

Planning Act

In making planning decisions, the Planning Act requires approval authorities to have regard for matters of Provincial Interest, as outlined by Section 2 of the Act and the Provincial Policy Statement. Council must also have regard for the policies of the Official Plan which apply to the lands. S.34 of the Act provides authority to municipal councils to enact land-use zoning by-laws, and S.51(24) of the Act provides criteria for consideration of draft plans of subdivision.

Additional commentary is provided below regarding the policies of the PPS and Official Plan.

PPS

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides more detailed policy direction on matters of provincial interests related to land use planning and development. The PPS provides for appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. Within the framework of the PPS, the subject lands are located within a settlement area. The PPS supports a wide range and density of uses within Settlement Areas, acknowledges these areas as the focus for growth and development, and that their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.

Section 1.0 of the PPS promotes Building Strong Healthy Communities through the provision of efficient development and land use patterns that promote cost effective development patterns to minimize land consumption and servicing costs. Residential uses should have compact form and be comprised of a range and mix of dwelling types and densities in order to allow for efficient use of land and services (PPS Section 1.4.3). In this regard, the PPS directs growth and intensification to existing Settlement Areas where suitable infrastructure is available or planned, adjacent to existing development. Municipal water and sanitary sewer systems are the preferred servicing form within settlement areas (PPS Section 1.6). Healthy active communities should be promoted by facilitating active transportation, providing a range of built and natural recreational amenities, providing opportunities for public access to shorelines, and encouraging a sense of place by promoting well-designed built form (PPS Sections 1.5, 1.6.7 and 1.7.1). The proposed applications provide for efficient land-use by maximizing the development potential of the lands.

The proposed development provides for single detached and semi-detached dwellings that will be accessed by a private road with direct connection to existing municipal roads. The proposed development will also include an underground stormwater management facility to provide for storage of stormwater during storm events and to ensure controlled release to the Alice street storm sewer. According to the Stormwater Management Report submitted in support of the proposed development, there will be an overall improvement of stormwater management in the area.

Section 2.0 of the PPS promotes the long-term prosperity, environmental health, and social wellbeing of the province through the conservation of biodiversity, protection of the Great Lakes, and protection of natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral, and cultural resources. Natural

heritage features are to be protected for the long term. Site alteration is not permitted within areas containing habitat for fish, or endangered or threatened species, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions. There are trees on the property, and removal of any trees will be subject to a Tree Preservation and Planting Plan, as required in the Draft Plan Conditions (**Attachment 3**). The Town would like to see a net gain in vegetation from pre to post development.

There are no natural heritage features on the subject site. With respect to cultural heritage resources, a Stage 1-2 Archaeological Assessment has been completed. The study concluded that there are no archaeological resources on the lands that would require further protection or mitigation measures. The study has been reviewed by Grey County and the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism Archaeology Program Unit.

Section 3.0 of the PPS aims to protect public health and safety by directing development away from areas of natural or human-made hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health or safety or of property damage, and not create new or aggravate existing hazards. There are no hazard lands on the subject site.

Based on the above comments, Planning Staff are satisfied that the proposed zoning and draft plan of subdivision are consistent, in principle, with the direction provided by the Provincial Policy Statement (2020).

Grey County Official Plan

The subject lands are designated as Primary Settlement Area, which is the location in the County where the majority of growth development is directed to.

The County Official Plan encourages the provision of a variety of housing types within the County. New residential developments are promoted at densities which efficiently use available servicing and are appropriate to site conditions and existing patterns of development (Section 4 Live Grey).

The proposed development provides for residential development that meets the minimum density requirements of the County Official Plan (20 units per net hectare), and makes efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Planning Staff are therefore satisfied that the proposed development conforms to the policies of the County of Grey Official Plan.

Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan

The Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan is intended to provide the basis for managing growth that will support and emphasize the Town's unique character, diversity, civic identity, recreational and tourism resources, rural lifestyle and heritage features and to do so in a way that has the greatest positive impact on the quality of life in the Blue Mountains. The Official Plan directs the majority of new residential growth to areas where full municipal services are available,

and encourages infilling, intensification, and redevelopment in appropriate locations with appropriate built form and design (A3.3.2). Infrastructure required to service urban areas shall be built prior to or coincidental with new development. The Official Plan must be considered in its entirety in the review of all new development proposals.

Community Living Area

The subject lands are located within the Thornbury Primary Settlement Area, and are located within the Community Living designation. The purpose of the Community Living designation is to “maintain the unique small town feel and character of Thornbury Clarksburg, maintain compatibility and where necessary, enhance the character and identity of existing residential areas, and promote the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure by creating the opportunity for residential intensification, where appropriate, and maintain the community’s low (height) profile and low density feel. Permitted uses within the Community Living Area include single detached dwellings and semi-detached dwellings (such as that proposed), as well as other dwelling types.

As the Town’s Primary Settlement Area, it is particularly important that this full range is planned for and accommodated. However, the majority of existing dwellings and recent development comprises single detached dwellings, with some semi-detached and townhouse dwellings.

Infill and intensification policies for Thornbury/Clarksburg are set out in the Community Living Area designation in Section B3.1.5. These policies set a framework for context-sensitive and compatible development within existing residential neighbourhoods, and emphasize that housing does not need to “mimic the character, type and density of existing housing, but rather, it shall fit into and reinforce the stability and character of the neighbourhood (Section B3.1.5.1).

A comprehensive set of criteria for infill development is set out within Section B3.1.5.2. Comments have been received on the subject application with respect to preserving the character of the neighbourhood and ensuring that the development fits in to the context of the immediately surrounding residential properties.

Section B3.1.5.2 sets out the following list of criteria for infill development:

- “a) The proposed development, including building form and density, is compatible with the character of the existing neighbourhood;*
- b) New buildings are designed in a manner that is sensitive to the location, massing and height of adjacent buildings;*
- c) Proposed building height reflects the pattern of heights of adjacent housing and shall not exceed two storeys;*
- d) A similar lot coverage to adjacent housing is provided to ensure that the massing or volume of the new dwelling reflects the scale and appearance of adjacent housing;*

- e) The predominant or average front yard setback for adjacent housing is maintained to preserve the streetscape edge, and character;*
- f) Similar side yard setbacks are provided to preserve the spaciousness on the street;*
- g) The frontages of new interior lots are generally no less than 70% of the average lot frontages on the same side of the public road to provide for, to the greatest extent possible, appropriate separation between new and existing dwellings;*
- h) The frontages of new corner lots are generally no less than 80% of the average lot frontages on the same side of the public road to provide for an appropriate setback from the exterior side lot line;*
- i) The depth of the new home provides for a usable sized rear yard amenity area and minimizes the potential impacts of the new home on the enjoyment of adjacent rear yards;*
- j) The use will have minimal impacts on adjacent properties in relation to grading, drainage, access and circulation, and privacy;*
- k) Existing trees and vegetation will be retained and enhanced where possible and additional landscaping will be provided to integrate the proposed development with the existing neighbourhood; and*
- l) The proposed development will not create a traffic hazard or an unacceptable increase in traffic on local roads”.*

With respect to all of the infill criteria, the proposed development is generally in line with the intent of the policies, however as noted in the Staff Report, Staff are recommending changes to the proposed draft plan of subdivision with respect to the proposed lots closest to Alfred Street (changing from 2 semi-detached dwellings to 1 single detached dwelling) to address landscaping and grading concerns, as well as the provision of a visitor parking area to accommodate guests and visitor parking spaces as well as an expanded area for snow storage during the winter months. These changes are directly in response to criteria f), k) and l) of Section B3.1.5.2.

Community Design Guidelines

Section A3.4 provides policy direction related to urban community character and directs that new development be held to a high standard of community design through demonstrated consideration for the Town Community Design Guidelines.

Section D5 of the Official Plan provides policy direction for community design, including the enhancement of the unique character of the Town’s community areas by encouraging high quality design that is complementary and compatible with existing development. Further reference to the Town Community Design Guidelines is also made.

Section 4.5 of the Town Community Design Guidelines provides recommendations for the design of residential areas, including that a variety of front yard setbacks along a street to provide visual interest and depth along the streetscape should be used. The proposed development consists of lots that meet the established minimum lot standards of the R1-1 and R2 zones (with the exception of one lot fronting onto Alice Street), and as such, there is flexibility in the applicable standards to accommodate a variety of built form and setback conditions to achieve the intent of the guidelines.

With the changes recommended by Staff, Staff are of the opinion that the proposed development, as revised, meets the intent of the Community Design Guidelines.

Town of The Blue Mountains Zoning By-law 2018-65

The developable portion of the Alfred Street lands are currently zoned as Residential R1-1.

The proposed Zoning By-law amendment application proposes to rezone a portion of the developable lands to Residential (R2) to permit the development of semi-detached dwellings, Open Space (OS) for a couple open space blocks and a stormwater management facility, and a site-specific zone (R1-1X) to permit a reduced lot frontage for one lot fronting onto Alice Street.

Based on commentary in previous sections of this report, Planning Staff are supportive of the proposed use of the subject lands for residential and open space development. Additional commentary is provided within the Staff report on the proposed zoning.