

SCOPED VISUAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Prepared By: UrbanSolutions Planning & Land Development Consultants Inc.
Prepared For: File No. ZAC-23-019 – Resubmission No. 2
Site Location: 117 Forest Avenue and 175 Catharine Street South, Hamilton
Owner: Representative Holdings Inc.
Date: **August 13, 2024**

UrbanSolutions Planning & Land Development Consultants Inc. (UrbanSolutions) has been retained to act as the authorized planning consultant on behalf of Representative Holdings Inc., the owner of 117 Forest Avenue and 175 Catharine Street South, Hamilton, as shown in Figure 1, below. In keeping with discussions with Urban Design and Development Planning staff during the meeting on June 6, 2024, the following scoped Visual Impact Analysis has been prepared to demonstrate that the location, massing, and height of the proposal will not have a significant impact on important public views and vistas. Further, details on the methodology used to generate the massing model and perspectives to ensure accuracy will be discussed in the following Report. Subsequently, the results of the analysis will be examined to determine the ultimate impact, if any, of the proposed massing on existing views and character.



FIGURE 1 – Aerial Perspective

BACKGROUND

On October 14, 2020, Hamilton City Council approved a Zoning By-law Amendment (By-law 20-216) for a previous development concept on the subject property proposing a 10-storey, 78 unit multiple dwelling and a 3-storey, 7 unit townhouse dwelling accommodated by 56 vehicle parking spaces. Due to a fluctuating market and shifting goals of the City, the registered landowner has since reconsidered the intent for the lands and has revised the development concept to accommodate a 24-storey dwelling containing 248 residential units. A Formal Consultation Waiver request was submitted in March of 2022 to facilitate this request. The Formal Consultation Waiver Letter for the updated development concept was obtained from the City of Hamilton on May 12, 2022. A Zoning By-law Amendment application was thereafter submitted to the City on December 22, 2022. To support the subject Zoning By-law Amendment application and to satisfy policy E.3.6.8 g) of Volume 1 of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP), staff have requested that a scoped Visual Impact Analysis be prepared to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed development on views of the Niagara Escarpment.

METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was completed in order to accurately place the proposed massing on the subject lands:

1. To ensure accuracy of the proportions and massing:

- The 3D model of the building was prepared per the proposed Site Plan, and within the 3D modelling software, was geo-referenced and oriented to accurately depict the proposed final site conditions including structure height and massing location in relation to property lines.
- The 3D model was then exported to a file type compatible with Google Earth Pro 3D terrain modelling, which preserves geolocation, orientation, and scaling information.
- The 3D model was then imported into Google Earth Pro with the accurate geolocation, orientation, and scaling of the site (see **Figure 2**).

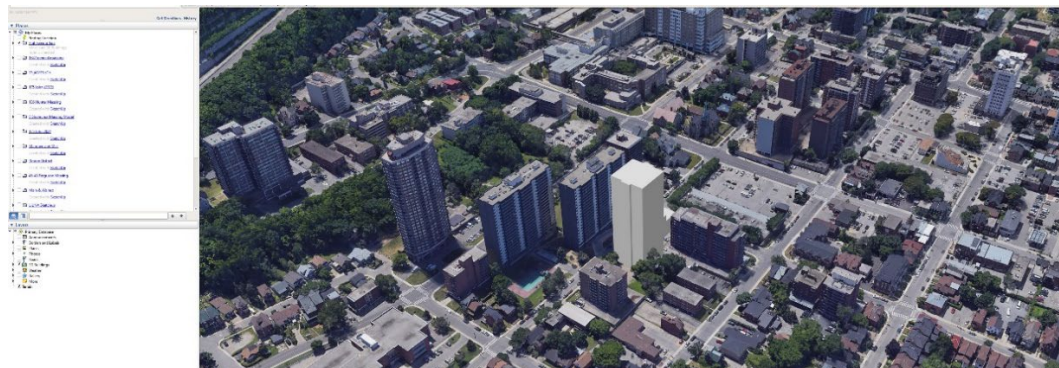


FIGURE 2

2. To capture each perspective:

- a. The camera was positioned at various locations at a height of approximately 2.5 metres above street level (this height is standard for Google Streetview cameras) and directed towards the 3D model.
- b. For each perspective location, the perspective was captured for both the high-resolution Google Streetview (**Figure 3.1**) and the low-resolution Google Earth “terrain view” containing the imported 3D model and terrain (**Figure 3.2**). Google’s software ensures that the camera’s relative position, angle, and field of view is preserved when toggling between terrain view and Google Streetview at the height of 2.5 metres above street level.



FIGURE 3.1



FIGURE 3.2

3. To render the 3D massing into Google Streetview perspectives:

- a. The terrain view was overlayed onto the Google Streetview perspective to precisely match the positioning of the terrain and existing buildings. **Figure 4.1** demonstrates the Google Streetview perspective being overlayed onto the terrain view, while **Figure 4.2** illustrates the perspectives once they have been aligned. This is done to ensure the massing of the proposed building shown in terrain view can be precisely projected onto the Google Streetview perspective and ensure an accurate rendering of the proposal can take place.



FIGURE 4.1



FIGURE 4.2

- b. The same visual perspective of the massing shown on terrain view was then captured within the 3D modelling software. Once aligned using the geo-referenced satellite image in the 3D modelling software, this view of the massing model was then brought into photoshop and overlayed on top of the terrain view to be scaled appropriately (**Figures 5.1 & 5.2**). The overlay of the 3D model is then accurately mirrored against the massing

displayed in the terrain view as shown in **Figure 5.3**. The purpose of this step is to replicate the massing perspective established in the terrain view using a higher resolution photo overlay in the Google Streetview perspective which better depicts the relationship between the proposal and the surrounding area.

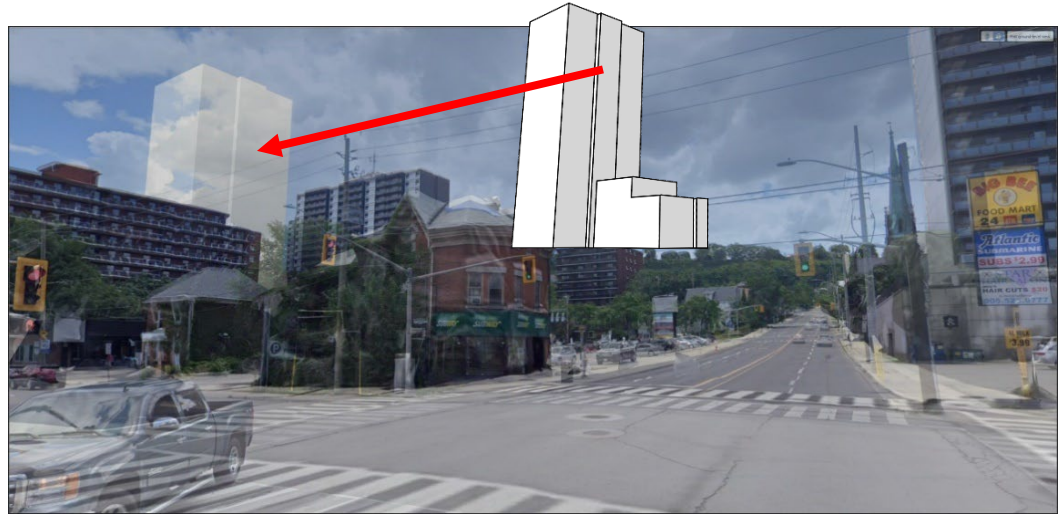


FIGURE 5.1



FIGURE 5.2



FIGURE 5.3

- c. With the 3D model overlay placed accurately against the terrain view perspective as shown in **Figure 5.2**, the terrain view can be hidden to show the realistic site surroundings contained in the Google Streetview perspective as shown in **Figure 5.3**. The imported 3D model overlay of the proposed structure was then further refined to ensure that the foreground and background of the Google Streetview perspective were accurately portrayed relative to the building (see **Figure 6**). Specifically, the proposed building was cropped to illustrate those components which exist in the foreground of the view such as trees, vehicles, buildings, etcetera.



FIGURE 6

ANALYSIS

Policy B.3.3.5 of Volume 1 of the UHOP notes that *“Public views and vistas are significant visual compositions of important public and historic buildings, natural heritage and open space features, landmarks and skylines which enhance the overall physical character of an area when viewed from the public realm...”*. Further, Policy E.3.6.8 g) of the UHOP requires the height and massing of buildings to take into account public view corridors of the Niagara Escarpment through the submission of a Visual Impact Assessment. The following Visual Impact Assessment intends to address these policies of the UHOP and demonstrate that public views and vistas are not significantly impacted by the proposed development.

Figure 7 (below) provides a Key Map of the various perspectives that will be evaluated in the balance of the report. Several perspectives were taken from the roads surrounding the subject lands along Catharine Street, Walnut Street, Young Street, and Forest Avenue. These perspectives are all placed north, east, and west of the development to evaluate the proposal’s impact on southerly viewsheds towards the Niagara Escarpment, and reflect the preliminary viewsheds approved by staff during the meeting on June 6, 2024.

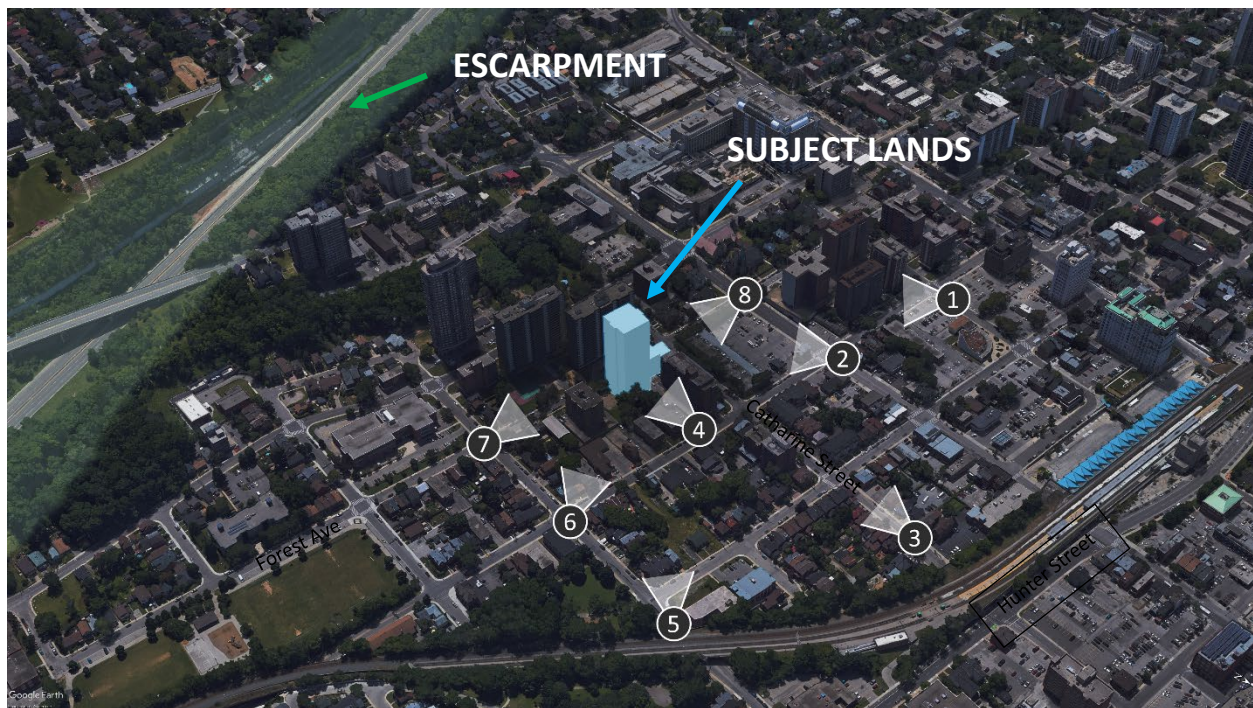


Figure 7: Key Map of Views contemplated in area surrounding the subject lands



VIEW 1.1: Existing view of site looking southeast from the intersection of Young Street and Hughson Street South.



VIEW 1.2: View of site looking southeast from the intersection of Young Street & Hughson Street South with proposed massing.

The perspective illustrated in Views 1.1 & 1.2 show the subject site as seen when looking southeast from the intersection of Young Street and Hughson Street South. Through analysis of the proposed massing, it can be determined that the proposed building does not block any existing views of the Niagara Escarpment from the corner of Young Street and Hughson Street South. Any views of the Niagara Escarpment from this perspective are blocked by numerous existing apartments in the Corktown neighbourhood. Further, this perspective demonstrates that the siting of each existing apartment creates a condition where the escarpment is not visible between the breaks in the towers as shown above in Figure 1.1.



VIEW 2.1: Existing view of site looking southeast from intersection of Young Street & John Street South.



VIEW 2.2: View of site looking southeast from intersection of Young Street & John Street South with proposed massing.

Views 2.1 & 2.2 above illustrate the visual perspective of the site from the intersection of Young Street and John Street South, looking southeast towards the Niagara Escarpment. The lower half of the proposed massing is partially blocked by an existing multiple dwelling along Young Street. In this case, the ridgeline and tree line of the Niagara Escarpment fall below the skyline of existing buildings. As such, it is determined that the proposed building does not impact generate impacts to an existing sightline of the escarpment from this viewpoint.

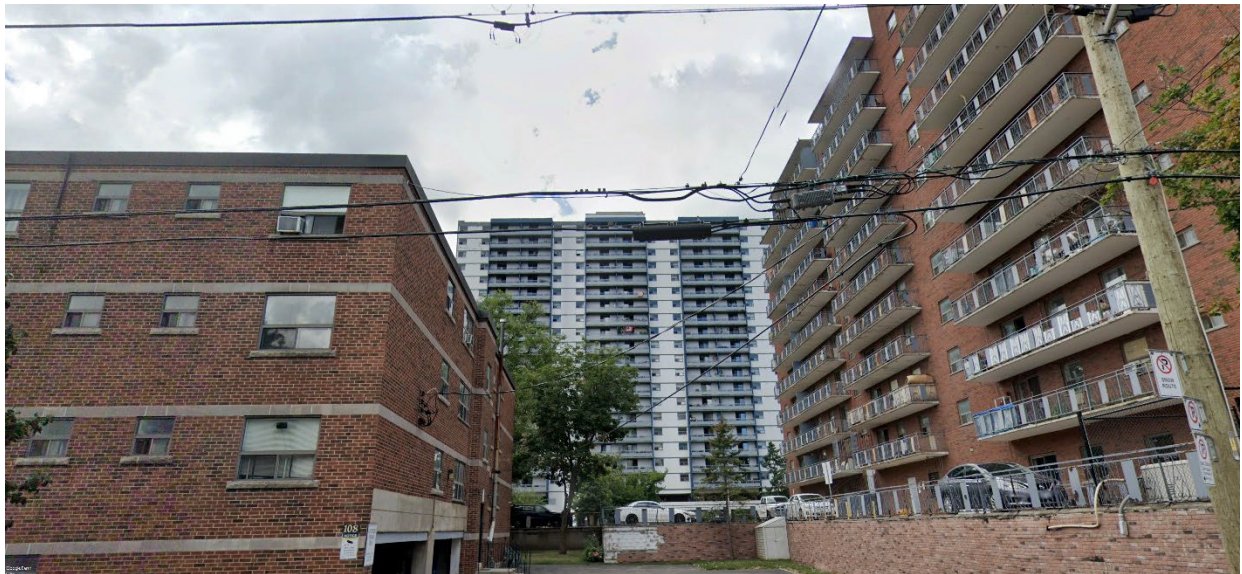


VIEW 3.1: Existing view of site looking south from Catharine Street South.



VIEW 3.2: View of site looking south from Catharine Street South with proposed massing.

Views 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate a view looking directly south down Catharine Street South from the location where the right of way meets with the existing railway corridor connecting to Hamilton GO Centre. As seen above, the introduction of the proposed development does not affect the existing viewshed of the escarpment from this perspective, with only a small portion of the upper-storeys visible above the existing multiple dwelling on the subject lands.



VIEW 4.1: Existing view of site looking south from Young Street.



VIEW 4.2: View of site looking south from Young Street with proposed massing.

Moving closer to the subject lands, Views 4.1 & 4.2 show the perspective of the site from Young Street looking south directly at the proposed development. From this location, it is apparent that no existing view of the Niagara Escarpment is present in the site's current condition as a result of the existing Oakland Square Apartments fronting Forest Avenue to the south of the subject lands. Although the proposed massing is prominent from this perspective, the massing does not obscure any existing views of the Niagara Escarpment and therefore does not present adverse impacts as outlined by Section 3.6.8.(g) of the UHOP.



VIEW 5.1: Existing view of site looking southwest from Walnut Street South.



VIEW 5.2: View of site looking southwest from Walnut Street South with proposed massing.

The illustrations depicted in Views 5.1 and 5.2 are taken from Walnut Street South looking southwest towards the direction of the subject lands. The Niagara Escarpment is visible looking directly south down Walnut Street South behind Arkledun Apartments. However, the Niagara Escarpment is completely obscured from view by other existing multiple dwellings and townhouse blocks when looking in the direction of the subject lands, due most notably to the Olympia and the Oakland Square Apartments. Accordingly, new adverse impacts to the views of the escarpment are anticipated for this view corridor as result of the development proposal.



VIEW 6.1: Existing view of site looking southwest from the intersection of Walnut Street South & Young Street.



VIEW 6.2: View of site looking southwest from the intersection of Walnut Street South & Young Street with proposed massing.

Views 6.1 & 6.2 show the proposed massing looking southwest from the intersection of Walnut Street South and Young Street. As is consistent with many of the views of the proposed massing, the lower portion of the tower and the entire podium is obstructed from view. Only a small portion of the Niagara Escarpment is visible in Views 6.1 and 6.2 on the left side of the images, and the proposed development does not impede these viewsheds of the Niagara Escarpment looking down Walnut Street South.



VIEW 7.1: Existing view of site looking west from the intersection of Walnut Street South & Forest Avenue.



VIEW 7.2: View of site looking west from the intersection of Walnut Street South & Forest Avenue with proposed massing.

Views 7.1 and 7.2 provide a supplementary view of the proposed massing looking west along Forest Avenue from Walnut Street South. The Niagara Escarpment is wholly obscured by existing multiple dwellings along the south side of Forest Avenue, Charlton Avenue East, and St. Joseph's Drive. The portions of the escarpment further west are obscured by existing vegetation and tall structures along the base of the escarpment. View 7.2 demonstrates that the proposed development does not impact any existing viewsheds of the escarpment from this location.



VIEW 8.1: Existing view of site looking east from the intersection of John Street South & Forest Avenue.



VIEW 8.2: View of site looking east from the intersection of John Street South & Forest Avenue with proposed massing.

Views 8.1 and 8.2 provide a view of the proposed development looking east along Forest Avenue from John Street South. The Niagara Escarpment is wholly obscured by existing multiple dwellings along the south side of Forest Avenue, Charlton Avenue East, and St. Joseph's Drive. The portions of the escarpment further east are obscured by existing vegetation and structures along the base of the escarpment. View 8.2 demonstrates that the proposed development does not impact any existing viewsheds of the escarpment from this location.

CONCLUSION

As previously noted, Policy E.3.6.8 g) of the UHOP ensures proposed structures exceeding 12-storeys in height evaluate potential impacts of proposed building massing on public view corridors of the Niagara Escarpment. As demonstrated within Views 1 through 8, the introduction of the proposed development on the subject lands does not create impacts on any existing public view corridors of the Niagara Escarpment. Due to the local character of Downtown Hamilton and the Corktown neighbourhood, there are a number of tall buildings in close proximity to the subject lands that either partially or wholly obstruct views of not only the Niagara Escarpment, but also views of the proposed development from various locations. Although the proposal consists of a tall building, this height and massing remains consistent with the existing site context and does not present adverse visual impacts.

Based on the above review of the subject lands, surrounding uses, and applicable policy framework, the height and massing of the proposed development facilitates an appropriate form of development which does not impact important public view corridors of the Niagara Escarpment and represents good planning.

Regards,
UrbanSolutions



Matt Johnston, MCIP, RPP
Principal



Stefano Rosatone, BES
Planner