530 Oxford Street West
London, ON

Urban Design Brief
Site Plan Approval Application
(Captain Generation Mall
c/o York Developments)

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Our File: 1094‘Y’
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

MHBC has been retained by Captain Generation Mall (c/o York Developments) to assist with a commercial development proposed for lands addressed as 530 Oxford Street West. The subject lands (Site) measure approximately 5.4 ha in area and are located at the southeast corner of the Oxford Street West and Wonderland Road North intersection. The proposal will integrate two new buildings into an existing commercial plaza containing a large format, multi-unit commercial building.

As discussed in this Urban Design Brief, the two new buildings will be located in the northeast corner of the Site; providing a total additional building area of 790 m² (Building A: 360 m², Building B: 430 m²). Collectively, the development would support additional service/retail commercial uses on the Site. The shopping centre would be serviced by the existing network of shared street accesses and a common surface parking area integrating main drive aisles, pedestrian corridors, walkway connections, bicycle parking areas and landscaping features.

The purpose of this Brief is to illustrate the design approach for the proposed Site Plan. This Brief has been prepared according to the City of London Urban Design Brief Terms of Reference (2009) and provides guidance on how the site should be developed.

1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Site is an irregular shape with frontage along both Oxford Street West and Wonderland Road North. These lands are bounded by these two roadways with a separate parcel located at the immediate corner of this intersection which contains a retail store (Nash Jewelers).

The subject lands have approximately 158 m of frontage along Oxford Street West and a maximum depth of approximately 240 m. Further, the Site contains large elevation changes around the perimeter with the majority of the Site being below the surrounding roadway grades. The internal portion of the Site is generally flat with the highest elevation along the northern and western perimeters of the property dropping towards the south and east. There are no prominent environmental features on the Site.

Adjacent to the Site, Oxford Street West provides five traffic lanes including a single left-turn lane, Wonderland Road North has six lanes of traffic including a left turn, and a right turn lane. Both streets are classified as arterial roads according to Schedule ‘C’ (Transportation Corridors) of the 1989 City of London Official Plan.
1.3 SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT

The subject lands are located entirely within the City’s Urban Growth Boundary and are within the West London Planning District. Further, this Site is located within a large commercial hub containing a mix of large format and smaller retail plazas within all quadrants of the Wonderland Road North/Oxford Street West intersection. Surrounding these commercial lands is a mix of medium and high-density residential areas.

Surrounding land uses are summarized as follows and are presented on the following figures:

**To the North:** Oxford Street West corridor; large format commercial

**To the East:** McDonalds restaurant; small format commercial; woodlot; high-density residential development

**To the South:** Small format commercial; train tracks; woodlot

**To the West:** Wonderland Road North corridor; small format commercial
SITE CONTEXT

![View south towards Site from Oxford Street West frontage](image1)

![View east towards Site from Wonderland Road North frontage](image2)

![View west towards Site from drive aisle at eastern perimeter](image3)
SITE CONTEXT

View southeast towards Site from Oxford Street West frontage

View north from entrance to large format commercial building on Site
1.4 DESIGN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following is a summary of key design goals and objectives incorporated into project planning to establish a development concept that responds to both site opportunities and constraints:

1. Create a contemporary development concept integrating a visually appealing streetscape along Oxford Street West;

2. Provide a wider range of commercial uses in the vicinity of a major arterial intersection;

3. Capitalize on exposure of a highly visible location along two arterial corridors;

4. Place buildings near the street interface to create a strong, visually appealing street edge along Oxford Street West;

5. Provide building designs that, through the combination of massing, orientation, pedestrian entrances, architectural elements, detailing, and material selection, will improve the streetscape and pedestrian experience along the Oxford Street West frontage;

6. Improve site aesthetics through the introduction of additional landscaping in the vicinity of the proposed buildings and in reconfigured parking areas, where appropriate;

7. Provide for development that will be supportive of existing/future transit routes and alternative transportation modes;

8. Integrate sidewalk connections from the street and parking areas to support safe pedestrian movement;

9. Ensure building entrances are well defined and accessible from barrier free parking stalls; and

10. Locate parking areas, loading zones and garbage collection areas to the rear of buildings to screen from view where practical and appropriate.
1.5 DESIGN RESPONSE TO CITY OF LONDON DOCUMENTS

To follow is a discussion of the relevant policies from these documents as they relate to the design of the Site.

1.5.1 City of London Official Plan (1989)

The Site is designated Community Commercial Node on Schedule ‘A’ (Land Use) of the City’s 1989 Official Plan. Permitted uses in this designation include:

- All types of retail outlets e.g., department stores, home improvement and furnishings stores;
- Supermarkets, financial institutions and services;
- Service-oriented office uses such as real estate, insurance and travel agencies;
- Community facilities, such as libraries or day care centres;
- Professional and medical/dental offices; and commercial and private schools;
- Limited office uses and places of entertainment;
- Multi-family, high density residential uses and community facilities.

As discussed in Section 2 of this Brief, the proponent is proposing to develop the Site for additional commercial uses within an existing shopping centre. The Site will continue to feature a broad range of retail/service commercial uses, and will primarily be comprised of smaller-scale retail uses in accordance with the above policies.

For the purposes of this Brief, the urban design principles set out in Chapter 11 of the 1989 Official Plan have particular relevance to the design approach of this project. Chapter 11 provides direction for matters relating to the visual character, aesthetics, and compatibility of land use, and to the qualitative aspects of development. Further Section 11.1.1. of this Official Plan itemizes a series of urban design principles for consideration in project planning.

The following principles set out in Section 11.1.1. have particular relevance to this proposal and reflect the core design objectives identified in Section 1.4 of this Brief:

vii) A coordinated approach should be taken to the planning and design of streetscape improvements in commercial areas, including the upgrading of building facades, signage, lighting, parking areas and landscaping;

viii) In pedestrian traffic areas, new development should include street-oriented features that provide for the enhancement of the pedestrian environment, such as canopies, awnings, landscaped setbacks and sitting areas.

x) Landscaping should be used to conserve energy and water, enhance the appearance of building setback and yard areas, contribute to the blending of new and existing
...Parking and loading facilities and driveways should be located and designed to facilitate maneuverability on site, between adjacent sites where appropriate, and to reduce the traffic flow disruption resulting from turning movements to and from the property.

It is our opinion that the Site Plan and building elevations prepared for this proposal demonstrate that the project complies with and has regard for the policies and principles set out in Sections 3.5.16., 4.3.7.6., and 11.1.1. (refer to Appendices A and B of this Brief, respectively). The merits of the proposal in the context of these principles are also presented in Section 2 of this Brief.

1.5.4 City of London Official Plan (New)

Status

City Council adopted a new City of London Official Plan (‘The London Plan’) on June 23, 2016. The London Plan was subsequently approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA), with modifications, on December 30, 2016.

Applicable policies and schedules of the new Official Plan have been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board and are not in effect. Notwithstanding, the following discussion describes how the proposed development aligns with the policy direction of The London Plan as approved by the MMA.

Land Use Permissions

Under the new Official Plan, the Site is designated Transit Village on Map 1 (‘Place Types’). Policy 806 defines an overall vision for development in the Transit Village place type to be achieved by the end of the planning period (2035)

“…Our Transit Villages will be exceptionally designed, high-density mixed-use urban neighbourhoods connected by rapid transit to the Downtown and each other. They will be occupied by extensive retail and commercial services and will allow for substantial office spaces, resulting in complete communities. …”

Policies 811 and 812 set out specific development permissions applicable to the Site:

“811_ The following uses may be permitted within the Transit Village Place Type: 1. A broad range of residential, retail, service, office, cultural, institutional, hospitality, entertainment, recreational, and other related uses may be permitted in the Transit Village Place Type. 2. Mixed-use buildings will be encouraged. 3. Where there is a mix of uses within an individual building, retail and service uses will be encouraged to front the street...
at grade. 4. The full range of uses described above will not necessarily be permitted on all sites within the Transit Village Place Type.

812. New drive through facilities may be permitted in the Transit Village Place Type where it can be clearly demonstrated that they will not detract from the vision and role of the Place Type and the quality and character of the pedestrian oriented street environment."

Additionally, Policy 813 provides policies with respect to intensity in Transit Villages:

“1. Buildings within the Transit Village Place Type will be a minimum of either two storeys or eight metres in height and will not exceed 15 storeys in height. Type 2 Bonus Zoning beyond this limit, up to 22 storeys, may be permitted in conformity with the Our Tools policies of this Plan.

4. For larger-scale projects on deep lots, a grid-based internal road network should be established to facilitate further development/redevelopment over time."

Given this policy framework, the new Official Plan permits these lands to be developed for commercial uses. In our opinion, the design of the Site is consistent with the policies of the Transit Village place type; however, a Zoning By-law Amendment would likely be required to permit the proposed drive-through use.

**City Design**

The City Design component of the London Plan (Policies 189 to 306) defines the urban design principles and policies that are intended to guide the character and form of development. The overarching objectives of these policies are outlined in Policy 193:

"In all of the planning and development we do and the initiatives we take as a municipality, we will design for and foster:

1. A well-designed built form throughout the city.
2. Development that is designed to be a good fit and compatible within its context.
3. A high-quality, distinctive and memorable city image.
4. Development that supports a positive pedestrian environment.
5. A built form that is supportive of all types of active mobility and universal accessibility.
6. High-quality public spaces that are safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.
7. A mix of housing types to support ageing in place and affordability.
8. Sustainably designed development that is resilient to long-term change.
9. Healthy, diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods that promote a sense of place and character."
Section 2 of this Brief demonstrates that the proposed Site Plan has been designed to achieve these broad objectives, where applicable. Further, the project design is in keeping with the intent of the character, street network, streetscape, public space and site layout policies set out in the City Design section of the new Official Plan. Notwithstanding that this section of the London Plan is under appeal, the design principles provided in the applicable City Design policies are generally consistent with the direction set out in the existing Official Plan, and the City’s Placemaking Guidelines (outlined in this Brief).

1.5.5 City of London Commercial Urban Design Guidelines

The City of London Commercial Urban Design Guidelines were adopted by Council in December 1999. These guidelines were intended to evaluate commercial site plan applications for large format retailers.

The following is a summary of how the proposed development achieves the two goals identified in this document:

**Goal 1:** To reduce the mass/scale and uniform ‘box-like’ appearance of large, blank walls of new format retail buildings, while providing visual interest through a high quality building design.

- The façades of the two proposed commercial buildings will be broken up by projections and recesses in their façades, colour and/or material changes and other architectural features.
- The buildings will include large windows and architectural details to provide visual interest from the public realm.
- Blank façades along Oxford Street West will feature large windows and an entrance.

**Goal 2:** To reduce the overall visual impact of paved parking lots and provide for safe, convenient, efficient and aesthetically pleasing vehicular and pedestrian access to, from and between commercial buildings.

- Where appropriate, parking areas will be broken up into smaller parking modules and landscaped islands are incorporated to break up the visual impact of parking areas.
- Perimeter/edge landscaping will be used to create visual interest.
- No parking is proposed between the proposed buildings and the Oxford Street West frontage.
- Service functions will be screened from public streets, where practical and appropriate. For the proposed building with the drive-through facility, conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles will be minimized.

1.5.6 City of London Placemaking Guidelines

The City of London Placemaking Guidelines are intended to promote liveable communities, an identifiable character and a sense of place.
The following summarizes the principal (core) Placemaking Guidelines that provided design direction for this project as presented in Section 2 of this Brief:

**Core Placemaking Guidelines**

### Site Context and Community Elements

- Establish key social, pedestrian and public transit connections between new development and the existing fabric of the city.
- Develop an overall concept plan which clearly identifies the relationship between land uses, built form and natural features of the community.
- Develop the concept plan with specific built form types and requirements in mind while allowing for future flexibility.
- Develop a circulation plan identifying where linkages will be established to support pedestrian, automobile, cycling movements throughout the community.
- Identify key streetscapes and coordinate the conceptual design and location of landscaping and built forms.

### Community Boundaries

- Buildings should be located close to the street and should be architecturally articulated to provide an appropriate level of detail that will visually animate the streetscape.
- Where commercial uses are located at entry points to a neighbourhood, parking lots, outside storage spaces, garbage and loading bays should be sited and arranged to reduce their visual impact on the image of the community.

### Pedestrian Environments

- Use landscaping strategically to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Design pedestrian environments that provide a sense of safety and separation from automobile traffic.
- Design roadways so that they calm traffic and keep car speeds to a minimum.
- Orient buildings, their massing, architectural elements and habitable areas so that they promote an eyes-on-the-street approach to streetscapes and public spaces.
- Use architectural and landscape design to enhance visually prominent locations.
- Design buildings and spaces to encourage social interaction.

### Focal Points, Public Realm and Residential Design

- Utilize paving and landscaping treatments in the design of visual focal points.
- Design convenient pedestrian linkages to focal points and public transit.
- Plan institutional uses so that their building forms complement the streetscape and
contribute to the design concept.

- Where appropriate, design for roundabouts with high quality landscaping.
- Employ exterior building materials and colours that are stylistically appropriate.
- Avoid architectural designs that are ubiquitous and non-descript because they do not contribute to a sense of place.
1.6 REGIONAL SPATIAL ANALYSIS

A Regional Analysis was conducted around the subject lands at a 400 and 800 metre radius as illustrated on the following page.

The 400 metre radius identifies a number of land uses in proximity to the Site. Referencing the 1989 Official Plan, immediately to the north and east are commercial lands associated with the Auto-Oriented Commercial Corridor designated area. To the south and east are commercial lands associated with the Community Commercial Node in which the Site is located. To the north, west and southwest are Open Space designated lands which are primarily wooded. These areas also contain waterbodies associated with the Mud Creek Subwatershed including a stream parallel to the eastern perimeter of the Site. To the southeast, northwest, and northeast there are Multi-Family, High Density Residential designated lands which contain a number of high rise apartment buildings. London Transit Commission (LTC) bus service is available along the Oxford Street West and Wonderland Road North corridors, with transit stops located in close proximity to the Site. Further, there is a trail at the southeast corner of the Site linking to the nearby high-rise apartment development to the southeast.

Within the 800 metre radius, the land uses identified above are generally surrounded by lands designated Low Density Residential to the southwest, additional Open Space lands to the east northeast and west, and Multi-Family, High Density Residential to the northeast, northwest, west, and southeast. Additional LTC bus service is also available within this radius.
Figure 2
Spatial Analysis
Site Specific

LEGEND
ACTIVE FRONTAGE ZONE
ZONE OF SENSITIVITY
TRANSIT STOPS

MAJOR TRANSIT ROUTE
PATH ADJACENT TO STREET
BIKE LANE

SUBJECT LANDS

DATE: May 02, 2019
SCALE 1:3,000

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F:\1094\T\Graphical\Figure 2 - Spatial Analysis Site Specific - May 02 2019
1.7 SITE SPATIAL ANALYSIS

A Local Analysis was conducted to understand the Site’s relationship with the surrounding uses in the immediate area.

Generally, the Site forms part of an existing commercial hub located in the immediate vicinity of the Oxford Street West/Wonderland Road North intersection. Collectively, this area contains a variety of small and large format retail and service commercial uses. However, the area is primarily designated Transit Village in the new City of London Official Plan, and is envisioned to transition into a more mixed-use area in the future.

Adjacent to the Site, the Oxford Street West corridor integrates five lanes of traffic, including a southbound turn lane. The Wonderland Road North corridor provides six lanes of traffic including a left turn, and a right turn lane. Both of these roads are classified as ‘arterial’ roads pursuant to Schedule ‘C’ (Transportation Corridors) of the 1989 Official Plan. According to the transportation network classification prescribed in Section 18.2.2. of this Official Plan, arterial roads are designed to serve high volumes of intra-urban traffic with controlled or limited property access.

An active frontage zone has been identified along the Oxford Street West and Wonderland Road North corridors. Appropriate pedestrian walkways and landscaping will be provided along these frontages to enhance the existing streetscape.
2.1 PROPOSED DESIGN

Appendix ‘A’ to this Brief presents the Site Plan, Appendix ‘B’ presents building elevations and Appendix ‘C’ provides renderings prepared by Matter Architectural Studio Inc. (Matter) for the Site. These plans and images illustrate the layout, scale and character of the intended development and the design response to the planning policy framework discussed in Section 1.

2.1.1 Core Design Elements

- Two (2) multi-unit commercial buildings;
  - Building ‘A’ incorporates:
    - 360 m² of GFA
  - Building ‘B’ incorporates:
    - 430 m² of GFA
    - Drive-through

- Buildings will incorporate retail/service commercial uses.

- Building ‘A’ will feature glazing, an entrance and a hardscaped landscaped area adjacent to the Oxford Street West streetscape. This unit will also be positioned close to both Oxford Street West and the internal driveway to create an active street frontage.

- Enhanced building design and landscaping elements.

- An internal driveway arrangement integrating access from Oxford Street West.

- A series of pedestrian walkways throughout the Site.

- Internal street trees on islands and along the internal drive aisles.

2.1.2 Site Design

The Site Plan, elevations, and landscape plans presented in this Brief demonstrate that this proposal incorporates a series of elements which collectively promote a high quality form of urban design.
Key components of the design are summarized below:

- The proposed buildings are positioned on the Site in a manner that optimizes the development potential of this property by positioning new buildings to the perimeter which supports an enhanced streetscape and a pedestrian orientation.

- The architectural treatment of the buildings is intended to promote an attractive, modern design that complements the local development context.

- Building height and massing is designed to be compatible with surrounding development (existing and planned).

- The site layout includes an internal circulation system to support vehicular and pedestrian accessibility from the surrounding streets with access from Oxford Street West.

- Enhanced landscaping will be provided in the public realm, including landscaped pedestrian walkways and parking islands.

### 2.1.3 Built Form, Massing and Articulation

The massing, orientation and articulation incorporated into the proposal is contemporary in character and designed to create a comfortable and engaging pedestrian environment. The design is also intended to contribute positively to the Oxford Street West streetscape and to be compatible with, and sensitive to, the existing development context within the surrounding area.

The elevations presented in Appendix ‘B’ of this Brief illustrate the proposed building massing which has been broken up by a series of projections and recessions, as well as horizontal and vertical elements. Additionally, a significant level of visual articulation is achieved through the use of variations in materials, distinctive wall and roofline elements, and fenestrations. Collectively, these elements contribute to a modern, attractive development that will help to enhance the local streetscape.

### 2.1.4 Architectural Treatment

The façade employed in the design of the proposed buildings display a contemporary style and integrate a variety of architectural treatments and neutral colour schemes. Metal, brick, wood and glass materials have all been incorporated into the façade, resulting in an attractive, modern response. The building designs also integrate articulations and large windows to create further visual interest and to break up the continuous mass of the structures. On-site landscaping will also complement the architectural treatment of the buildings as demonstrated on the Landscape Plan provided under Appendix D.
2.1.5 Access and Service Areas

The proposed design maintains the existing access off of the main drive aisle extending south from Oxford Street West providing ingress/egress. Parking will be maintained in a series of parking fields located internal to the Site. Bicycle parking will be provided in close proximity to building entrances.

Loading and service areas are generally provided between buildings out of view of the public in areas that will not negatively impact vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

2.1.6 Character and Image

The proposal represents a contemporary response to the site context that is sensitive to the existing character of the surrounding area. Further, the development will contribute positively to the Oxford Street West corridor by adding additional buildings closer to the street frontage. Moreover, this project will help to enhance this development area as a prominent, community-oriented gathering place within an existing Community Commercial Node.

2.1.7 Lighting and Signage

A lighting scheme is being prepared for the proposed development. In general, the lighting plan will ensure illumination of entranceways, walkways and driveways by way of contemporary elements. On-site lighting will be designed at a pedestrian scale and will ensure safe movement at night.

Reasonable amounts of outdoor lighting will be used for safety, utility and security. However, glare from exterior luminaries will be reduced and minimized through the use of full cut-off lighting.

Signage has not yet been determined. However, the associated lighting will be refined and backlit.

2.2 PUBLIC REALM

The proposed development has been designed to reflect, and integrate with, the existing development context at the pedestrian level. Most notably, the design elements incorporated into the main level reinforce the public and private realm along the access walkways and driveway. Further, large windows and an entrance help to promote an active street frontage along the north facing facade that fronts the Oxford Street West streetscape.

The combination of materials including high performance cladding and fenestration into each of these façades further animates the public realm along the sidewalks. Pedestrian access is provided from street level via the adjacent sidewalks along the Oxford Street West frontage.
2.3 SUSTAINABILITY TECHNIQUES

The proposed development will be designed and built with consideration for suitable sustainability techniques, materials and systems. In this respect, landscape plans will consider several sustainable design elements, including (1) hard landscape elements and drought resistant landscaping to reduce water consumption and (2) strategic planting of landscaped areas to provide further shading opportunities.

Additionally, those working at or visiting the Site wishing to seek alternative forms of transportation will have options for walking, biking and transit. These options will be encouraged through provision of pedestrian connection to the sidewalk system along Oxford Street West.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The proposed commercial development described in this Urban Design Brief represents an attractive, modern, contemporary form designed to integrate effectively into the project site and the existing development context. Moreover, the proposal is designed to: complement the existing commercial development pattern both on the Site and in the surrounding development area; contribute positively to the Oxford Street West corridor; and have regard for the existing planning policy framework.

Collectively, the design elements of the Site Plan demonstrate sensitivity to the local development context and adjacent land uses, and apply contemporary urban design principles. Particular emphasis has been placed on pedestrian circulation and access. This design approach is also in keeping with the policies and design direction set out in the City’s 1989 Official Plan, new Official Plan, Commercial Urban Design Guidelines and Placemaking Guidelines.

In light of these considerations, in our opinion the proposed development plan is appropriate for this location and will contribute positively to the character and built form of the West London Planning District.
APPENDIX B
BUILDING ELEVATIONS
APPENDIX C
BUILDING RENDERINGS
APPENDIX D

LANDSCAPE PLAN