

VIA EMAIL

March 23, 2021

City Planning
City of London
206 Dundas Street
London, ON
N6A 1G7

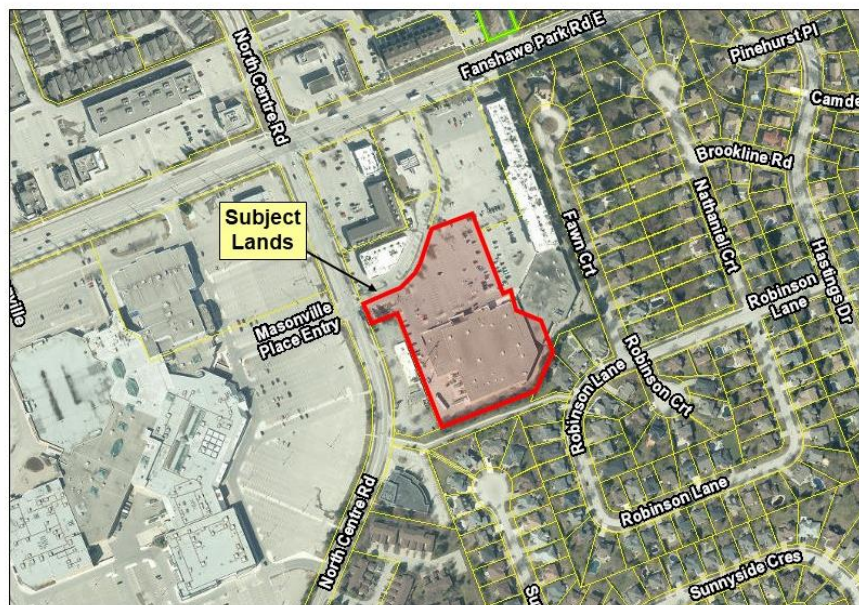
Attention: Ms. Sonia Wise, Planner

Dear Ms. Wise:

**Re: Draft Masonville Secondary Plan (File O-9881)
Preliminary Comments on Behalf of Rock Developments
50 North Centre Road
London, Ontario
Our File: ROD/LON/20-01**

We are the planning consultants for Rock Developments as it relates to the City of London Masonville Secondary Plan process. Rock Developments is the owner of lands within the area subject to the Masonville Secondary Plan, including lands municipally known as North Centre Road, and generally located south of Fanshawe Park Road East, and east of North Centre Road (“Rock Lands”). The Rock Lands are built for single storey commercial retail uses and associated parking, and are currently occupied by a variety of uses, including a Jysk, Winners, and Bulk Barn, amongst others. The Rock Lands are shown below for reference:

50 North Centre Road – Rock Lands



Location and boundaries are approximate

On behalf of Rock Developments, we have been monitoring the Masonville Secondary Plan. We have reviewed the Draft Secondary Plan dated March, 2021 and the March 1, 2021 Staff Report in the context of the Rock Lands.

Based on our review of the Masonville Secondary Plan:

- Schedule 2: Community Structure identifies the Rock Lands as “Low-Rise” and “Mid-Rise”. A “Future Connection” is identified through the Rock Lands, as is a “Future Pedestrian/Bicycle Only Connection”;
- Schedule 3: Land Use identifies the Rock Lands as “Transit-Village Mixed Use”;
- Schedule 4: Heights identifies the Rock Lands as “Mid-Rise [2-8 Storeys]”, and “Low-Rise [2-4 Storeys]” and with a “Future Connection” through the lands, as well as a “Future Pedestrian/Bicycle Only Connection”;
- Schedule 5: Connections identifies a “Future Connection” and “Future Pedestrian/Bicycle Only Connection” through the Rock Lands; and
- Schedule 6: Priority Streets identifies both Rich Fanshawe Park Road East and North Centre Road as “Commercial Character Streets” where they align with the Rock Lands. A “Future Mixed-use Character Street” is identified within the Rock Lands.

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON DRAFT MASONVILLE SECONDARY PLAN

The Masonville Secondary Plan Area is a Protected Major Transit Station Area, where significant growth through intensification is anticipated. The Secondary Plan seeks to direct growth to this area, while ensuring a transition to existing established neighbourhoods, which surround this node. Based on our review, the draft Secondary Plan establishes maximum building heights to apply throughout the study area, including establishing High-Rise, Mid-Rise, and Low-Rise areas. In addition, the draft Secondary Plan proposes numerous site design/built form policies, which would also contribute towards ensuring appropriate transition to existing residential areas. In our submission, the building height maximums proposed for Low-Rise and Mid-Rise areas as they relate to the Rock Lands are less than what could be achieved on site while maintaining appropriate transition through site design. The maximum heights imposed do not provide sufficient intensification opportunity that would persuade the redevelopment of an existing successful commercial plaza. The Rock Lands have the opportunity to achieve the growth objectives of the plan, while continuing to provide appropriate transition to surrounding areas.

As noted, the draft Secondary Plan proposes policies that would seek to protect existing residential lands from the impact of intensification of the Masonville Plan Area. Those policies include, but are not limited to Policy 8.1i), which seeks to apply an angular plane as follows:

“The height, setbacks and stepbacks of new mid-rise and high-rise development shall fit within a 45 degree angular plane measured above 7m height from the property boundary of lands in the Neighbourhoods Place Type and/or any lands in in the Low-

Rise Residential Land Use Area in the Masonville Secondary Plan area as shown on Schedule 3. This is intended to provide a sympathetic transition from lower to higher development forms. All elements of fit and transition must be accommodated within the development site.”

We note that the Rock Lands are adjacent to existing low rise residential uses to the south and east. The Rock Lands are irregular in shape, however at the furthest points the parcel is approximately 183m deep, and approximately 130m wide. The Rock Lands are set back from adjacent residential areas to the east by approximately 95m (noting that an additional parcel and road separates the Rock Lands from existing residential). The Rock Lands are of a sufficient depth so as to apply appropriately transition to surrounding residential lands. Using the draft policy 8.1i) as a guide, the potential building heights on the Rock Lands far exceed what is proposed as the upper maximum on the lands, while being within a 45 degree angular plane. It is therefore unclear as to how maximum building heights of 4 and 8 storeys were calculated as the maximum permitted for the Rock Lands. We are of the opinion that the policy framework can and will guide what building heights are appropriate in certain locations, including appropriate transitions and setbacks, without the need to prescribe rigid building heights that would otherwise restrict intensification opportunity on lands within the intensification area.

We would encourage the City to reconsider the proposed designations and building heights on the Rock Lands as shown on draft Schedules 2 and 4.

Separately, and in considering that existing conditions of the Masonville Secondary Plan Area, we propose that it is essential that the draft Secondary Plan consider policies for interim development, to allow for modest growth or expansion to existing developed lands, in advance of comprehensive redevelopment. The redevelopment of lands within the Secondary Plan Area will likely take years or decades to fully realize the vision presented by the plan. In the interim and until redevelopment occurs, the viability of existing lands and buildings should be protected. We suggest Staff consider implementing interim development policies, which would recognize existing uses and permit expansion or infill development that is in accordance with the existing policy framework, and that does not necessarily realize the vision for comprehensive redevelopment. At this time, the Secondary Plan is silent with respect to the existing uses within the plan area, and interim development.

Further to the above comments, at this time our specific preliminary comments for the Draft Secondary Plan are as follows:

- Draft Policy 1.5i)b) indicates a key principle of the Plan as follows: “Break up large commercial blocks during site development to create a more fine-grain connectivity network and improve walkability throughout the area.” We suggest revised language as follows: “create a finer grained road network through the acquisition of lands within larger commercial blocks, as lands seek to comprehensively redevelop”;

- Draft Policy 3.1.1iii) states: “Connections shown on Schedule 5 are intended to break up large commercial blocks...” In our submission, revised language should be considered, which does not rely on the phrase “break up large commercial blocks”. We suggest alternative language such as, “creating a finer grained street network”. The policy as written, inappropriately targets a specific use;
- Draft Policy 3.1.1ix) indicates that variations to Schedule 5 may be considered by exception based on circumstances. We suggest that the phrase “circumstances such as” be replaced with “circumstances including but not limited to”, so as to not be restrictive in potential exceptions;
- Draft Policy 3.1.2ix) requires all new multi-unit residential developments include indoor and outdoor communal amenity spaces. In our submission, flexibility is important for site design and we suggest that “shall” be replaced with “should”;
- Draft Policy 3.2.2iii) states “Achieve net-zero or net-positive greenhouse gas emissions for buildings through efficient design and energy usage.” In our submission, flexibility should be introduced and we suggest revised language as follows “development should seek to achieve net...”;
- Draft Policy 3.2.2ix) would require all new mid and high rise development to include electric vehicle charging stations. In our submission, flexibility should be introduced to the draft policy, so as to best allow development to respond to demand. We suggest revised language as follows: “Opportunities for electric vehicle charging stations should be provided in new mid-rise and high-rise developments”
- Draft Policy 3.7i) would require a range of housing types to be provided on every site. In our submission, flexibility should be introduced to best respond to market demand;
- Draft Policy 3.7ii) would require all properties to provide for live-work opportunities. In our submission, flexibility should be introduced to best respond to market demand;
- Draft Policy 3.7iii) requires a range and mix of unit sizes and types. In our submission, flexibility should be introduced to best respond to market demand, and suggest “shall” be replaced with “should”;
- Draft Policy 4.1v) caps office use for the Secondary Plan area at 20,000sq.m. We request clarification if this cap site wide, or on a per property basis is based on recommendations of a market analysis. We are concerned with a cap that would apply to multiple properties throughout the study area, and would suggest the overall cap on office space be removed, so that development can best respond to market demand in the future, and make use of the transit opportunity in the area;
- Draft Policy 4.2.1iii) would restrict any new stand-alone single tenant commercial buildings. We encourage Staff to consider interim development opportunities that are reflective of the existing commercial nature of the Secondary Plan area;
- Draft Policy 5.1iii) requires buildings and main entrances to be located and oriented towards public streets. We suggest flexibility be introduced to accommodate site specific circumstances, and suggest replacing “shall” with “should”;

- Draft Policy 5.1vii) requires building entrances at grade. We suggest removing the word “(flush)”, to allow for a degree of flexibility to accommodate site specific circumstances;
- Draft Policy 7.2ii) prescribes the maximum building height for mid-rise areas as eight (8) storeys, whereas Draft Policy 7.2i) applying to high-rise buildings allows for additional height beyond the allowable maximum. In our submission, lands identified for Mid-rise should be extended the opportunity to go beyond the maximum identified building height, subject to other criteria of the plan to ensure compatibility surrounding lands. As noted previously, we believe that the identification of the Rock Lands as a mixed Mid-Rise and Low-Rise area, is not reflective of the intensification potential afforded by this site;
- Draft Policy 8.5i) states “Loading docks and back of house activities will be located away from public and private streets” and Draft Policy 8.5ii) states “Loading areas shall be screened from public and private streets, and neighbouring uses by the combined use of building massing and landscaping.” We suggest flexibility be incorporated within these draft policies, in order to respond to site specific circumstances and site design; and
- Draft Policy 9.9 states: “New public and private streets will be created through the following processes: i) Plan of Subdivision. ii) Plan of Condominium. iii) Site Plan. iv) Consent. v) Land Dedication. vi) Land Purchase.” We suggest that “only” be added between “streets will” and “be created”. In addition, any approvals for interim development or minor expansions to existing buildings shall not be subject to this policy.

We will continue to review the Masonville Secondary Plan in more detail, will monitor the implementation, and may provide additional comments as required.

Please kindly ensure that the undersigned is notified of any further meetings or notices related to this matter.

Yours very truly,

ZELINKA PRIAMO LTD.



Rob MacFarlane, MPL, MCIP, RPP
Planner

cc. Rock Developments (via email)