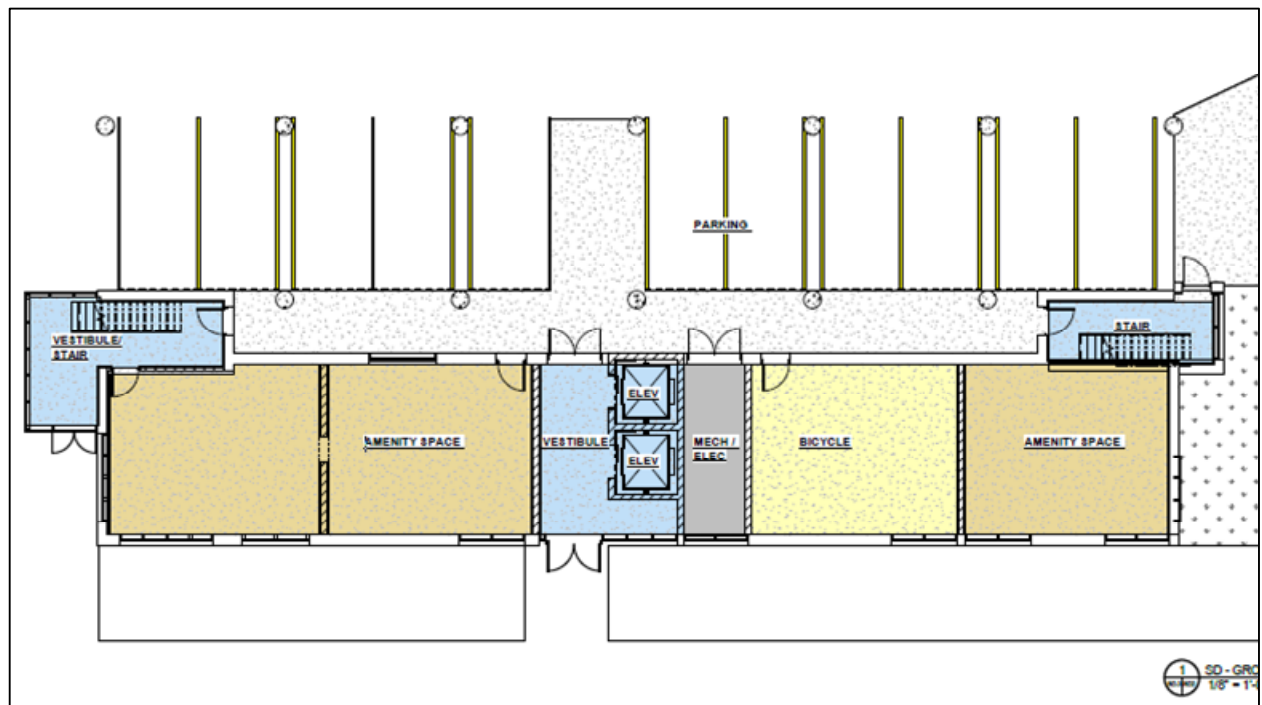


Figure 12 - Ground Floor Plan (MZE Architects)

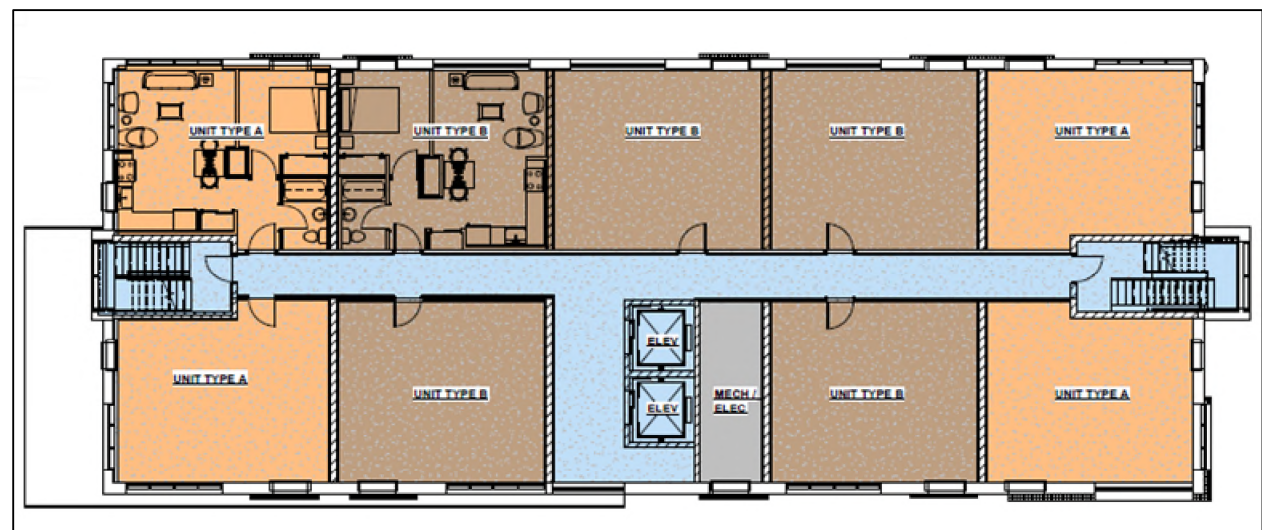


Figure 13 - Second Floor Plan

Design Analysis

The NRMUDG states that infill development should support intensification goals while respecting the character of the existing neighbourhood. The LLUDGs support the change and evolution of the Lundy's Lane streetscape to implement the vision of the Community Improvement Plan.

The proposed building is consistent with the preferred building height of between 4 and 6 storeys specified in the LLUDG. This is also consistent with the NRMUDG which promote intensification to enhance the urban environment and provide amenities for new tenants, residents, and the wider community.

Both the LLUDG and NRMUDG encourage compatibility measures such as step-backs to facilitate the integration of infill development into the existing neighbourhood. An angular plane is encouraged where new development abuts sensitive land uses such as residential uses. Though the proposed development does not directly interface residential uses, the proposed building still maintains a 45-degree angular plane relative to all adjacent properties. The primary interface with adjacent properties will continue to be the existing 2-storey building which helps in transitioning the proposed development with the established neighbourhood.

The LLUDGs encourage design features such as articulated facades and a defined base to provide visual interest. The proposed building features a variety of colours, textures and roof variation which enhances visual interest without overwhelming the surrounding developments. As the area lacks a unified architectural style, the proposed building will integrate well and remain visually unobtrusive within its context. Additionally, the building design incorporates a canopy, providing articulation that defines the building's first level and aligns with urban design goals related to pedestrian comfort. Large ground-floor windows for amenity spaces create a welcoming, human-scale façade that enhances pedestrian interaction and encourages vibrant, active street-level use.

Overall, the proposed building implements NRMUDG and LLUDG standards by supporting intensification while enhancing neighborhood and streetscape character. Its design elements—including appropriate height, set-backs, and an angular plane—provide for a building which enhances the streetscape while remaining unobtrusive. Diverse materials and a pedestrian-focused ground level enhance visual interest and create a vibrant, inviting streetscape that aligns with the Community Improvement Plan's vision for Lundy's Lane.

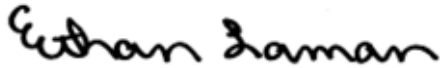
CONCLUSION

The proposed development consists of the conversion of a motel for permanent residential uses, and the construction of a new 6-storey apartment building, along with associated landscaping and parking improvements. The development will result in the creation of 138 purpose-built rental housing units which are anticipated to be affordable for low- and moderate-income households.

In addition to providing a significant amount of housing, the development implements and aligns with good urban design principles and provides for an enhanced, pedestrian-oriented and activated streetscape as envisioned in the Lundy's Lane Urban Design Guidelines and the Niagara Region Model Urban Design Guidelines.

The development supports the City's priorities related to intensification and the provision of affordable rental housing while supporting the City's Urban design vision for Lundy's Lane.

Prepared and submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethan Laman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ethan Laman, BURPI., MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner
Upper Canada Consultants