

MEMORANDUM

To: Glen Letman, Manager of Development Planning
From: Wai Ying Di Giorgio
Date: October 20, 2015
Subject: Peer Review - Highland Gate Development Inc. 21 Golf Links Drive
Reference: TPP 1724

Urban Design and Architectural Design Review

Our team has reviewed the application documents for the Highland Gate Development located at 21 Golf Links Drive. Our review and comments focus primarily on the Streetscape Plan, Urban Design Guidelines and Architectural Design Guidelines.

In general, the Urban Design Guidelines are well written and provide the framework for a vibrant new neighbourhood. However, some of the language of compliance in the Urban Design Guidelines is too general and could be strengthened. Additionally, the Urban Design Guidelines should be coordinated with the Architectural Control Guidelines.

Our specific comments are as follows:

URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

SECTION 2.0 – THE CONCEPT PLAN

1. Section 2.4 Trails & Pedestrian Connections

Provide a cross-section illustrating the typical walkway block design (width of pavement, landscaping, fencing, etc.), taking into consideration pedestrian visibility and screening from adjacent properties.

SECTION 3.0 - HOUSING

2. Section 3.2 Building Orientation

Consider adding the following:

- *“Along long, straight streets, building setbacks should be varied (i.e. Street ‘A’)”.*
- *“Along curved streets, building setbacks may consistent.”*

3. Section 3.4 Garages
Make reference to the Architectural Control Guidelines (Section 3.10 Garage Treatment & Location) to ensure that designs are coordinated.

4. Section 3.6 Priority Lots
Priority Lots are important in defining the scale and character of the development; the recommended design enhancements and upgrades should be mandatory, where possible. For example, under Corner Lots, Bullet 3, consider the following wording: *“Corner lots **shall** provide a consistent level of detailing on all publicly exposed elevations.”*

Similarly, with respect to Elbow and Cul-de-sac Lots, consider *“Special attention **shall** be given where the bend of the street can be partially exposed....”*

5. Section 3.9 Utilities & Mechanical Equipment (and Section 4.0 of the Architectural Design Guidelines)
Consider adding the following:
 - For **high density buildings**, ensure that mechanical equipment and elevator overrun is screened or set back from the façade.

SECTION 5.0 - STREETSCAPES

6. Section 5.1 New Local Roads
 - a. Add dimensions to Figure 15 and clarify the location of the street tree on the left hand side of the cross-section; is this tree located within private lands or a landscape buffer?
 - b. Consider, to the extent possible, that sufficient space within the R.O.W. can accommodate both a bio-retention gallery and sufficient soil volumes to ensure (street) tree growth.
 - c. Provide details of the proposed methods of landscape screening/mitigation for the various conditions throughout the site. In particular, along new local roads where existing lots have become ‘through lots’ and new lots are fronting onto existing backyards, how will the new streetscape be experienced from both vantage points? What is the character of these new streets and what are the hard and soft landscape elements that will be provided to create that character?
 - d. If animated streetscapes is an objective of the plan, consider designs that allow the opportunity for private gates (from existing lots) accessing the new local roads.
 - e. Replace the reference to ‘consistent with’ with ‘complementary to’ (the character) when describing landscaping within the boulevards. Uniformly applied, consistent tree species does not represent current best practices in arboriculture. Providing a diversity of species is one of the preferred methods of building resiliency to disease (and the complete loss of urban canopy in that event).

- f. To the previous point, consider providing a tree planting strategy as part of the overall streetscape master plan.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

7. Provide clarification regarding the level of compliance and conformity that will be required (i.e. “may”, “should”, and “shall”) for the design guidelines.
8. Section 2.2.7 Building Heights Compatibility
Expanding on Section 3.1 of the Urban Design Guidelines regarding ‘Architectural Style’, consider adding the following:
“On lots that slope down from the front to the rear lot line, additional building height may be permitted at the rear of the dwelling only. The additional height will be measured at the rear face of the building.”
9. Sections 2.3.2, 2.3.3 and 2.3.4
Rather than repeating the general descriptions contained in the Urban Design Guidelines for the Priority Lots, the Architectural Design Guidelines should provide a greater level of detailed design guidance for dwellings in these prominent locations. Moreover, specific design enhancements/considerations (for example, with respect to ‘fenestration’, ‘driveway locations’ and ‘selection of models’) should be provided and, their application and the responsibility of the builders should be clarified.

To conclude, we believe that the proposed plan generally does a good job of carving out a new neighbourhood within an established existing community, and does take into consideration many of the design elements that will make it a great place to live. For the most part, our main concerns are related to achieving an appropriate transition/interface to the existing neighbourhood and in this regard, have requested additional clarification and/or design details to demonstrate/illustrate the urban design intent.

Please let us know if you require any clarification on these points, or wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wai Ying Di Giorgio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "W".

Wai Ying Di Giorgio, B.L.A., OALA
Principal