URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

Victoria Common, Block 9

Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment | October 2024

MHBC
PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE

CONTENTS

Prepared by
MHBC Planning, Urban Design
& Landscape Architecture
540 Bingemans Centre Drive, Suite 200
Kitchener, ON N2B 3X9
519 576 3650

1.0 INTRODUCTION

MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited ("MHBC Planning") has been retained by i2 Developments (Victoria Common) Inc. (the "Owner") to prepare an Urban Design Brief in support of Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications (the "Applications") for Block 9 of Subdivision 30T-11203 within the City of Kitchener (the "Site"; see Figure 1). The Site is located in central Kitchener within the Victoria Common neighbourhood, near the intersection of St Leger Street and Louisa Street. The Site is irregularly shaped, measuring approximately 1.45 hectares. The Site has approximately 154m of frontage on Prince Albert Boulevard and 83m of frontage on Victoria Marie Court. The Site is currently vacant.

The Owners propose the construction of a three-tower residential development with 1,151 units and a total Floor Space Ratio of 5.21 (the "Proposed Development"; see Figure 2). Building heights range from 21 to 35 storeys with 5 to 9 storey podiums. The Proposed Development includes 3,484 square meters of amenity space, including privately-owned public spaces ("POPS"). 879 vehicle parking spaces and 588 bicycle parking spaces are provided.

The surrounding Victoria Common neighbourhood was developed beginning of 2011 as a residential intensification project on a central brownfield site. Two mid-rise buildings were constructed on the eastern portion of the Site as part of a previous development phase. The Proposed Development will complete the final phase of the Victoria Common Master Plan envisioned in 2012.

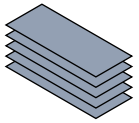
This Urban Design Brief has been prepared as part of a complete application to the City of Kitchener and includes the following topics:

- A description of the existing site conditions, surrounding context, including built form, transportation network, and open spaces;
- An overview of the Proposed Development, including site design, building design, and landscape design;
- A detailed analysis of the proposed design features in relation to the applicable urban design policies and guidelines;
- A summary of the conclusions regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Site.

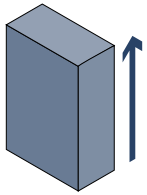
This Urban Design Brief has considered, and must be read in conjunction with, the following plans and studies supporting the Applications:

- Planning Justification Report, prepared by MHBC Planning (dated October, 2024)
- Architectural Drawing Package, prepared by TACT Architecture Inc (dated September 23, 2024)
- Sustainability Statement, prepared by MHBC Planning (dated March, 2024)
- Transportation Impact Study, prepared by Paradigm Transportation Solutions Limited (dated June 2024)
- Pedestrian Level Wind Study, prepared by Gradient Wind (dated June 3, 2024)
- Noise Feasibility Study, prepared by HGC Engineering (dated June 3, 2024)

1,151 Residential Units



5.21 FSR



21-35 Storey Towers
5-9 Storey Podiums

3,484m^2 Common Amenity Space

588 Bicycle Parking Spaces

879 Vehicle Parking Spaces

Figure 1 - The Site at Block 9, Victoria Common, in Central Kitchener

Figure 2 - The Proposed Development with three residential towers of 21, 33, and 35 storeys (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

2.0 SITE CONTEXT

2.1 EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The Site is located in central Kitchener within the Victoria Common neighbourhood, near the intersection of St Leger Street and Louisa Street (see Figures 3-5). The Site is irregularly shaped, measuring approximately 1.45 hectares. The Site has approximately 154m of frontage on Prince Albert Boulevard and 83m of frontage on Victoria Marie Court.

The Site is currently vacant, with the exception of a small parking lot along Victoria Marie Court. The Site rises approximately 3m from St Leger Street to the west, with an additional 4m rise at the western property line. There are no significant trees or vegetated areas on the Site.

Figure 3 - View southeast from Prince Albert Boulevard showing adjacent mid-rise buildings

Figure 4 - View southwest from Prince Albert Boulevard of future development lands

Figure 5 - Existing Site conditions in the centre of Victoria Common

2.2 SURROUNDING CONTEXT

Built Form

The Site's surrounding context features a broad mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, institutional, and employment uses (see Figures 6-14). The Site is located in the Mount Hope/Breithaupt Park neighbourhood northeast of downtown Kitchener, near the Victoria Street North and Weber Street West corridors.

To the immediate north of the Site are 2-3 storey townhouses along Prince Albert Boulevard and Robert Peel Road, within Victoria Common. The townhouses are built in a historic style with varied brick facades and rear lane access. A single-detached residential neighbourhood lies beyond, with a mix of one and two storey dwellings and a small commercial node at Margaret Avenue and Guelph Street. Breithaupt Park is approximately 800m to the north, providing indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

Directly east of the Site are two mid-rise buildings constructed as part of a previous phase within Victoria Common. Building A is four storeys and fronts onto St Leger Street and Building B is six storeys and fronts onto Prince Albert Boulevard. The buildings are designed in a faux-industrial style with red brick, white spandrel, black mullions, and recessed balconies. On the east side of St Leger Street is a small employment district, with a continuation of the single-detached residential pattern beyond, centered around Hillside Park. An additional employment district and the Woodside National Historic Site lie further east, to the east of Lancaster Street West.

To the south of the Site, 2-3 storey townhouses front along Victoria Marie Court, within the Victoria Common community. The Margaret Avenue Senior Public School is located to the south of Louisa Street, with a mix of single-detached, low-rise apartments, and employment uses between the Site and Victoria Street North. The Victoria Street North corridor features a mix of residential, commercial, and employment uses from one to six storeys in height.

To the immediate west of the Site lies a church, 12-storey apartment building and associated surface parking lots. Beyond Margaret Street lies a residential neighbourhood with a mix of single-detached dwellings and low-rise apartments. The Spur Line Trail and Weber Street West are located approximately 600 meters to the west.

Figure 6 - The Site is situated within a mixed block of medium to high density residential, institutional, and open space uses

Figure 7 - Townhouse and mid-rise residential on Prince Albert Boulevard

Figure 8 - Single detached to the north, along Guelph Ave

Figure 9 - Employment uses across from Victoria Common on St Leger St

Figure 10 - Hillside Park viewed from Hill St

Figure 11 - Margaret Avenue Senior Public School

Figure 12 - Rail corridor and commercial uses north of Victoria St N

Figure 13 - High-rise residential adjacent to the Site on Margaret Ave

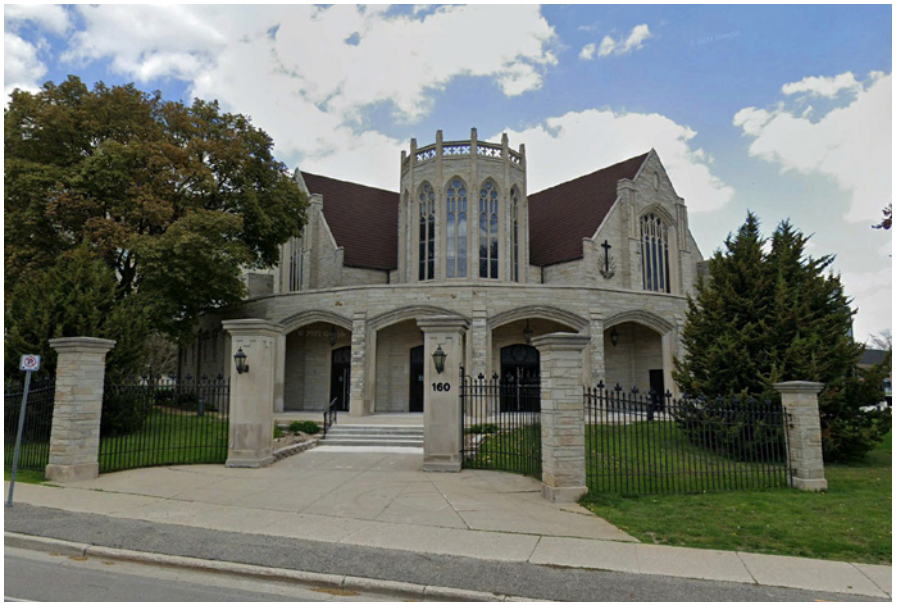


Figure 14 - New Apostolic Church adjacent to the Site on Margaret Ave

Circulation

The Site is located near several Regional and arterial roads, providing access to Downtown Kitchener, Highways 7 and 85, and the broader Region (see Figure 15). The remaining local streets form a small-scale grid, with the exception of the larger institutional and apartment blocks between the Site and Margaret Avenue. The Site is connected to St Leger Street by Prince Albert Boulevard and Victoria Marie Court, two private roads within Victoria Common.

The Site is in close proximity to a number of Grand River Transit routes and is within walking distance of the GO/VIA station and 204 Highland-Victoria iXpress route, offering connections throughout the Region and to the Greater Toronto Area (see Figure 16).

The Site is well connected to the surrounding active transportation network (see Figure 17). The dedicated bike lane along Margaret Avenue provides connections to Downtown Kitchener and the City Centre neighbourhood, while the Spur Line Trail provides connections to Uptown Waterloo. The fine-grained road pattern provides pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding commercial, employment, and open space uses.

Figure 15 - Surrounding vehicle circulation

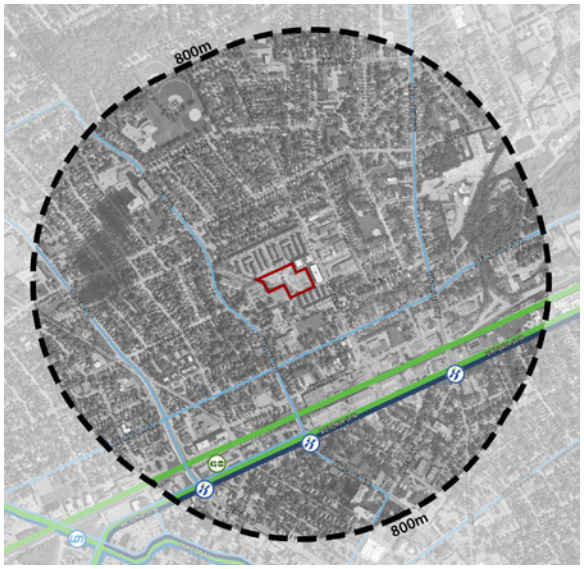


Figure 16 - Surrounding public transit

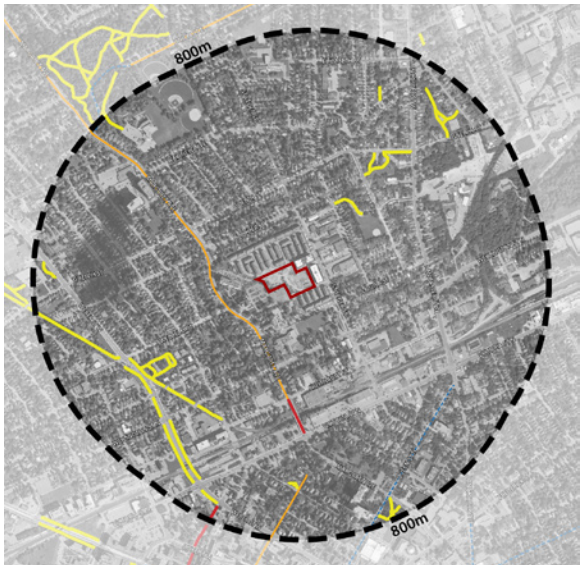


Figure 17 - Surrounding active transportation routes

Open Spaces & Natural Heritage

The Site is adjacent to Oscar Lauber Park, a linear park with a playground and open lawn areas (see Figure 18). The surrounding neighbourhood contains a number of parks and open spaces with sports fields, community gardens, off-leash dog parks, and additional playgrounds. Breithaupt Park is located approximately 600m to the north and includes an indoor pool and gym, sports fields, playgrounds and natural areas. There are no significant natural heritage features immediately surrounding the Site.

Summary

The Site is located in a mixed neighbourhood within Central Kitchener and includes a variety of built forms and uses. The Site is well served by surrounding commercial, employment, and open space uses and is connected to Downtown Kitchener and the surrounding Region through the fine-grained transportation network. The Site is well positioned to accommodate additional residential density to further enhance this complete community.

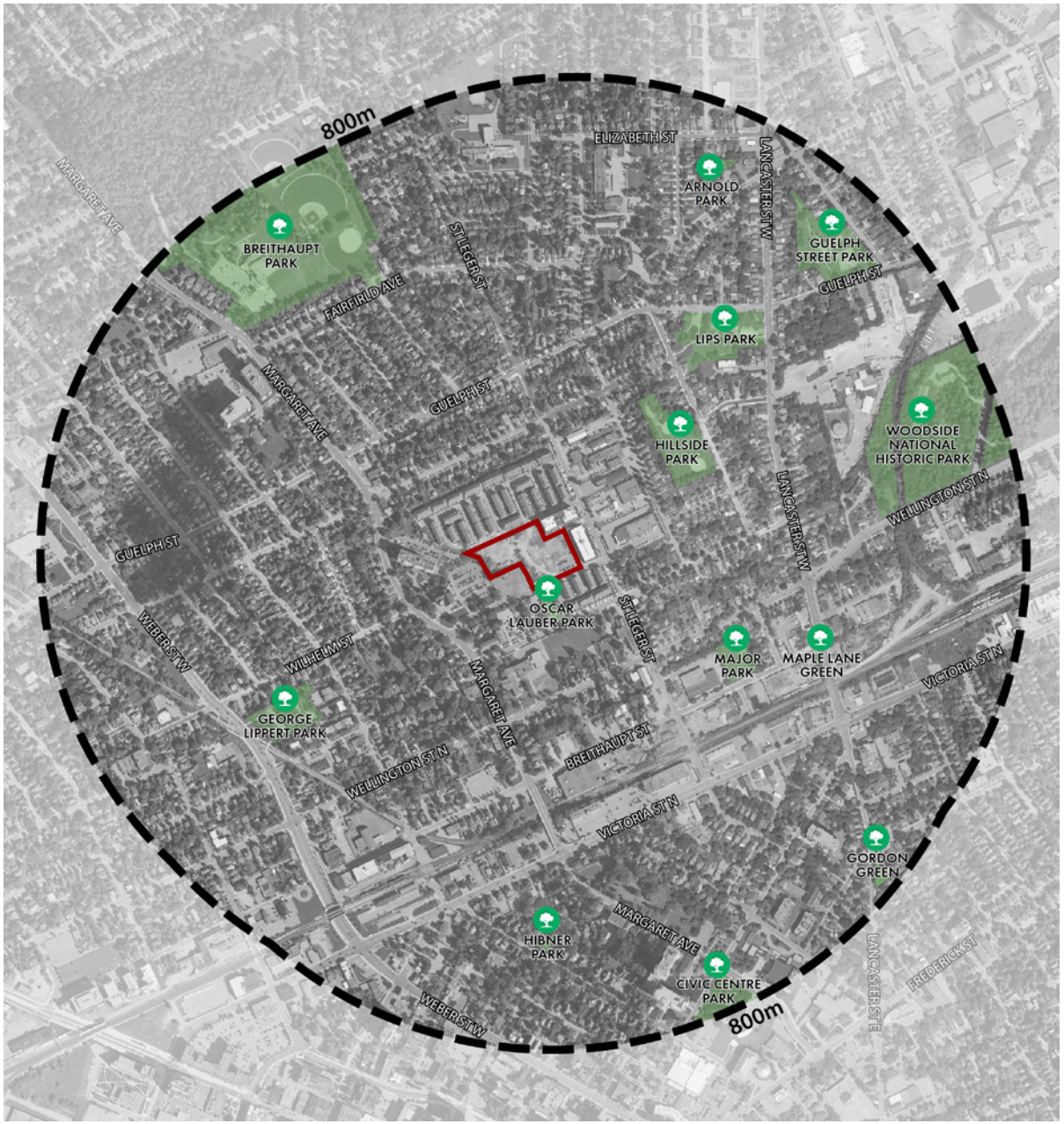


Figure 18 - Surrounding parks and open spaces

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 SITE DESIGN

The Proposed Development includes three residential towers situated around a linear extension of Oscar Lauber Park, forming the centerpiece of the Victoria Common neighbourhood (see Figure 19). The proposed towers rise to heights of 33, 21, and 35 storeys with podiums of 7, 5, and 9 storeys (Towers C, D, and E, respectively; see Figure 20). 1,151 residential units are proposed, as well as 3,484 square meters of indoor and outdoor amenity space, 588 bicycle parking spaces, and 879 vehicle parking spaces.

The three towers are located and designed to balance street frontage, open spaces, and height transitions. Tower D fronts onto Victoria Marie Court with a 7.6m setback from the street, creating a human-scaled street presence through its 5-storey podium base and 2.6m tower stepback. Tower C features a 7-storey streetwall along Prince Albert Boulevard, setback 6.7m from the street. The tower portion is stepped back 19.8m from the podium along Prince Albert Boulevard. Tower E is pushed back from Prince Albert Boulevard, with a 15.9m setback, to create a large open space along the street frontage. The open space acts as the terminus of the central linear park and provides additional buffering between the 9-storey podium and neighbouring townhouses. Storeys 7 to 9 of the podium are stepped back on the west side to provide additional sunlight on the open spaces, while the tower portion is stepped back 9.7m from the northern most podium face, providing further separation from the street.

Access to the Site is provided via Prince Albert Boulevard, Victoria Marie Court, and Oscar Lauber Park. Pedestrian access is provided on both street frontages and from the linear park. Buildings C and D share a common lobby entrance at the Site's centre, while building E has a dedicated lobby at the building's west end. Additional access is provided to ground-oriented units in all three podiums, creating a fine-grained pedestrian network. Vehicle circulation is restricted to the Site's perimeter, with access to the underground parking at the northwest and southeast edges. The central courtyard between Buildings A, B, C, and D includes a small surface parking area, with drop off areas located next to the lobby entrances. Loading is similarly kept to the edges of the Site and is co-located with underground parking ramps in Building D and E to reduce conflicts.

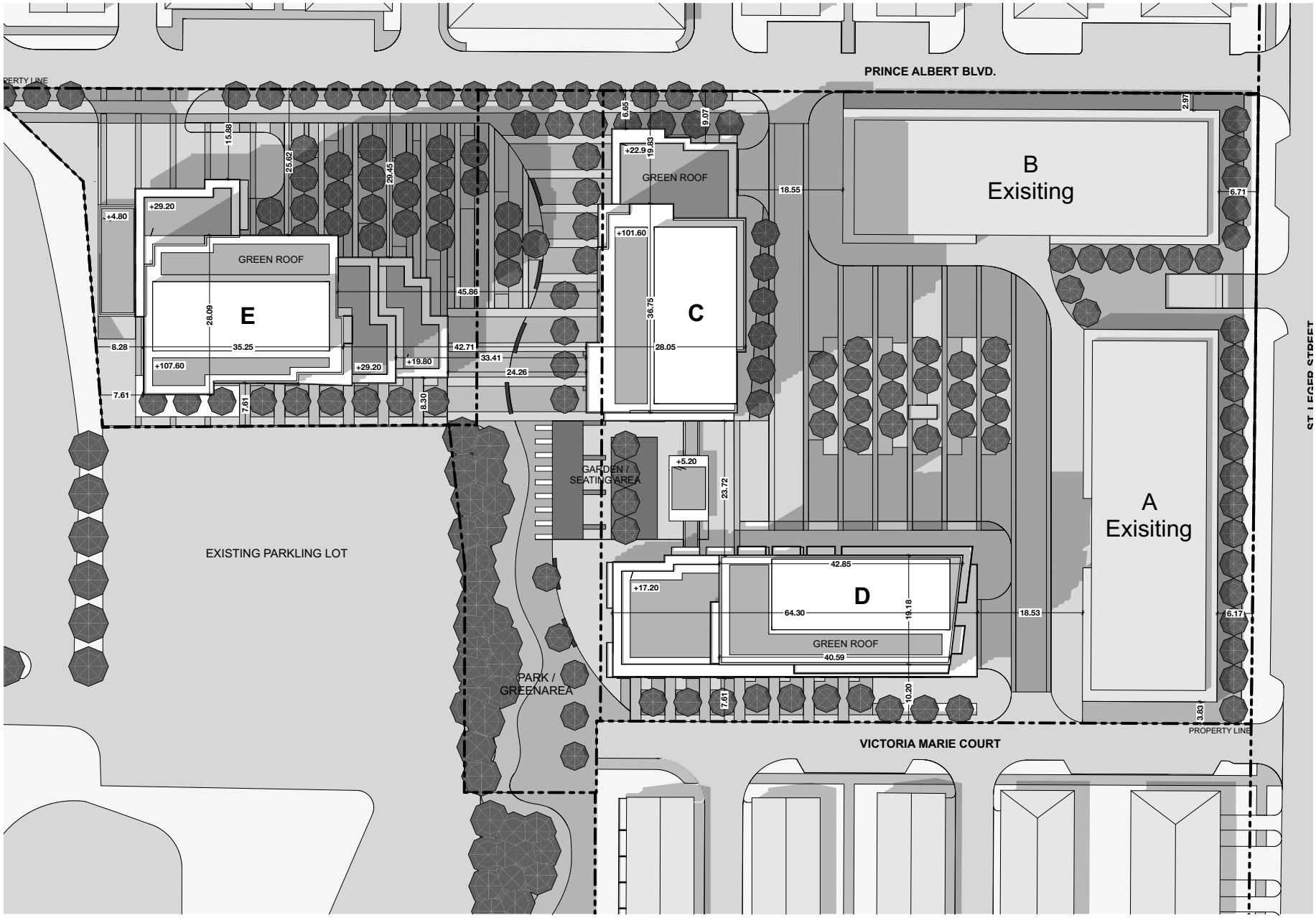


Figure 19 - Proposed Site Plan showing three residential towers on mid-rise podiums (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

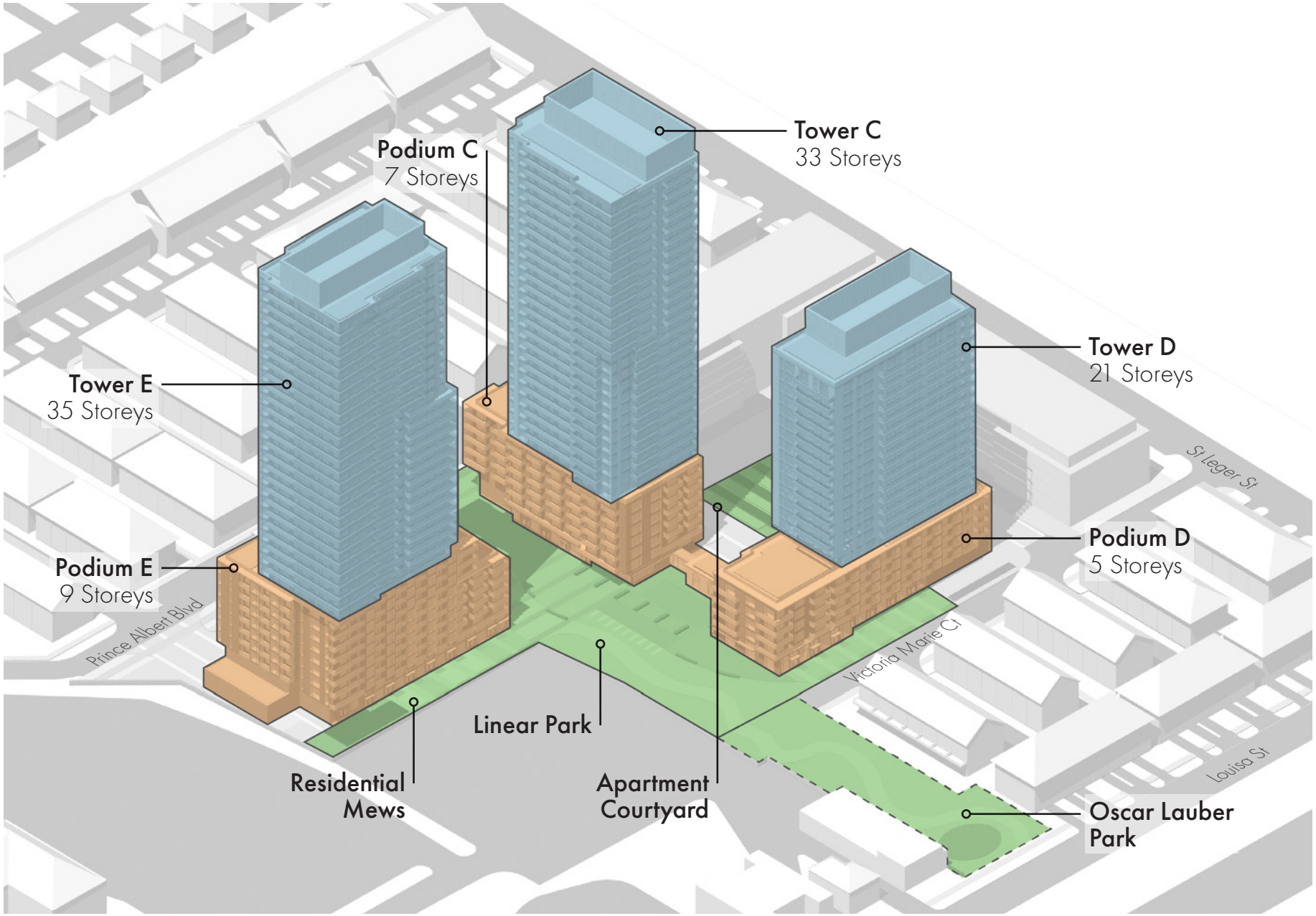


Figure 20 - Massing model showing the slender tower forms, stepped height, and abundant green spaces

3.2 BUILDING DESIGN

The Proposed Development includes three high-rise buildings with podium and tower forms (see Figures 21-22). The massing and design for all three buildings includes distinct base, middle, and top portions to create cohesive building designs.

The three building podiums create a human-scale base for the towers above. The podiums heights range from 5 to 9 storeys, growing in height as the corresponding tower heights increase. The ground floors include residential units and indoor amenity spaces fronting onto the streets and open spaces. The ground floor residential units provide a regular rhythm of unit entrances and façade articulation. Upper podium storeys include a mix of projecting and recessed balconies to provide additional natural surveillance and vibrancy. Podiums are proposed to be clad in a mix of buff brick precast and vision glass, creating a finely-textured base with abundant transparency.

The three tower forms are offset from the podium bases through a mix of stepbacks and overhangs, creating a separation of massing. Tower floorplates are limited to 756 (Towers C & E) and 800 square metres (Tower D), creating compact tower forms.

The three towers are clad with vision glass, buff brick precast, dark concrete precast, and wood-look aluminum, complementing the façade design of the podiums. Projecting balconies break up the façade and overall tower mass. The top of each tower is capped with a mechanical penthouse. The three buildings contain a mix of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces. Ground floor amenity spaces face onto the Site's open spaces and public realm, while rooftop patios on Floor 6 (Building D), Floor 8 (Building C), and Floor 10 (Building E) are co-located with indoor amenity spaces to create vibrant, safe spaces for resident interaction.

Figure 21- South elevation, Buildings E & C (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

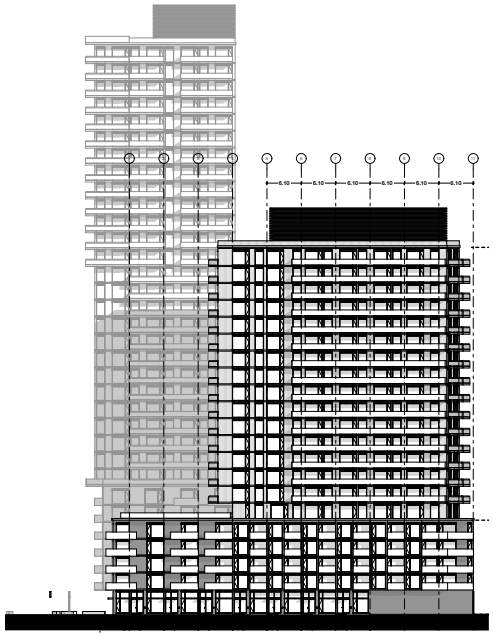


Figure 22 - South elevation, Buildings D & C (TACT Architecture, 2024)

3.3 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The Proposed Development includes a series of streetscapes and open spaces that create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly ground plane (see Figures 23-25). The streetscapes represent a continuation and expansion of the existing design along Prince Albert Boulevard and Victoria Marie Court. The boulevards along both streets have been expanded to include street trees, sidewalks, and abundant landscaping. The designs take advantage of the increased building setbacks to provide a green condition that softens the building facades and encourages active transportation. Active frontages and direct entrances from residential units have been provided where possible to create activity and provide natural surveillance. Detailed design of the streetscapes will be determined through the Site Plan Approval phase.

Four unique open spaces provide central outdoor amenity areas and connect the Site with the broader community: the Linear Park, Victoria Square, Apartment Courtyard, and Residential Mews.

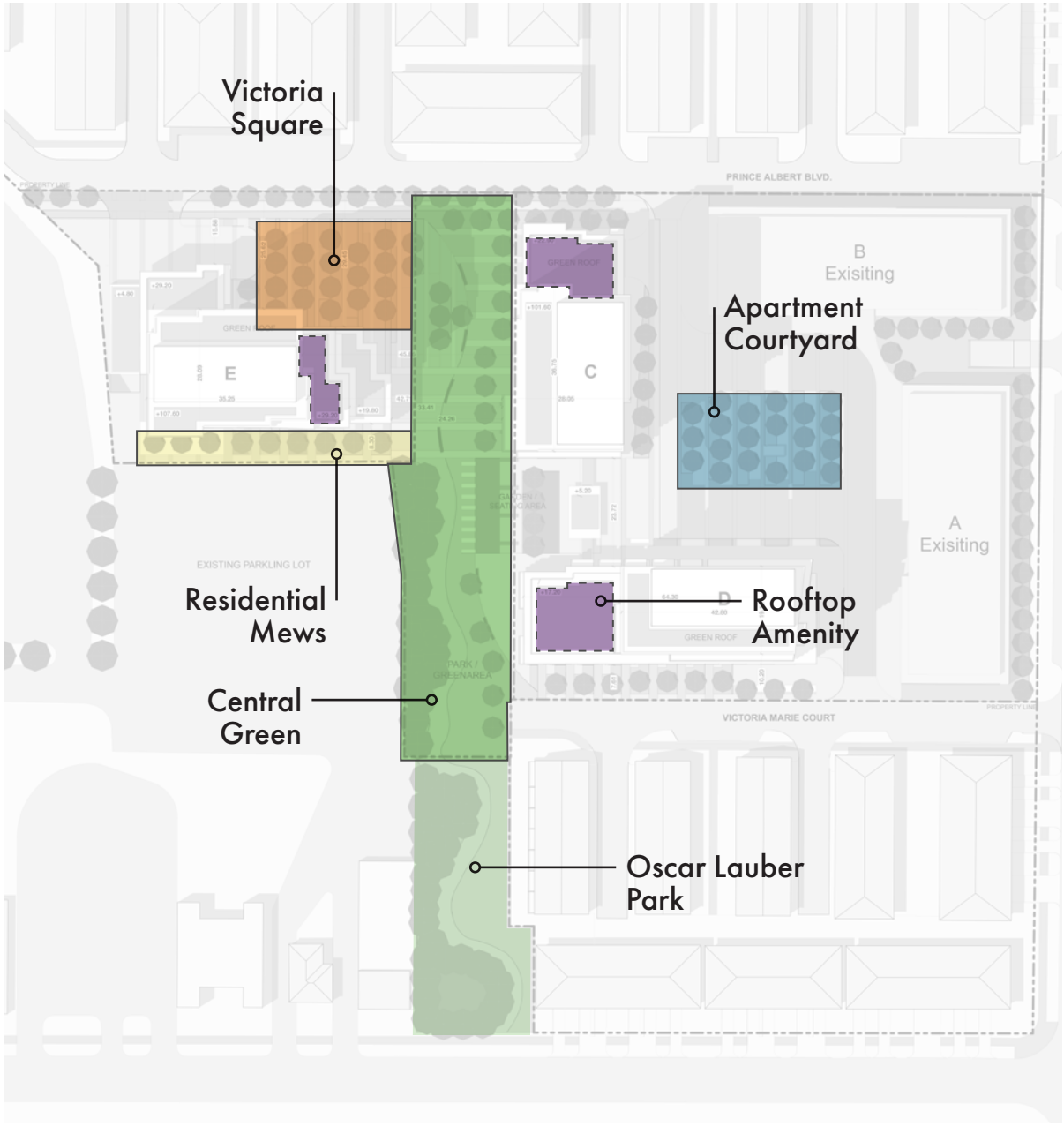


Figure 23 - The Proposed Development includes a wide variety of open spaces and amenity areas

The Linear Park extends Oscar Lauber Park into the Site, creating a direct connection from Louisa Street to the centre of Victoria Common. A landscape buffer is included along the western property line to create a visual barrier to the existing parking lot. Victoria Square forms the northern end of the Linear Park and acts as the centerpiece of Victoria Common. The square is envisioned as an active, vibrant urban plaza that creates a central gathering space for the Proposed Development and broader neighbourhood. The Apartment Courtyard is located in the centre of Buildings A, B, C, and D, providing a passive open space for the block. The space also provides access to the underground parking area below the four buildings. The Residential Mews acts as a pedestrian street, connecting the ground floor residential units in Building E to the linear park and broader development.

The four spaces are envisioned with a mix of active and passive programming, including public art, walking trails, seating, hardscaped areas, trees, and abundant landscaping. The spaces are framed by streets and active frontages, providing views into the spaces and natural surveillance. Specific programming and design details will be determined through the Site Plan Approval phase.

Figure 24 - Central Green with Victoria Square and Residential Mews in background (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

Figure 25 - Looking north from Oscar Lauber Park into the Central Green (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

3.4 VICTORIA COMMON MASTER PLAN

The Proposed Development acts as the focal point for the Victoria Common neighbourhood and completes the final phase of the brownfield redevelopment project. The Proposed Development creates a height peak at the neighbourhood's centre with large, connected open spaces.

The proposed site plan is based on the original plan prepared in 2012, with five apartment buildings in a central block, bisected by a north-south green spine (see Figure 26). The Proposed Development shrinks the footprints of the remaining three apartments and pushes Building E to the south, opening up additional lands for neighbourhood-facing open space. The plan also maintains the previous circulation pattern for vehicles and pedestrians. The internal circulation loop between Buildings A to D is completed while pedestrian access is provided throughout the Site, with connections to St Leger Street and Louisa Street.

While the Proposed Development represents increased height and density when compared to the 2012 design concept, the overall layout of the Site and design principles established through the Urban Design Brief are maintained. A full analysis of the Proposal Development with regard to the design concept and guidelines will be undertaken in the following section.

Figure 26 - Previous Victoria Common Master Plan (GSP Group, 2012)

4.0 URBAN DESIGN ANALYSIS

The design of the Proposed Development has considered the policies, guidelines, and direction from the City of Kitchener Official Plan, Urban Design Manual, and previously approved Urban Design Brief (prepared by GSP Group, dated May 25, 2012). Section 11 of the City of Kitchener Official Plan contains Urban Design policies which direct the growth and development of the city in relation to communities, neighbourhoods, sites, and buildings. The City of Kitchener Urban Design Manual contains a series of guidelines related to development across the City, of which the sections relating to City-Wide Development (Section 1), Central Neighbourhoods (Section 3), and Tall Buildings (Section 9) are applicable. Section 8 of the previously approved Urban Design Brief contains design guidelines to provide specific direction on the design of the Victoria Common neighbourhood.

To avoid repetition, the policies and guidelines within the various documents and sections are grouped by theme and addressed simultaneously. The Proposed Development conforms to the applicable Official Plan policies and meets the guidelines in the Urban Design Manual and Urban Design Brief, as demonstrated below.

4.1 BUILT FORM, MASSING & COMPATIBILITY

Policy Summary

(Policies 11.C.1.28, 11.C.1.31-33, Guidelines Sections 01.3.1, 03.2.6, 03.3.1, 09.3.3, 8.A.ii)

The applicable urban design policy and guidelines direct developments to concentrate height and massing to create opportunities and limit impacts on the public realm. Buildings should be limited to a maximum length of 70m and be subdivided into massing elements that are compatible with the surrounding context. Developments are to respect and complement the surrounding context through height, scale, massing, setbacks, stepbacks, transition, orientation, floor plate, rhythm, and materiality. Tall buildings should utilize contemporary designs that consider their place within the overall urban structure. Compatible tower design is accomplished through compact point tower forms with appropriate relative height, separation, overlook, orientation. Ground floors should be human scaled and contribute to pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. Developments should occupy the majority of the lot frontage and utilize minimal setbacks to create vibrant urban places that are human scaled, accessible, and focused on active transportation.

Design Response

The Proposed Development concentrates height and massing at the centre of Victoria Common to create a dense residential core within the neighbourhood. The proposed building layout follows a similar arrangement to the previously approved master plan but utilizes smaller building footprints, taller tower forms, and greater street setbacks to allow for larger amenity spaces and a more inviting public realm.

The building bases are limited to a maximum length of 64m to ensure permeability within the Site. Massing, façade articulation and ground floor residential units provide additional interest and variation at ground level, adjacent to the open spaces and public realm. Buildings C and E are setback 6.7m and 15.9m from Prince Albert Boulevard, respectively, creating space for a wide sidewalk, street tree planting, and large open space between the building and existing street edge (Victoria Square). Building D occupies the majority of the frontage on Victoria Marie Court with a setback of 7.6m, allowing for a wide sidewalk and front gardens for the ground floor residential units that front onto the street. Both streets and Victoria Square are framed by mid-rise building components, continuing the urban street wall condition created by Buildings A and B and creating a human-scaled sense of enclosure.

The buildings transition in height from west to east, placing the tallest 35 storey tower at the western portion of the block and stepping down to 33 and 21 storeys toward St Leger Street. Angular plane measurements (see Figure 27) taken from St Leger Street show Building C falling under a 45-degree angular plane (see Figures 28), while angular plane measurements taken from Prince Albert Boulevard and Victoria Marie Court demonstrate that the proposed heights of Buildings C, D and E generally correspond to the as-of-right building masses approved in the 2012 master plan (see Figures 29 and 30).

The proposed height, scale, and massing are appropriate for the Site's location within Victoria Common and provide adequate separation, compact floor plates, and generous setbacks from the public realm. Further detail with regard to the Tall Building Guidelines is provided below.

The proposed building designs represent a contemporary style, with material palettes and human-scale articulation that reference the brick facades and fine-grained entrance pattern of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Figure 27 - Angular plane key map

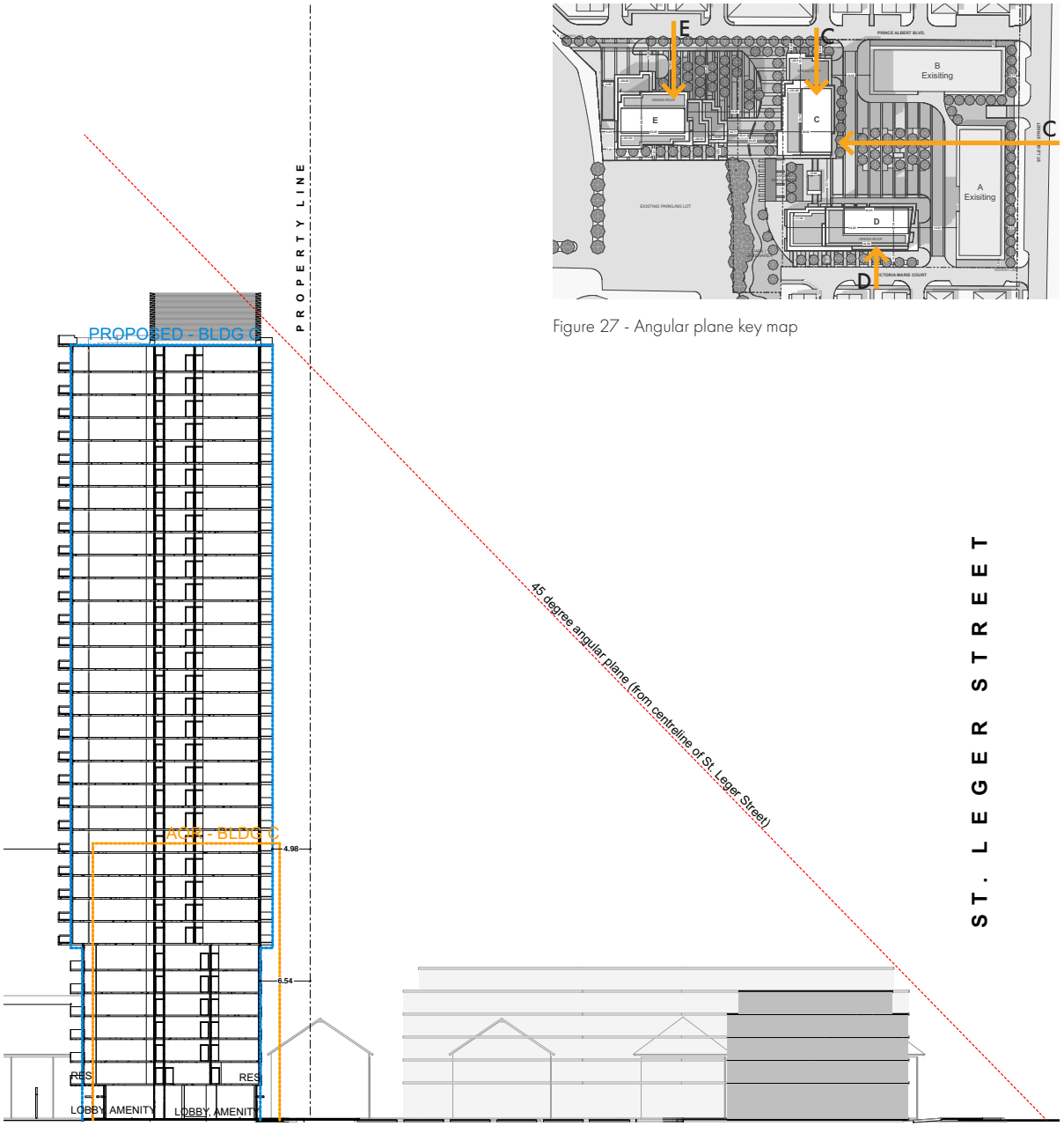


Figure 28 - Angular plane measurement from St Leger St (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

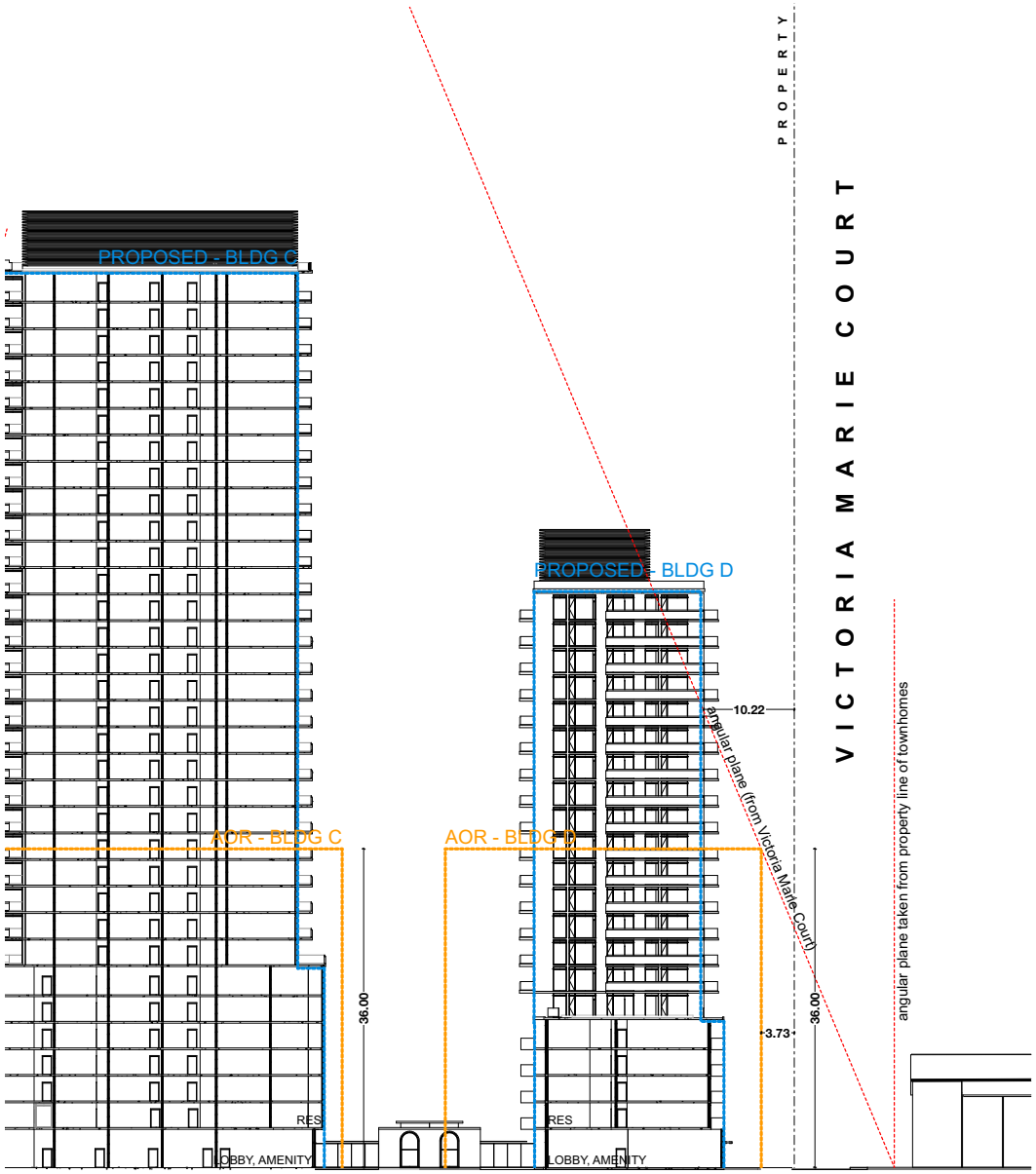


Figure 29 - Angular plane measurement from Prince Albert Blvd and Victoria Marie Ct (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

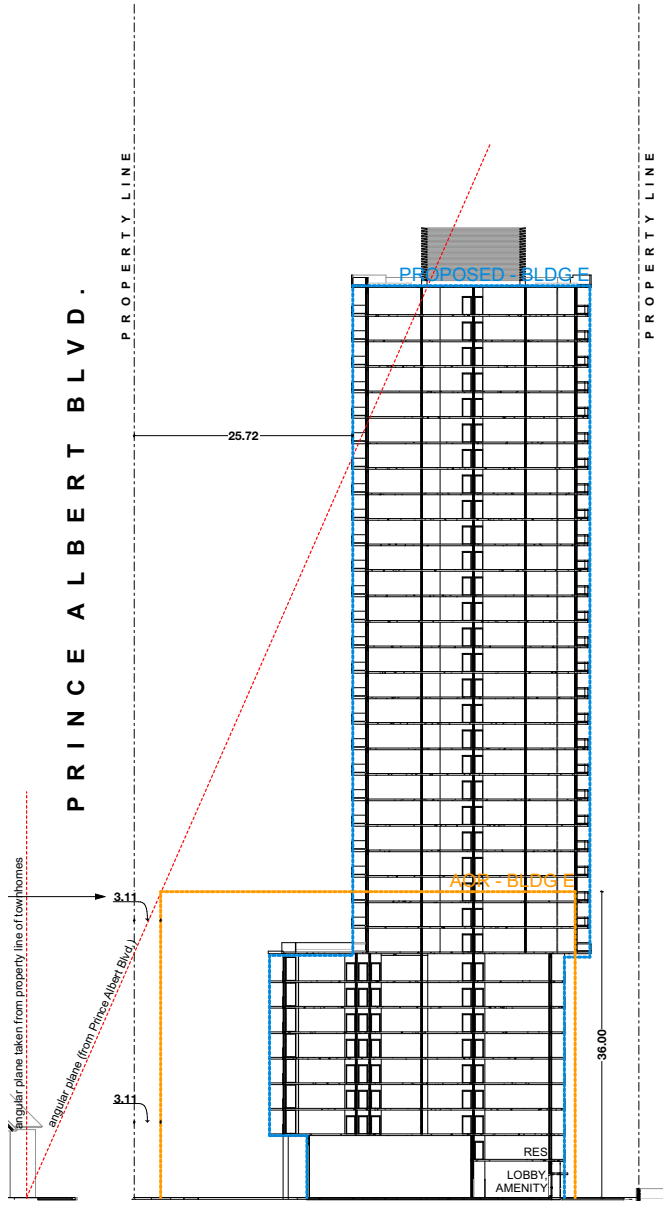


Figure 30 - Angular plane measurement from Prince Albert Blvd (TACT Architecture)

4.2 SITE FUNCTION & STREET DESIGN

Policy Summary

(Policies 11.C.1.11, 11.C.1.26-27, 11.C.1.29, Guidelines Sections 01.3.3, 03.2.4, 03.3.3, 09.3.2, 8.A.iii, 8.B)

The applicable urban design policies and guidelines encourage the coordination of street design with the other site elements to create walkable, connected, safe, and transit-supportive developments. Street designs should reflect the surrounding character and integrate proposed buildings with the context. Planting palettes should be chosen for tolerance of salt and urban conditions with adequate soil volumes to allow for large canopy tree growth.

Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be safe and accessible, with barrier free entrances and conveniently located bicycle parking. Landscape design should not obstruct views and entrapment areas are to be avoided. Street furniture, lighting, and signage should be coordinated and human-scaled.

Vehicle circulation should be consolidated with contrasting pedestrian crossings to reduce conflicts with active transportation. The majority of vehicle parking is to be accommodated underground. Surface parking is to be located to the rear of buildings with landscaping used to screen the perimeter and break up rows. Emergency access routes should be clear and properly signed and not conflict with other vehicles. Internal loading and servicing areas that are integrated with the building design are encouraged to screen these areas from the public realm.

Design Response

The Proposed Development creates a fine-grained circulation network that is integrated with the surrounding streets and open spaces. The Proposed Development will complete the existing streetscapes along Prince Albert Boulevard and Victoria Marie Court with sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture. Active residential frontages along the streets and open spaces create a safe, inviting, and vibrant public realm.

Pedestrian circulation is provided throughout the Site, with connections and building entrances to Prince Albert Boulevard, Victoria Marie Court, and Oscar Lauber Park (see Figure 31). The Central Green provides a north-south pedestrian spine while residential lobbies and individual unit entrances on the adjacent streets and Pedestrian Mews allow convenient, barrier-free access to the residential units. Pedestrian routes are designed to incorporate the principles of CPTED and universal design, as detailed in the following sections. Additional details relating to pedestrian routes, landscape materials, and lighting will be determined through the Site Plan Approval phase.

The proposed vehicle circulation is kept to the exterior of the Site, along Prince Albert Boulevard, Victoria Marie Court, and the existing driveway adjacent to Buildings A & B (see Figure 32). Access to the underground parking garage is located close to the two streets to reduce conflict points within the Site. The underground parking is integrated with the existing parking levels for Buildings A and B. The internal driveway is completed with a loop and limited surface parking surrounding the Residential Courtyard. The surface parking is screened by the existing and proposed building masses.

Loading areas are co-located with underground parking ramps to reduce conflict points. Loading and garbage pickup are contained within the podium structures and will be screened from the public realm. Emergency circulation through the Site will be confirmed through the Site Plan Approval process to provide efficient access to building entrances.

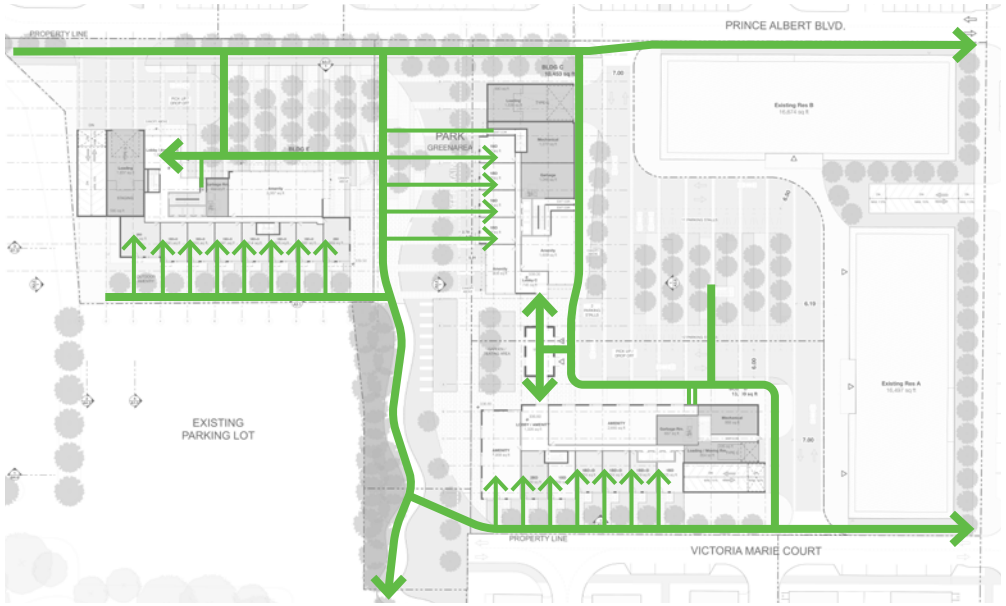


Figure 31 - Proposed pedestrian circulation

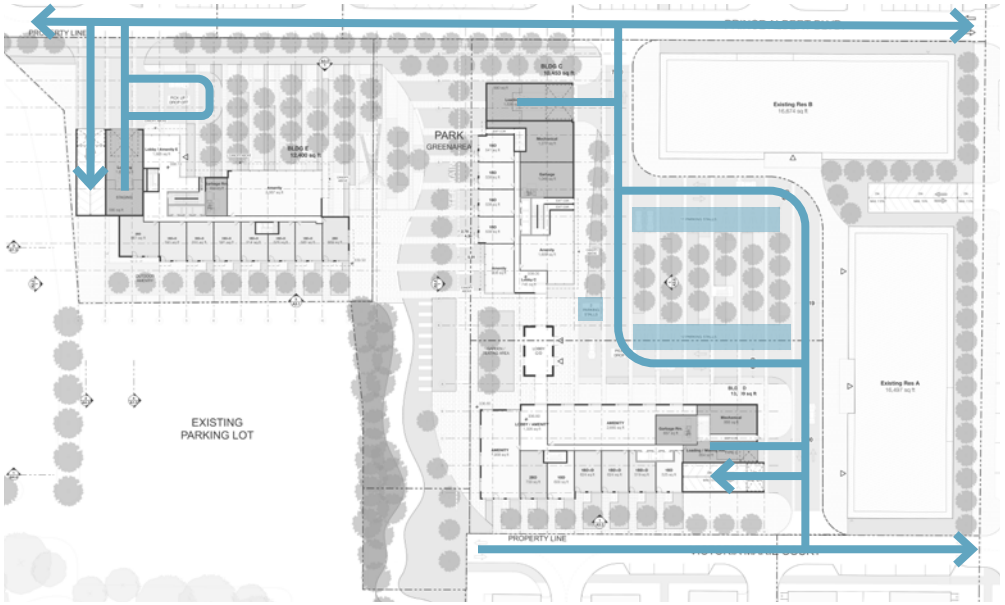


Figure 32 - Proposed vehicle circulation

4.3 SHARED SPACE, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Policy Summary

(Policies 11.C.1.17-20, Guidelines Sections 01.3.2, 03.2.5, 03.3.2, 09.3.2. 8.C.i-vii)

The applicable urban design policies and guidelines direct developments to create a hierarchy of public and private amenity spaces that are adaptable, varied, and accessible to all users. At-grade spaces should be large, continuous, well connected, and located away from vehicle and loading areas. Mid-block connections should provide direct linkages with public spaces and be animated with active frontages and entrances. Existing parks should be expanded where possible.

Shared spaces should incorporate native species that are tolerant of urban conditions. Street trees should be large canopy species, be provided with adequate soil volumes, and be coordinated with utility locations. Permeable surfaces and low-impact development measures are encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff. Spaces should also be designed to take advantage of microclimate conditions.

Street and park furniture is to be coordinated across the neighbourhood. Lighting and signage should be human scaled, with clearly identified pedestrian routes. Glare and spillover onto adjacent properties is to be avoided. Public art is encouraged within large scale developments at priority locations and should create an integrated focal point within the site.

Design Response

The 2012 Urban Design Brief identified two types of open spaces within the central apartment block: the Central Spine running north-south from Louisa Street and Apartment Courtyards between Buildings A to D and south of Building E. The Proposed Development brings these spaces forward and adds two additional types to create a full hierarchy of communal and private open spaces within Victoria Common.

The Central Spine is split into two parts: the Linear Park and Victoria Square (see Figure 33). The Linear Park acts as the north-south spine that links the neighbourhood together and connects the Site with the surrounding community. The Linear Park also acts as an extension of Oscar Lauber Park into the Site. Victoria Square is a new space at the terminus of the Linear Park, created through the relocation of Building E. This space will function as a vibrant focal point for all of Victoria Common.

These spaces are intended to be active, social spaces for residents of Victoria Common. The future design of the spaces will include a broad spectrum of four-season features, such as a paved plaza, landscaped open spaces, large canopy trees, a central public art installation, walking trails, seating, and bicycle storage (see Figure 34). The Proposed Development locates stormwater management facilities underneath the Linear Park, creating opportunities for LID measures and the integration of visible stormwater features within the park.

Figure 33 - Central open spaces form an extension of Oscar Lauber Park

Figure 34 - Potential public art as a focal point within the central open spaces (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

The Proposed Development also carries forward the Apartment Courtyard between Buildings A, B, C, and D, adds a new Residential Mews to the south of Building E, and creates three rooftop amenity spaces on the podiums of Buildings C, D, and E (see Figure 35). The Apartment Courtyard provides a central green space for the residents of Buildings A to D, while the Residential Mews creates a unique pedestrian street that allows access to the ground floor units and acts as a 'front porch' (see Figure 36).

These spaces and the rooftop amenity spaces are intended to be for the use of individual building residents. The future design of the spaces will create a sense of privacy through planting, screening, and shade, with a clear demarcation of private spaces along the Residential Mews. Additional features may include seating, bicycle storage, outdoor BBQs, and lounge areas to create a welcoming environment for residents. The three rooftop amenity spaces are paired with indoor amenity areas to create seamless activity areas and ensure safety through natural surveillance.

Future landscape plans for the Site will determine details relating to planting palette, lighting, furniture, signage, and public art, and will be prepared through the Site Plan Approval phase. A thorough review of the open spaces and landscape design with regard to the guidelines in the Urban Design Manual will also be undertaken through Site Plan Approval.

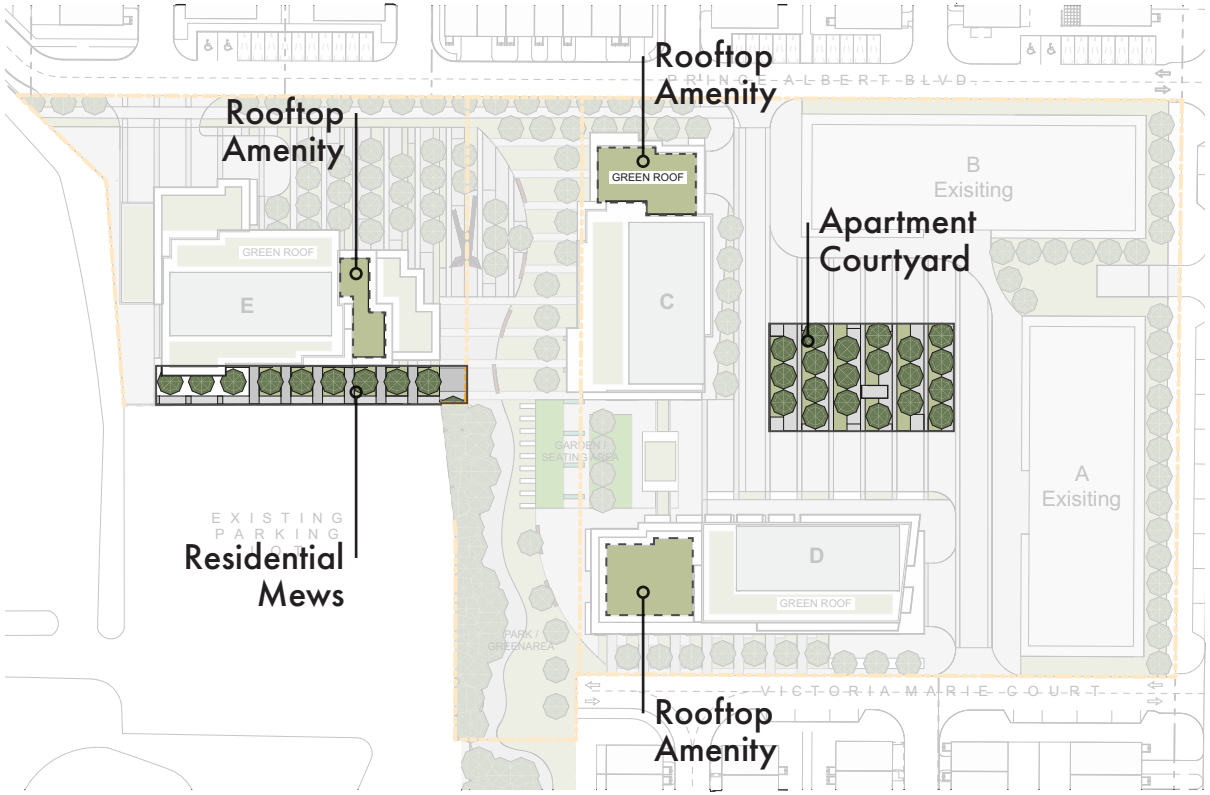


Figure 35 - Ground floor and rooftop amenity spaces for individual building residents

Figure 36 - Ground floor unit entrances directly onto the public realm (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

4.4 BUILDING DESIGN

Policy Summary

(Policies 11.C.1.26, 11.C.1.31-33, Guidelines Sections 01.3.1, 03.3.1, 09.2.1, 09.2.2, 09.3.3, 8.A.ii, 8.A.iv)

The applicable urban design policies and guidelines encourage high quality, contemporary building designs for priority locations. Tall buildings should utilize articulation, materials, and a range of forms to create visually interesting designs that reduce the perception of height and massing. Tall buildings should be designed with clear base, middle, and top forms. Enhanced building treatments and a consistent architectural style are encouraged for elevations along the central open space spine.

Building bases are to incorporate human-scaled design with a 3 to 5 storey height and a street-facing orientation to create vibrant, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. Ground floors that include active uses are to be 4.5m in height, with a maximum podium length of 70m and high levels of transparency. Entrances should be prominent, distinct, and accessible from the street. Street-facing facades should include balconies and outdoor amenity spaces to provide natural surveillance. Loading and servicing areas should be integrated into building facades and screened from public view.

Compact point tower typologies are preferred for middle portions of tall buildings. Towers should be stepped back a minimum of 3m along street facing facades to reinforce the human-scale. Compatibility on-site and with surrounding properties should be demonstrated through transition, relative height, separation distance, overlook percentage, and orientation. Towers should be located to minimize impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood. Tower tops should be clearly defined and utilize integrated penthouse units, amenity areas, and mechanical systems to resolve the overall tower design.

Design Response

The Proposed Development utilizes a compact tower form with distinct podium and tower components and contemporary façade design. The three podiums provide human-scaled building bases with lengths between 50 metres (Building C) and 64 metres (Building D). Podium heights range between 5 and 9 storeys, corresponding with the height of the towers above. The ground floor residential units and lobbies create a fine-grained rhythm of entrances, with highly transparent facades for natural surveillance.

The Proposed Development generally adheres to the Tall Building Guidelines and employs specific mitigation measures to address potential impacts (see Figure 37). Buildings C and E are classified as compact point towers, with length to width proportions of 1.3 and floor plates of 756 square metres. Building D is classified as a compact slab tower, with length to width proportions of 2.2 and a floor plate of 800 square metres. The height differential between the three towers creates a clear progression of massing and transition from west to east, with

Tall Building Guidelines	Tower E	Tower C	Tower D
Tower Type	Compact Point	Compact Point	Compact Slab
Proportion	1.3	1.3	2.2
Floor Plate	756m²	756m²	800m²
Relative Height	N/A	94%	61%
Separation - South	5.5m	N/A	N/A
Separation - West	7.6m	N/A	N/A
Separation - C & E	42.7m		
Separation - C & D		23.7m	
Overlook	74%		

relative heights of 94% (Towers C and E) and 61% (Towers D and E).

The three towers are oriented at right angles to each other and placed within the Site to allow maximum setbacks to the surrounding uses. The unique shape of the Site, adjacent buildings, and open spaces restricts the possibilities for separating the towers and eliminating overlook.

While the tower setbacks from the south and east property lines fall below the distance recommended in the guidelines, the abutting lands are currently a parking lot and will not be impacted by the proposed tower proximity. Further, the reduced setbacks are not anticipated to impact the ability of the adjacent parcel to develop with a high-rise form, though the property does not currently have planning permissions for such an intensification.

Within the Site, the overlook between Towers C and E is mitigated by the increased separation distance and building orientation, resulting in only two units per floor within Building E having windows on the eastern façade. The separation between Towers C and D is deficient, however these towers interact corner to corner, with no overlook between the tower forms and no impact to unit views. As discussed below, the decreased separation distance does not result in undue shadow, wind, or skyview impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood.

The tower tops are designed with enclosed mechanical penthouses to screen equipment from public view.

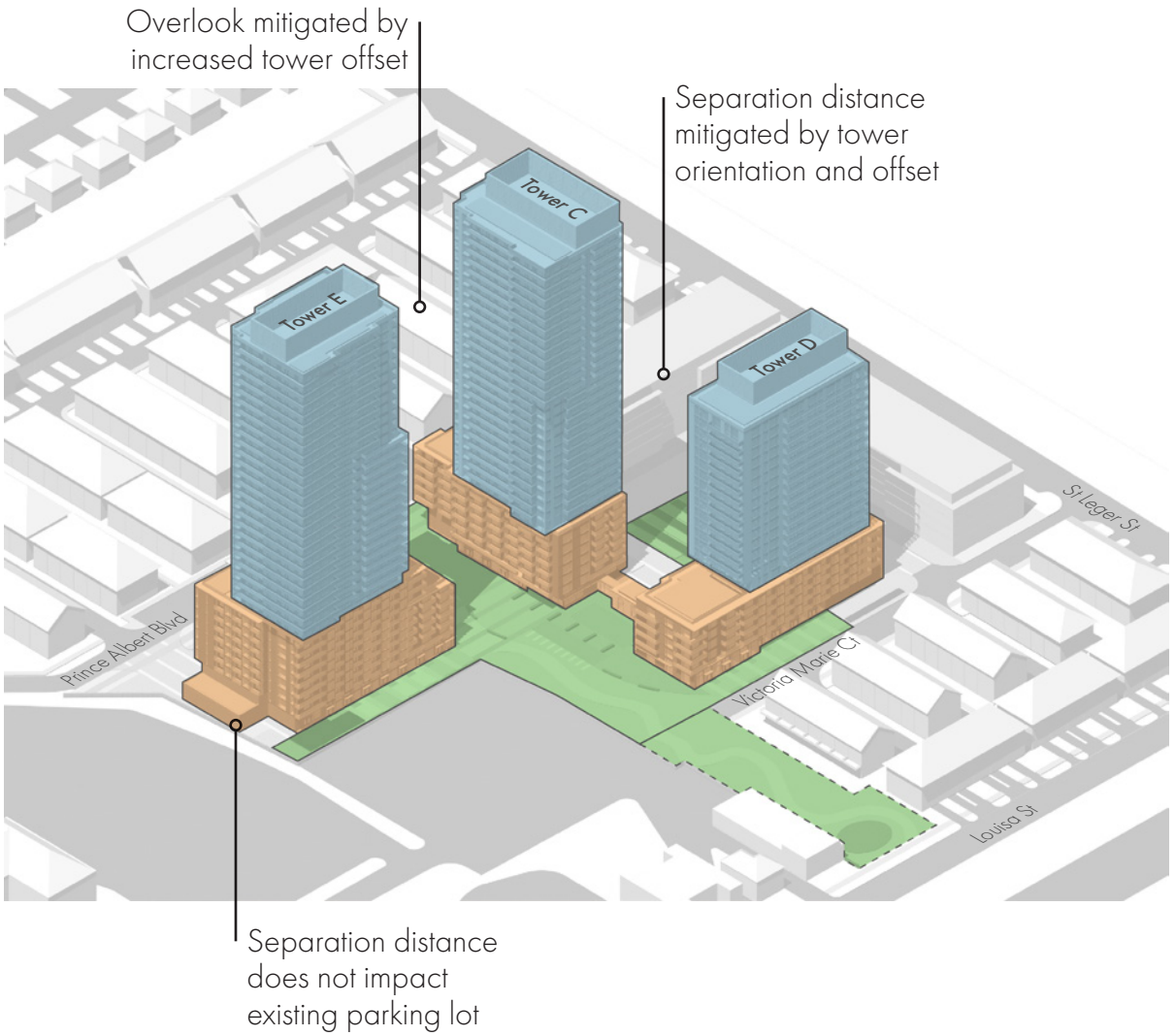


Figure 37 - Migitation measures for Tall Building Guidelines

4.5 DESIGN FOR OUTDOOR COMFORT

Policy Summary

(Policy 11.C.1.22, Guidelines Sections 03.2.3, 09.3.6)

The applicable urban design policies and guidelines direct developments to limit microclimate impacts on the site and surrounding neighbourhoods. Shadows are required to provide protection from the sun and to reduce urban heat island but should be limited on the public realm and adjacent properties, with five hours of cumulative sunlight on sidewalks and open spaces. Pedestrian shelter should also be provided through building and landscape elements. Building and landscape design should also consider wind impacts, creating comfortable and safe conditions. Alternative massing scenarios are encouraged to maximize microclimate benefits and preserve access to skyview.

Design Response

The Shadow Impact Study prepared by TACT Architecture compares the proposed massing with the as-of-right building footprints and heights, based on the approved 2012 design concept (see Figure 38). The study demonstrates that the net new shadows result in minor impacts on the surrounding streets, open spaces, and residential properties. The study found the following:

- Minor net new shadows on St Leger Street during afternoon times, with no additional shadows on Louisa Street;
- Minimal net new shadows on the Linear Park during mid-morning and late afternoon test times in June;
- Improvements to the shadow conditions throughout the day on the Apartment Courtyard due to the smaller tower footprint;
- Net new shadows on Victoria Square; however, this is due to the relocation of Building E from the 2012 concept. A 12-storey massing on the Building E location would cast shadows across Victoria Square for a significant portion of the test times;
- Marginal net new shadows on the surrounding residential lots to the north from March to September, with yards being primarily in shadow during December test times and minimal existing townhouse windows facing the Proposed Development.

The conversion of the building footprints from mid-rise buildings to compact towers reshapes the shadow profile and results in shadows that move quickly across the landscape and result in minor net new impacts.

The Pedestrian Level Wind Study, prepared by Gradient Wind (dated June 3, 2024), determined that conditions within the public realm and amenity spaces are comfortable for a mix of sitting, standing, and walking and are generally appropriate for the proposed programming of each space (see Figures 39-40). The report recommends wind mitigation measures for the Central Green and rooftop amenity spaces, including wind screens, coniferous trees, and overhead canopies to improve conditions. No unsafe wind conditions are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.

The shift to compact tower forms and reconfigured building locations results in significant improvements to skyview from the surrounding streets, open spaces, and residential dwellings. The previously approved slab buildings were located with minimal setbacks to the private streets and open spaces and were planned up to 12 storeys in height. The increased setbacks and lower podium heights lead to improved skyview from the pedestrian realm and open spaces. The compact tower footprints result in slender tower profiles, which, when combined with the rotated tower orientations and provided separation distances, reduces the impacts to skyview from adjacent residential properties and the broader neighbourhood.

Figure 38 - Shadow Study for March 21 at 9am, 12pm, and 3pm (TACT Architecture, September 23, 2024)

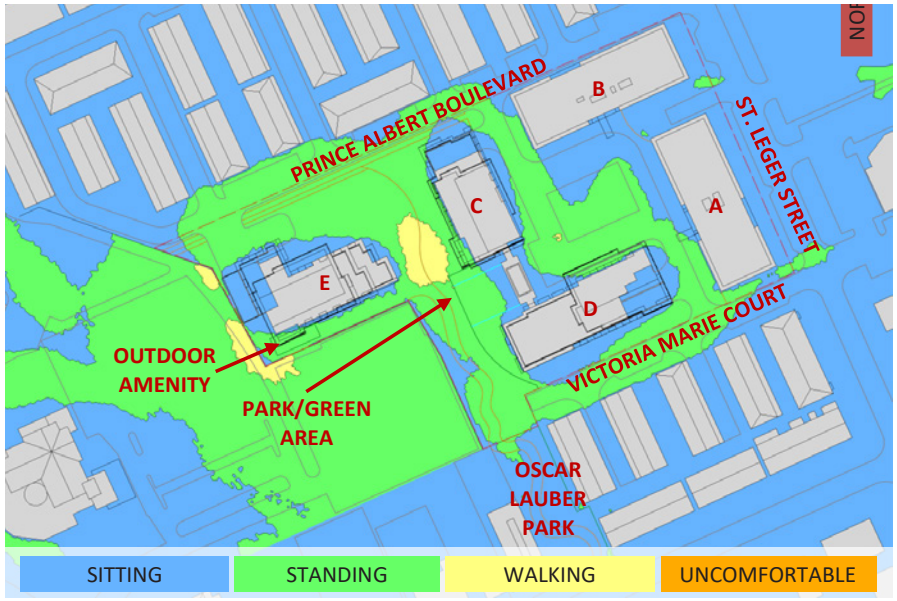


Figure 39 - Summer wind conditions (Gradient Wind, June 3, 2024)

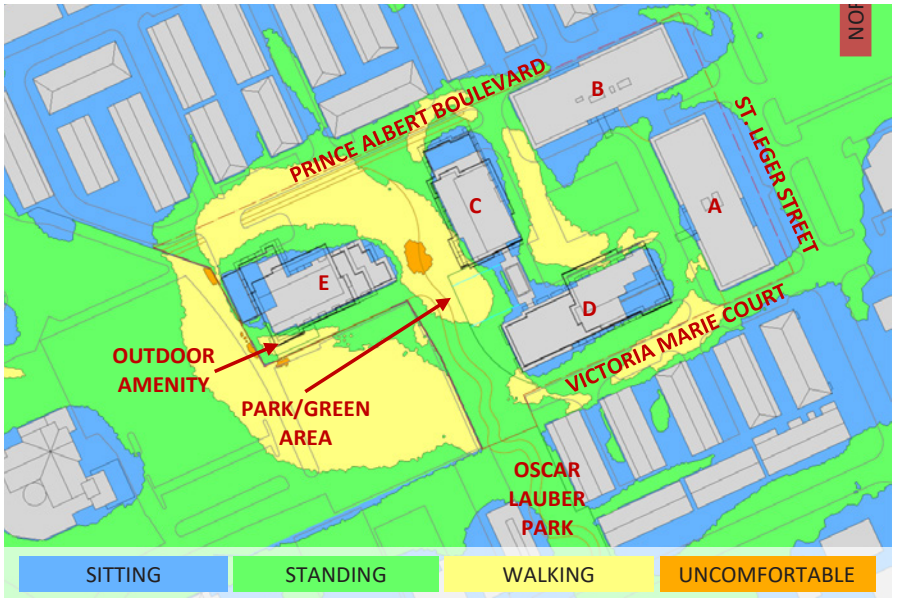


Figure 40 - Winter wind conditions (Gradient Wind, June 3, 2024)

4.6 INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Policy Summary

(Policies 11.C.1.13-16, Guidelines Sections 03.2.1, 09.3.1, 8.A.ii, 8.C.iv)

The applicable urban design policies and guidelines encourage the creation of safe, accessible spaces that are designed for all users. Site designs should incorporate the principles of CPTED and prioritize safety through landscape, lighting, function, and circulation. Emergency service routes are to be efficient. Sites are encouraged to include barrier free paths of travel and universal accessibility through continuous pedestrian circulation, clear connections between buildings, shared spaces, and the public realm, and avoiding conflict areas. A mix of unit types and sizes should be provided, as well as amenities for a variety of user groups.

Design Response

The Proposed Development is safe, accessible and designed for a variety of users. The overall site design incorporates CPTED principles by including active uses on the ground floors and residential balconies above, leading to natural surveillance on the public realm, and creating continuous circulation routes and connections to the existing streets and open spaces to avoid entrapment areas. Future landscape design will ensure that residential units and private spaces facing streets and open spaces have clearly defined boundaries through paving materials, planting design, and vertical separation, as necessary. Adequate pedestrian scaled lighting and emergency service routes will also be included through future design phases.

Barrier-free paths of travel will be included throughout the Site, allowing access to buildings and open spaces. Walkways will be surfaced to ensure accessible travel.

The Proposed Development includes a mix of unit types and sizes, from one to three bedrooms, to cater to a variety of household sizes and needs. Open spaces and amenity spaces will be designed and programmed to allow a wide range of user groups, ages, and abilities to take advantage of the amenities.

4.7 DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Policy Summary

(Guidelines Sections 03.2.2, 09.3.5)

The applicable urban design policies and guidelines direct developments to include adaptable and sustainable building and landscape features. Buildings should strive to include sustainable features, such as high-efficiency appliances, solar panels, natural ventilation, smart systems, sustainable materials, passive solar gain, and bird-friendly facades. On-site waste separation and organics diversion are also encouraged.

Landscapes should include a mix of native deciduous and coniferous trees to provide shade and wind protection. Rain gardens, permeable surfaces, and green roofs are also encouraged to improve stormwater management and reduce urban heat island effects. Site lighting should be dark sky compliant and utilize energy efficient LED fixtures.

Design Response

The proposed buildings include geothermal heating/cooling consistent with Buildings A and B, and green roof areas on podiums and towers. The Central Green includes a stormwater management facility, with potential for low-impact development and infiltration. Future landscape plans will include native species tolerant of urban conditions and contribute to the City's tree canopy. Additional measures will be explored through the Site Plan Approval process, including low-carbon building materials, high-efficiency building systems and appliances, energy-efficient lighting, and weather protection.

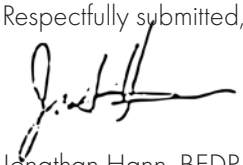
5.0 CONCLUSION

This Urban Design Brief concludes that the Proposed Development incorporates a high-quality of urban design through the following:

- Utilizing a compact, high-rise form that adds a variety of housing units, completes the Master Plan originally contemplated in 2012, and serves as the centerpiece of the Victoria Common neighbourhood;
- Providing a network of vibrant open spaces that are framed by active uses and act as an extension of Oscar Lauber Park;
- Creating a sensitive tower layout that limits impacts through a transition of height, varied orientation, and appropriate separation distances; and,
- Including sustainable elements such as geothermal heating and cooling, green roofs, on-site stormwater management, bicycle parking, and opportunities to increase the City's urban tree canopy.

It is our opinion that the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications reflect the intent, policies, and guidelines of the City of Kitchener Official Plan and Urban Design Manual and represent good urban design.

Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan Hann, BEDP, MScLA
Senior Urban Designer

MHBC

PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
& LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE