

Building Heights: Manor Park Estates Redevelopment

Draft Comments and Concerns from Manor Park Community

Date: 7 June 2021

Application #D01-01-21-0003 (Manor Park Estates)

For More Information on this and other development in the neighbourhood please visit the Manor Park Community Website at:

<https://manorparkcommunity.ca/home/>

and

<https://manorparkcommunity.ca/home/development-review/>

The Manor Park Community Association (MPCA) would like to register its specific objections to the proposed building heights in the current proposal by Manor Park Estates for the redevelopment of Manor Park Heights and Manor Park Gardens.

This development proposal replaces two existing areas of low-to-ground, affordable, family housing with **41** new mid-rise buildings and high-rise towers. It is MPCA's view that, while development is expected in urban residential neighborhoods, it is fundamentally unfair for Manor Park residents to face such massive transformation of their community.

In contrast, we seek neighbourhood design that blends with the environment and promotes attractive natural exteriors that maintain or increase the amount of usable green space, provide community gardens and protect mature trees. There should be a range of **diversified** housing typologies at reasonable building heights that retain the current neighbourhood design and that provide affordable housing options for residents in keeping with the zoning and character for the areas.

The development of Manor Park should facilitate a **socially equal and just community** with mixed rental and for sale properties geared towards multiple income levels and family types with a variety of unit sizes. It is important that Manor Park retains a critical mass of family sized 3-4-bedroom units to maintain its school, playgrounds and to support other family-oriented amenities. This will help to ensure that the development supports a **thriving community** with the required social infrastructure and recreational spaces.

As such the MPCA objects in the strongest possible terms to the unreasonable building heights contained in the development application. While we support reasonable densification in pursuit of livelihood improvements, we cannot condone the rampant densification that will have a detrimental impact on individuals, families and the community at large.

In context of the points set out in Section 2, the MPCA recommends that the proposed Development Plan be revised to allow for reasonable urban intensification with necessary green space, as follows:

Proposed Manor Park North Development:

- *Significantly reduce the number of buildings to allow inclusion of at least two proper green spaces (full sized parks not courtyards);*
- *Include a mix of 2 storey, 4 story and 6-story buildings;*
- *Maximum building height allowable to be 6 storeys in Manor Park North.*
- *Neighbours on Jeffery Street and St Laurent Blvd to have privacy protected and excessive shadowing removed.*

Proposed Manor Park South Development:

- *Significantly reduce the number of buildings to allow inclusion of at least two proper green spaces (full-sized parks not courtyards);*
- *Include a mix of 4 storey buildings, up to 15 storey buildings;*
- *Maximum building height allowable to be 15 storeys in Manor Park South, providing for a reasonable transition from two storey homes to 4 storey buildings only.*
- *Neighbours in Manor Park Hill to be protected from excessive shadowing and loss of privacy.*

Social Contract

- *A social contract should be negotiated to ensure the protection of the current residents of Manor Estates and their transition into new homes with the Manor Park Managements Holding on site or off site.*

1. Development Application Summary

Application: Official Plan Amendment

Status Date: 2021-04-09

Description: The City of Ottawa has received an Official Plan Amendment application to increase maximum building heights and consider area-specific policies and land use designations for a Master Plan development concept with a range of buildings and uses. The tallest building proposed is 30-storeys.

This application seeks to amend the Official Plan.

The subject site consists of multiple properties within two areas identified in the application as Manor Park North (Manor Park Gardens) and Manor Park South (Manor Park Heights).

2. Zoning and Building Heights

Manor Park North (Manor Park Gardens)

The northern lands are primarily within the northwest quadrant of the intersection of St. Laurent Boulevard and Hemlock Road, with another parcel east of St. Laurent and south of Blasdell Avenue. See the Location Map below. These lands are in a low-rise residential neighborhood, with some local commercial uses (restaurants and services for the community) along St. Laurent, with Beechwood Cemetery to the south, and Manor Park Public School to the west.



Figure 1: Current Zoning

The entire site proposed for re-development is located within the residential third density subzone B (R3B zone). This zonation provides for detached homes and stacked townhomes.

The area is characterized by low rise (2-storey) residential homes and detached homes and surrounded by an R1 zone to the north and west.



Proposed Building Heights

- 5 X 4-storey buildings
- 7 X 6-storey buildings
- 1 X 8-storey buildings
- 4 X 9-storey buildings
- 7 X 6-storey buildings
- 2 X 12-storey buildings
- 1 X 16-storey building

Figure 2: Proposed Building Heights

In contrast, the development concept for the northern lands, as detailed in the applicant’s Master Plan / Planning Rationale, consists of seven development blocks creating 20 new buildings, yielding approximately 1,590 dwelling units and roughly 8,000 square metres of potential commercial space.

The proposed building heights range from 4-storeys to a **16-storey tower** at the corner of St. Laurent and Hemlock.

The purpose of the Official Plan Amendment is to allow for increased building heights within the General Urban Area designation through area specific policies and land use designations. Current policy generally permits building heights up to **4-storeys**, with some consideration of taller buildings in areas already characterized by taller buildings. The proposed Official Plan indicates up to 4 stories in inner city neighborhoods.



Figure 3: Proposed Building Heights and Massing

The development proposal far exceeds legal limits in the current zoning bylaws and is vastly incongruent with any reasonable standard with respect to building heights in a residential neighbourhood. Jeffery Street and St Laurent Blvd residents will lose their privacy and sunlight to 4-storey and higher buildings in their backyards. The proposed massing will dwarf the existing neighborhood, fundamentally change the residential character of the community, and be completely out of character with current development and development planning for the neighborhood.

However, it is important to note that the building development proposed in Block 2 (See Figure 2), on the top right-hand-side of the picture above (to the right of St. Laurent Blvd.) is reasonably consistent with the neighborhood. The proposed Block 2 consists of a 6-storey building, one 4-storey building, and two 2-storey buildings. This should serve as an example of responsible densification for the neighborhood, providing a combination of (6, 4 and 2-story buildings as well as townhouses) to replace the existing 2-story red brick buildings.

Manor Park South (Manor Park Heights)

The southern lands generally front Brittany Drive between St. Laurent Boulevard and Montreal Road. The lands, and the surrounding area, consist of primarily residential uses with a range of built forms and heights including low-, mid-, and high-rise, as well as a variety of non-residential uses along Montreal Road.

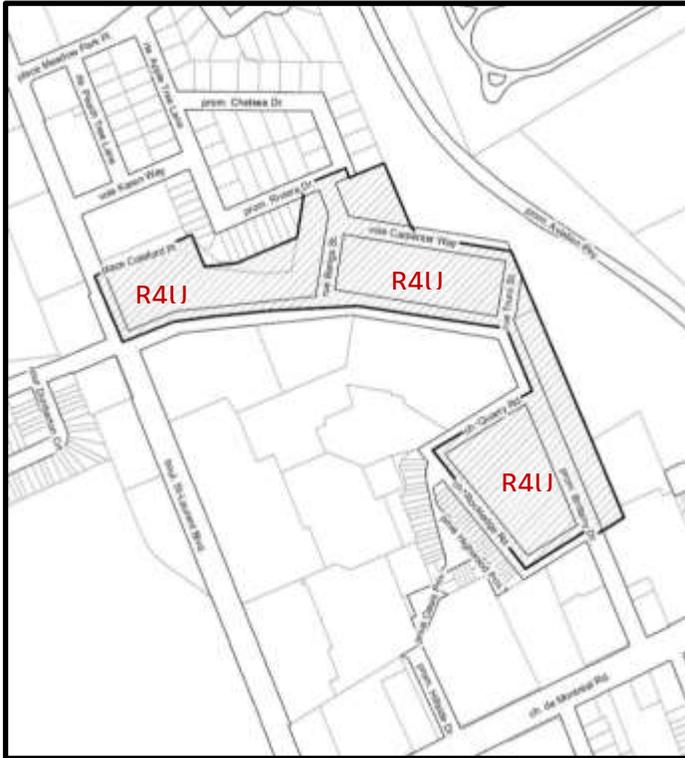


Figure 4: Manor Park South (Manor Park Heights)

The subject Lands are zoned as residential general urban R4U allowing for a range of building heights up to but not exceeding four stories.

This allows for “a wide mix of residential building forms ranging from detached to low rise apartment dwellings, in some cases limited to four units, and in no case more than four storeys, in areas designated as **General Urban Area** in the Official Plan”.

The concept, as detailed in the applicant’s Master Plan / Planning Rationale, consists of five development blocks yielding approximately 2,470 dwelling units, roughly 1,590 square metres of commercial space and 1,560 square metres of social infrastructure. The concept also includes a new, small City Park.

The proposed building heights vary with mid- and high-rise built forms up to **30-storeys**.



Figure 5: Proposed Building Heights

- 1 X 4-storey buildings
- 1 X 6-storey buildings
- 2 X 9-storey building
- 2 X 12-storey buildings
- 1 X 15-storey buildings
- 2 X 18-storey buildings
- 2 X 20-storey buildings
- 1 X 25-storey buildings
- 2 X 30-storey buildings



Figure 6: Building Massing for MP Heights

The proposed building on the NE corner of Brittany/St Laurent is too close to the street and it should conform with the set-back line of the high rises on the east side of St Laurent to protect the view of the river and Manor Park. This is clearly visible in the top image when viewed from the south along St. Laurent Blvd. Importantly, the proposed setback of the existing building on St. Laurent is further back from the street in comparison with the new proposed building in the development application. This building is also in close proximity to the existing low rise residential homes in Manor Park Hill., casting excessive shadows and reducing privacy. In adhering to the proposed setback, this would increase the proposed building proximity to the owned residential homes on Riviera and Apple Tree Lane. The height & density should be stepping down towards the residential areas, *not up from the 23 storey* Highlands Complex (See lower half of figure 6, looking east along Brittany). Buildings across the street from the proposed 30-storey building on St. Laurent and Brittany are only 13-storey (the Brigil), 11 storeys (230 Brittany) and 2 storeys

(Presbyterian Church). The plan does not have a reasonable transition of building heights to the family homes on Apple Tree and Riviera. Nor does the design take into account the elevation between Manor Park Hill and Brittany. Currently, the transition goes from a small backyard to 12-15 storey buildings. This demonstrates the inappropriateness of the design proposal and that the proposal is not acceptable in its current form.

It is noteworthy that there is only one building proposed at a 4-storey height (facing Rockledge), and only two 9 storey buildings proposed on Brittany. The remaining buildings proposed have podiums between 2 and 6 storeys, but all buildings are high rise buildings with heights between 12 and 30 storeys.

The purpose of the Official Plan Amendment is to allow for increased building heights within the General Urban Area designation through area specific policies and land use designations. Current policy generally permits building heights *up to 4-storeys on the subject lands*, with some consideration of taller buildings in areas already characterized by taller buildings.

The excessive heights proposed for the numerous buildings will result in the radical increase in units and consequent densification at over 600%, far in excess of the City of Ottawa targeting to accommodate a 40% population growth over 25 years. The project will introduce approximately 4060 new units (to replace the current 650 units) across the Manor Park neighborhood, to the significant detriment to the 8000 current residents as well as to the 10,000 new residents¹ of Manor Park as the outcome of over-densification and disproportionate burden on infrastructure and community resources.²

Brittany should not be made a collector road to suit the need of the proposed development.

Diversified and Affordable Housing and Poverty

Manor Park Community has high levels of child poverty; 31% - 37% depending on the quadrant. 50% of the community lives in rental housing and of those, 40% spend more than 30% of their income on rent. There has been almost no support for a targeted poverty strategy for Ward 13 despite joint advocacy with 6 other community associations. Because disadvantaged children have a better chance to break the cycle of poverty when they live in mixed income neighborhoods, we would like to see a more diversified housing stock being produced as part of the redevelopment in terms of the size and design of houses and apartments to meet the needs of a broader range of family types, sizes and incomes as well as a range of affordable housing options.

¹ Based on an estimated average of 2.5 persons per unit.

² In 2007, the Ontario Municipal Board rendered a decision (No. 2393, August 24, 2007) recognizing the low rise character of Manor Park and gave effect to the need for transitioning by approving only 3-story townhomes on a property abutting low rise residential houses.

Also, multiple high-rise towers of 20 to 30 storeys within such close proximity to existing homes, apartment complexes and urban nature areas, and the insufficient provision of enough ground-oriented units reflect limited consideration of the One Planet principles which relate to health, equity and community. The lack of sufficient ground-oriented units for families who will be displaced from current townhomes and who currently enjoy large front-yards is a major problem for equity in housing in our community. More townhouse designs are needed.

Further, there are significant concerns about wildlife pertaining to the proposed building heights and potential adverse impacts on both local and over 170 migratory bird populations. The City of Ottawa recently adopted design guidelines to help keep birds from colliding with buildings. Bird-safe design features have been scientifically proven to lessen the risk of collisions, reducing bird injuries and deaths. With sustainability highlighted as a key urban design principle in the Master Plan, it is expected that the entire redevelopment will commit to following the most up to date bird-safe design features that have become the standard in the City of Ottawa (https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/birdsafe_designguidelines_en.pdf).

The Manor Park Community Association (MPCA) strives for a community that is based on the principles of a **sustainable, diversified, socially just** and **thriving community**. This development proposal brings challenges that will have a major impact on the quality of life of residents in this community.³ Protection should be provided for current tenants in the form of a **Social Contract** to continue to preserve Manor Park as one of the few remaining neighbourhoods with affordable housing close to the city centre and job opportunities and to avoid the unjust gentrification of the neighbourhood at the expense of the existing residents.

It is important that Manor Park retains a critical mass of family sized 3-4-bedroom units to maintain its school, playgrounds and to support other family-oriented amenities. This will help to ensure that the development supports a **thriving community** with the required social infrastructure and recreational spaces. This social infrastructure provides the spatial and social platforms for communities to interact, build social bonds and to ultimately thrive. Success will be residents who experience a village feeling and a sense of belonging.

We have seen through the lens of the COVID 19 epidemic how important the social infrastructure is for community resilience, self-sufficiency and sustainability and consider these to be critical elements of any new development.

Inflating Real Estate Values

If the city were to allow such dramatic increase heights through zoning amendments, it would significantly increase the value of the land making resale to other developers very profitable and attractive. It is too early in a 25 year community development plan to arbitrarily increase land values in an area already struggling to be affordable to families. It would ensure that future

³ For Further information on MPCA social and environmental sustainability concerns see the May 10, 2021 submission to the City [here](#).

buyers would justify higher buildings by virtue of the cost of the land thus sealing the fate of Manor Park as mid to high rise development area.

In context of the above comments, MPCA recommends that the proposed Development Plan be revised to allow for reasonable urban intensification with necessary green space, as follows:

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- *Include a mix of 2-storey, 4-storey and 6-storey buildings;*
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Proposed Manor Park South Development:

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A Social Contract

- *A legal social contract shall be drawn up between the develop, the City and the residents of Manor Park Estates to ensure that the “affected units are replaced with equivalent units on the same site and the same rent at the time the application was made, on a right of first refusal basis. (Draft OP Section 4.2.3.Section 1 (c)) and that all other commitments made by the Aggarwal (e.g. paying moving costs) are kept should ownership change.*

MPCA objects in the strongest possible terms to the unreasonable building heights with concomitant expected contained in the development application. While we support reasonable densification in pursuit of livelihood improvements, we cannot condone the rampant densification that will have a detrimental impact on the neighborhood and the community at large.

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