

King approves Village Urban Design guidelines

By Mark PavilonsEditor

Revamped guidelines for King's three villages will help shape development in King. Councillors gave their approval recently to the final Village Urban Design Guidelines (VUDGs), replacing the 15-year-old measures for King City, Nobleton and Schomberg. The guidelines include a series of design criteria, features and elements that will shape King. The guidelines are primarily aimed at three key areas: village centres, established neighbourhoods and employment areas. The new rules amalgamate the four previous guidelines for each village. They will also help implement the Our King Official Plan. With help from WSP Global Inc. consultants, work on the design guidelines was conducted over three phases in as many years. The final draft was presented to council back in September, with more consultation taking place through October. Input received was considered in the final document. A glitch arrived in the fall of 2022, with the Province's Bill 23, which eliminated exterior design from municipal site plan control. Other elements: massing and conceptual design of proposed buildings, the relationship of buildings to the street, interior walkways which have access from streets and open spaces, accessibility, and sustainable design elements and building construction, can all still be reviewed, and evaluated through the Site Plan Control process. King's Official Plan provides robust policies to support the building of compatible and desirable places that contribute to the economic vitality and health of the Villages. Our King Official Plan emphasizes that a high standard of design will contribute to the overall desirability and quality of places. The policies support maintaining and enhancing character and continuously improving the visual appeal, form, and function of the built environment. The policies, staff noted, also support design excellence, sustainable design and construction, linkages to the natural environment, age-friendly and barrier free accessible design. Our King Official Plan highlights the importance of urban design guidelines for assisting in the evaluation of planning and development applications. The policies of the Plan encourage the use of design guidelines and identify that it is a policy of council to review and update the council approved design guidelines for the villages. The VUDGs provide a new comprehensive set of design guidelines for the Township's three villages including village cores, mixed uses, and the Major Transit Station Area. Through the VUDGs, engineering, architecture and landscape design will impact building orientation and location, streetscape elements, built form massing, compatibility, planting and screening requirements and public realm considerations. The main idea is to encourage buildings to reflect the rhythm, scale and pattern of heritage design features and the existing community. Some of the features of the guidelines push for additional pedestrian-scaled street lighting in particular locations; parking lot connections; screening for utilities and road enhancements. The Urban Design Guidelines work in conjunction with other Township plans, bylaws, and guidelines to support the Township's desired urban design objectives. As such, there are matters addressed in the Guidelines which may also be implemented through other Township plans, by-laws and other guidelines. Incorporating VUDGs into other documents where it is appropriate to do so may help to reinforce certain urban design expectations and provide consistency in the Township's design expectations. Bruce Craig, on behalf of Concerned Citizens of King Township, noted CCKT supports the goal of adding additional commercial and retail space to the Core Area. Given King Township's initiative to update Green Building Standards through ThinKING Green, and the recent resolution from King Township to update the Ontario Building Code, it is important to ensure there is a high level of green building standards in this significant new building in the Core Area. One key recommendation from CCKT is to include a cold climate air source heat pump for heating and cooling throughout the new King City building complex to eliminate the need for heating through natural gas and thus eliminating GHG emissions. In the long term there would likely be significant savings on energy costs. We hope through the design phase this will be included. The building also provides the opportunity for PV solar panels to generate electricity, and we encourage the inclusion of solar panels in the architectural design for the roof. As the federal government is committed to Net Zero standards in all buildings across Canada by 2050, there is an important priority to design and build this commercial/office building with standards prescribed by Passive House Canada or a similar set of green building standards. CCKT supports the goal of developing an effective parking strategy for the King City Core through the Block Planning process to accommodate future parking. Regarding landscaping, CCKT notes details have not been provided on the health or approach for retaining existing trees on the adjacent property along the east side of the subject site. Loss of tree canopy cover is a concern in the area, and a report prepared by a certified arborist, including a Tree Protection Plan with Tree Protection Zones and details indicated is requested to assist in understanding the approach to preserve existing trees on the adjacent property during and following construction. It is appreciated that the basement of the

proposed building has been located some distance from the trees and will help to preserve existing roots, however site grading, column foundations, and construction activities could all affect the health of the trees.?