

Urban Design Brief

Coletara Development Starwood Node

Guelph, Ontario



Building Phase 5 - Retirement Home Concept



Building Phase 2 - Starwood Elevation

Prepared for Coletara Development

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MICHAEL SPAZIANI ARCHITECT INC.
6 Helene Street North, Suite 100
Port Credit, Mississauga, ON, L5G 3B2
T 905 891 0691 F 905 891 0514

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Introduction

This Urban Design Brief has been prepared in support of a Zoning Bylaw Amendment and Official Plan Amendment application by Coletara Development. The applications seek approval for a new development at the southwest corner of Watson Parkway at Starwood Drive comprising a development site with an approximate total unit count 405 units on a site of 2.71 hectares or 6.7 acres. The project seeks to accommodate a range of housing options for Guelph residents including young adults and seniors.

This brief comprises two distinct sections.

Section 1 describes the physical and policy context of the subject site and includes;

1a) Contextual Analysis

- 1.1 Location and Site Attributes
- 1.2 Site Edges and Neighbouring Conditions
- 1.3 Urban Pattern in the District
- 1.4 Transportation Systems
- 1.5 Natural Heritage Systems
- 1.6 Landmark Characteristics

1b) Project Goals and Objectives

- 1.7 Urban Design Principles

1c) Response to City Policy Documents

- 1.8 Envision Guelph Plan
- 1.9 Official Plan
- 1.10 Mixed Use Centre Policies
- 1.11 Zoning Bylaw

Section 2 describes the proposal's specific design responses and is structured as follows;

2a) Conceptual Design Principles and Concept Plan

- 2.1 Site Design
- 2.2 Built Form Elements and Massing
- 2.3 Building Articulation
- 2.4 Character and Image
- 2.5 Architectural Treatment
- 2.6 Lighting
- 2.7 Signage
- 2.8 Servicing and Parking

2b) Sustainability

- 2.9 Energy Efficiency
- 2.10 Carbon Emissions

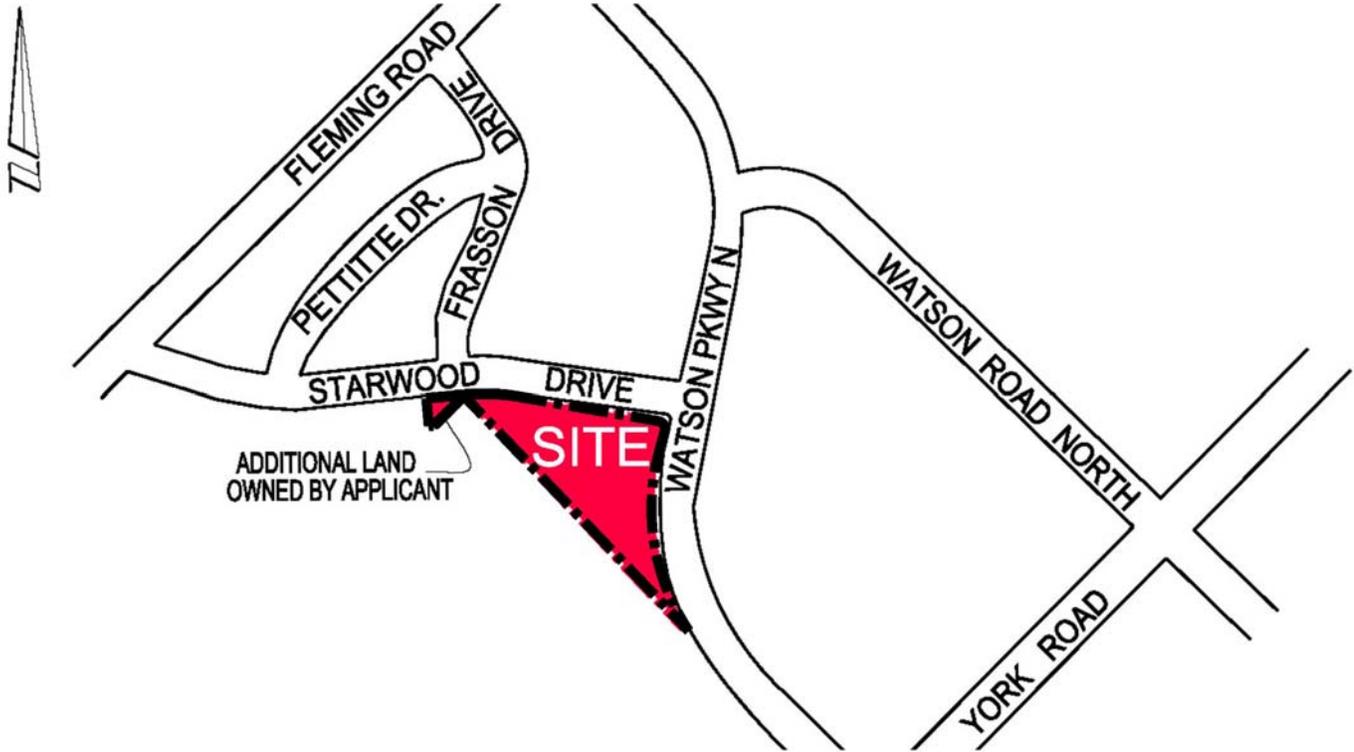
2c) Public Realm Principles and Features

- 2.11 Public Spaces
- 2.12 Pedestrian Circulation
- 2.13 Design Concepts
- 2.14 Linkages to Off-site Amenities
- 2.15 Transit Integration
- 2.16 Landscape Design/ Boulevards
- 2.17 Public Art Opportunities

- 2.18 Streetscape Elements
- 2.19 Transition Spaces
- 2.20 Midblock Connections
- 2.21 Shadow Impacts on the Public Realm

Section 1: Site Characteristics and Policy Framework

Section 1 a) Contextual Analysis



Aerial Photograph with 5 and 10 minute walk radii around subject site (source; Google Earth)

1.2 Site Edges and Neighbouring Conditions

North Edge



To the north of the subject site lies single detached houses that were recently constructed. The above photograph shows the intersection of Watson Parkway and Watson Rd.

West Edge

Starwood Ave. extends west from the subject site into a newly constructed residential area known as the Grange Hill East subdivision. The photograph below shows the intersection of Starwood Ave and Frasson Dr. opposite the subject site.



South Edge-



South of the subject site lies a wetland conservation area. The area will remain in a natural state adjacent to the subject site.

East Edge

Immediately to the east of the subject site are lands designated for a commercial node that will support the community function with a grocery store and other retail and office support uses. The plan below shows an early concept plan for the site. Further east beyond York Rd. lies an employment area known as Airport Place.



1.3 Urban Pattern in the District

The road pattern in the district is the result of recent planning efforts to subdivide the formerly rural lands defined by orthogonal concession roads. The concession road grid is formed by Watson Road to the east, Eastview Rd. to the north, Victoria Rd. to the west, and York Rd. to the south. The new urban pattern focuses on Starwood Dr. and Grange Rd. which wind through the middle of the sector and intersect near its centre. Beyond these arterial roads lie a hierarchy of collector and local roads in a modified grid pattern.

1.4 Transportation Systems

The site is served by the aforementioned concession road grid of 100 chains or 2.01 kilometers. These roads support regional vehicular traffic and bus transit. Starwood Dr. and Grange Rd. serve as local traffic collectors linking to the regional grid. These roads have transit routes and planned bicycle paths.

1.5 Natural Heritage Systems

The wetland immediately to the west of the subject site connects to a planned off-site "open space link" comprising conservation areas that run south along Watson Parkway leading to the Eramosa River watershed. The subject site carefully interfaces with this planned open space.

1.6 Landmark Characteristics

The subject site is part of the planned Starwood Node which is planned as a Mixed Use Centre of higher density and mixed uses acting as a focal destination for the community.

Section 1b) Urban Design Goals and Objectives for the Project

1.7 Urban Design Goals

In reviewing the City's various Urban Design policies and in consideration of the existing and planned site context, several goals have been formulated as follows:

- With respect to the height of buildings: create a building height regimen that is a step above the predominant low-rise character of the district at heights, creating a focal point for the community.
- With respect to uses; provide housing options that accommodate the current and growing demand for affordable apartment units and those units suitable for an aging population, with a possible retail presence along Starwood Drive.
- To minimize the visual impact of the car on the streetscape by limiting the number of driveways and garage access points and to minimize the visual presence of truck movements and loading areas on the public streets.
- To ensure that a convenient and pleasant walkable environment is provided within the site and along its street edges with a high standard of urban design.
- To complete a district in transition from single detached lots to multi-unit mixed tenure development creating a more complete community with more housing choices.
- To create a development that respects the scale and character of this emerging district while carefully incorporating opportunities for appropriately scaled intensification.

1 c) Response to City Documents

Guelph's in-force Official Plan includes policies that support the urban design goals of the subject development. Those policies include;

Section 3.3 Urban Form Policies

3.3.1 *The City will promote a compact urban form and gradual expansion of existing urban development by:*

a) *Encouraging intensification and redevelopment of existing urban areas in a manner that is compatible with existing built form;*

Section 3.6 Urban Design

3.6.1. 1. *The implementing Zoning By-law outlines regulations that promote compatibility in built form.*

3.6.17.1 *The City shall ensure that new development located within existing, established neighbourhoods and districts is designed as an integral part of that area's existing larger pattern of built form and open spaces, and that it reinforces and complements the existing range of building mass, height, proportion and orientation of buildings relative to the street.*

Through OPA 48, which is currently under appeal and hence not yet in effect, Guelph has been developing policies for a series of Mixed-Use Centres. These centres are seen as preferred nodes for development intensification within the city. They are intended to provide a range of uses and development types that create Complete and Healthy Communities. Rather than continuing to provide single detached housing, the plan seeks to facilitate the creation of more housing options.

The subject site lies at the heart of the Starwood- Watson Parkway Node, designated as a Community Mixed Use Centre in OPA 38. The proposed subject development seeks to provide a range of apartment form housing uses complementing the existing stock of low and medium density housing in the context.

1.8 Mixed Use Centre Plan

The following policies are extracted from Guelph's OPA 48 plan for the Community Mixed Use Centre nodes. They build on the policies of the current Official Plan.

VISION

The integration of energy, transportation and land use planning will make a difference in the environmental sustainability, cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity and social well-being of Guelph.

HIGHLIGHTS OF STRATEGIC GOALS

The following excerpts show the relevant directions from the strategic goals of the Official Plan that apply to this site:

Planning a Complete and Healthy Community

Ensure an appropriate range and mix of employment opportunities, local services, community infrastructure, housing including affordable housing and other land uses are provided to meet current and projected needs to the year 2031.

Protecting What is Valuable

Advance innovation by building on the synergies between infrastructure, built form and climate change imperatives.

Transportation

Develop a safe, efficient, convenient and sustainable transportation system that provides for all modes of travel including cycling and walking to support sustainable land use patterns.

Municipal Services

Direct development to those areas where full municipal services and related infrastructure are existing or can be made available, while considering existing land uses, natural heritage systems, development constraints, fiscal sustainability, development costs and related factors.

Community Infrastructure

Provide an appropriate supply and distribution of community facilities to meet the social, health and education needs of existing and future residents in a manner that maximizes accessibility.

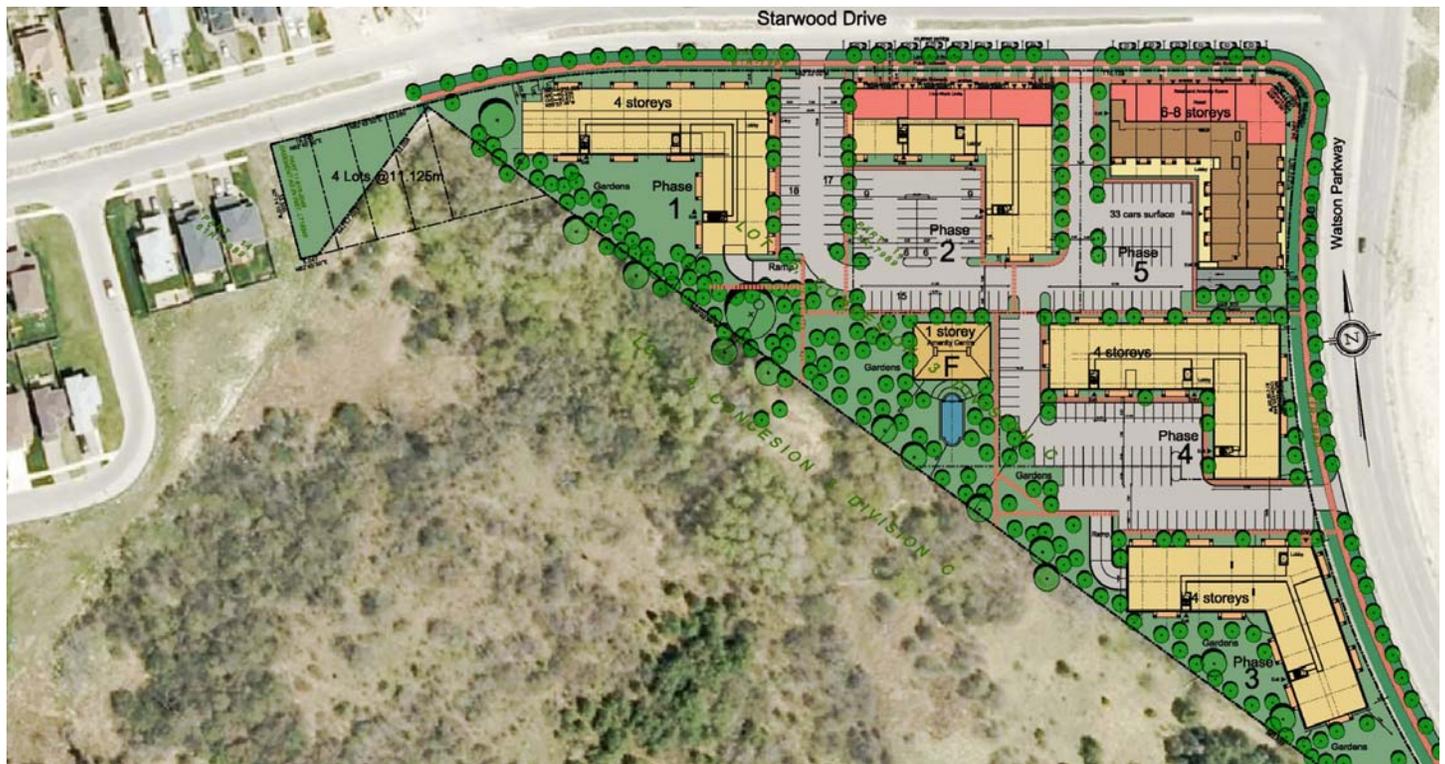
Urban Design

Preserve, enhance and protect the distinct character of the City and the sense of a community of neighbourhoods. Encourage intensification and redevelopment of existing urban areas that is compatible with existing built form.

Implementation

Promote informed public involvement and engagement in a user friendly planning and development process.

The concept plan seeks to provide a range of affordable housing options for all stages of life from young couples to families to seniors. In conjunction with the existing library, the development seeks to define a physical urban presence along Starwood Dr. near the intersection with Watson Parkway. In this way the proposed concept plan meets the policies outlined above contained in the Official Plan for the district.

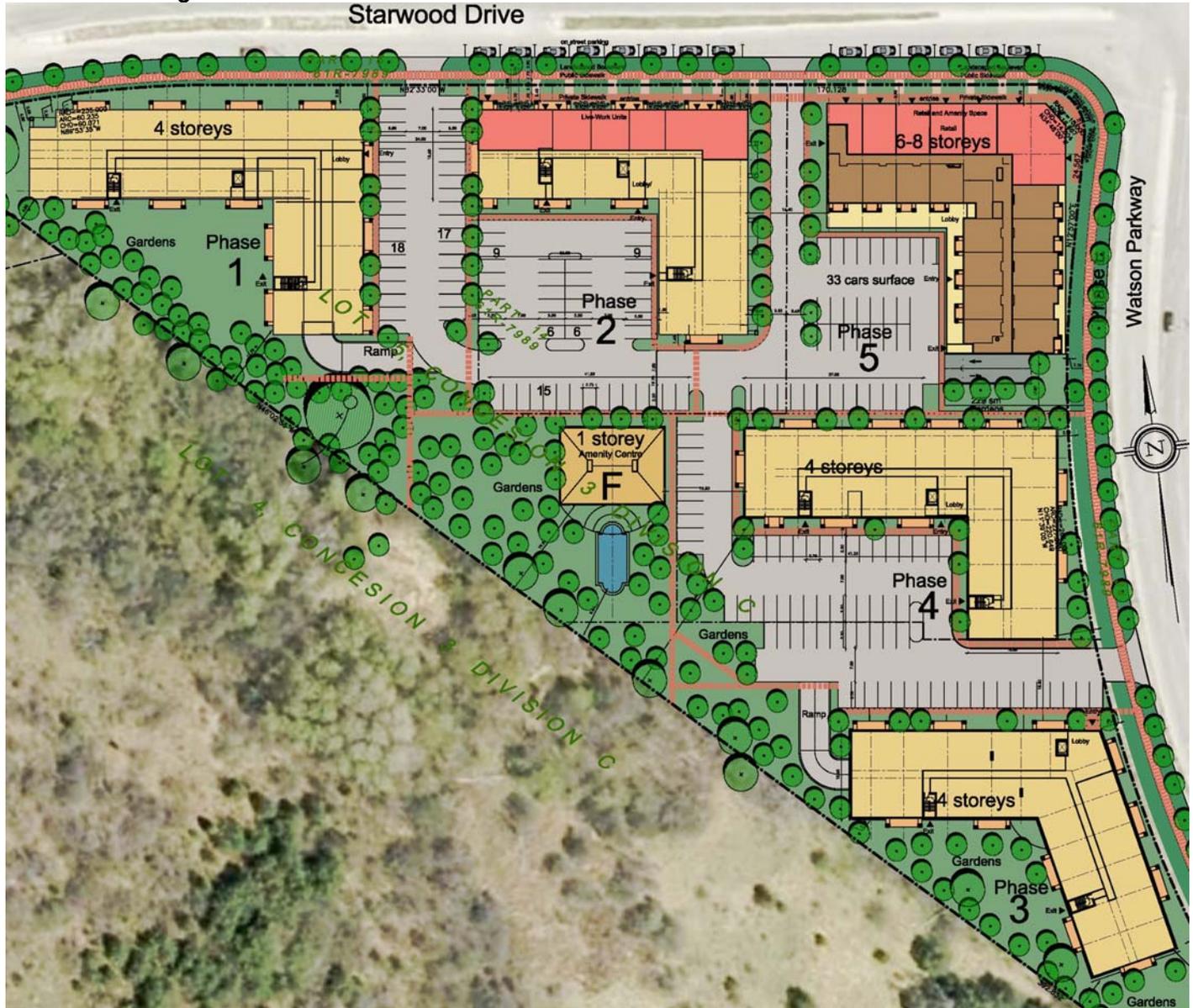


Concept Plan showing the proposed site plan in context

Section 2 - The Proposal

2a) Conceptual Design Principles and Concept Plan

2.1 Site Design



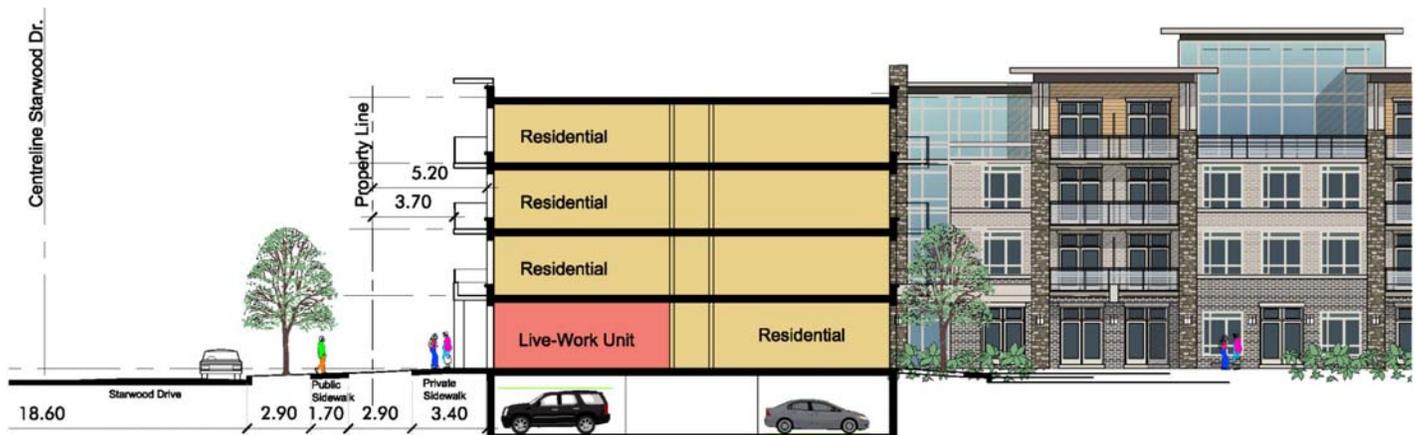
Concept Site Plan showing 5 building phases

The site plan has been configured to achieve the following general outcomes;

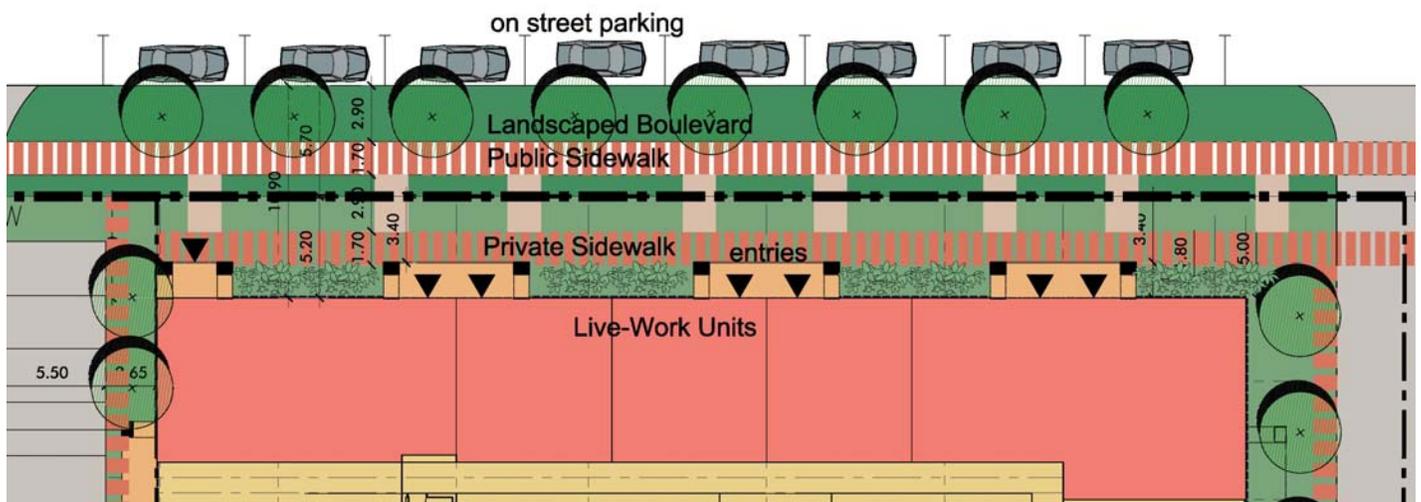
- Strongly define the Starwood Drive and Watson Pkwy. edge with a streetwall with active uses at grade.
- Limit access to 3 vehicle entry/ exits off the adjacent streets
- Provide vehicular drop off functions within the site, away from public roads.
- Provide a pedestrian network of walkways that interlink the site with the streetscape, contributing to the development of a vibrant pedestrian community node.

- Provide at-grade amenity spaces adjacent to all ground floor uses where economically feasible.
- Provide a central indoor amenity building for all buildings that faces gardens and outdoor amenities adjacent to the wetland preserve.
- Building setbacks along the public streets have been set to create a vibrant public realm edge condition defining the node in a strong urban way.

On Starwood Drive a front yard setback of about 4m on average (with a minimum setback of 1m in certain pinch points) is recommended for this design along most of its frontage. When added to the existing boulevard, a total distance of 10.9m is provided from curb to nearest building wall. This dimension then creates an appropriate and spacious public realm that accommodates options for tree planting, terraces for retail operations, lay-by parking and projecting canopies contributing to the vibrancy of the district.

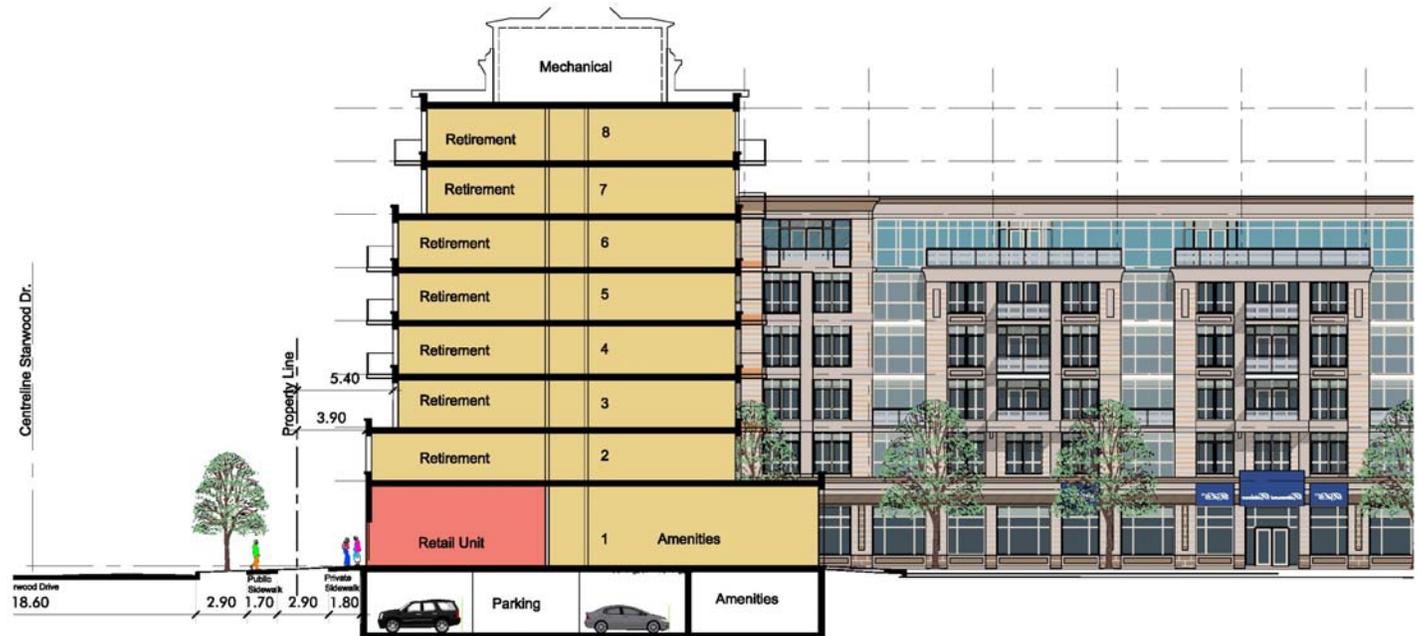


Concept Section through Phase 2 Building



Concept boulevard treatment along the Phase 2 building along Starwood Drive

The Starwood Drive planned right-of-way width is 30m in the vicinity of the site. This dimension is sufficient to allow on street lay-by parking for a portion of the site frontage. This parking is essential to support the commercial uses planned for this face. There is also room for a 1.2m bicycle lane if desired by the city.



Concept section through boulevard at Phase 5 seniors building



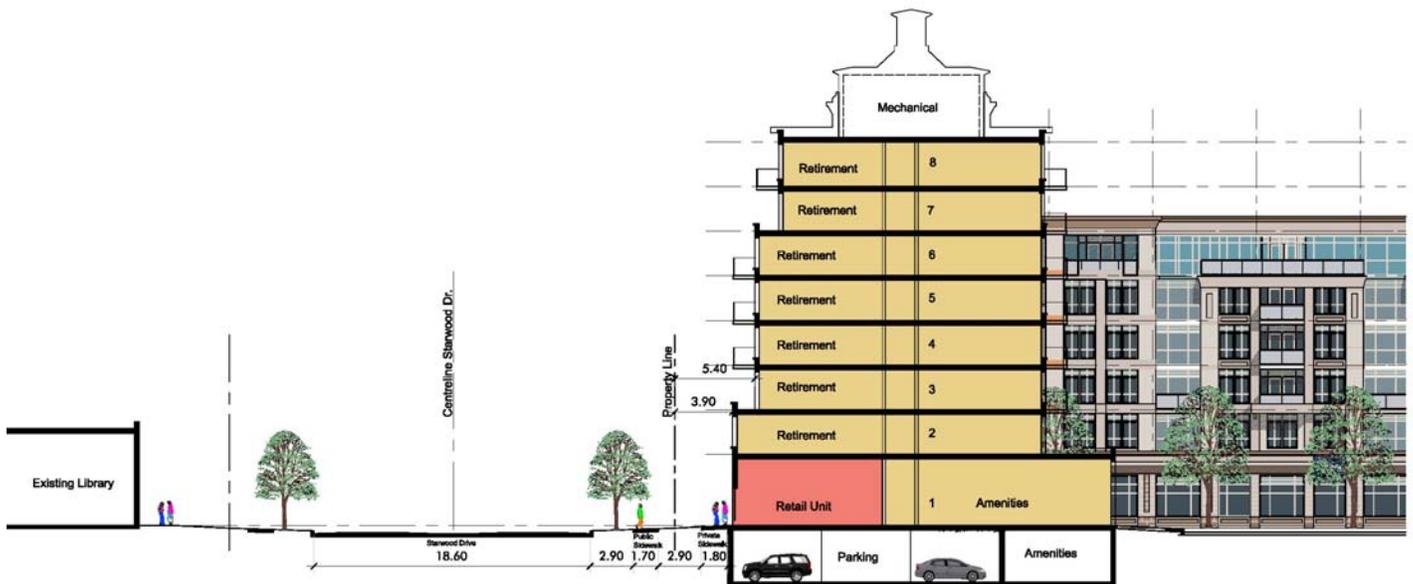
Concept boulevard treatment along the Phase 5 building along Starwood Drive at Watson Pkwy.

This extent of boulevard can accommodate a variety of conditions and treatments including planting and seating.

The City has created a vision for the Starwood node that is best understood with the following image. It shows the existing Library on the right and a suggested massing on the subject site on the left which is intended to create an urban street edge condition. The intention is to create a mixed use focal point for the community where daily resident needs are met through a variety of civic and support uses.



Starwood Node example image of Mixed Use Centre prepared by Guelph



Conceptual Starwood Drive street cross-section showing compliance with the city's vision for the district.



An appropriate boulevard width allows amenities and planting



A boulevard of at least 10m width as proposed allows terraces, tree planting and generous walkways with lay-by parking

2.2 Built Form Elements and Massing

The built form for Phases 1 through 4 is scaled in this concept to match traditional built form that Coletara has developed. Coletara has a record in Guelph of building similar buildings that offer a high degree of affordability as well as a high standard of urban design in this city.



Building Phase 1 - Starwood Elevation

The massing is controlled to create several discrete built form elements that create a more traditional streetwall with the appearance of several buildings. Balconies are framed in stone masonry and project forward to accentuate the multiple massing strategy. The top floor is given a unique contrasting character with a non-linear roofline that further breaks down the visual length of the building, creating an interesting silhouette against the sky.



Building Phase 5 - Retirement Home Concept

The Phase 5 building is proposed at an increased height with active ground floor uses. The massing in a traditional manner creates variety and interest along both street edges. Additional height is proposed at the intersection to add a physical prominence that helps define the node intersection as an important marker for the community.

2.3 Building Articulation

With over 200m of frontage on both Starwood Drive and Watson Parkway, the concept creates the image of smaller incremental buildings typical of evolved built form patterns in older urban areas. To that end the proposed streetwall is divided into several discrete units through the use of plan indentations and material changes as described above. Each of the buildings along Starwood Dr. has a street face width ranging from 50m to 70m. Each building face is broken down into building elements of a width that ranges from 8m to 10m. Similarly the building height is subdivided into a base of about 4m, a body of about 6 to 12m, and a top of about 4m.

2.4 Character and Image

The built form character of the concept design is interpreted in a more contemporary design image. In this way a familiar scaling of built form is achieved with a contemporary look and appeal. Punched window openings are used to create this image and character.



Building Phase 2 - Starwood Elevation

The Phase 2 building above illustrates how the mix of window types creates layered and finely scaled building character.

2.5 Architectural Treatment

The use of clay brick masonry is an important element in the traditional built form evident in Guelph. Brick is used in the lower segments of the building visually anchoring them to the pedestrian realm. Stone accents are also used in the lower reaches of the buildings similarly anchoring the heavier building elements to the ground.



An example of similar material choices for a retirement home building in Clarkson

2.6 Lighting

Light standards will be used throughout the site that will match the scale and character of the design components of the site. All lighting should be sympathetic in colour tone using dark sky cutoffs. Lighting should not spill onto adjacent properties.

2.7 Signage

Permanent signage will be limited to project/use identification and address. Should ground signs be used to identify the project, sign bases should use materials found in the building bases and landscaped surfaces such as brick and stone.

Retail tenant signage is carefully integrated with the storefront design.



2.8 Servicing and Parking

All waste will be stored internally and placed out for pick up at designated locations only when required at pick up times.

A combination of underground and surface parking located away from the streetscape will be utilized to minimize conflicts with pedestrian movement on the public streets around the site perimeter.

2b) Sustainability

2.9 Energy Efficiency Standards

Green features such as low flush toilets and high efficiency HVAC systems will be incorporated at the detailed design stage.

2.10 Carbon Emissions

The inclusion of apartment form residential densities within a walkable mixed use district core and regional transit system will promote pedestrian and bicycle activity and minimize the use of the automobile resulting in fewer carbon emissions. Retirement communities typically require less than half the parking needed in typical residential developments thereby producing less pollution.

2c) Public Realm Principles and Features

2.11 Public Spaces

The primary public realm space provided is on the boulevards along Starwood Dr. and Watson Pkwy. These areas will be landscaped to the City's current urban design standards. As noted above the boulevards are set at about 10.9m of width which can suit a variety of amenities and planting strategies.

Resident common amenity areas are provided in a central building facing the conservation area. landscape details of these areas will be provided through the complete Site Plan process.

2.12 Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian circulation interconnects the interior of the site with the adjacent public sidewalks and community amenities such as the library.

2.13 Design Concepts

Accessible walkways will be smooth to facilitate those with limited mobility.

CPTED principals will be considered to enhance safety and security throughout the site.

2.14 Linkages to Off-site Amenities

The site is edged by public sidewalks along its perimeter facilitating convenient access to the transit corridors, the library and planned local shops and services.

2.15 Transit Integration

The subject site is located adjacent to bus lines along Starwood Dr. and Watson Pkwy. Weather protection can be provided by means of canopies to assist those waiting for the bus prior to a municipal bus shelter being constructed.

2.16 Landscape Design/ Boulevards

Planting details for the boulevards will be determined in consultation with the City during the Site Plan application process.

2.17 Public Art Opportunities

None are suggested at this time although Coletara is open to any city funded initiatives.

2.18 Streetscape Elements

These elements will be determined through the detailed design stage.

2.19 Transition Spaces

All transition edges are dealt with through physical building setbacks and landscaped areas along each street. There are no sensitive built form adjacency issues. The lands immediately west of the site along Starwood Dr. allow for single detached lots to be placed between Phase 1 and the adjacent existing houses.

2.20 Midblock Connections

Pedestrian connections through the site to public trails can be accommodated whereby the city funds and constructs same.

2.21 Shadow Impacts on the Public Realm

No shadow impacts are expected from this development.

Conclusion

The urban design strategies conceptualized for the site will ensure a compatible and sensitive development for the subject site generally meeting the policy directions of the Official Plan and the Mixed Use Nodes where economically feasible. The project introduces a type of housing needed in the area allowing residents enter the housing ownership market and to age and stay in their community.

The project design realizes the policy goals and principles set out in the Envision Guelph Plan. It will further assist in creating a more complete and vibrant community experience within this neighbourhood as directed by the Strategic Goals of the Plan.