

ANNEX – Rebuttal of the justification for increased height on the corner lot

The Planning Rationale submitted by Richcraft to justify its various applications outlines the relevant policies and requirements for buildings that are proposed for the Sandy Hill context, the traditional main street context, and specifically in the Uptown Rideau context, including for buildings that exceed the maximum height allowance. The Planning Rationale concludes that the proposal conforms to all of the policies, and that the requested increase in height for the corner lot is justified. However, the following analysis and rebuttal of the rationale will show that the conclusion should be quite the opposite.

We are of the opinion that:

- The proposal does not have full regard for the immediate and wider surroundings, and does not encourage compatibility between existing and planned built form, as well as quality of the built environment. Indeed, the proposed 18 storey tower is significantly taller than all buildings on the South side of uptown Rideau and that portion of Sandy Hill and significantly taller than most buildings on the North side of Rideau. It also does not reflect the brick architecture or any other features of the high quality heritage residential buildings of the neighbourhood. Therefore, the proposal is not in compliance with the Official Plan.
- The proposal is not suited for a TM context, since it does not contribute to a tightly knit urban fabric, is not a small scale building with a narrow frontage, and is not 4-6 storeys. To the contrary, its large façades, long frontage, sweeping plaza and tall tower make this proposal an antithesis to what is desirable in the context of a TM. As a result, the proposal is not in compliance with the definition of a TM under the Official Plan.
- The Sandy Hill Secondary Plan criteria of mix-use for Rideau Street is respected by the proposal, but the proposal will not contribute to its charming character. Charming means pleasing and delightful, and in the context of a TM, refers to the feeling one gets when walking down a quaint main street with eclectic, independent shops, small and pretty storefronts that are inviting and accessible, a smaller, more comfortable scale, and a pleasant walking environment. The proposed development adds none of these attributes to the street – since the proposed façade is set back from the sidewalk, uniform, and punctuated with a long plaza, which, although interesting in some respects (and mainly necessary to break the inappropriate massing of the building), is not conducive to the feel of a TM. The developer has also indicated that the commercial space is to be occupied by larger stores not traditionally found downtown, which points to the fact that a variety of smaller stores may not be available such as on a TM, and the feel may be one that is closer to a suburban larger store. The proposal does not provide a transition strategy between the mainstreet and the surrounding lower profile neighbourhood, since the proposed building is a very tall tower, merely separated from the low-profile building by a setback and a podium. The proposal includes a high-rise building and only mid-rise buildings are contemplated for Uptown Rideau street. Finally, the proposed architecture is not of the highest quality. The

- development looks like all the other condo developments currently going up in the City: a large podium (on both larger buildings), a slim, yet uninteresting tower, and generic building materials. As such, the proposal does not conform with the SHSP and the application to modify the plan to allow high-rise buildings is not appropriate, as outlined in the main document of comments.
- The proposal for the corner tower cannot be justified under the Urban Design and Compatibility of the Official Plan policy. The area is not characterized by high-rise buildings – only one high-rise on Rideau Street is in proximity to the property being discussed. Rideau Street is not an arterial road. The property is not within 600m of a rapid transit station. A community design plan, secondary plan, or other similar Council-approved planning document does not identify the location as suitable for the creation of a community focus on a strategic corner lot, or at a gateway location or on a terminating site to strategic view, or a site that frames important open spaces, or at a location where there are significant opportunities to support transit at a transit stop or station by providing a pedestrian and transit-oriented mix of uses and activities. Furthermore, the proposal would not create a community focus, as it is merely a condo development with retail, the same that is proposed for other locations all along Rideau street (and all over the City), the corner lot is not a strategic corner lot – it is a corner off of a very narrow street, and not noticeable as a corner from afar, the lot is not a gateway (and is rather in between two gateways - the bridge to Vanier and the King Edward intersection), and the proposal would not be an appropriate gateway for the area (a condo tower is not a gateway and especially not a proper gateway for a mostly low-rise historical TM close to a river and a heritage bridge). The property is not within an area identified for high-rise building where these building profiles are already permitted in the Zoning By-law approved by Council.
 - The proposed building does not offer an appropriate built form transition as described in Policy 12 and the property at hand is not in an area where such transitions are appropriate in general. Beyond a single podium, the corner tower does not offer any incremental changes in building height (including angular planes or stepped profiles); the project's massing remains imposing (two massive buildings occupying almost half of an entire block); the proposed buildings sorely lacks in character (no rhythm, playful setbacks, texture or interesting building materials, no subtle decorative or architectural features) and offer no original architectural design (no use of angular planes, cornice lines). The building setbacks do help with regards to transition, but are not sufficient in the case of such a large project.
 - The proposal does not abide by the 5 design cues included in the Upper Rideau Community Design Plan. The architectural styles or details contained in the existing fabric of valued historic structures are not reflected in any facet of the proposal, the proposed contextual colours and materials (clay brick, cast stone, stucco, metal detailing and clear glazing) are not present or not noticeable in the proposal, the imagery of urban waterways and parks is completely absent from the proposal, as is any expression of the diversity of lifestyles and cultures within the surrounding community, and permitted neighbourhood uses are not respected. In addition, the directives for a consistent height along Rideau Street to frame the

street and to give it a sense of identity set out at 2.2 are not respected. The heights selected are not appropriate in scale. Pedestrians will immediately feel the difference between the proposed building and the rest of the street, since they will be going from a low-rise environment of storefronts on the sidewalk to a massive development cut in half by a plaza with a long frontage and with large podiums, sleek building materials, and disproportionate height. Figure 12a of the UPCDP shows that most buildings (with only a select few exceptions, including one at the corner of K-E and Rideau, which is a gateway) do comply with the consistent height requirement of 3-6 storeys on the entire length of the street, making the proposal a sharp contrast. Residents living in the storeys beyond the 8th or 10th floor of the corner tower will feel completely alienated from the sidewalks, especially since they will be further separated from it by the setback on the podium. The Upper Rideau Community Design Plan talks about the street's ability to accommodate mid-rise buildings due to its relatively dense urban fabric and its close proximity to downtown, but this is a high-rise proposal that breaks the dense urban fabric of the street. Finally, the proposal does not complement the built heritage in the Uptown Rideau area, which has many smaller buildings made of red brick and that date back to Rideau Street's heyday or seek to replicate it, and does not at all contribute to its unique identity – since it only offers a slightly better version of the generic Richcraft condo model, already featured in many other parts of the City.

In short, the proposal falls short in many respects when the relevant planning policies are applied to it, and the proposed height for the corner tower does not qualify under any policy or law quoted in the Planning Rationale. Indeed, the proposed building is too tall and massive to fit the Rideau Street, TM or SH context, does not have any built features that ensure a transition to the low-rise heritage community that sits immediately next to it, does not offer a single architectural feature that reflects Rideau street, the neighbourhood, or the River, and does not meet the requirements for any exception. The proposed building would be appropriate with a maximum height of 9 storeys, but is far from being spectacular or innovative enough to warrant an exception to the height requirements.