

# Staff Report



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| To           | <b>City Council</b>  |
| Service Area | Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services  |
| Date         | Monday, September 12, 2022   |
| Subject      | <b>Decision Report<br/>785 Gordon Street<br/>Proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment<br/>File: OZS22-005<br/>Ward 5</b> |

## Recommendation

1. That the application by GSP Group on behalf of 2371633 Ontario Inc, for the property municipally known as 785 Gordon Street, for approval of an Official Plan Amendment application to permit the development of a 10-storey mixed use building containing 389 residential units and 600 square metres of commercial, be refused; reasons for refusal are set out in Attachment 1 of Report 2022-280 "Decision Report 785 Gordon Street", dated September 12, 2022.
2. That the application by GSP Group on behalf of 2371633 Ontario Inc, for the property municipally known as 785 Gordon Street, for approval of a Zoning By-law Amendment application to permit the development of a 10-storey mixed use building containing 389 residential units and 600 square metres of commercial, be refused; reasons for refusal are set out in Attachment 1 of Report 2022-280 "Decision Report 785 Gordon Street", dated September 12, 2022.

## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

This report provides a staff recommendation to refuse an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to permit the development of a 10-storey mixed use building containing 389 residential units and 600 square metres of commercial space.

### Key Findings

Planning staff recommend refusal of the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications because the proposed height and massing is inappropriate and incompatible with the character of the surrounding area.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no potential development charges or tax estimates to report because the recommendation is to refuse the applications.

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## **Report**

### **Background**

Applications for an Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-law were received for the property municipally known as 785 Gordon Street from GSP Group Inc. on behalf of the property owner, 2371633 Ontario Inc. The applications were received by the City on March 29, 2022 and were deemed to be complete on April 28, 2022.

A statutory Public Meeting was scheduled for June 13, 2022, but due to technical difficulties, was rescheduled and held on July 11, 2022. At the Public Meeting, a number of concerns were raised by neighbourhood residents, including impacts of the proposed height and density, impact of the proposed massing, the proposed change of use, a lack of transition to the neighbourhood to the southwest, a lack of onsite outdoor amenity area, parking, traffic, noise, and the loss of trees on site.

### **Location**

The subject site is approximately 0.85 hectares in size and located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Gordon Street and Harvard Road (see Location Map in Attachment-1). The site currently contains a two-storey hotel, known as the Days Inn. Surrounding land uses include:

- To the north, across Harvard Road, is the Campus Estates Plaza, a neighborhood commercial area that contains a variety of uses including retail, restaurant, medical office and personal service;
- To the east, across Gordon Street, are two-storey townhouses and to the south of the townhouses is a two-storey office building;
- To the south of the site is a three storey townhouse building that fronts onto Gordon Street
- To the southwest, the subject site backs onto single detached dwellings that front onto Hickory Street;
- To the west is a two-storey office building that fronts onto Harvard Road.

### **Existing Official Plan Land Use Designations and Policies**

The Official Plan land use designation that applies to the subject property is Neighbourhood Commercial Centre. The Neighbourhood Commercial Centre designation is intended to accommodate local convenience and neighbourhood commercial uses within walking distance of residential areas. Permitted Uses in a Neighbourhood Commercial Centre include commercial, retail and service uses, small-scale offices, community services, live/work units, multiple units residential within mixed-use buildings and urban squares. The maximum height in this designation is six storeys and the maximum net density for residential development is 100 units per hectare. Further details of this designation are included in Attachment-3.

## **Proposed Official Plan Amendment**

The applicant is proposing an Official Plan Amendment to redesignate the site to a High Density Residential designation with site specific policies to permit a maximum density of 615 bedrooms per hectare and to allow convenience commercial uses to have a maximum Gross Floor Area of 600 square metres. The standard High Density Residential designation would allow a maximum of 10 storeys in height, a maximum net density of 150 units per hectare, and a maximum of 400 square metres of convenience commercial uses. More information on the proposed Official Plan Amendment is included in Attachment-4.

## **Existing Zoning**

The subject site is currently zoned SC.1-11, a specialized Service Commercial Zone. The only permitted use within this zone is a hotel. The existing zoning is shown in Attachment-5.

## **Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment**

The purpose of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is to change the zoning from the current SC.1-11 (Specialized Service Commercial Zone) to a Specialized High Density Apartment Zone (R.4B-??) to permit the development of the proposed 10 storey mixed use building with 389 Post-Secondary School Residence units together with 600 square metres of convenience commercial uses. A number of specialized regulations are required for the proposed development including increases to maximum density and a change in how density is measured (bedrooms rather than dwelling units), increased Floor Space Index, increased angular planes, reduced parking provision, reduced front and rear yard setbacks, reduced common amenity and landscaped open space requirements. See Attachment-6 for the full details of the proposed specialized zoning regulations.

## **Proposed Development**

The applicant has proposed to redevelop the site by demolishing the existing hotel building and developing a 10-storey mixed use building. The applicant proposes 389 "Post-Secondary School Residence Units" consisting of a total of 520 bedrooms, together with 587 square metres of convenience commercial uses on the main floor of the building.

The site is proposed to be accessed off Harvard Road. A total of 220 parking spaces are proposed, consisting of 45 surface parking spaces and 175 underground parking spaces.

The proposed site concept plan and building elevations are shown in Attachment-7.

## **Planning Recommendation**

Meridian Planning Consultants was retained to prepare a planning analysis and opinion on the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the subject site. Their planning analysis is provided in Attachment-1 of this report. In addition, Fotenn Planning + Design was engaged to review the urban design aspects of the planning applications and their review comments are provided in Attachment-2 of this report.

In summary, the planning and urban design analysis of the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments together with the proposed site concept found that the additional height and density proposed on site cannot be supported. It was

concluded that the massing of the proposed development is inappropriate for the site and creates on-site impacts related to the quality of amenity space, pedestrian and vehicle access and circulation. The proposal does not meet key urban design policies in the Official Plan and the building length of close to 100 metres creates unnecessary shading, wind tunneling effect, and dissipates pedestrian access to the site.

City planning and urban design staff have reviewed the planning analysis and urban design review comments provided and agree with the recommendation to refuse the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no potential development charges or tax estimates to report because the recommendation is to refuse the applications.

### **Consultations**

The Notice of Complete Application and Public Meeting was mailed May 12, 2022 to local boards and agencies, City service areas and property owners within 120 metres of the subject lands. The Notice of Public Meeting was also advertised in the Guelph Mercury Tribune on May 19, 2022. Notice of the applications have also been provided by signage on the property, which was installed on May 10, 2022. All supporting documents and drawings received with the applications have been posted on the City's website.

On August 23, 2022, the Notice of Decision Meeting was sent to members of the public and parties that provided comments on the applications or requested to receive further notice. See Attachment-9 for a full consultation summary.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

#### **Priority**

Sustaining our Future

#### **Direction**

Plan and design an increasingly sustainable city as Guelph grows.

#### **Alignment**

The proposed development application is not in conformity with policies of the City's Official Plan, which is the City's key document for guiding future land use and development, so planning staff recommend refusal. The Official Plan's vision is to plan and design an increasingly sustainable city as Guelph grows. A review of how the proposed development application is not in conformity with the City's Official Plan can be found in the Planning Analysis in Attachment-1.

### **Attachments**

Attachment-1 Planning Analysis

Attachment-2 Urban Design Review

Attachment-3 Existing Official Plan Land Use Designation and Policies

Attachment-4 Proposed Official Plan Land Use Designation and Policies

Attachment-5 Existing Zoning

Attachment-6 Proposed Zoning

Attachment-7 Proposed Site Concept Plan and Building Renderings

Attachment-8 Department and Agency Comments

Attachment-9 Public Notification Summary

**Departmental Approval**

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