VISUAL ASSESMENT STUDY

Prepared for Spallacci Homes

December 21, 2017

Proposed Residential Development
John Street, Hamilton

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1.0 BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS

1.1 Study Area

Spallacci Homes propose to develop a mixed-use complex consisting of three 26, 30 and 36 storey residential towers with a common podium to create 923 units and underground parking for 934 vehicles.

The subject property is steeply sloping, from the northeast corner of Charlton Avenue East to the corner with John Street and then up John Street to the corner with St Josephs' Drive.

The subject property is of a generally rectangular shape and is approximately 0.85 hectares in size. The subject lands are currently developed with a five-storey multiple unit building and a privately-owned surface parking lot.

Figure 1- Subject lands

Surrounding uses include St Josephs' Hospital to the west, existing residential uses to the north, a municipal park to the east and a low-rise residential neighbourhood to the south.

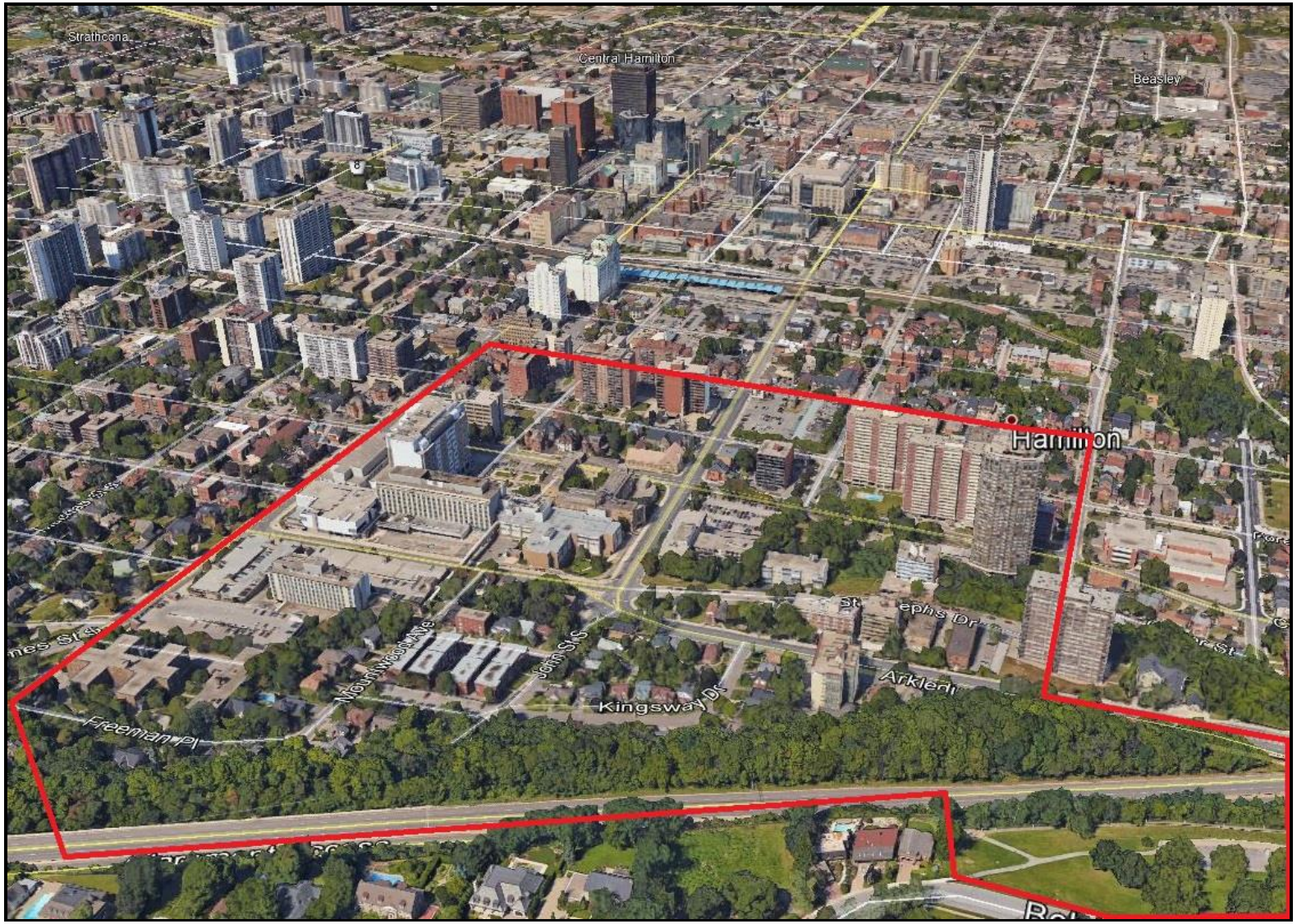


Figure 2- Study Area as defined by the Niagara Escarpment Commission

1.2 Existing Views of the Site

Figure 3- The site looking west along Charlton Avenue East.

Figure 4-Looking south up John Street, towards the Escarpment.

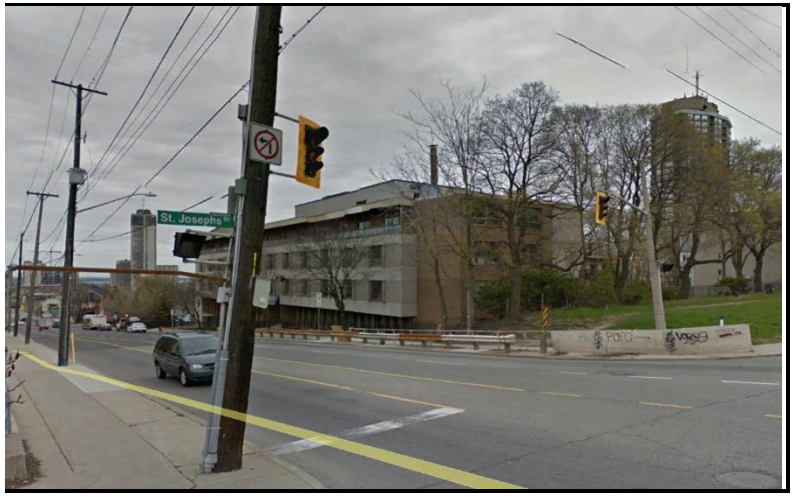


Figure 5- The site looking down John Street.

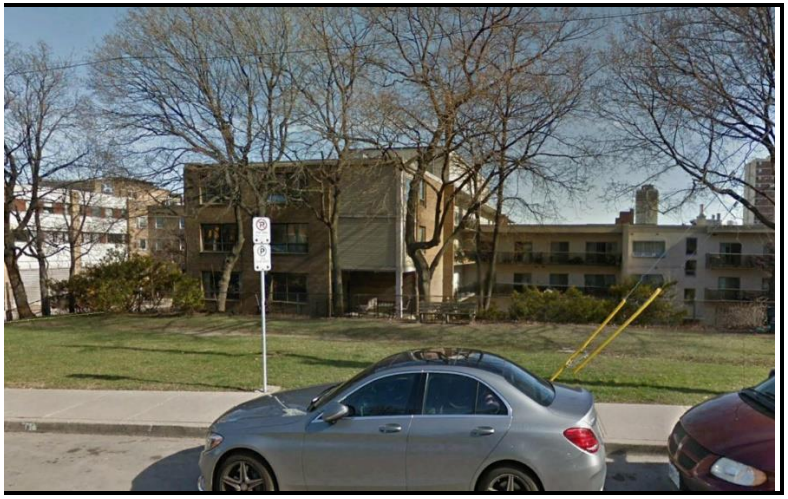


Figure 6- The site looking north from St Josephs' Drive

1.3 Methodology

As prescribed by the Niagara Escarpment Commission the following Methodology has been employed in this visual assessment study.

1. Establish a baseline for the existing conditions. This step examines the views to the Niagara Escarpment slopes and brow documenting the views and viewshed (all or in part) that exist from the roads, trails and public lands within a prescribed area in and around the proposed development.
2. Photographs including panoramic images where appropriate (i.e. views from Sam Lawrence Park) that show the whole of the viewshed are a requirement. To meet NEC standards photographs are to be taken with an SLR or DSLR 50-52mm lens as this produces an image close to that of the human eye. Images from Google Street View, smart phones and similar cameras do not meet the NEC standards. Steps:
    a. Photographic inventory, GPS positon, locate each viewpoint on a key map;
    b. On the photos utilizing an icon (arrow) identify where in the view /viewshed the proposed built form is located;
    c. Analysis of the impact of the development on the views in the inventory;
    d. Recommend views /viewshed for further investigation.
3. For those viewpoints where further investigation is required identify in an accurate and replicable manner the proposed physical changes to the views that would result from the proposed built form. Photographic simulations are considered the best method for this investigation. See Guideline and supplemental information attached.
4. Assess the impact of the proposed changes on the scenic resources of the Escarpment (see NEP policies, Guideline & Landscape Evaluation Study); and
5. Propose measures to mitigate including such matters as changes to proposed setbacks, reductions in height and configuration of the proposed buildings.

2.0 NEC POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

The Niagara Escarpment Commission has established a series of Guidelines to outline the standards for the preparation of the Visual Assessment Study.

The Visual Assessment Study process sets out initially to establish a baseline for the existing conditions and then identify the physical changes in an accurate and objective manner. With a baseline and an accurate identification of the physical changes, an assessment of the impact of change on the Escarpment visual, landscape and scenic resources, in keeping with the NEPDA and NEP, can be conducted.

The steps and methods identified in Section 1.3 (Methodology) set out a standard protocol that was employed in the production of this document.

The next step in the Study seeks to assess the impact of change on the Escarpment landscape caused by the proposed development. With a baseline and an accurate identification of the physical changes, an assessment of the impact on the visual, landscape and scenic resources of the Escarpment

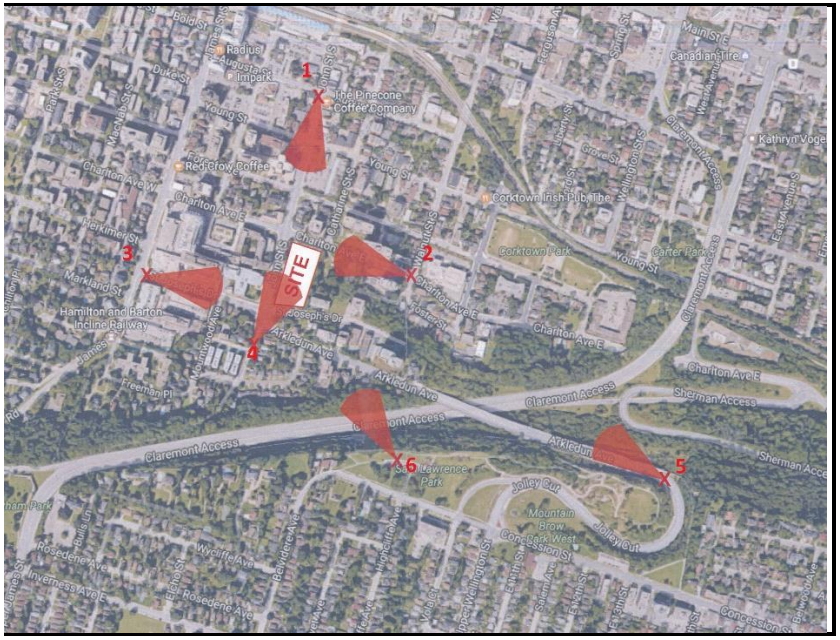


Figure 7- The proposed View Corridors

environment, in keeping with the NEPDA and NEP, as well approved Policy Papers, is demonstrated in the next Section (4).

The Niagara Escarpment Commission has provided specific view corridors to be assessed in this study and they are described in Figure 7.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Project Description

The development comprises a multi-level, mixed use podium ranging from 1-5 storeys to accommodate the drop in grade from St Josephs' Drive to Charlton Avenue East. Residential and commercial uses screen the above ground resident and visitor parking levels. Underground parking levels complete the base building. Vehicle access to the parking areas is from both St Josephs' Drive to Charlton Avenue East via ramps screened by the built form. From the podium level, 3 residential towers emerge and achieve 26, 30 and 36 storeys respectively. The towers are staggered on the podium to take full advantage of view to the City and Escarpment and Lake Ontario beyond.

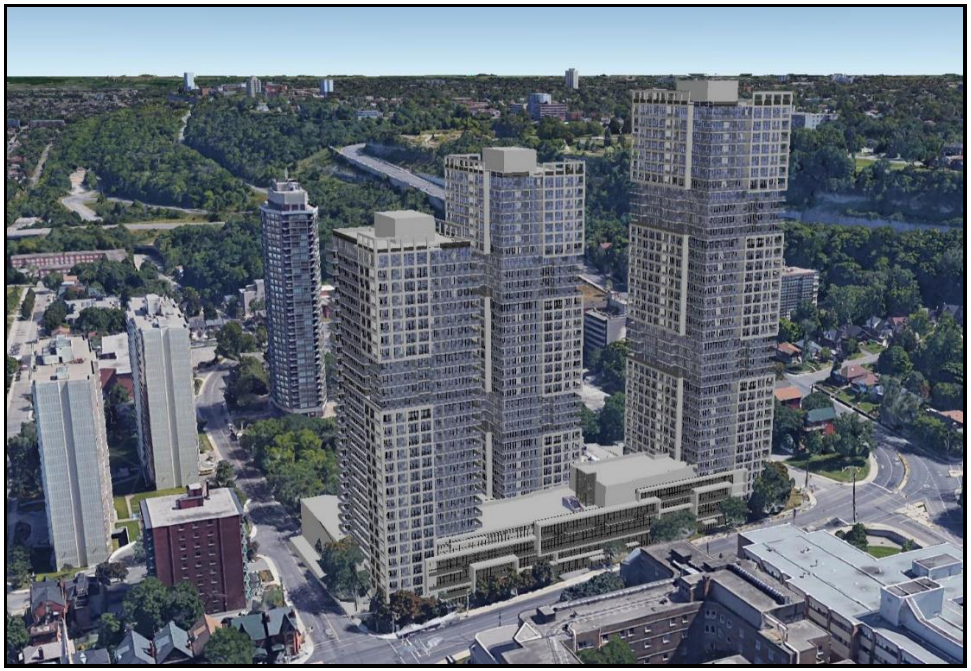
. 

Figure 8- The proposed development.

4,0 VIEWS TO BE ASSESSED (Before and After)

4.1 John and Augusta looking South

The view south on John Street shows the gradual incline and John Street moves towards the Escarpment. The Escarpment is in clear view with multiple dwellings obvious on the ridge. Trees on the Escarpment are in view, summer and winter,

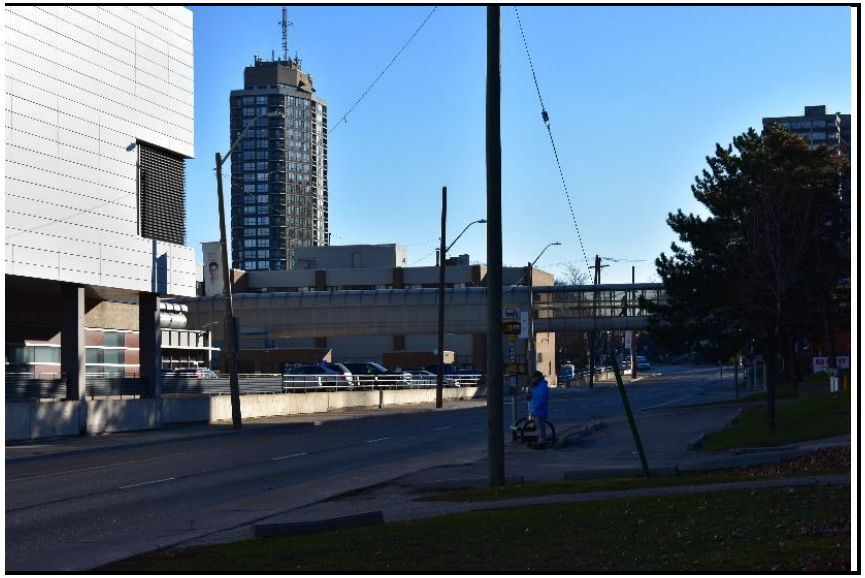
The proposed development clearly obscures the view to the Escarpment on John Street.

4.2 Charlton and Walnut looking West

The view west on Charlton Avenue does not currently provide view of the Escarpment. The view shows the main building of St Josephs' Hospital.

The proposed development with Woolverton Park in the foreground.

4.3 St Joseph and James looking East



The view east on St Josephs' Avenue, which is partially on the Escarpment, shows the 33-storey Olympia Tower Condo with hospital buildings in the foreground.

The proposed development obscures the view of the Olympia Tower however has no effect on other Escarpment views.

4.4 John and Arkledun looking North

The view north, looking down John Street from Arkledun shows the skyline of the Downton Core. There are no current views of the Escarpment from this location

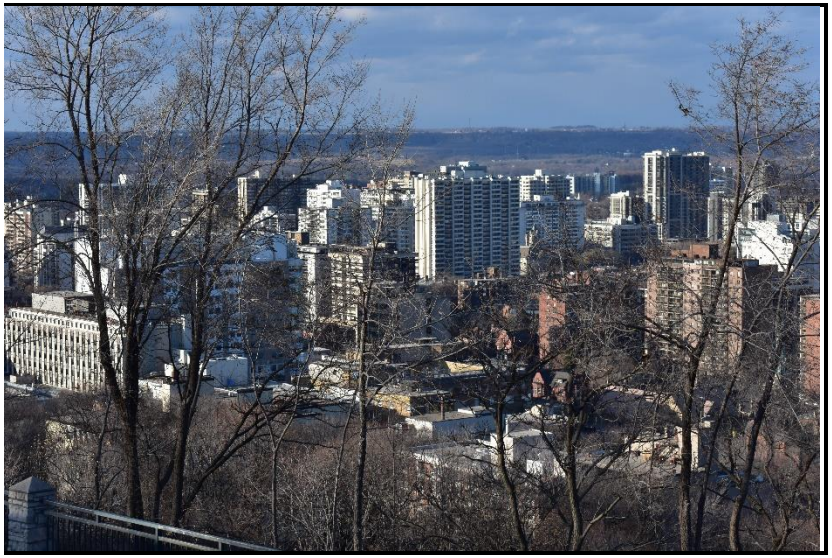
The proposed development obscures some of the view of the Downtown Core however has no effect on other Escarpment views.

4.5 Arkledun Avenue looking Northwest

The view northwest, looking from the walkway on the ridge of the Escarpment shows the two existing tower buildings, one of which is built on the Escarpment slope. Views of the Escarpment in the background are punctuated by the existing buildings.

The proposed development is show in context with the existing buildings and the escarpment in the background.

4.6 Sam Lawerence Park looking Northwest



The view northwest from Sam Lawerence Park, on the Escarpment displays the Hamilton skyline. Views of the Escarpment in the background are visible.

The proposed development is show in context with the existing buildings and the escarpment in the background.

4.0 -Conclusion

The proposed development is obviously a significant addition to the City of Hamilton skyline. It is worth noting that there are a number of proposals, of similar scale and density, currently in the approval process that will bring new residents to the Downtown area. Although, as the images in Section 4 indicate, some grade related views of the Escarpment will be affected by the proposed development however new and spectacular views of the Escarpment, Lake Ontario, the Hamilton and Toronto skylines will be realized from the residences of the Metro Condominiums.

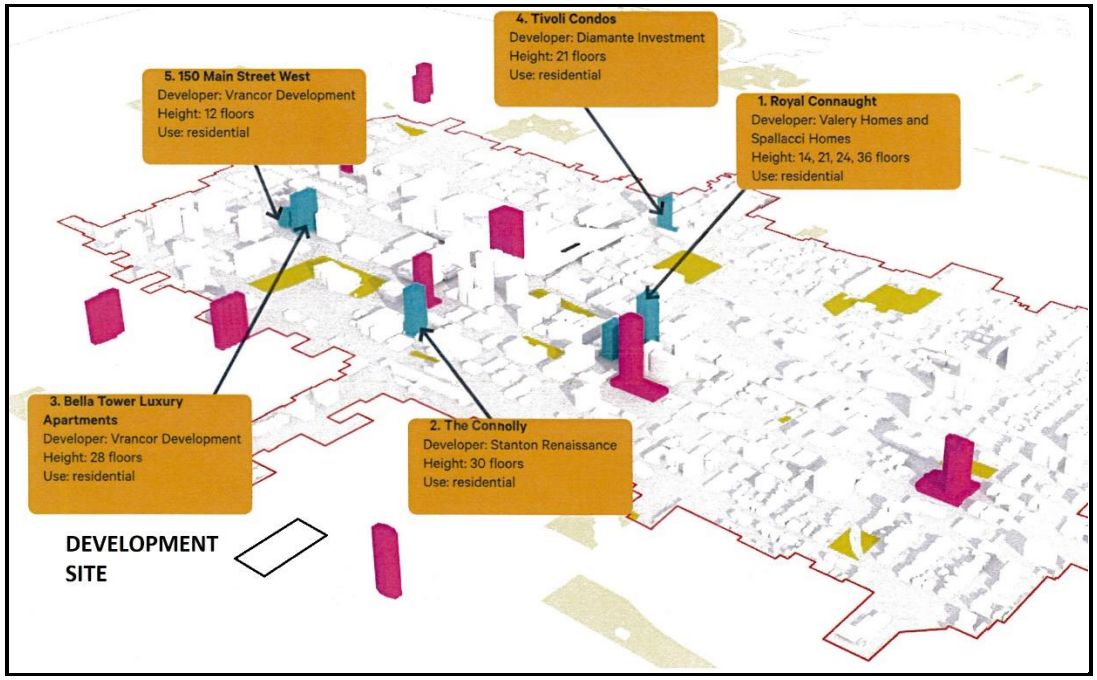


Figure 9- Existing and Proposed Developments in Hamilton.