

MORE

DESIGN BRIEF

RETIREMENT HOME

PROPOSED MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

1866 RYMAL RD, HAMILTON, ON

MASRIO ARCHITECTS

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MORE

1. INTRODUCTION

This design brief, prepared by Masri O Architects, is being submitted to City of Hamilton Design Review Panel as a part of an application for Zoning By-law Amendment and Official Plan Amendment in support of the re-development of 1866 Rymal Road E in Hamilton (Site).

The lands are currently zoned C3, Community Commercial. The re-zoning of this property will allow for the construction of an 8-storey mixed-use building containing a retirement home, daycare, and other commercial spaces. The development will provide high-quality retirement living units. The design offers a variety of unit sizes and types ranging from studio to 2-bedroom units.

The new building will be aesthetically pleasing and contextually appropriate in design; employing compatible finishes and forms to the surrounding built-context and contributing positively to the planned growth along Rymal Road by utilizing a high standard of design.



Figure 1 – Artistic Image of the Proposed Mixed-use Development

2. ANALYSIS OF POLICY AND GUIDELINES

2.1. URBAN HAMILTON OFFICIAL PLAN

The Urban Official Plan Schedule E (Figure 11 below) describes the Site in the context of urban structure. The section of Rymal Road that the site is located on is part of a Secondary Corridor. The OP defines the purpose of Secondary Corridors being to “serve to link nodes and employment areas, or Primary Corridors.”

The Site is within a neighbourhood adjacent to major open space (Eramosa Karst Conservation Area) and in close proximity to a Community Node, located at the intersection of Rymal Road and Upper Centennial Parkway. This section of Rymal Rd links the Community Node to the Employment Areas directly west of the Site, illustrated by the map below.



Figure 2 - Part of Urban Hamilton OP Schedule E - Urban Structure

Hamilton’s urban structure is guided by nodes and corridors, and considers the following principles:

- Nodes and corridors are the focus of reurbanization activities (i.e. population growth, private and public redevelopment, and infrastructure investment).*
- Nodes and corridors provide focal points of activity for Hamilton’s local communities and neighbourhoods.*
- Nodes and corridors are connected to each other and are internally served by various modes of transportation, including higher order transit.*

This context should inform the design of the Site. The location on a Secondary corridor, and its proximity to both designated Major Open Space and a Community Node indicate a readiness for denser development. The corner lot adjacent to an Institution provides an appropriate location to

accommodate additional height. The scale and mixed-use typology are aligned with the specific OP goals for Secondary Corridors:

“Secondary Corridors shall generally accommodate retail and mixed use forms in small clusters along the corridors with medium density housing located between the clusters.”

“Secondary Corridors are currently characterized, in large measure, by single use buildings. The intent of this Plan is to evolve the Secondary Corridors to an increasing proportion of multiple storey, mixed use buildings in small cluster locations with at grade retail and service commercial uses.”

The OP goes on further to describe the benefits of commercial and mixed-use zones within nodes and corridors, particularly when combined with residential intensification, because of the natural symbiotic relationship between these uses. This development achieves these priorities of the Official Plan.

2.2. RYMAL ROAD SECONDARY PLAN

The Rymal Road Secondary Plan identifies the Site as a Local Commercial designation. The vision for the Plan is based on:

“a compact urban form which promotes a sense of community, encourages a mixing of uses, establishes a vibrant neighbourhood setting, encourages pedestrian travel and other alternative modes of movement, creates residential densities which support transit and protects natural heritage features.”

One of the relevant policy goals of the Plan is to support “aging in place” by providing a variety of housing forms that can accommodate a variety of life stages. The retirement home use supports this goal. Residents who already live in the neighbourhood would be able to choose this building for its proximity to community, and new community residents could move to the area to be closer to family members already living in the area.

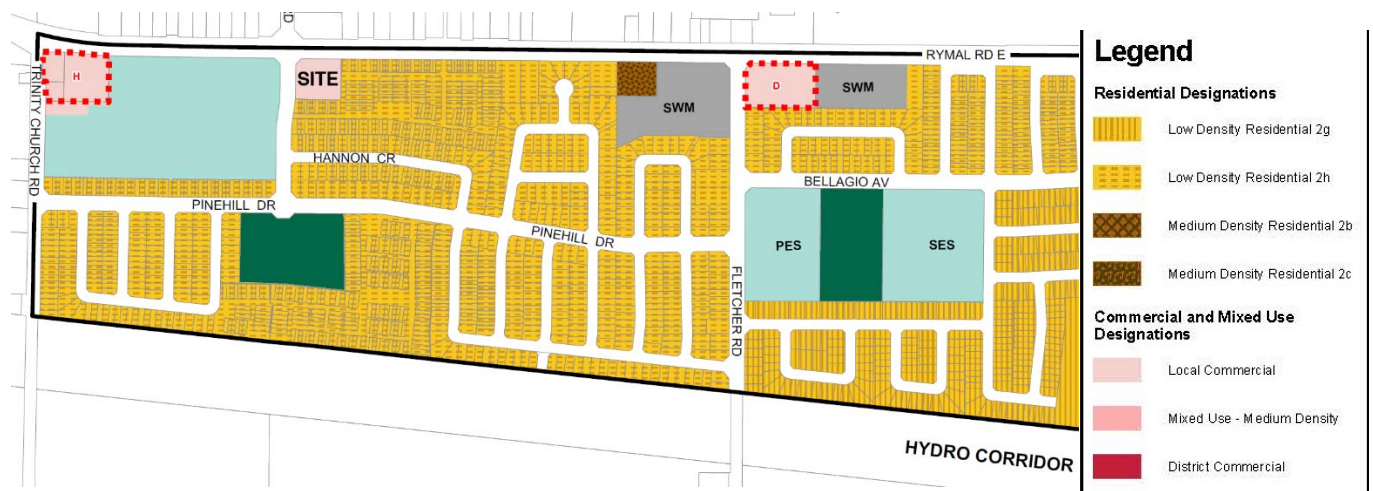


Figure 3 - Portion of Rymal Road Secondary Plan (map B5.2-1)

Another policy goal achieved by this proposed development is the enhancement of commercial uses and higher intensity residential development along the corridor, in order to support public

transit and serve the growing community. Both of these are proposed for the Site, which will provide 180 retirement home dwelling units, as well as commercial/retail uses at the ground floor.

2.3. CITY-WIDE CORRIDOR PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

The City-Wide Corridor Planning Principles and Design Guidelines indicate that Nodes and Corridors are the focus of reurbanization activities. The following excerpt from the Guidelines list its principles below.

Corridors should be planned and developed to:

(a) Support and facilitate development and investment that contributes to the economic and social vitality of the Corridor and adjacent neighbourhoods.

(b) Promote and support development which enhances and respects the character of existing neighbourhoods where appropriate and creates vibrant, dynamic, and livable urban places through high quality urban design.

(c) Develop compact, mixed use urban environments that support transit and active transportation.

(d) Promote and support an innovative sustainable built environment that uses resources efficiently and encourages a high quality of life.

(e) Identify areas of change as the locations for new development along Corridors.

2.4. TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Using guidance from the OP, the Transit Oriented Development Guidelines indicate a hierarchy for transit development based on the Urban context. These include the Corridors and Nodes defined by the OP. These guidelines point out the importance of Community Nodes (such as that on Rymal Road and its intersection with Upper Centennial Parkway.) The Guidelines state:

It is the intent that these non-traditional and future community nodes transform over time to contain a full range of services and functions found in the traditional community nodes. Thus the principles for urban nodes must be applied to these non-traditional and greenfield nodes. Although the Community Nodes may not be directly connected to higher order rapid transit, it is essential that TOD principles be applied at the appropriate scale to ensure these nodes develop to support local transit and achieve their planned function in the urban structure.

Increasing transit options will be scaled to the size of the communities served, with the understanding that growth is expected – particularly within Corridors and Nodes. The future growth anticipated by the TOD will be supported by the proposed development, which will establish both residential density and retail uses.

3. SITE CONTEXT

The Site is located on the corner of Rymal Rd E and Dakota Blvd. The growing community contains schools, retail establishments, parks and churches. These amenities serve a growing and recently developed residential neighborhood of mostly stacked townhouses to the south. Eramosa Karst Conservation Area is a large environmental reserve to the north of the Site: it is complete with trails, boardwalks, caves and water features. Although the Site is located near the suburban edge of the City, it is also along a corridor (Rymal Rd) and very close to a community node at the corner of Rymal Road and Upper Centennial Parkway. These are defined in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan as areas of growth. Specifically, the immediate area surrounding the Site is planned under the Rymal Road Secondary Plan.



Figure 4 – Map of the surrounding context of the site.

The immediate community includes both elementary and secondary schools: Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Elementary School and Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School. Rymal Road Community Church is just down the street, and Trinity United Church is around the corner on Trinity Church Road. These schools and churches serve the surrounding neighbourhood. The neighbourhood includes mostly new single-family residences. Directly adjacent to the Site, there is a large townhouse complex. The neighbourhood incorporates several parks including Summit Park and Bellagio Park, as well as playgrounds and sports fields associated with the schools. There are two small commercial plazas within 1km of the Site: Summit Park Centre at the corner of Rymal Rd and Trinity Church Rd, and Fletcher Square at the corner of Rymal Rd and Fletcher Rd. These contain a gas station, several restaurants and salons, a medical centre and a daycare.

The main streetscape elements along Rymal Road are the new three storey townhouses on the south side, and the more established one and two storey detached homes on the north side. Across Dakota Blvd, the secondary school is a relatively new two storey building with a worship space facing the corner of Rymal Road and Dakota Blvd. Directly across Rymal Rd, a new 8 storey residential building is slated for the corner of Rymal Rd and Columbus Gate. Moving towards the south, the streetscape transitions from townhouses to single detached homes. The area of development along the south side of Rymal Rd is all fairly recent. The existing homes on the north side of Rymal Rd have been there for much longer, and have larger properties and deeper street line setbacks. Beyond the southern boundary of the neighbourhood, marked by the hydro corridor, is farmland and open landscape.



Figure 5 – Site Context Legend



Figure 6 - Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School seen from Rymal Road



Figure 7 - Townhouses as seen from Rymal Rd, adjacent to the Site



Figure 8 - Single Family Homes as seen from Rymal Road, North of the Site



Figure 9 - Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School seen from Dakota Blvd.



Figure 10 - New Townhouses South of the Site, seen from Dakota Blvd.

Across the street, at the corner of Rymal Rd E and Columbus Gate, an 8-storey residential building is slated for construction in the coming year. Both of these developments anchor and activate the corner with commercial uses, strengthening Rymal Rd as an urban corridor.



Figure 11 – Proposed 8 Storey Mixed-use Development at 1865 Rymal Road Across from Site

4. DESIGN

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This proposal consists of an 8-storey mixed-use development including ground floor commercial uses; these incorporate a daycare and various other commercial uses, such as: coffee shop, neighbourhood convenience shop, personal services and other small retail establishments. The upper floors (2nd-8th) contain a retirement home.



Figure 12- Rendering of Proposed Building from the Corner of Rymal Rd and Dakota Blvd.

The proposed design takes its cues from its context: the Site is located at the street corner of a city block and at the edge of a low-rise neighbourhood on the east and south, transitioning towards institutional, commercial and high-rise residential across the street corner on the north and west.

The building location and massing responds to this context in terms of placement, massing, configuration and architectural language expressed in articulation, colour, texture, etc.



Figure 13 - Rendering Showing Future Street Scape at Intersection of Rymal Rd with Dakota Blvd and Columbus Gate

Overall the building design aims to fit in an evolving neighbourhood along a corridor planned for growth and higher density.

The design aims to create a street wall with ‘podium’ type architectural language to emphasize a human scale base corresponding to the height of existing buildings. It also aims to activate the street along Rymal Rd, with multiple entrances to commercial units which are each accessed from the public sidewalk along Rymal Road and also internally from the Site.



Figure 14 – Street View Along Rymal Road (looking east) with Existing and Proposed Buildings

The retirement home as well as the daycare, are accessed from the interior of the lot, at an entranceway defined by a green roof canopy. Both the daycare and retirement home have frontages on the public roads with large glazed facades, while taking advantage of the canopied entrance feature internal to the Site, with close proximity to the temporary pick up/drop-off parking spaces adjacent to the building.



Figure 15 - Rendering Showing the Site Interior

The Site is vacant and relatively flat, with an overall grade change of approximately 0.75m. The grade is generally highest in the middle of the site, and slopes down towards the corner of the Site at the intersection of Rymal and Dakota. Due to this natural sloping, the building has been designed with its primary accessible entrances serving the retirement home and the daycare facing the interior of the Site, towards the parking and drop-off area. This determines the ground floor elevation and means that the outer facades of the building are raised above the natural sloped grade. Accesses to the commercial areas facing Rymal Road therefore require stairs to be accessed directly from the sidewalk. The parking area is accessed via the main driveway off Dakota Blvd. A secondary driveway is proposed on Rymal Rd., and would provide restricted access to site with right-in and right-out access only.



Figure 16 – The Site Existing Condition

The site does not have any notable existing landscape elements, as it was used as a staging area for the construction of the townhouses to the east and south of the property. There are no natural or heritage features requiring special protection or consideration.

4.2.SITE DESIGN

The building is intentionally placed closer to the street. This allows for better relation to the public realm where the building participates in activating the intersection. It also allows maintaining maximum distances from the adjacent townhouses to the east and south.

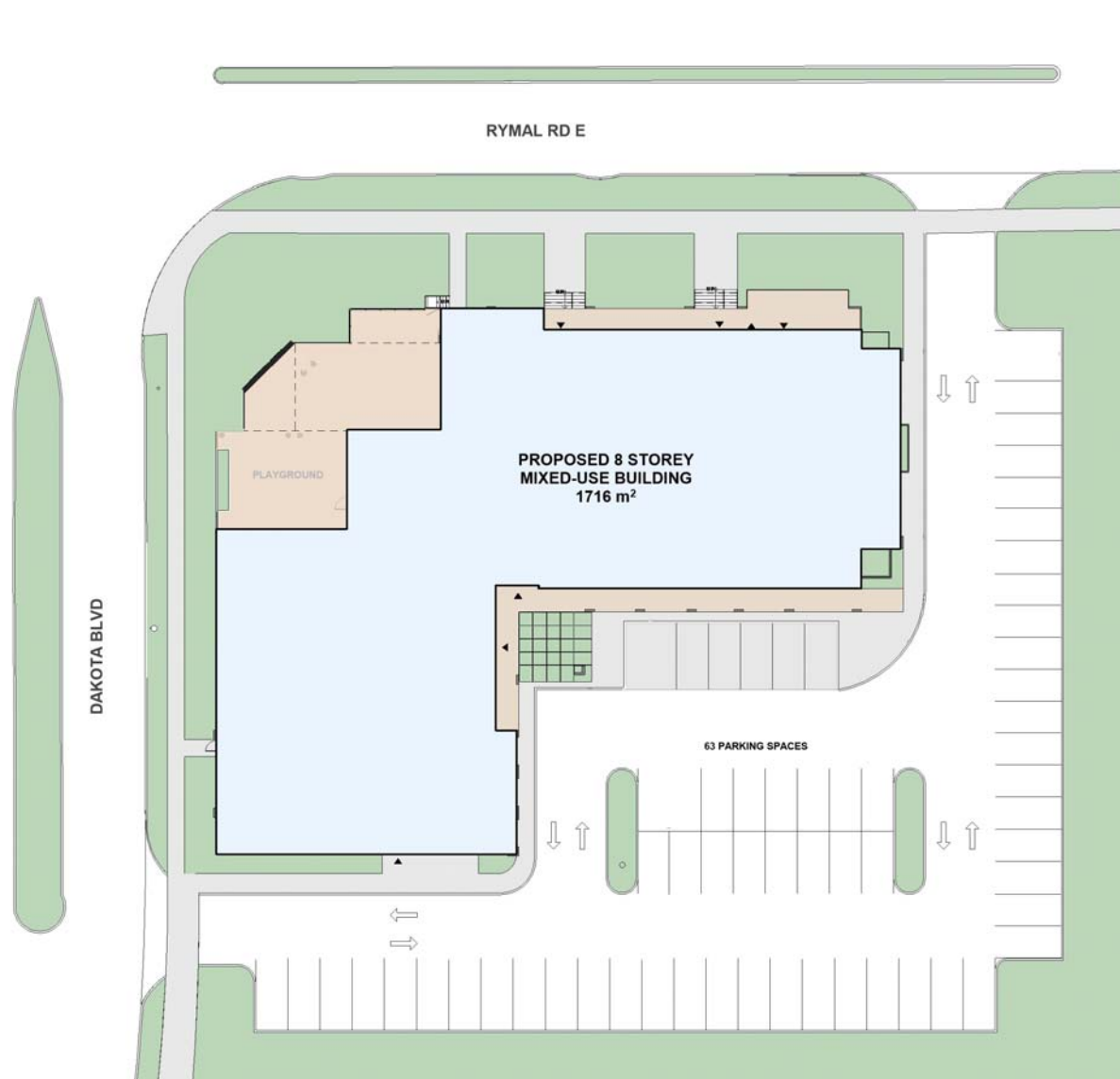


Figure 17 – Site Plan Showing Building Placement

The L-shaped building that straddles the street line contributes to an activated street at the corner of Rymal Rd and Dakota Blvd. By placing the building closer to the street and providing glazed facades with entrances to the commercial spaces and landscaping elements, the building provides for maximum interaction with the public realm. The type of uses accommodated on the ground floor: commercial, daycare and public areas of the retirement home will provide activity on and along the street and allow for eyes-on-the-street.

North wing of the building along Rymal Road can be accessed by pedestrians from the street. Several street-facing retail entrances can be seen from the street, and accessed individually. The retirement home lounge, dining and lobby areas face Dakota Bld. There is a second outdoor, covered patio at the eastmost part of the building, providing flexible seating space for the retail establishments.

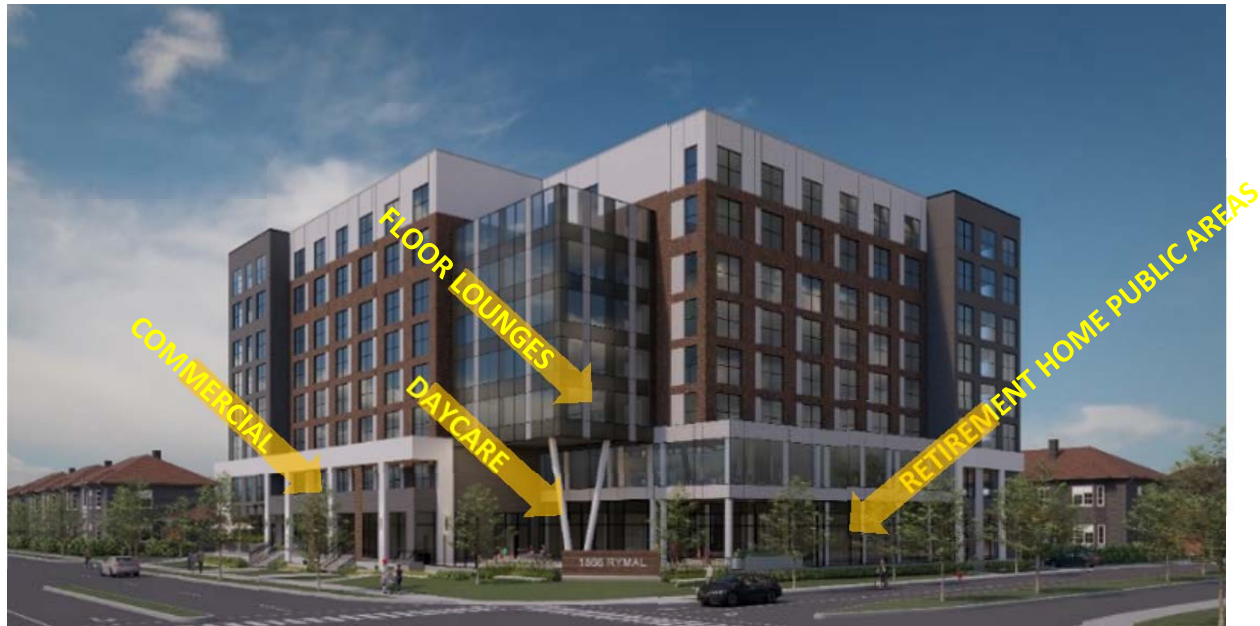


Figure 18 – Rendering showing the Building Uses at Street Level

The L-shape of the building is slightly recessed or bent at the corner which provides an added element of design interest signifying the building corner at the street intersection. The corner of the L is animated in 3-dimensions by changing use, materiality and massing at various floors. The void the recess creates makes room for the daycare playground. At the floors above 3rd to 7th this area turns into an indoor lounge area at each floor for the residents, then finally to flip back to an outdoor terrace.

The exterior corner of the building is accented by an outdoor space intended to provide a secure outdoor play area for the daycare within. The corner of the Site is further emphasized with a prominent signage wall that also works to provide privacy and noise control for the play area. The signage wall will be built with the same material as the building accentuated with glass walls and railings to provide an animated and semi-transparent street wall. The outdoor space is slightly above the adjacent grade, and accented by planter boxes and other soft landscaping.



Figure 19 – Rendering showing the Exterior Corner of the Building at Street Intersection

The interior corner of the building acts as the main access point to the building within the Site and away from the busy street and closer to the parking. This choice was based on providing safe access for the prospective tenants and their visitors. The main entrance for the daycare is also within the Site, so both uses can share the temporary parking provided for drop-off and pick-up.



Figure 20 – Rendering showing the Interior Corner of the Building Internal to the Site

Two driveway entrances provide vehicular access and a fire route. The main driveway is located off Dakota Blvd. The secondary driveway is located off Rymal Rd, providing right-in and right-out access only. The driveway locations are intentional, in order to keep the mass of the building at the corner of the Site and provide the neighbouring townhouses with significant 15m + setbacks (where 3.0m and 7.5m are required).

The retirement home has a centralized garbage room on the main floor, adjacent to a loading area at the south-west end of the building. Garbage chutes are located on each floor above. Garbage pick-up will be internal to the Site at a loading zone outside of the garbage room.

Lighting design includes high quality fixtures that are intended to complement the design of the building.

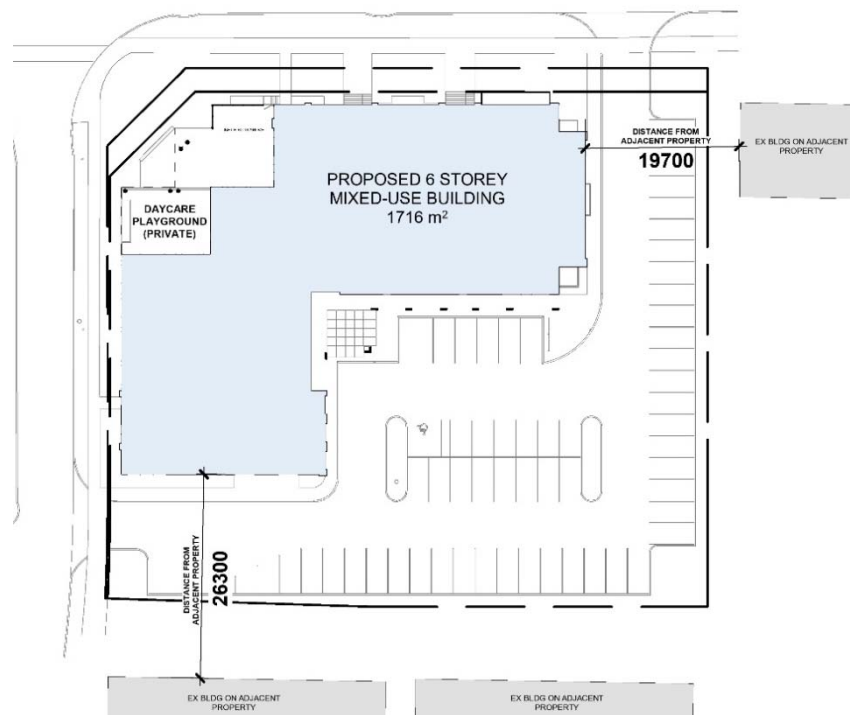


Figure 21 – Site Diagram showing Distance of the Proposed Building to Neighbouring Buildings

4.3. BUILDING DESIGN

The building is composed of three main components to its mass located above a podium style base.

- . The central mass is a red brick “L” oriented towards Rymal Road and Dakota Blvd.
- . Two smaller masses bookend the building anchoring the ends of the “L” form.
- . The corner of the ‘L’ is accented with a glass form that provides interior amenity spaces for residents with expansive views to the outside. The massing is carved out at the ground floor and second floor, providing an outdoor space intended for use by the daycare. At the 7th floor, the corner is further carved out for the terrace.

The base of the building at the ground floor exhibits extensive glazing for views in and out of the retail uses within. Each retail unit has its own entrance and windows that look out onto the street or onto the Site. The materiality of the building is based on three elements; brown brick, grey metal siding and glass. The ground floor and the corner are highlighted with curtain wall glazing, and residential units are provided with large windows and lots of light.



Figure 22 – Rendering showing the North Building Elevation facing Rymal Road

The base is set at two floors with an overall height of approximately 9m which corresponds well to the 2 storey school building and the 3 storey townhouse buildings at each end of the Site. The main mass which is shaped in an “L” form and which includes all the residential suites, is set back from this base at the second and third floors at the north and west respectively.



Figure 23– Rendering showing the West Building Elevation facing Dakota Blvd

The ground floor and second floors along Dakota Blvd are more public spaces – they contain the daycare and the main retirement home entrance lobby, dining room and lounge areas. These spaces are enclosed within two bands of glazing that wrap the building from the north to the west face. This light colour and transparent materiality communicate the nature of spaces within and correspond with the height of the ‘podium’ expressed as a canopy band that continues to wrap the building on all other sides.

The windows at the top floors above the base are large and square, in keeping with the modern form of the design. This also gives the elevation a rhythm that is supported by the regularly placed columns of the canopy that wraps the base of the building.

4.4. LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The approach taken to the landscape design of the site is an urban style with mostly functional landscaping.

- . The Site is edged by a landscape strip along its interior property lines with low plantings and maple trees.
- . The front yard and exterior side yard will both include street trees.
- . The parking areas are broken with islands that incorporate trees and low landscaping.
- . A variety of hard landscaping finishes is incorporated to delineate different uses. These include broom faced concrete for walkways, patterned and stained concrete for patios, as well as paver stone for the drop-off area close to the building.
- . Additional landscaping is incorporated vertically, such as the green roofed canopy and container style green landscaping at the terraces.



Figure 24 – Landscape Concept Plan

In general, the design employs various urban landscape features. There are three main features; the exterior corner terrace, the interior corner entrance, and the commercial terrace along Rymal Road. The exterior corner terrace at Rymal Rd. and Dakota Blvd. features a large, secure outdoor play area intended for use by the daycare.



Figure 25 – Rendering Showing the Daycare Playground

The interior corner features a large green-roofed canopy that shelters pedestrians entering and exiting the retirement home and the daycare. The roof of the entrance canopy is part of the green roofing of the terrace at the second floor serving the retirement lounge area.



Figure 26 – Rendering Showing the Green Entrance Canopy

The commercial terrace is connected to the public walkways by two stairways. A small covered patio is featured outside the two eastmost commercial units that can potentially serve as a patio for a coffee shop.



Figure 27 – Rendering of the North Building Corner at Rymal St showing Commercial Terrace and Patio

The landscape design incorporates as much soft landscaping as possible, with various types of plantings (lilies, grasses, and deciduous bushes) in the beds that line both Dakota Blvd and Rymal Rd. Flowering varieties have been included to provide colour to the streetscape.

Several walkways have been added to provide easy access to the various ground floor uses. Two of these provide pedestrian access along Rymal Rd to the commercial units, one to the daycare, and two to the internal walkways of the Site, providing an alternative pedestrian access to the daycare and the primary entrance for the retirement home. Along the south elevation, a canopied walkway provides access to additional retail units. The concrete material of the walkway is extended to include the temporary pick-up/drop-off parking spaces, indicating that the pedestrian realm is extended. The walkway opens up to a large hard landscape zone in front of the main retirement home entrance. This is sheltered by an additional canopy that incorporates a green roof.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Located at an important intersection along the Rymal Road corridor, the building is sited well for its proposed density, height and mixed-use typology. The proposed building is at the edge of a residential neighbourhood where it transitions to a high-density corridor of mixed –uses of medium height 6-8 storeys and across from an Institutional building.

The scale of the 8-storey building is well accommodated relative to its context and site.

- . It mirrors the height and massing of the proposed residential building on the opposite side of Rymal Rd.
- . The setbacks to the neighbouring townhouses to the south and east are generous at over 15m, providing a significant buffer space including landscape buffers that soften the transition. Across Rymal Road, there is a significant buffer to the residences due to the width of the street.
- . The narrow street-line setback at 1.5m, contributes to the creation of a complete streetscape that is welcoming to pedestrians supported with a mix of soft and hard landscaping.

Both streets benefit from the L-shaped building positioned close to the street, with plenty of at-grade glazing creating views in and out of the commercial and retail uses. The corner incorporates lots of soft landscape features that along with the exterior patios contribute to the pedestrian experience of the streetscape.

The building design is modern with elements from traditional industrial buildings of similar scale, where the large windows will contribute both the quality of the indoor spaces and to the street facades. The Building massing is broken down into sections that correspond with the function and the street location. The facades are well articulated with varying and compatible materials, colours and textures.

Most importantly, the proposed building massing and design will complement the development across the street on Rymal Road that obtained site plan conditional approval and together they will greatly enhance this section of Rymal Road that is identified as an urban growth corridor.



Figure 12 – Street View at Rymal Road (looking east) with Existing and Proposed Buildings