



**ELGIN PARK - URBAN DESIGN BRIEF**  
**Project No. 19284**



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

BBA has prepared this Urban Design Brief in support of the application to amend the Town of Cobourg Zoning By-law to permit a medium density townhouse development consisting of 40 units. The property is municipally addressed as 265 – 327 Elgin Street East, in the Town of Cobourg, which will herein be referred to as “subject site.”

The residential proposal involves the development of four buildings as townhouse typologies. Each building will be divided in a mix of two-storey townhouses and single-storey apartment units. The development has been designed to provide frontage onto Elgin Street East, with private, shared roadways leading to the back of the site. Surface parking will be provided behind the development.

A Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) is required to establish the appropriate zone category and rezone the lands from a “Residential 3 (R3) Zone” to a “Multiple Residential 4 (R4) Zone”. This rezoning will permit stacked, multi-unit townhouse dwellings, and allow a higher density of units.

Site plan approval will be submitted in the future to address more detailed building and site design matters. This brief will assist in providing justification for the housing proposal, which will be a positive addition to the existing community.

# 2.0 EXISTING CONTEXT

## 2.1 Location

The proposed redevelopment site is located at 265-327 Elgin Street East in the Town of Cobourg. The subject lands are legally described as Part of Lots 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94 & 95, Registered Plan No 227, Town of Cobourg, County of Northumberland. The subject site comprises a gross lot area of 0.84 hectares and is located on the south side of Elgin Street East, east of D'Arcy Street and abuts residential lots along its south and east limits.

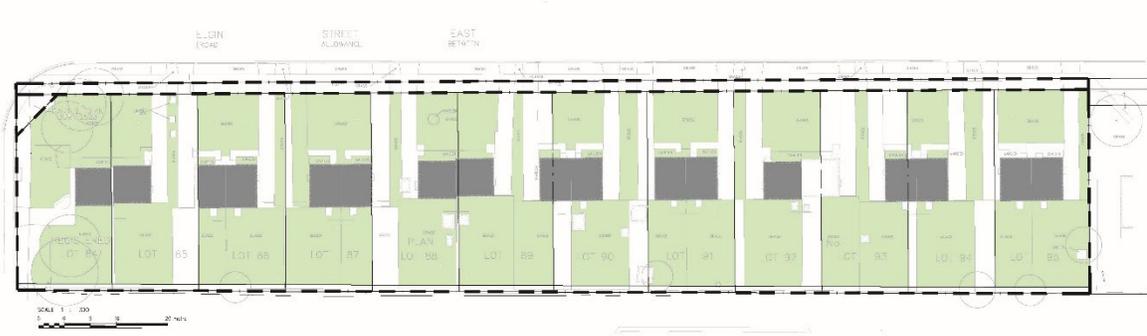


Figure 01. Subject site consisting of existing residential lots and dwelling units

The subject site is situated within the northeastern portion of the Town of Cobourg. The surrounding neighborhood consists of a variety of zoning functions and built typologies that have evolved in time. Uses that immediately surround the subject lands include:

**North:** Low density, single detached residential dwellings of varying lot sizes and St. Mary's C.S. School.

**West:** St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School and community center. Further West (within 1km radius) contains a variety of residential and commercial uses on Division Street.

**East:** There is a Townhouse adjacent to the property. Further east is undeveloped green field area that is currently under review for a mix of residential use. The Elgin Street & Brook Road North (major arterial road) intersection will provide a significant future gateway to this largely residential zone.

**South:** Multiple-2 Storey Dwelling-Community Housing, Cobourg Community Center, and a day care. A large section of Cobourg's North Industrial Employment Zone is also proximate to the subject land.

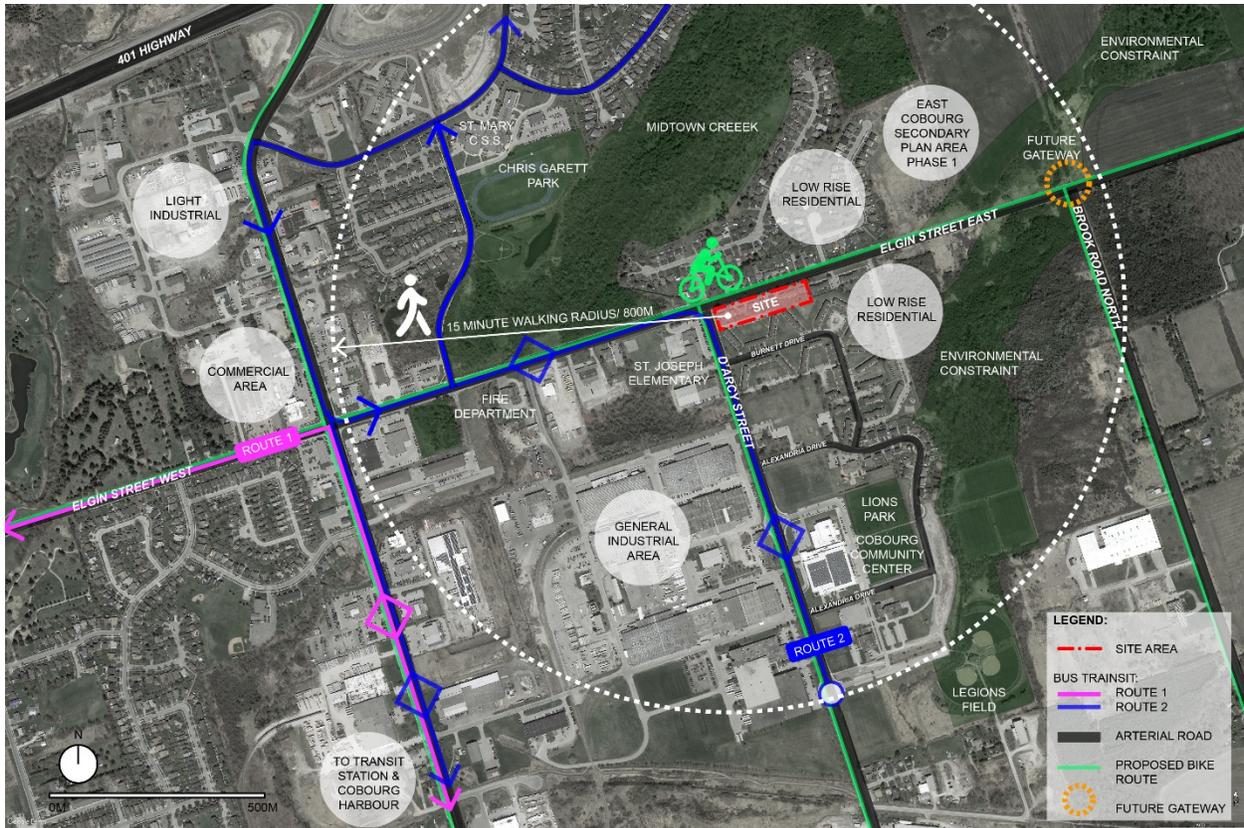


Figure 02. Context analysis and transit links surrounding the subject site

There are currently eighteen semi-detached two-storey dwelling units (9 buildings), on each residential parcel that make up the subject site. Northumberland County Housing Corporation (NCHC) owns and operates these houses. These houses are similar in massing and have stylistic residential elements including brick, wood siding, and asphalt shingles, that are typical of the area. All eighteen existing dwellings are planned for removal to accommodate the proposed development.

## 2.2 Transit & Amenities

The site is situated along main arterial roads, where existing bus connections run along D’Arcy Street (Route 1 & 2) and Elgin Street (Route 2). There is a bus stop at the north-west corner of the property. A planned bike path is running adjacent to the property on Elgin Street, connecting to the larger cycling network in the area. The subject site is well served by parkland, with two parks (Chris Garrett Park and Lions Park) and Midtown Creek (natural protected) within a five-minute walking distance.

The site is well situated in relation to a primarily residential context, with access to amenities and services. The new development can provide an opportunity to further consolidate the community, through the proposed process of residential intensification.

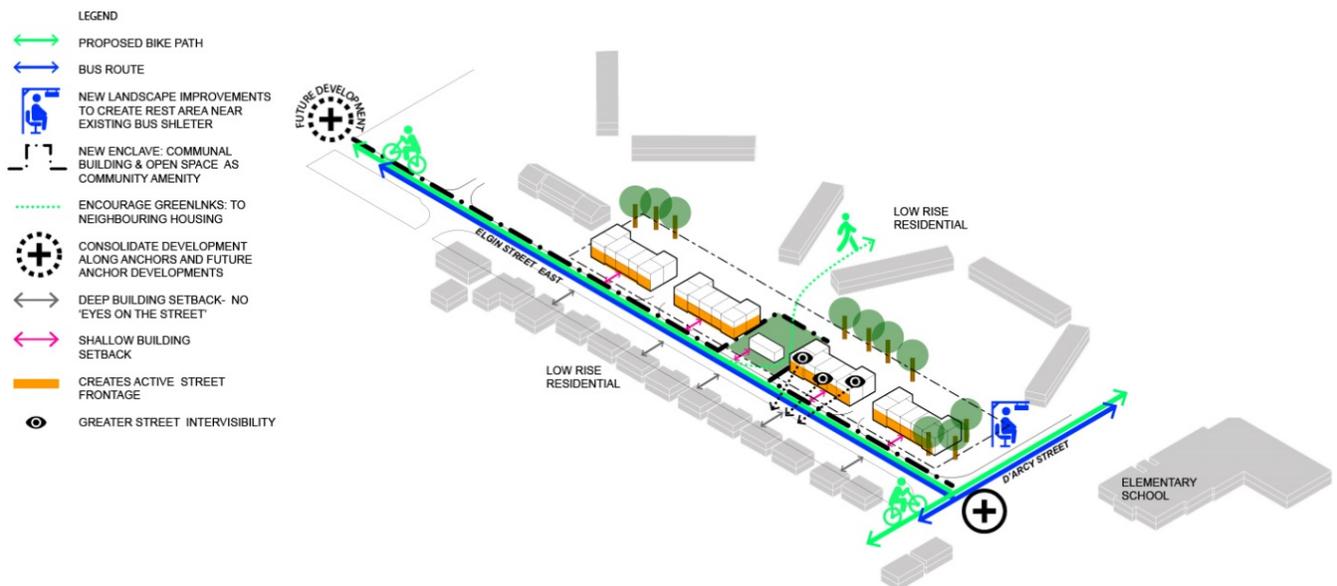


Figure 03. Public realm analysis

## **3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

### **3.1 Project Overview:**

The goal of this project is to intensify the existing housing stock from eighteen to forty units. The existing semi-detached buildings are reaching the end of their useful life and will be demolished as part of the scope of this project.

The property is currently underdeveloped, with its relative siting at the periphery of the Town Development ceases past Elgin Street and Conger Avenue to the east and any new development of the Town further east will take several years to develop. Typical single-family residential lots provide deep setbacks from the street, which does not foster an active and safe street front. The site is however at the corner of an intersection, which can benefit from increased density to encourage active street nodes and edges.

This project aims to provide needed affordable housing to Cobourg and the Region. It will intensify the available housing in the area, and approximately double the number of units on the site. The housing is targeted at a diverse user base including single persons, seniors, families, and people with physical disabilities.

From a design perspective, the new buildings will be sensitive to the existing community. They will use community housing typologies (exterior materials and colours, scale and form, roof design, etc.) similar to the existing environment that ensures a unified neighbourhood. Smaller building setbacks will improve community safety and increase visibility between the new residential dwellings. The building articulation and massing will have variation to create visually stimulating homes in keeping with the existing community.

The project will improve pedestrian links and midblock connections to housing towards the south creating a better integrated community. A pedestrian friendly and active streetscape with amenities (benches lighting, pathways, improved signage, landscape etc.) will enhance transit use, bike path use, and neighbourhood walkability.

## 3.2 Detailed Objectives

The County's vision for the new development is for four, alternating 10-plex buildings that would be constructed on the existing property creating a total of forty (40) units. These low-rise multi-unit residential buildings will offer a mix of townhome and apartment units. The overall building area is 1,807 sq.m., which provides 21.3% coverage of the site. Twenty-eight (28) units will be affordable housing and twelve (12) units will be market rate rentals.

A shared green space and smaller amenity building would occupy the area central to the subject site. The target markets for the new development include single person, seniors, families, and people with physical disabilities.

The proposed site area will be the combined lots at 265 – 327 Elgin Street East, Town of Cobourg, ON, which is an area is 8,429 sq.m. The four proposed buildings consist of 40 residential walkout units that range from 550 sq.ft./ 51sq.m. to 1430 sq.ft./ 133 sq.m. and consist of one, two, three, and four-bedroom units (See *Figure. 04* for a summary of unit types). The subject site servicing will be provided municipally through the extension of storm water, sanitary and water servicing to the site.

The development is intended to be constructed in phases. In the first phase, eight semidetached dwellings (4 buildings) on the east will be demolished. This will allow for the first two (2) 10-plex buildings to be constructed. In the Second Phase, the remaining existing dwellings will be demolished, and the two remaining 10-plexes and amenity building will be constructed. The exact phasing plan will be determined in the Site Plan Application and Building Permit stages.

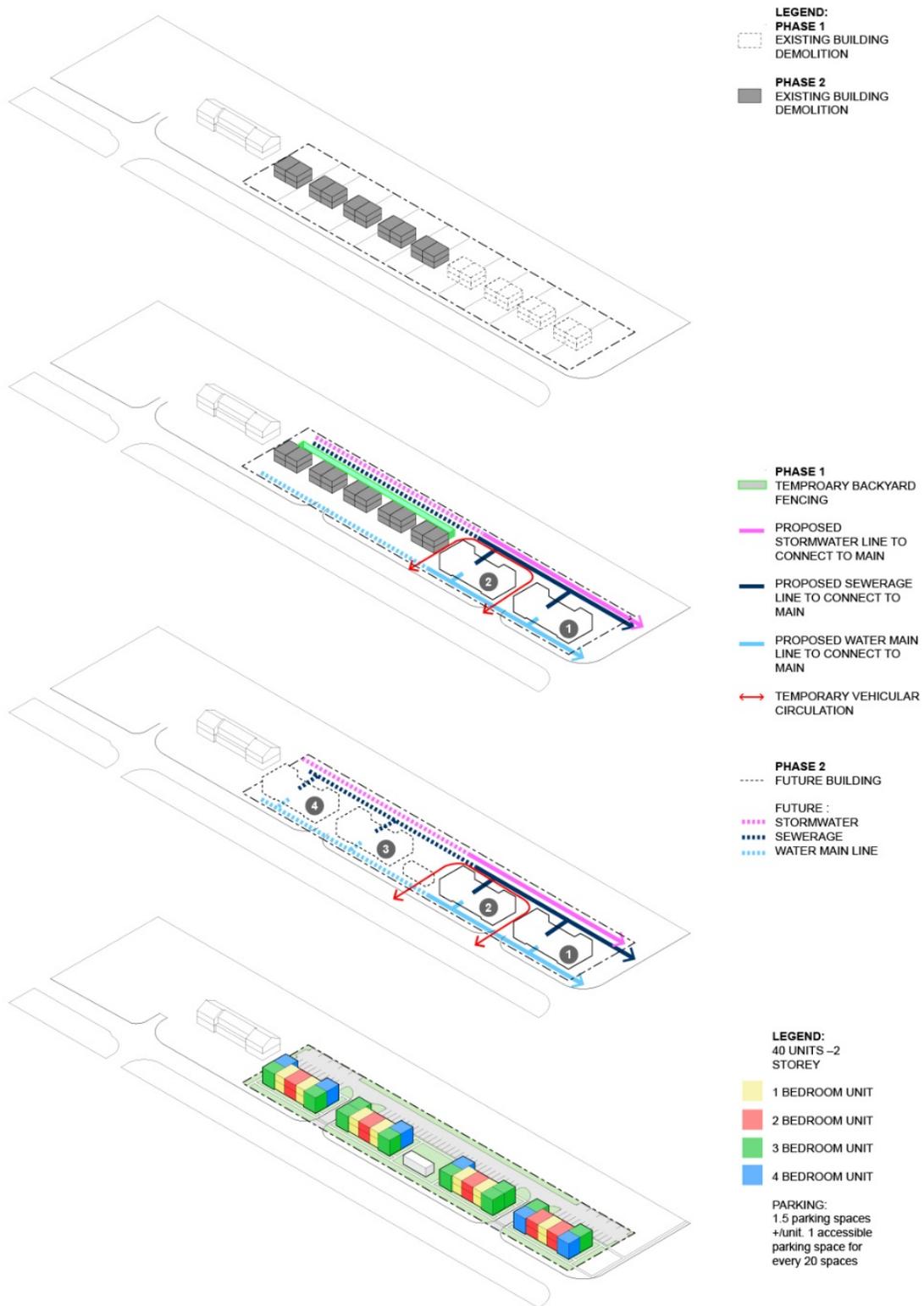


Figure 04. Proposed phasing strategy and unit types

### **3.3 Public Policy and Considerations:**

The existing density is 18 units/ 0.84 Ha. The Official permitted density 50 units/ ha, which allows for 42 units on this subject site. The goal of this project is to intensify the existing housing stock from 18 units to 40 units. The existing semi-detached buildings are reaching the end of their useful life and will be demolished as part of the scope of this project.

The Town of Cobourg has established a set of policies and guidelines in the Town of Cobourg Urban & Landscape Design Guidelines report. This study will evaluate the proposed development against the general urban design policies and guidelines in the various sections of the Official Plan and Urban Design Guidelines documents.

As per Official Plan and Municipal urban design guidelines (UD Guidelines Section 3.0 & Official Plan Policy 15.5.3), this project will create new housing intensification and a high-quality public realm design on Elgin Street East.

Particular attention will be given to the existing bus stop location and the proposed bike lane. Streetscape design located in the public right-of-way, consisting of street furniture, bus shelter, bike stands, mailboxes, and signage, etc., will be re-evaluated to provide considered and minimal design. This is to avoid visual clutter so that site elements integrate well with the new development. Servicing and utilities are also encouraged to be located underground.

The Development will promote traffic calming measures, for a safer pedestrian environment and/or to maintain vehicles within designated speed limits. All development planned for this project is proposed within the limits of the subject site, except for driveways, sidewalks, underground servicing connections.

The high-quality, pedestrian scaled architectural design proposed on Elgin Street East provides front facing lots, with direct access to a municipal sidewalk. Shallower building setbacks, large multiple windows and outdoor patios front the street. This promotes better public interaction and greater surveillance on to the street, which keeps in line with the Official Plan objectives.

The Official Plan Policy encourages infilling and intensification (Official Plan Policy 7.5.1/ 15.9). The development responds to the Infilling and Intensification Development policy that aims to efficiently manage and control land use and infrastructure expansion.

The following design objectives provided direction to the proposed development:

- Provide for a building and streetscape design that defines the Elgin Street East frontage at a pedestrian friendly scale to encourage interaction within the development and in the public realm.
- Provide for an accessible design through the site and within the design of the interior of the units.
- Provide for a design that is contextually sensitive to the surrounding context and functions.
- Prescribe landscaping and building materials that are resilient to weather effects and are low maintenance over the entire life cycle of the development.
- Improved midblock pedestrian connections from Elgin and D'Arcy Street to adjoining communities through improved landscaping, outdoor seating, and lighting.
- Sustainability and safety of the proposed development will be considered.
- A phasing strategy will be applied to divide the building construction and servicing in at least two phases. This strategy will be clarified in the site plan development stage.

## 3.4 Architectural elements

The proposed site plan reflects the design objectives and incorporates the following design elements:

The Buildings are oriented to the street with a central parkette and amenity building, to create a greater sense of community. In addition to the massing above grade, basements are provided in each building that consist of a mechanical room, storage cages and laundry room. A strong street edge along the Elgin Street East frontage is provided, and the buildings are compatible with surrounding building heights

Multiple pedestrian connections throughout the site and direct access from residential units to the sidewalk on to Elgin Street is proposed. Common Amenity Area is provided in a 1,000 sq.ft./ 93 sq.m. single storey building, sited centrally within the proposed parkette. This building will include laundry facilities and a Common Room.

Two entrances are provided into subject property from Elgin Street East for full circulation of two-way traffic for vehicles, including emergency vehicles, snow removal and waste management. Sixty (60) parking spaces each unit are provided (1.5 space per unit) including 3 designated accessible surface parking spaces (1 accessible space per 20 spaces). Please refer to the Site Plan in Appendix A, which demonstrates the proposed site layout.

Elgin Street East consists of detached one to two storey residential units, with finishes that are typically clapboard and brick veneer. All dwellings are consistent in setbacks (approx. 12-14m) and front facing towards Elgin street. South of the site area are several two storey multi-unit residential buildings, with brick veneer and vinyl cladding finishes. The unit's setback and angle away from D'Arcy street, organizing internally within the block, around large semi enclosed open spaces. The proposed multi-residential development has been designed to align with the existing row house form in its scale, massing, and architectural elements, in order to relate to the community context.

### **3.4.1 Landscaping and Site Plan**

The site plan has been designed according to the Official Plan and Urban Design Guidelines (UD Guidelines Section 3.2.3, 3.5.2 & Official Plan Policy 5.2.4). The development's siting in relation to the street intersection provides a strong urban relationship or 'gateway development.' This is further reinforced through the building entrance, canopy, exterior area at the site corner with landscape and adjacent semi-public spaces within the ground floor of the proposed development, lobby, amenity spaces, etc.

The proposed landscape design will be developed in the site plan process to provide definition to open spaces and walkways, provide direction for pedestrian movement, demarcation, and definition for open spaces. The proposed site grading and stormwater management design ensures there is no impact to adjacent properties. Additional lighting and street design will be included, particularly the existing bus stop area. Other site elements such as low masonry wall, fences, public art, rockery, and landmark features can be utilized to define the open spaces.

Existing trees will be maintained, where possible, for buffering from the neighboring residential uses and enhanced landscaping and fencing will be considered to separate uses and maintain privacy.

The proposed landscaped amenity (approximately 500 sq.m.) is included for the enjoyment of the residents. The scale of this amenity can liken this more as village square, that would serve as a community focal point within the center of the surrounding neighbourhoods. The park perimeter is within view to the road for easy accessibility. Some playground equipment, benches, bike racks and community gardens could be included as part of the landscape design. The landscape will provide buffer from main arterial roads as well as privacy/ screening of parking from the residential units.

Parking has been located behind the buildings, emphasizing the residential nature of the development and prioritizing pedestrians' relation to the street front. Parking is provided at the back of the buildings, with built form situated at the street where parking is screen at the back. Setbacks and landscape provide buffering, in relation to the street intersection and adjoining housing development at the south.

There are 60 proposed parking spaces, internal to the site, that also include three (3) accessible and parallel parking spaces. No parking reductions are required to accommodate the proposed development. A detailed lighting and landscape plan will be prepared to also indicate bicycle parking, lighting, and screen parking from the street for safety and privacy.

There are no significant views or vistas (UD Guidelines Section 3.0 & Official Plan Policy 5.2.2, 15.5.6) that need to be protected from the subject area, as the site is surrounded by residential use. However, the parkette does provide a visual link to the adjoining community towards the south.

Urban gateways are considered in the Official Plan and Urban Design Guidelines (UD Guidelines Section 3.4.1.9 & Official Plan Policy 15.5.7). The gateway associated with the Secondary Plan Area on Schedule X1 at Elgin Street East and Brooks Road North is envisioned as the main point of entry to this future residential area. The proposed development on the subject site, at Elgin and D’Arcy Street intersection, will provide an opposing anchor to the future gateway at Elgin and Brooks Road.

Public Art is encouraged in public and private spaces (UD Guidelines Section 3.4.3.3 & Official Plan Policy 15.5.5), which fosters community identity and memory through its local history and traditions. The opportunity for public art as a site feature will be considered as part of the detailed site design during the site plan process stage.



Figure 05. Proposed site plan

### 3.4.2 Building Massing and Siting

The external building design has incorporated principles detailed in the Official Plan and Urban Design Guidelines (UD Guidelines Section 4.4, 4.5.2 & Official Plan Policy 5.2.8). The external building design follows the policy to complement the heights, massing pattern, rhythm, and character of the adjacent existing developments.

The two (2) storey development is consistent with the townhouse row housing typology. It consists of a mix of back-to-back townhouse and stacked units. All units are walk-up dwellings with direct access to the street. The building heights also match with the surrounding housing scale.

The proposed massing creates continuous street fronting facades that creates a strong public face to the development. The variations in setbacks that break up the form and with enhanced building articulation, creates visual interest from the street. Shallow building setback and large windows facing on to the street create active frontages and create a sense of safety. This articulation also provides opportunities for small semi-public spaces that transition from private to public realm, which encourages a sense of ownership for this housing development.



*Figure 06. Proposed conceptual rendering – View from Elgin Street East*

Additional siting considerations include: Dual frontages are provided at the corners, continuity of front porch design is maintained in the attached dwellings, the roof line is varied and defined to express individual dwelling unit, and the roof forms and materials are consistent and contextually sensitive to the area.

Vehicular parking is provided at the back thereby being screened from the street. Vehicle access to the site is from Elgin Street, on the north side of the property, providing adequate vehicle distance from the intersection. All visitor parking and servicing is located behind the proposed development, screened from pedestrian view.

The massing of the proposed development is derived from a combination of context, density, and site. This placement of the building aligns itself with the Municipality Urban Design Policies. The building is sited close to Elgin Street, to create a more active frontage, while being buffered through landscaping from D'Arcy Street.

The existing residential context provides single detached home sited with deep setbacks, relative to the street (approx. 12-14M from the property line). To counter this residential trend of maximizing privacy from the street, the proposal provides shallower setback of 6m from the property line, to bring the massing closer to the right of way on Elgin Street. This allows for increased interaction between public and private realms and creating an 'urban street scape' relationship.

### **3.4.3 Roof**

The existing housing typologies often incorporate gabled roofs. The proposed roofs are split gabled front facing roofs. The height of the proposed development buildings is approximately 10.17m to the mid-point of the sloped roof line, which is approximately a 6/12 roof pitch, giving a strong balance and prominence to the development. The gable also splits to create a lower, secondary roofline, with its mid-point at 8.85m.

The amenity building is a one storey cross gabled structure with a height of approximately 6.23m to the mid-point of the sloped roof line. The varying heights create movement and rhythm in the roofline and contribute to visual interest at the street level.

### 3.4.4 Façade and Fenestration

The façade is articulated through various projections and recessions and is also enhanced through the variation in building materials.

The repetition of the two sets of rooflines at differing heights, in conjunction with the system of grouped windows, create a complimentary rhythm in the elevation. The variation in the design breaks up the mass of the building frontage and provides visual interest along the entirety of the façade.



Figure 07. Proposed elevations from facing Elgin Street East & Burnet Drive

Fenestration along the north facing buildings is planned with the main door access at Elgin street and large windows to encourage natural light along this facade. Larger windows are centrally placed to reinforce stability to the composition, whereas smaller windows with varied widths provide a break to the static order of openings. Wood paneling with a vertical run is placed between the first floor and second floor set of windows to visually reinforce their intended grouping. The verticality of the grouping also accentuates the rhythm of the vertical rise and fall of the pitched roofs.

### 3.4.5 Materiality

The intent of the design is to provide for frontage that is attractive along the public and private street frontage. Townhome units also open along the east and west side elevations. Building 2 and 3 units facing east and west respectively benefit from view to the parkette amenity. While the building design remains true to the existing house-form typology in the area, it is however reinterpreted in a more contemporary and minimal design. This is achieved through subtle means through materiality and detailing.



*Figure 08. Proposed conceptual rendering – View to central parkette*

Building materials are planned to be consistent along all the proposed buildings. The building materials planned for the development will be low maintenance and have a variety of colours and finishes to provide interest along the building façade. The materials and finish selection will be further refined during the site plan process. Wood clapboard siding is used horizontally on exterior walls of varying color. Projected walls are lighter, using white wood siding. The walls that are recessed relative to the former are prescribed to be blue wood siding, or similar neutral accent colour.

Roofs are designed with charcoal fascia trim to match roofing material/ blanket. Large windows are provided to allow for natural light. The glazing system will be designed with black metal low-profile frames to create a slim yet defined outline that punctuates the window openings. Hollow metal doors are used with full glass to match. Wood paneling is used for other projected

elements such as balconies facing Elgin Street and the private street, and awnings and privacy walls for the ground floor patios facing Elgin Street.

### **3.5 Accessibility**

The Official Plan (UD Guidelines Section 3.4.5 & Official Plan Policy 5.2.6) requires that all new development be consistent with the standards and regulations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Ontario Building Code (OBC) to provide barrier free access on site and within the residential units. Site provisions and elements e.g. curb ramps and accessible parking, that should be meeting AODA standards will be developed during site plan process stage. OBC requires 15% of all residential units to be accessible, while CMHC require a rate of 20%. The proposed accessible units are on the ground floor.

Units can also be built to facilitate future accessibility retrofitting. Additional ground floor units can be retrofitted from standard interiors to have accessible provisions. Typical shower tub can be replaced with an accessible shower and grab bars. Millwork counters can be replaced with accessible height units for kitchens. All washrooms, entry ways and paths of travel are adequately spaced to meet OBC and AODA requirements.

The entry way to the units are covered to shelter residents from seasonal elements. Most units will be primarily accessed by pedestrians from the Elgin Street East and the private street, while some townhomes and one (1) apartment will have access from the side elevations. Automobiles access off Elgin Street will have two entrances into the private street for parking.

Direct access to the units from Elgin Street will be provided to the street via private patios. These are included as part of the private amenity for related units and are adequately spaced for outdoor seating.

There is an amenity building in this development. Access to the amenity space is central to the development, with favorable connections through landscaped pedestrian walkaways.

Façade lighting will be planned at a pedestrian scale to ensure all building entrances and steps are illuminated for safety. This will be detailed though the site plan approval process. All outdoor spaces, fixtures and provisions must meet OBC and AODA compliance.

### **3.6 Safety**

Safety is a primary concern of the development (UD Guidelines Section 3.4.4 & Official Plan Policy 5.2.5). The site design adheres to the principles of Crime prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Each of the 40 townhouse and apartment units have direct access to public and private streets, which encourages a pedestrian oriented streetscape.

The development incorporates appropriate lighting and opportunities for public surveillance. The Landscape design will maintain clear views and clearly located signage which precludes entrapment.

All entry ways, driveways and sidewalk entrances will be well lit. The common amenity space will have appropriate signage and lighting to provide a safe and clearly demarcated common space for residents to gather in. A lighting and detailed landscape plan will be developed further as part of the Site Plan Process.

The location of windows and openings are front facing to the street, to create an active frontage on Elgin street, which improves street inter-visibility/ “eyes of the street”. Soft landscaping will be designed as low height features to provide clear views throughout the site. Details of the landscape plan will be confirmed through the Site Plan Process.

### **3.7 Sustainability**

The Official Plan (UD Guidelines Section 4.1 & Official Plan Policy 3.4.3.1) encourages energy efficiency and sustainability in neighborhood, site, building and roof design. The project is currently at the Zoning Amendment stage, therefore specific sustainable considerations will be determined through site plan and building design development process.

The Applicant intends to pursue LEED version 4 Silver for Homes for the proposed development. The Applicant considers the LEED program to be the most holistic approach to overall site and building design. The firm is also qualified to administer the LEED application internally. In addition to the LEED credits, the project is also required to meet the Ontario Building Code Standards for SB-12 compliance. The engineering design will meet Town of Cobourg standards for stormwater management on site.

The project will consider sustainable measures for the buildings and site design to include items such as: site and connectivity elements, mitigation of heat island effect, photovoltaics, site water infiltration and landscaping elements, water use efficiency (low flow faucets and toilets), energy efficient heating, indoor air quality, double glazed-windows, use of LED fixtures, ecologically preferred material selection, provision of on-site bike racks and occupant education.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

Through this analysis we conclude that the proposed design meets the general intent of all Urban Design policies defined in the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.

The proposed development will:

- Provides for housing intensification that meets the intent of the Urban Design Policy of the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.
- Provide building design that responds to the pedestrian scale and creates a continuous, active frontage along Elgin street and internal to the development.
- Provide for a high-quality design, with resilient material for lower maintenance.
- Provide contextually sensitive landscape and architectural design that complements adjacent uses.

Through our analysis we consider this housing intensification proposal to be an appropriate development along Elgin and D'Arcy street intersection, that is respectful to the surrounding community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Swerdfeger', written over a horizontal line.

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