



Urban Design Brief

Walkup Apartments at the Royal Oak Dairy Redevelopment (Phase Three)

315 Robert St. and part of 225 East Avenue N. Hamilton



Invizij Architects

Project # 21-011

May 2021

1.0 Executive Statement

The proposed development is the third phase in the redevelopment of the Royal Oak Dairy site. Initially built in 1898 and occupying the majority of a large urban block, the site has undergone a transformation to create 108 units of affordable housing facilitated through Phase 1 (95 units) and Phase 2 (13 units). This proposed redevelopment on the south portion of the lot will create an additional 31 units for a total of 139 units within the Royal Oak redevelopment.

The first phase included the re-building of the former dairy building using roughly the same footprint, massing, and building elevations for the three storey building. To the north of the former dairy building a new five storey building was added in a more modern, but complimentary form. These two buildings are tied together below grade by a subgrade parking garage for 39 vehicles.

The second phase of the redevelopment includes the renovation of the former stables and carriage storage building into 13 apartments. For this building, the original brick facades are all being retained and restored. The original window openings are also being maintained, with some being enlarged slightly for the apartments.

Between these two phases is a shared courtyard, or piazza, which will serve as a gathering space for the entire community and especially for those living in the Royal Oak redevelopment. The ground floor of the stables building has a common space that opens up to the piazza and will be shared by all tenants.

This is the context of this third and final phase in the redevelopment of the Royal Oak Dairy site. While the first two phases are primarily designed for smaller households, this final phase is intended for couples and small families with the majority of units having 2 bedrooms. Indwell will own and operate the buildings while providing supports and networking for all 3 phases.



Figure A – Rendering of the site plan for the Royal Oak Dairy Redevelopment. The Phase 3 walkups are the “L” shaped building on the left.

2.0 Background/ Existing conditions

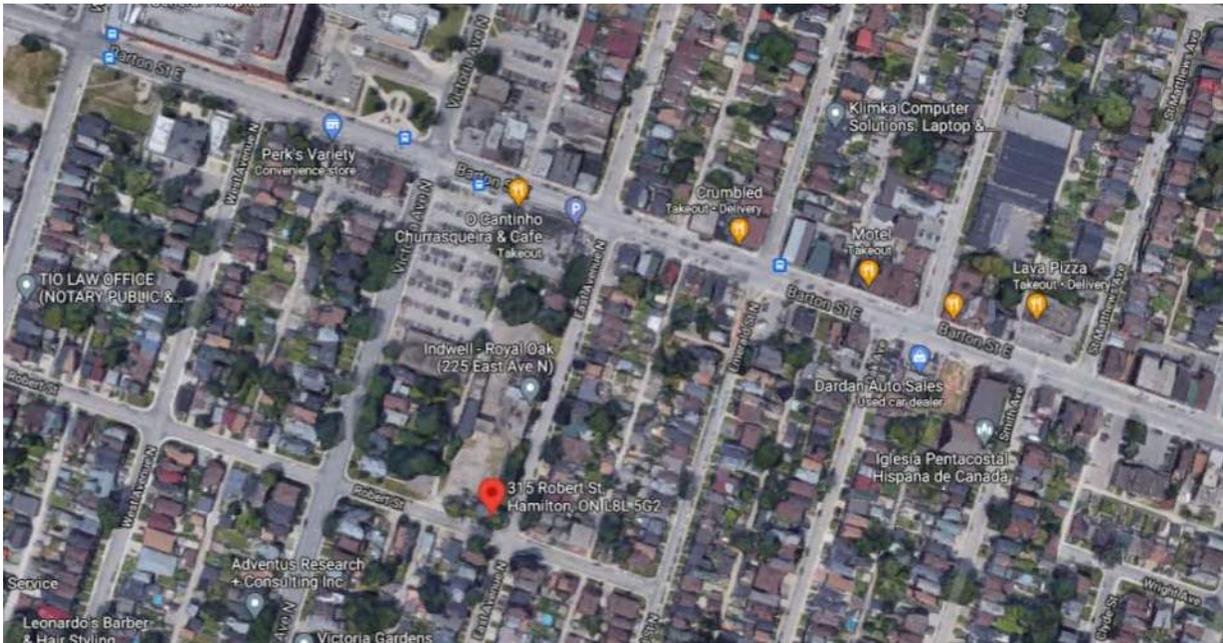


Figure 1- Satellite map of the surrounding neighbourhood to the Royal Oak Dairy development



Figure 2 - Location of the site from Robert Street

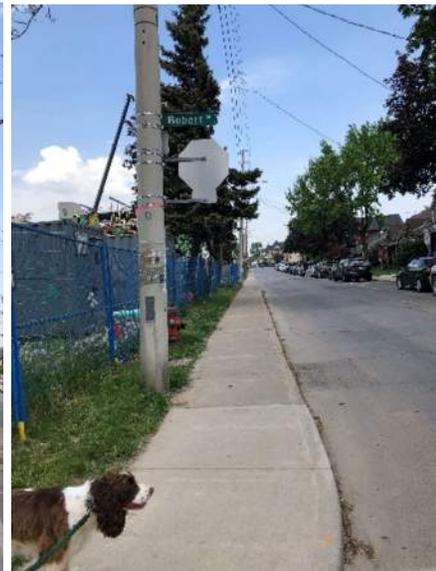


Figure 3- Streetscape along East Ave

2.1 Topography, vegetation, existing buildings

The Royal Oak redevelopment is comprised of multiple properties that are now merged on title. 315 Robert St and 223-225 East Avenue North were the previous site of the former Royal Oak Dairy. 247 East Avenue North was historically a self-contained detached residential dwelling. All properties are now merged on title and owned by Indwell Community Homes. 315 Robert St and 223-225 East Ave N is a former brownfield site with only wild vegetation. There is a slope from the northwest to southeast of the site, with the low point at the rear laneway. The site faces two local streets, East Avenue North

(which is the access to Phase 1 and the subgrade parking) and Robert Street. It also abuts an assumed City laneway to the west. There used to be a house at 315 Robert which was torn down for the redevelopment due to structural concerns. The house was originally tied to the dairy and used as administrative and security staff accommodations but had fallen into disrepair. Also within this footprint was the former covered loading docks for the dairy, which had been in disrepair and were torn down as part of the redevelopment. The majority of the site was used for parking and access to the former dairy site, and today is all used for parking and staging of the construction related to approved Phases 1 and 2 (DA-20-001).



Figure 4- West side access to the site along existing laneway



Figure 5- Existing streetscape along Robert Street

This historic Royal Oak Dairy building was mostly three storeys and brick with a flat roof. The building had a minimal setback from East Ave N. There was detailing around the windows which is being replicated in the new building and a historic archway transom at the main entrance that had been lost during one of its different iterations and is being brought back in the new entry to the building. The stables building is also mostly three storeys and brick, with a pitched roof. This building has been maintained and is currently being renovated as Phase Two of the redevelopment. A thorough analysis of the existing and former Royal Oak Dairy buildings and site can be found in the Cultural Heritage Report and Salvage report by Megan Hobson approved through DA-20-001.

2.2 Analysis of site context, neighbourhood, streetscape

The surrounding neighbourhood is primarily single family dwellings, some which have been divided into multiple residences. Most of the houses are two storeys high, some include a third storey attic. There are a few infill houses on Robert Street that are only one storey. A majority of the houses are brick, some have siding. Typical lots are quite narrow at 6-8m wide and none of the houses have off-street parking from the front with the exception of a few infill houses. Most dwellings utilize street parking as well as rear parking accessed from the historic laneways.



Figure 6- Dwellings in the surrounding neighbourhood

There are large municipal boulevards and established street trees throughout the neighbourhood which provide a buffer from the street and generous shade of the sidewalks. As a result, the neighbourhood is very good for walkability with access to surrounding uses and transit.

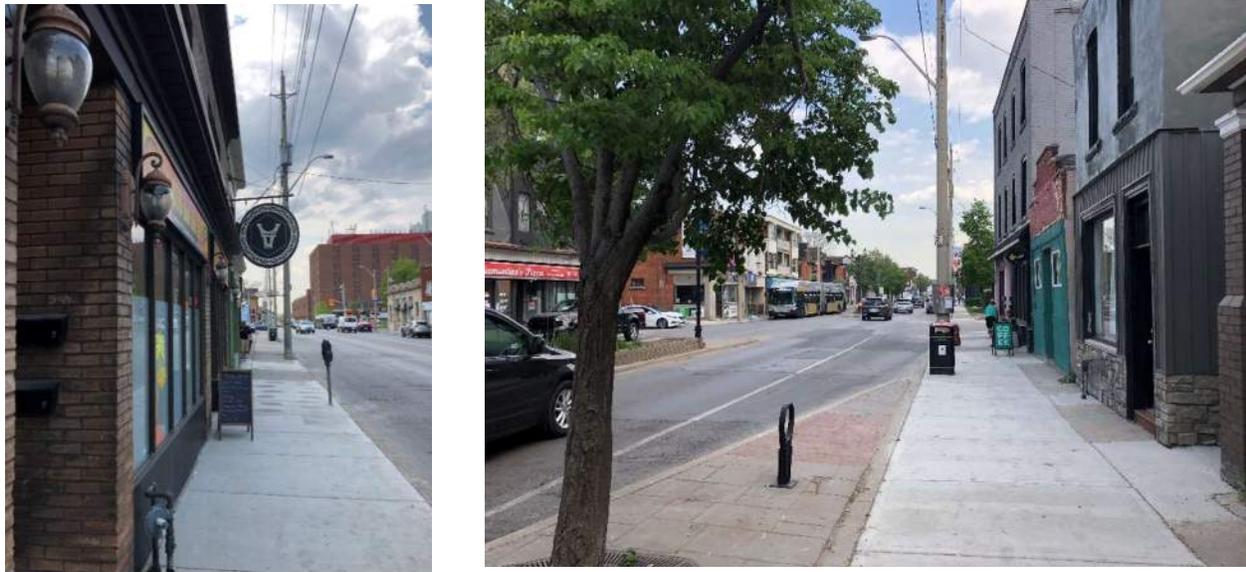


Figure 7 & 8– Neighbourhood’s access and walkability



Figure 9 & 10– Construction of the first two phases of the Royal Oak Redevelopment

2.3 Location within community

The site is located within the Lansdale neighbourhood. One of the main anchors of the community is the General Hospital which is located one block away at Barton St E and Victoria Ave N. There are several parking lots and supporting businesses for the large regional hospital along Barton St. Barton St is about half a block north of Royal Oak and is a designated minor arterial road. While Barton has historically been a major commercial street, it had fallen mostly into a state of neglect until recently, when new investment in this part of the Barton Street neighbourhood has seen significant reinvestment by small businesses. In recent years there has been a resurgence of new restaurants, cafes, bakeries and bars which have brought new life into the neighbourhood.

Further to the close proximity of Barton Street East, the subject lands are within walking distance to Cannon Street East, another minor arterial road with a major bicycle lane that connects the east part of Hamilton to the west.

Downtown Hamilton is a Urban Growth Centre and its easterly boundary is approximately 550 metres from Royal Oak. Therefore, the Downtown is within walking distance of the subject lands.

2.4 Type of street & location of parking

Both East Avenue North and Robert Street are “local” roads per UHOP. Most houses within the Landsdale neighbourhood have rear parking on their lot accessed by the historic laneways as well as street parking. The center of the block historically had parking for the Dairy, with an undefined number of parking spaces and a large area for shipping & receiving. There is a municipal parking lot to the north at 255 East Avenue N. and a large parking lot encompassing one quarter of the lot on the northwest corner, closest to the hospital.



Figure 11-14 – Parking areas in the neighbourhood

2.5 Description of applicable policies & design guidelines

The following subsection will outline the applicable policies and design guidelines of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan to frame the urban design analysis found in section 4.0.

Urban Hamilton Official Plan Volume 1 Section B.3.3 provides urban design goals and principles that apply to all development and redevelopment in the urban area. Generally, the goals of the City are to provide a built form that enhances the identity of Hamilton's communities with quality public and private space that is inclusive, transit-supportive and environmentally sustainable while respecting the existing character of the neighbourhood.

B.3.3.2.4 Quality spaces physically and visually connect the public and private realms. Public and private development and redevelopment should create quality spaces by:

- a) organizing space in a logical manner through the design, placement, and construction of new buildings, streets, structures, and landscaping;*
- b) recognizing that every new building or structure is part of a greater whole that contributes to the overall appearance and visual cohesiveness of the urban fabric;*
- c) using materials that are consistent and compatible with the surrounding context in the design of new buildings;*
- e) creating a continuous animated street edge in urban environments;*
- f) including transitional areas between the public and private spaces where possible through use of features such as landscaping, planters, porches, canopies, and/or stairs;*
- g) creating public spaces that are human-scale, comfortable, and publicly visible with ample building openings and glazing;*
- [...]*
- i) minimizing excessive street noise and stationary noise source levels through the design, placement, and construction of buildings and landscaping.*

B.3.3.2.5 Places that are safe, accessible, connected and easy to navigate shall be created by using the following design applications, where appropriate:

- a) connecting buildings and spaces through an efficient, intuitive, and safe network of streets, roads, alleys, lanes, sidewalks, and pathways;*
- b) providing connections and access to all buildings and places for all users, regardless of age and physical ability;*
- c) ensuring building entrances are visible from the street and promoting shelter at entrance ways;*
- d) integrating conveniently located public transit and cycling infrastructure with existing and new development;*
- [...]*
- f) providing pedestrian-scale lighting;*

[...]

- j) *creating places and spaces which are publicly visible and safe.*

B.3.3.2.6 Where it has been determined through the policies of this Plan that compatibility with the surrounding areas is desirable, new development and redevelopment should enhance the character of the existing environment by:

- a) *complementing and animating existing surroundings through building design and placement as well as through placement of pedestrian amenities;*
- b) *respecting the existing cultural and natural heritage features of the existing environment by re-using, adapting, and incorporating existing characteristics;*
- c) *allowing built form to evolve over time through additions and alterations that are in harmony with existing architectural massing and style;*
- d) *complementing the existing massing patterns, rhythm, character, colour, and surrounding context; and,*
- e) *encouraging a harmonious and compatible approach to infilling by minimizing the impacts of shadowing and maximizing light to adjacent properties and the public realm.*

B.3.3.2.8 Urban design should promote environmental sustainability by:

- a) *achieving compact development and resulting built forms;*
- b) *integrating, protecting, and enhancing environmental features and landscapes, including existing topography, forest and vegetative cover, green spaces and corridors through building and site design;*
- c) *encouraging on-site storm water management and infiltration through the use of techniques and technologies, including storm water management ponds, green roofs, and vegetated swales;*
- d) *encouraging the use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or other environmental building rating tools for buildings and infrastructure for all development and redevelopment;*
- e) *encouraging the reduction of resource consumption in building and site development and avoiding the release of contaminants into the environment; and,*
- f) *encouraging energy efficiency in neighbourhood design and development as set out in Section B.3.7.1.*

B.3.3.3.2 New development shall be designed to minimize impact on neighbouring buildings and public spaces by:

- a) *creating transitions in scale to neighbouring buildings;*
- b) *ensuring adequate privacy and sunlight to neighbouring properties; and,*
- c) *minimizing the impacts of shadows and wind conditions.*

B.3.3.3.3 New development shall be massed to respect existing and planned street proportions.

B.3.3.3.4 New development shall define the street through consistent setbacks and building elevations. Design directions for setbacks and heights are found in Chapter E – Urban Systems and Designations and in the Zoning By-law.

B.3.3.3.5 Built form shall create comfortable pedestrian environments by:

- a) *locating principal façades and primary building entrances parallel to and as close to the street as possible;*
- b) *including ample glazing on ground floors to create visibility to and from the public sidewalk;*
- c) *including a quality landscape edge along frontages where buildings are set back from the street;*
- d) *locating surface parking to the sides or rear of sites or buildings, where appropriate; and,*
- e) *using design techniques, such as building step-backs, to maximize sunlight to pedestrian areas.*

3.0 Site Design

3.1 Proposal & functional requirements

The proposed development for the Phase Three Apartments is 'L' shaped building facing both Robert Street and East Avenue to continue the street frontage. It is three storeys tall with a partial lower level that will be visible from Robert Street where the topography is lower than at the rear. The Phase One apartments are mostly one bedroom, with some two bedroom units. The second phase is studio apartments. While these buildings are intended for single person households, couples, and single parent households, the third phase of the redevelopment is intended to be for small families due to the two bedroom size of the units. The intention with these apartments and proposed built form is to blend into and address the street, becoming part of the neighbourhood fabric and addressing the pedestrian realm.



Figure 15 – Proposed Basement Plan

GFA= +/-6,940 FT²

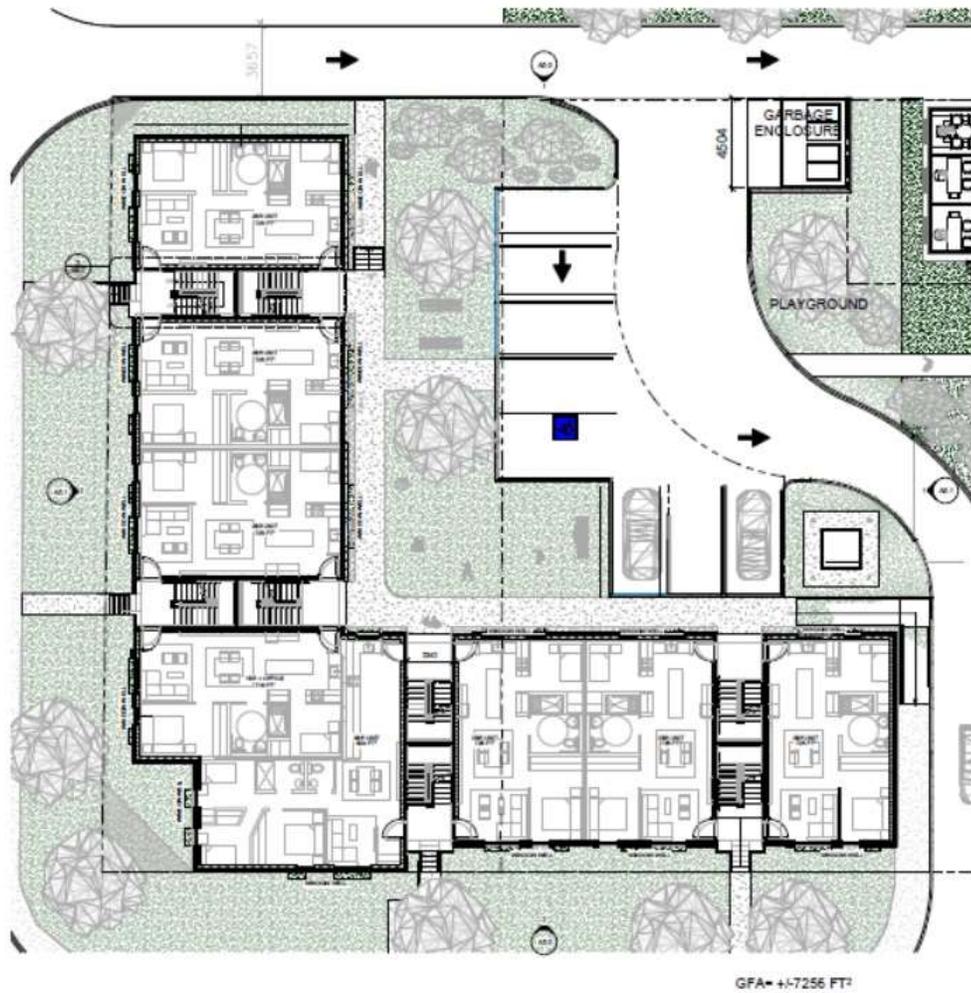


Figure 16 – Proposed First Floor Plan



Figure 17– Proposed Second & Third Floor Plan

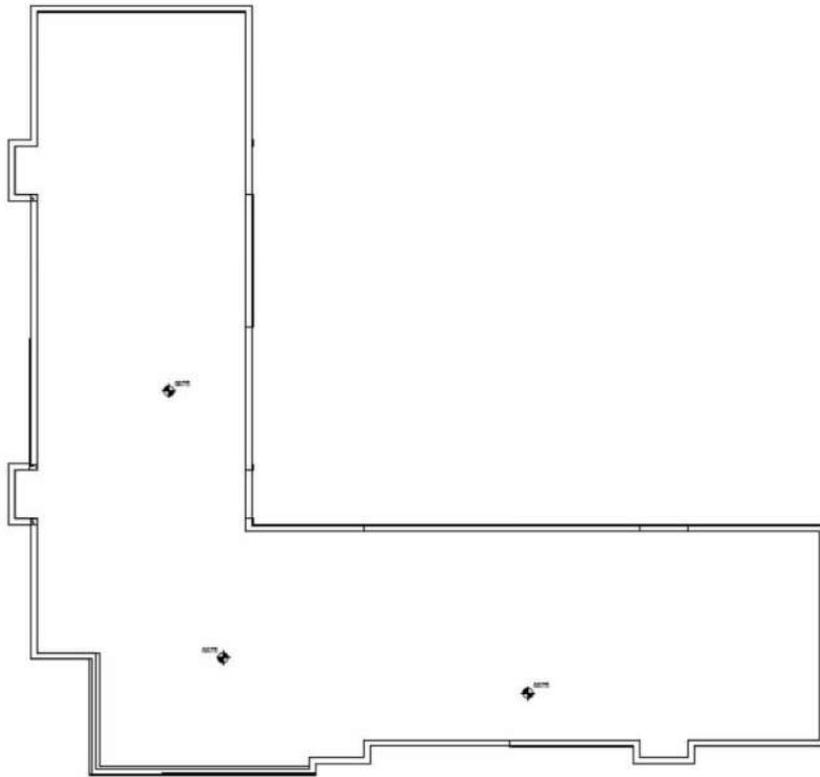


Figure 18 – Proposed Roof Plan

3.2 Site design

The overall design intent is to have the proposed dwellings address the street, with stacked walkup units with shared exterior staircases between units. Each unit can therefore be accessed either from the sidewalk or from the rear parking lot, as each unit will have both a front and rear staircase. Between the parking lot and the building on the inside of the lot will be a small play area for the children in the building to play.

The central parking spaces will be accessed from the existing laneway with a shared exit driveway to the Phase One subgrade parking level off East Avenue North. The surface parking lot driveway was designed to allow for trucks, including waste management vehicles, to navigate the site. While the surface parking lot has less spaces than the planned development, there is the opportunity for tenants with vehicles to have a dedicated parking space in the approved parking level of Phase 1.

Site lighting will be internal to the site and subject to approval at Site Plan Control.

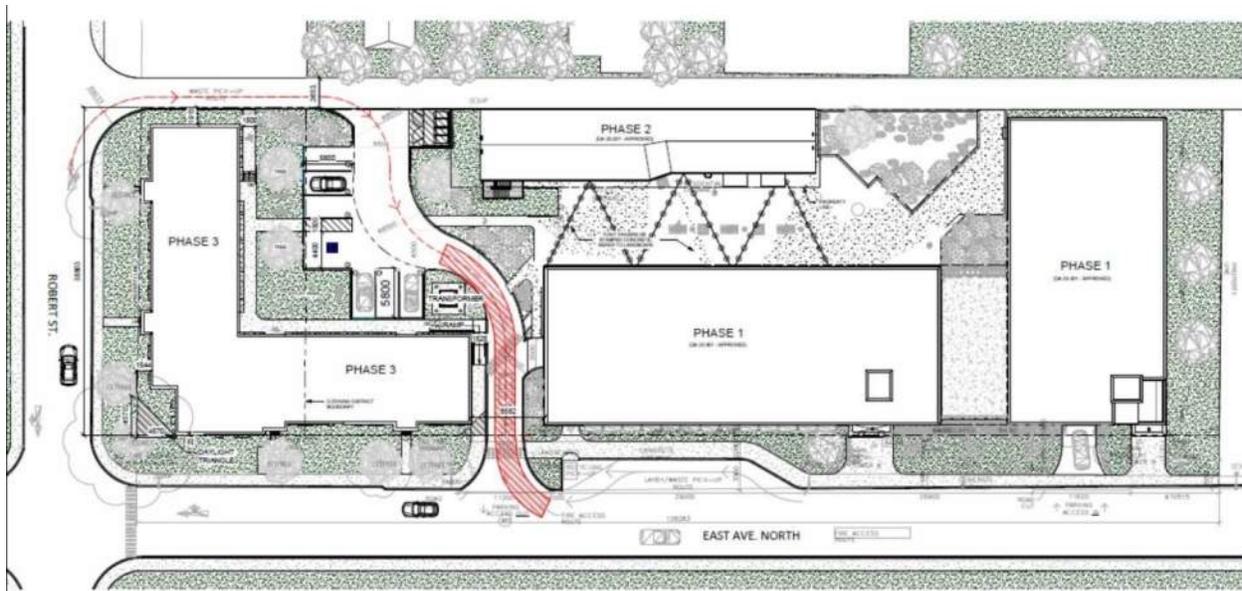


Figure 19 – Proposed Site Plan

3.3 Building design

The proposed three storey building is 'L' shaped with 8 units per floor and three storeys above grade, one storey below. The proposed building is 31 units with one unit being used for utility services to the building. There are five sets of exterior staircases which allow access to the suites both from the sidewalk and the rear parking area, each staircase is used to access a stack of apartments, allowing for direct access to each front door for visitors, deliveries, and a greater feeling of connectedness to the neighbourhood. With this direct access to the entry door to each suite, the intention is that these entries will play a more active role in the streetscape, with occupants coming in and out and sharing a greater connection to the life of the street.

The building's design will reflect the character of the surrounding houses with its window sizes and the materiality of the facades. The building will be clad in a mixture of brick and siding as can be seen in the elevations and renderings.



Figure 20 – North – West view showing the barrier free access from the parking lot



Figure 21 – South - East corner at the intersection of Robert St. & East Ave. Additional benches and landscaping will be added to the rendering to reflect the landscape concept plan.



Figure 22 – East elevation along East Ave., showing shared parking exit for the entire development



Figure 23 – Site view

3.4 Landscape design

The amenity area behind the Phase 3 building consists of two seating areas and a small play space suitable for pre-school aged children.

In order to maximize accessibility, concrete curbs have been removed at the parking spaces and replaced with rounded granite boulders which will prevent vehicles from entering while allowing unimpeded movement from the parking spaces to walkways through the seating areas.

Depending on whether the driver or passenger are in need of the barrier-free space, there are access areas on both sides: toward the larger seating area from the passenger's side, and toward the smaller seating area from the driver's side. Both paved seating areas provide pedestrian connections to the walkways that run parallel to the building.

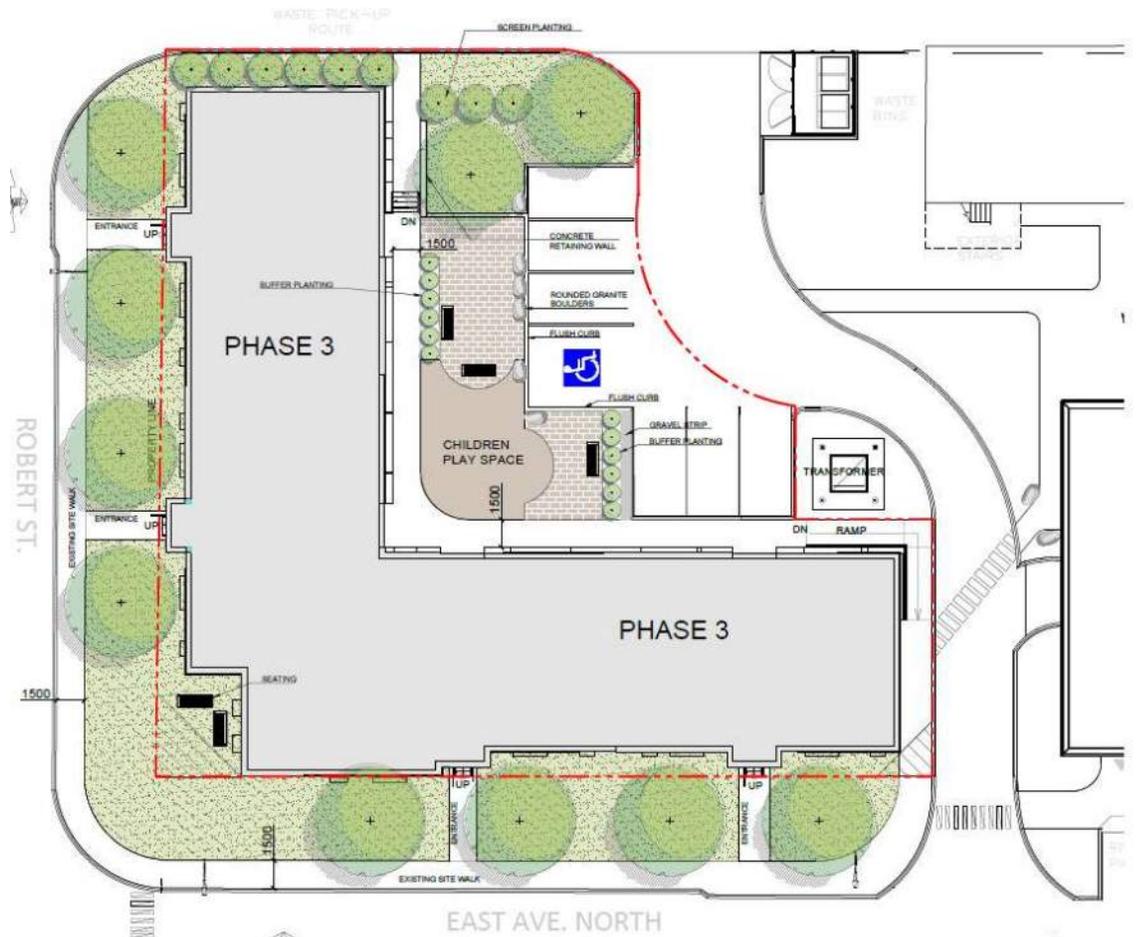


Figure 24 - Landscape concept plan

A green buffer has been provided between the alley and the amenity space (trees and shrubs). A future smoking shelter will be installed near the western parking space. Hedges perform a similar function at the two seating areas.

City of Hamilton Forestry staff have indicated that the existing trees in the municipal ROW will need to be removed. The concept includes new street tree planting which will support the city's future urban forest. Lastly, benches are provided at the front of the building.

4.0 Analysis of proposal

4.1 How the design is informed by the urban design requirements

The proposed Phase 3 redevelopment is sensitive to the surrounding neighbourhood and provides a gradual transition of building height from the residential uses south the subject lands to the approved multiple dwellings within Phases 1 and 2. The proposed 3-storey building above grade will provide a pedestrian scale at the street and the proposed front and exterior side yard setbacks will provide a continuous street wall that is carried through in Phase 1. Opportunity for landscape within the limited street setbacks will be maximized with the implementation of an approved Landscape Plan through Site Plan Control including sod, native-species plantings, and trees. Surface parking is at the rear of the proposed building to be screened from the public realm and will be buffered from the building with landscaping and amenity area.

The ultimate building height of 9.2 metres is appropriate for the 20.0 metre public right-of-way widths that the subject lands abut. The proposed low-rise built form will not cause impactful wind conditions, shadowing or overlook to adjacent residential uses or within the public realm. The proposed built form will animate the street and promote a safe and walkable neighbourhood with dwelling access from the street via exterior stairs and windows activating the street.

Overall, the proposed Phase 3 redevelopment will function comprehensively with the overall Royal Oak redevelopment and provide efficient and compact development for affordable housing. The proposed Phase 3 building is a logical placement with consideration to Phases 1 and 2 with the opportunity to share amenity and parking areas. Internal pedestrian connections and landscaping will connect to the public realm and establish a cohesive development where residents of the development and greater neighbourhood can access outdoor spaces.

The proposed building will be sustainable with energy efficient design and Passive House detailing of the building envelope. The proposed landscape area will contribute to an overall low impact stormwater management strategy on the site. The building design will utilize exterior material types and colours that compliment the approved buildings in Phase 1 and 2, including the red brick 4-storey building immediately north of the Phase 3. Building materials include traditional red Hamilton brick, traditional white (tan) brick, a more contemporary grey brick, and corrugated white siding.

4.2 How the design fits in the neighbourhood in terms of design

The proposed Phase 3 redevelopment is transitioned into the overall Royal Oak development with a gradation of height and mix of material palette that compliments the Phase 1 and 2 buildings. Amenity areas are connected via walkway connections, waste is consolidated utilizing City laneways and a defined and animated streetscape is established with a "build-to" street wall along the street edge. The overall Royal Oak redevelopment fits into the neighbourhood as it redeveloped and re-adapted a brownfield site within a residential neighbourhood that historically had buildings with larger massings.

The proposed design of Phase 3 fits into the neighbourhood with a 3-storey building height above grade, complimentary material palette and providing family sized units. The proposed phase 3 redevelopment in conjunction with Phases 1 and 2 will provide programmed amenity areas accessible by the public and promote social gathering. The primarily low density residential neighbourhood is well connected to a mix of land uses accessed by transit corridors and a local street network that promotes walkability and other alternative transportation methods. The overall design accommodates landscape buffers along the street edge and improves the East Avenue North street function with the installation of a lay-by approved as part of Phase 1. Parking is screened from the public realm. Phase 3 will contribute to improving public safety by implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques with overhead surveillance of public spaces and the street.

4.3 Other considerations

This project aims to be a good neighbour and fit into the context of the neighbourhood while continuing Indwell's value-based design goals of sustainable development. The entire complex has been designed to meet the Passive House energy standard, with significantly reduced carbon output from energy sources and energy consumption that is 40% less than a code-built building. The walk-ups have also made use of the existing slopes on the site to provide barrier free access and use of all the suites on the ground floor (accessible from the parking side).

Indwell is also unique in its funding model, which aims to provide deeply affordable housing that is significantly less than average rents in the community. The third phase of the Royal Oak Dairy redevelopment is the final piece in what will be a model of sustainable development in Hamilton and across Canada.



Figure 25 - Birds eye view of Royal Oak Dairy including all three phases