

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Application for Official Plan Amendment OP 24-04-8 – John & Lesia Crocker

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Community Planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Oxford County Council approve Application No. OP 24-04-8 submitted by Key Change Property Management, for lands described as Plan 48, Part Lots 2 and 3 in the City of Woodstock, to redesignate the subject lands from Low Density Residential to High Density Residential;
2. And further, that Council approve the attached Amendment No. 331 to the County of Oxford Official Plan and raise the necessary by-law to approve Amendment No. 331.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Official Plan amendment proposes to redesignate the subject property from Low Density Residential to High Density Residential to facilitate the development of a 32 dwelling unit stacked townhouse development.
- The proposal is consistent with the relevant policies of the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement and supports the strategic initiatives and objectives of the Official Plan and can be supported from a planning perspective.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

The application will be implemented in accordance with the relevant objectives, strategic initiatives and policies contained in the Official Plan.

Financial Impact

The approval of this application will have no financial impact beyond what has been approved in the current year’s budget.

Communications




In accordance with the Planning Act, notice of complete application regarding this proposal was provided to surrounding property owners on August 28, 2024 and notice of public meeting was issued on December 30, 2024. At the time of the writing of this report one letter of concern was received and is included as Attachment 4. The letter of concern identified potential issues over ownership, rent, height, parking, traffic, privacy, garbage, pests and disruption of services. During the City of Woodstock public meeting for the application, a few residents raised concerns relating to privacy, density, grading, and drainage.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendations in this report support the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
Goal 1.1 – 100% Housed Goal 1.2 – Sustainable infrastructure and development Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being		

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

Owner: John and Lesia Crocker
c/o Key Change Property Management

Agent: GSP Group c/o Richard Kelly-Ruetz
72 Victoria Street South, Suite 200, Kitchener ON N2G 4Y9

Location:

The subject lands are described as Plan 48, Part Lots 2 and 3 in the City of Woodstock. The lands are located on the west side of Norwich Avenue between Parkinson Road and Salter Avenue and are municipally known as 394, 398, 400, 408 and 412 Norwich Avenue.

County of Oxford Official Plan:

Existing:

Schedule 'W-3'	City of Woodstock Residential Density Plan	'Low Density Residential'
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Proposed:

Schedule 'W-3'	City of Woodstock Residential Density Plan	'High Density Residential'
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Proposal:

Applications have been received to amend the Official Plan and City's Zoning By-Law to permit the development of a 32 unit stacked townhouse development on the subject lands. The Official Plan amendment proposes to redesignate the subject lands from 'Low Density Residential' to 'High Density Residential' to facilitate the proposed increase in residential density on the site.

The associated zone change application proposes to rezone the subject lands from 'Residential Type 1 Zone (R1)', 'Residential Type 2 Zone (R2)' and 'Special Residential Zone 2 (R2-12 and 23)' to 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R3-sp)' to facilitate the proposed use through site specific zone provisions regarding the minimum lot area per dwelling unit, minimum landscaped open space and to permit limited parking in the required front yard.

The subject lands comprise an approximate area of 3,966 m² (42,691 ft²) and contain four existing residential buildings. The application proposes to remove the existing structures and replace them with a stacked townhouse dwelling structure containing 32 units.

Surrounding land uses include existing low density residential development to the west and a significant Regional Commercial Node to the east; specifically, the proposed development is immediately west of a plaza that is anchored by No Frills.

Plate 1, Location Map with Existing Zoning, indicates the location of the subject site and the existing zoning in the immediate vicinity.

Plate 2, 2020 Aerial Map, provides an aerial view of the subject property and surrounding area.

Plate 3, Applicant's Sketch, consists of a site plan illustrating the layout of the proposed development, as provided by the applicant.

Comments

2024 Provincial Planning Statement

The policies of Section 2.3 of the Provincial Planning Statement directs that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development, and that land use patterns within settlement areas should be based on densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use land and resources, optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities, support active transportation, are transit supported (as appropriate) and are freight supportive. Planning authorities shall support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities, including by planning for a range and mix of housing options and prioritizing planning and investment in the necessary infrastructure and public service facilities.

Official Plan

The subject lands are designated 'Low Density Residential', according to the City of Woodstock Residential Density Plan. The application for Official Plan amendment proposes to redesignate the lands to facilitate high density residential development.

Areas designated for Low Density Residential use are generally intended to provide a variety of low-rise, low-density housing forms including executive and smaller single detached dwellings, semi-detached and duplex dwellings, additional residential units and converted dwellings, street fronting townhouses and low rise apartments. In these Districts, it is intended that there will be a mixing and integration of different forms of housing to achieve a low overall density of use.

The maximum net residential density for an individual development in the Low Density Residential District is 30 units per hectare (12 units per acre) and no building shall exceed three storeys in height at street elevation.

High Density Residential areas are primarily developed or planned for a limited range of large scale multiple unit forms of residential development. This designation is to be applied in a localized and site specific manner in locations where high rise development can:

- Result in the preservation of features of the natural environment which may otherwise be compromised with more dispersed low rise development, or
- Result in the efficient use of land which may be difficult to develop at a lower residential density due to the presence of environmental constraints and the costs of mitigating such constraints; or
- Constitute community land marks or reference points, or
- Support the functionality of the municipal transit system, or
- Support the viability and functionality of the Central Area.

The height and density limitation applicable to various forms of development in the High Density designation shall be determined on the basis of the nature, character, and scale of adjacent land uses and are to be specified in the zoning by-law and may vary from location to location. Unless there are specific site or area characteristics which favour higher limits, the maximum net residential density in the High Density Residential designation is 150 units per hectare (60 units per acre). The proposed development, at 32 units, would have a net residential density of approximately 81 units per hectare (32.7 units per acre).

Any further High Density Residential designations [beyond those currently in the Official Plan] will be consistent with the following location criteria:

- The site will generally have direct access to arterial and collector roads;
- On vacant or under utilized sites adjacent to development which is already built at medium or high densities;
- Close to community services and neighbourhood conveniences such as shopping plazas, institutional, recreational and open space facilities; sites which are adjacent to the Central Area, designated Shopping Centres or Community Facilities.

In addition to the requirement for compliance to the locational policies, when considering proposals to designate lands for high density residential development, City Council and County Council will be guided by the following:

- the size, configuration and topography of the site provides sufficient flexibility in site design to mitigate adverse effects on the amenities and character of any adjacent residential development through adequate setbacks, buffering and screening;
- the development results in a gradual transition from low profile residential buildings to higher profile residential buildings and vice versa;
- the location of vehicular access points and the likely effects of traffic generated by the proposal on the public road system and surrounding properties relative to pedestrian and vehicular safety is acceptable;
- adequate hard service capacity including water distribution, sanitary and storm sewers, power and gas distribution facilities is available or will be available to accommodate the proposed development;
- adequate off-street parking and outdoor amenity areas can be provided;
- the availability of, and proximity to existing or proposed services and amenities such as day care, schools, leisure facilities, shopping and parks to serve the new development; and
- the effect of the proposed development on environmental resources or the effect of environmental constraints on the proposed development will be addressed and mitigated as outlined in Section 3.2.

Further, City Council may establish lower height and/or density limits than permitted in the Official Plan for specific areas through zoning, based on the following criteria:

- sanitary sewage, water or storm drainage constraints;
- limitations related to municipal fire protection;
- development constraints related to topographical features;
- protection of significant or scenic views or vistas;
- to minimize the effect of development and required parking on significant features;

- where adjacent low profile residential land uses may be adversely affected in terms of sunlight, traffic or privacy.

Zoning By-law

The subject lands are currently zoned 'Residential Zone 1 (R1)', 'Residential Zone 2 (R2)' and 'Special Residential Zone 2 (R2-21 and R2-23)'. The applicant proposes to rezone the lands to 'Special Residential Type 3 Zone (R3-sp)' to facilitate the proposed 32 unit stacked townhouse dwelling building.

A number of site-specific zone provisions have been requested to facilitate the proposed stacked townhouse dwelling on the lands. Site specific zone provisions have been requested to address the minimum lot area per dwelling unit, minimum landscaped open space, and location of parking for one space.

Agency Comments

The City of Woodstock Engineering Department (Building Division) has provided the following comments:

1. The site is proposing an R3- special zone to permit the construction of 32 multiple attached dwelling units.
2. Relief is required to reduce the minimum lot area from 150m² per unit to approximately 123.9m². The applicant should determine the actual area required as the application calls for 124m² (124 x 32 = 3,968M²). The plan indicates a total area of 3,966 m².
3. A provision should be included for the minimum front yard depth of 6.7m as the established building line provision requires a minimum of 7m.
4. Relief is required for a reduced landscape area coverage from 35% to approximately 32%. The applicant should confirm the number.

The City of Woodstock Engineering Department (Engineering Division) has provided the following comments:

We have reviewed the items submitted for the above noted application and the City of Woodstock Engineering Department has the following comments.

1. If approved, site plan approval is required where servicing, grading, SWM, lighting, landscaping, etc. will be reviewed in further detail.

Oxford County Public Works has provided the following comments that are to be addressed during the site plan control process:

- A Transportation Impact Study will need to be completed for the site intersection with Norwich Ave. A complete stoplight assessment will be required.
- The property will need a single water meter. This can be completed though a water meter chamber. The chamber will need to be located just inside property line.
- A hydrant flow test will need to be completed on a nearby hydrant to confirm availability of fire flows and included within the FSR. Supervision of hydrant flow testing by City is required.

City of Woodstock Council

City of Woodstock Council recommended support of the proposed Official Plan amendment and approved the proposed zoning by-law amendment 'in principle', at the City's regular Council meeting of January 16, 2025.

Planning Analysis

The application is proposing to redesignate the subject lands from Low Density Residential to High Density Residential to permit a stacked townhouse development consisting of 32 dwelling units. The stacked townhouse structure is proposed to be three storeys in height with a single access to Norwich Avenue that aligns with an existing signalized intersection.

Planning staff are of the opinion that the subject proposal is consistent with the policies of the PPS, as the development is an efficient use of land and municipal services within a fully serviced settlement area. The development also contributes to housing types and densities required to meet the projected requirements of current and future residents of the City and the broader regional market area.

The proposal is generally consistent with the Official Plan policies respecting the designation of additional high density sites. The subject lands have frontage on Norwich Avenue, which is an arterial road, and access will be provided through an existing signalized intersection; no new access is proposed and existing entrances will be reduced from five to one. The applicants have consolidated four existing lots to provide an opportunity for intensification and infill of existing under-utilized residential lands. The subject lands are directly adjacent to a Regional Shopping Area and transit on Norwich Avenue, and are located in close proximity to a large City-owned park (former golf course) to the west. Further, although the request is to redesignate to high density residential, the proposed density of 81 units per hectare (32.7 units per acre) is much closer to the maximum density of the medium density designation of 70 units per hectare than it is to the maximum density of the high density residential designation of 150 units per hectare. The proposed built-form is also consistent with the expectation for medium density designations at three-stories. The Official Plan also provides City Council with the ability to establish lower height and/or density limits than permitted in the Official Plan through zoning, based on specific criteria, including where adjacent low profile residential land uses may be adversely affected in terms of sunlight, traffic or privacy; this policy provides the opportunity to restrict the built form of the high density use on the site to achieve greater compatibility with adjacent residential uses.

To reduce impacts to adjacent lower density residential uses, the applicants are proposing a three-storey structure that will be buffered from adjacent residential uses by parking areas on the south and west of the subject lands, adjacent to existing low density residential uses. The limited height of the proposed three-storey structure (relative to a typical high density development) will provide a gentle transition from the surrounding single-detached dwellings to the Regional Commercial uses located along Norwich Avenue, across from this proposed development. Additionally, the applicants have aligned their entrance with the existing signalized entrance to the commercial node, reducing impacts to traffic on Norwich Avenue. The applicants are providing parking in accordance with the minimum standards for the proposed development, and adequate services are available to service the proposal.

Planning staff are supportive of the associated zoning by-law amendment which would establish a number of site-specific R3 zone provisions to facilitate the proposed development. Further, the requested zoning was approved in-principle by City Council on January 16, 2025.

Therefore, planning staff are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with the applicable policies of the Provincial Planning Statement and supports the strategic initiatives and objectives of the Official Plan. As such, staff are satisfied that the applications can be given favourable consideration.

CONCLUSIONS

Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposal is consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement and supports the strategic initiatives and objectives of the Official Plan and, as such, can be supported from a planning perspective.

SIGNATURES

Report author:

Original Signed By

Justin Miller
Development Planner

Departmental Approval:

Original Signed By

Eric Gilbert, RPP
Manager of Development Planning

Original Signed By

Paul Michiels
Director of Community Planning

Approved for submission:

Original Signed By

Benjamin R. Addley
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Plate 1, Existing Zoning & Location Map
Attachment 2 – Plate 2, Aerial Map (2020)
Attachment 3 – Plate 3, Applicant's Sketches
Attachment 4 – Letter of Concern
Attachment 5 – Official Plan Amendment, OPA 331