

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE 16, 2003

SITE DEVELOPMENT FILE DA.02.086
STEELES-KEELE INVESTMENTS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT Site Development Application DA.02.086 (Steeles-Keele Investments) BE APPROVED, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. That prior to the execution of the site plan agreement:
 - i) the final site plan and building elevations shall be approved by the Commissioner of Planning;
 - ii) the final landscape plan and detailed landscape cost estimate shall be approved by the Urban Design Department;
 - iii) the final site grading and servicing plans and stormwater management report shall be approved by the Engineering Department;
 - iv) parking, access and on-site vehicular circulation shall be approved by the Engineering Department;
 - v) all requirements of the Region of York Transportation & Works Department and the City of Toronto shall be satisfied;
 - vi) all requirements of Hydro One Networks Inc. shall be satisfied;
 - vii) all requirements of Hydro Vaughan Distribution Inc. shall be satisfied; and
 - viii) any variances required to implement the site plan, shall be obtained from the Committee of Adjustment and shall be final and binding.
 - b. That the site plan agreement contain the following provisions:
 - i) If required, the Owner shall pay to Vaughan by way of certified cheque, cash-in-lieu of the dedication of parkland equivalent to 2% of the value of the subject lands, prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, in accordance with Section 42 of the Planning Act. The Owner shall submit an appraisal of the subject lands prepared by an accredited appraiser for approval by the Vaughan Legal Department, Real Estate Division, and the approved appraisal shall form the basis of the cash-in-lieu payment; and
 - ii) If required, an easement shall be provided along the north property line to secure public vehicular access to the future transitway parking lot, to the satisfaction of the City of Vaughan.
 - c. That the future development of the site and its integration with the adjacent lands be in accordance with the policies, standards and guidelines as may be adopted as a result of the Steeles Avenue Corridor Land Use Review-Keele Street to Jane Street.

Purpose

On December 20, 2002, the Owner submitted a Site Development Application to permit a 9,565.97m² four-storey office building with 441 parking spaces on 1.98 ha of a larger 16.3 ha lot.

Background - Analysis and Options

Location

The subject lands are located on the northwest corner of Steeles Avenue West and Keele Street, in Lot 1, Concession 4, City of Vaughan. The 16.3 ha site is vacant, and abuts Keele Street and Steeles Avenue West to the east and south, respectively, and the hydro corridor to the north.

Land Use Review

The site is part of a larger landholding and is within a land use study area known as the "Steeles Avenue Corridor Land Use Review - Keele Street to Jane Street". This corridor is currently in a state of transition. It is the focus of a number of studies which involve the introduction of new rapid transit services, including the York Rapid Transit Plan's (YRTP) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service from the Vaughan Corporate Centre to York University and beyond to the Downsview Subway Station. The TTC is also undertaking a corresponding study for a BRT Service from Downsview Station to York University. The YRTP Environmental Assessment will also confirm the subway corridor from York University to the Vaughan Corporate Centre, as identified by the City in OPA #529.

The TTC is committed to undertaking a review of the earlier Environmental Assessment for the Spadina Subway extension, pending receipt of funding from the Province and the Federal Governments. In addition, the Region of York has acquired a site for an interregional transit terminal on Steeles Avenue, which could provide the location of a future subway station in the long term, or a BRT stop in the short term. York University is growing rapidly and is considering a review of its land use potential along Steeles Avenue, to benefit from the planned transportation improvements.

Together, these factors triggered the start of the land use review. The purpose of the study is to develop a new planning framework for the area located between Steeles Avenue on the south, Keele Street on the east, Jane Street on the west and the CN Rail Line on the north. The vision will be based on four linked elements, which include land use and density, transportation and transit urban design, and on-going stakeholder consultation.

The result will include revised land use and density policies designed to take advantage of the expected upgrading of transit services to the area; an urban design plan and guidelines to foster the transition of this area from a suburban arterial road to an urban street that is shared with one of Canada's largest universities; and changes to the transportation plan that will recognize the need to provide for commuter parking, rapid transit corridors and an internal road network that will relieve congested intersections and provide improved circulation within the area to be developed.

Phase 1 of the study (Inventory and Assessment of the Current Situation) has been completed and Phase 2 (Developing the Vision for a New Planning Framework) is nearing completion. The City's consultant will be completing their work in August, at which time an update report will proceed to a Committee of the Whole Working Session, followed by a final public information meeting. A public hearing will be held on the draft official plan amendment in early 2004.

On April 28, 2003, the Owner submitted an application to amend the Official Plan, together with a draft plan of subdivision application (Files OP.03.015 and 19T-03V06) to permit 10 mixed use blocks, consisting of office, commercial, service, retail, residential and hotel uses on the larger land-holding. These applications were considered at a public hearing on June 2, 2003. As the subject site plan application conforms to both the current Official Plan and Zoning By-law provisions, this application can proceed independent from the applications on the broader land holding.

Official Plan

The subject lands are designated "Prestige Area" by OPA #450, which permits an office building use. The proposed development conforms to the Official Plan.

Zoning

The subject lands are zoned EM1 Prestige Employment Area Zone by By-law 1-88, which permits the proposed office building use. By-law 1-88 requires a minimum landscape strip width adjacent to Keele Street and Steeles Avenue of 9m, whereas 6m is proposed. Staff has no objections to reducing the landscape strip to 6m, which is consistent with the commercial zone requirement, to permit the office building to be sited closer to the street.

As a condition of site plan approval, the Owner will be required to obtain a variance to the By-law from the Committee of Adjustment to reduce the landscape strip requirement.

Site Design

The site plan consists of a four-storey office building with a total gross floor area of 9585.21m². The building is set back approximately 21m from both Steeles Avenue West and Keele Street. Access to the site is proposed from Keele Street and Steeles Avenue West. One row of parking and an aisleway are proposed between the building and the adjacent streets, with most of the parking being provided north of the building.

There are two entrances to the building; one facing southeast with a pedestrian connection to the arterial intersection, and the other on the north side facing the parking area. Two loading spaces are shown on the west side of the building. Landscape strips are provided along Keele Street and Steeles Avenue West, together with pedestrian walkways and landscape features at the building entrances and within the north parking lot.

The site design employed in this application may not reflect the ultimate form that may be recommended by the Steeles Avenue study. Indications are that the study may support a more urban form of development, that will assist in the transition of this portion of Steeles Avenue from an industrial/employment area to a high profile part of a university precinct of regional, provincial and national importance. Therefore, co-ordinating the Steeles Avenue streetscape with York University and the City of Toronto will be a future priority.

As noted, the current plan shows a single row of parking and a circulation aisle between the building and Steeles Avenue and Keele Street. This style may not reflect the solution that is ultimately approved for Steeles Avenue. Typically, the expected emphasis would be on reducing the presence of the automobile on the streetscape in favour of a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

The current plan allows the development to go ahead. However, it is recognized that new guidelines and policies will be coming which may prescribe alternative approaches. These can be addressed in future developments on this site or as part of any future master plan prepared for this area. The site has been designed in a manner that the front yard parking could ultimately be removed and replaced with a pedestrian space of substantial size and design potential. This will be guided by the results of the Steeles Avenue review and technical matters, such as the location and function of the long term accesses to the site.

Parking/Access

The required parking for the site is 336 spaces (3.5 spaces/100m² GFA), whereas 420 spaces have been provided. The site is accessed by two driveways; one onto Keele Street at the north end of the site, and one access onto Steeles Avenue West at the westerly limit of the site. All requirements of the Region of York Transportation and Works Department and the City of Toronto must be satisfied as a condition of site plan approval. Parking, access and on-site vehicular circulation must be to the satisfaction of the Engineering Department.

Transportation improvements are planned for this area, including a transit stop with parking for approximately 2000 - 3000 vehicles. The hydro corridor is a potential location for the public access to the transitway facility, however, the final location has not yet been determined. As a condition of site plan approval, the Owner will be required to provide an easement along the north property line to secure public access, until such time as a final location is determined.

Site Servicing, Grading and Stormwater Management

Municipal storm, sanitary and watermains are available to service the site. As a condition of site plan approval, the final grading and servicing plans and stormwater management report must be approved by the Engineering Department.

Landscaping

A mix of coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs are proposed within the landscape strips adjacent to the abutting streets. A combination of patterned concrete and planting is proposed along the perimeter of the building, and for the pedestrian connection from the building to the intersection, and to the parking areas. The plan must be revised to provide municipal sidewalks along the extent of both the Keele Street and Steeles Avenue frontages, to be included in the development agreement.

Staff is recommending that unit pavers, rather than patterned concrete, and additional landscaping be provided along the perimeter of the building and for the pedestrian connections to the streets and parking area. The final landscape plan, including detailed drawings and a cost estimate, must be approved by the Urban Design Department.

Streetscaping

The applicant will be responsible for streetscaping in the public road right-of-way adjacent to the subject lands, consistent with the urban design plan to be developed as part of the Steeles Avenue Corridor Study.

Building Design

The square-shaped building is setback approximately 21m from both Steeles Avenue West and Keele Street. The building has two entrances; one along a curved glass curtain wall that is oriented towards the arterial intersection, and the other is on the north side of the building facing the parking area. Two loading spaces are provided along the west side of the building. Most of the building's exterior will be treated with reflective glass and framed with aucobond panels. As a condition of site plan approval, the final building elevations, including a more prominent and primary entrance oriented towards the arterial must be approved by the Commissioner of Planning.

Conclusion

Staff have reviewed the site plan application in the context of the ongoing land use study, and the requirements of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law. Staff are satisfied that the subject lands can be appropriately developed in the context of the surrounding area. Should the Committee concur,

Site Development Application DA.02.086 (Steeles-Keele Investments) can be approved with the adoption of the "Recommendation" in this report.

Attachments

1. Location Map
2. Site Plan
3. Landscape Plan
4. Elevations

Report prepared by:

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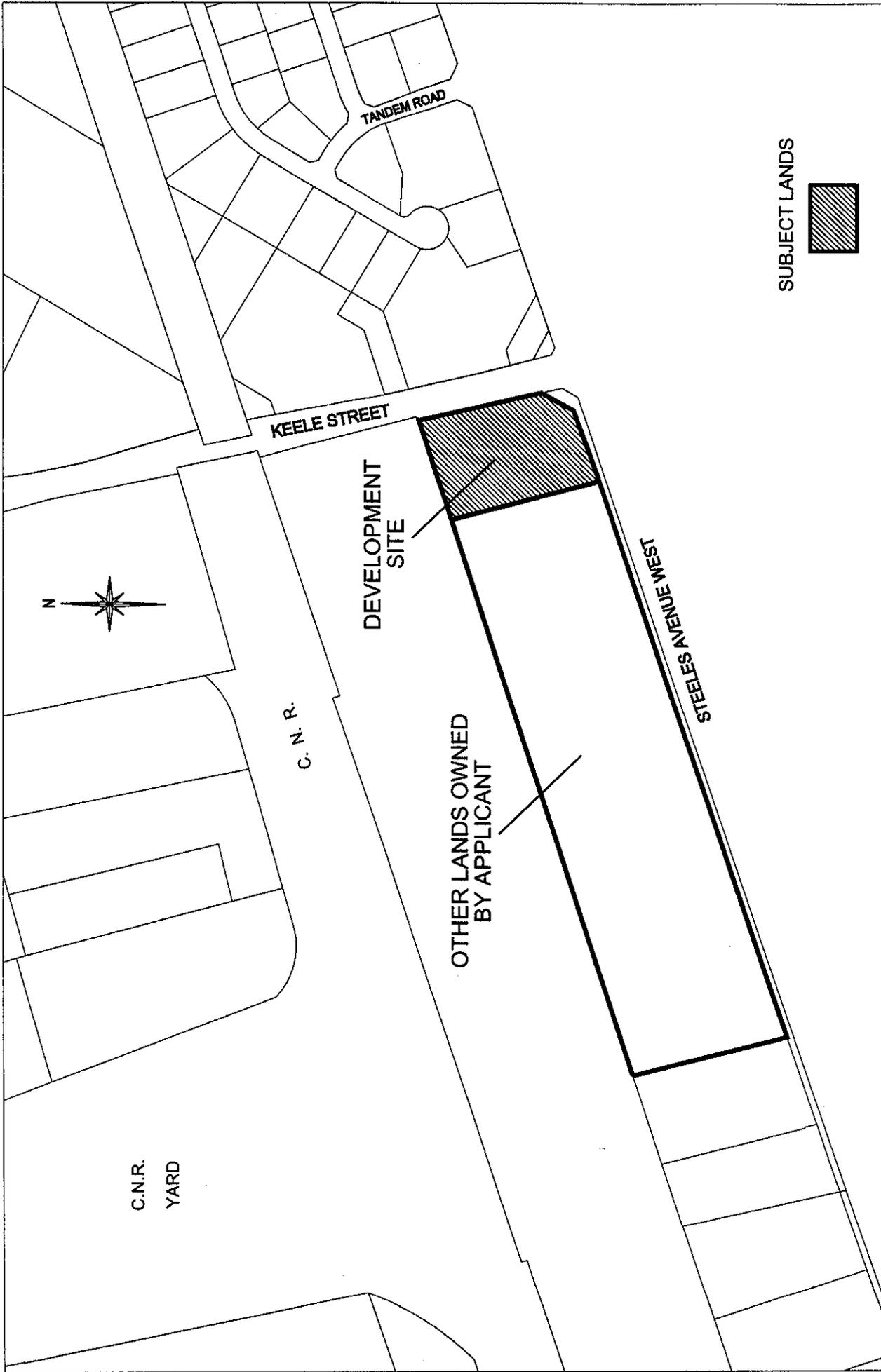
Respectfully submitted,

MICHAEL DeANGELIS
Commissioner of Planning

JOANNE R. ARBOUR
Director of Community Planning

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SUBJECT LANDS



Location Map

Lot 1,
Concession 4

APPLICANT:
STEELES - KEELE INVESTMENTS

City of
Vaughan

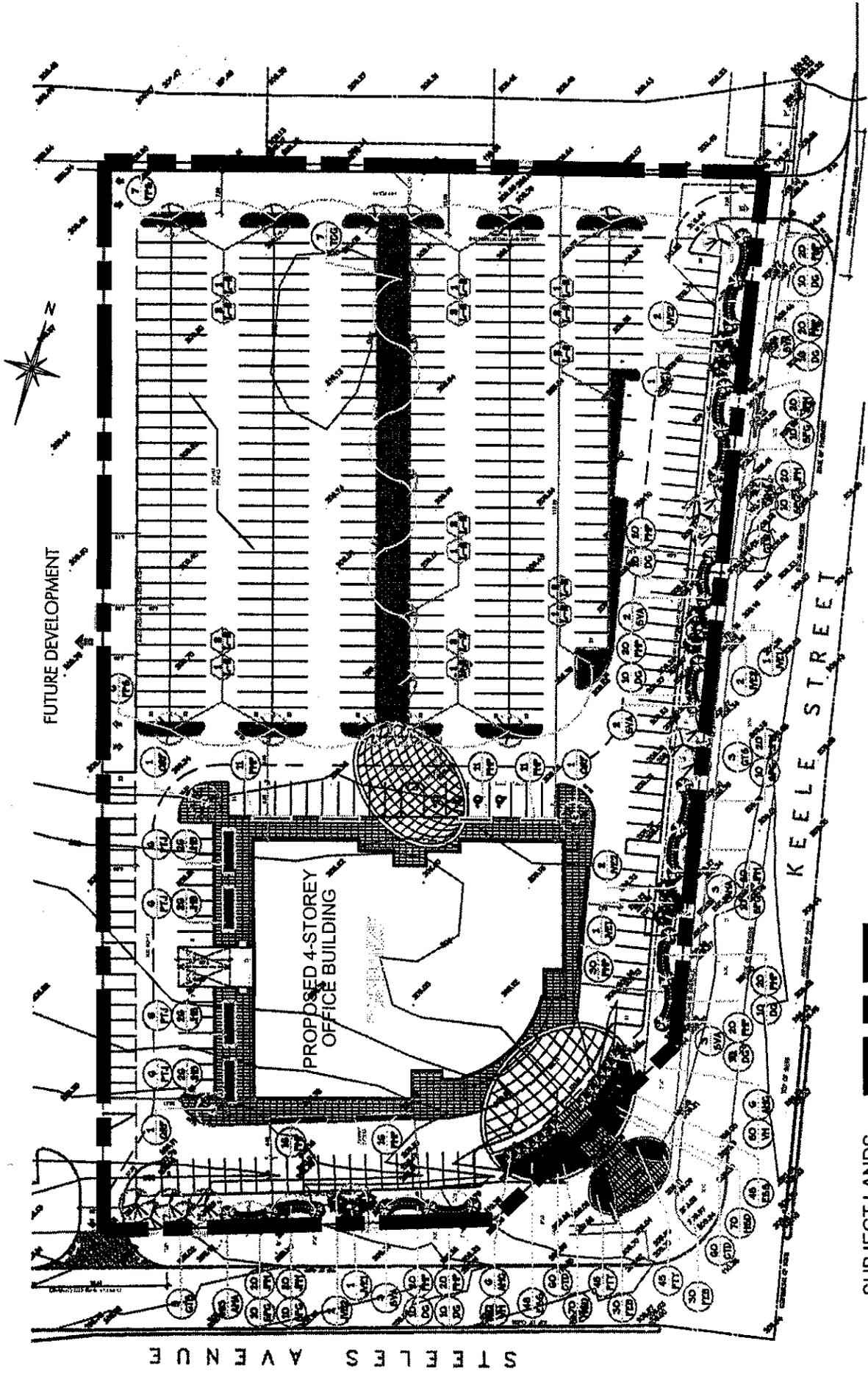
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Attachment

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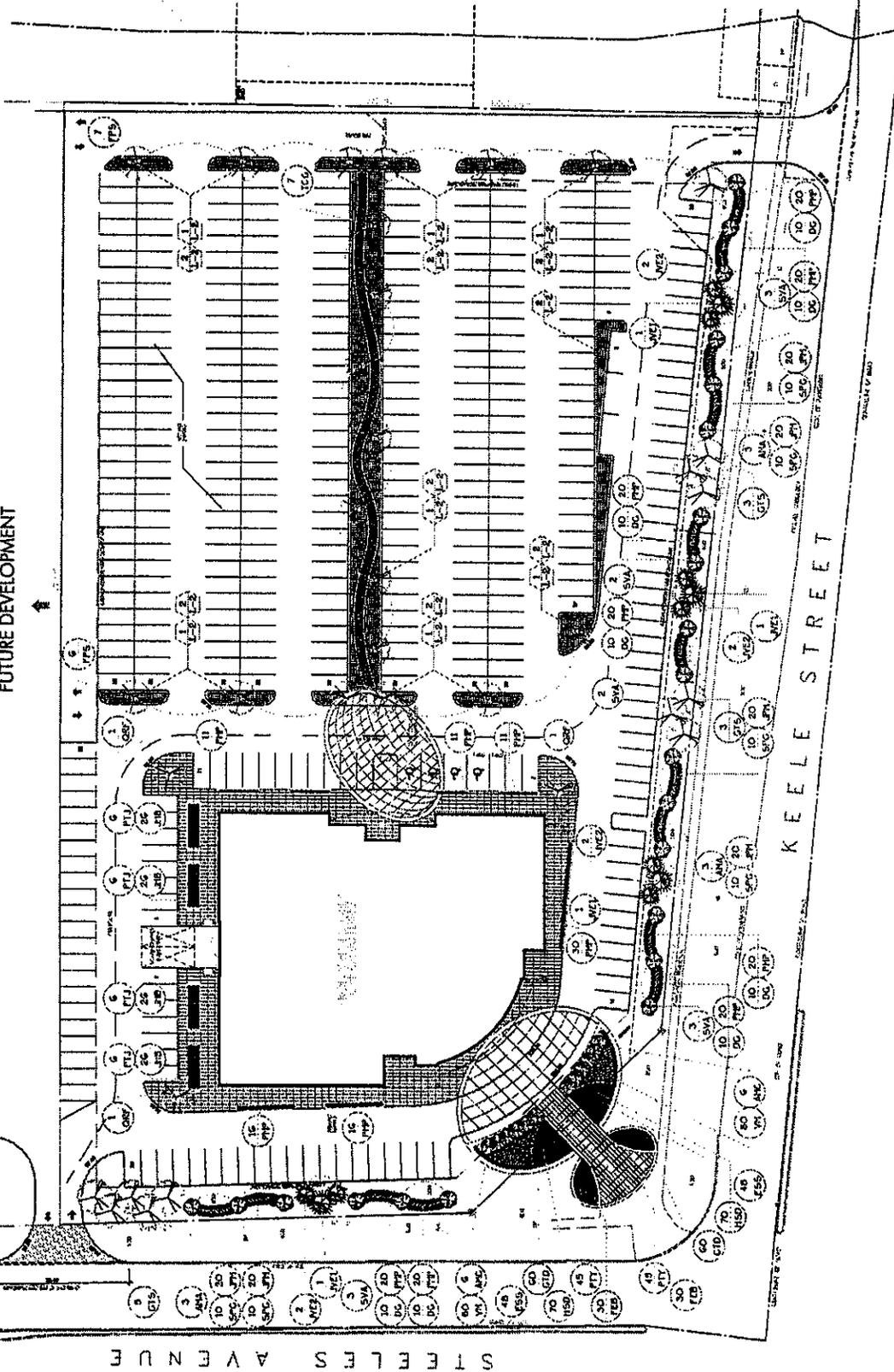
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City of **Vaughan**
 Community Planning Department

Site Plan
 Lot 1,
 Concession 4
 APPLICANT:
 STEELES - KEELE INVESTMENTS



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



Landscape Plan

Lot 1,
Concession 4

APPLICANT:
STEELES - KEELE INVESTMENTS

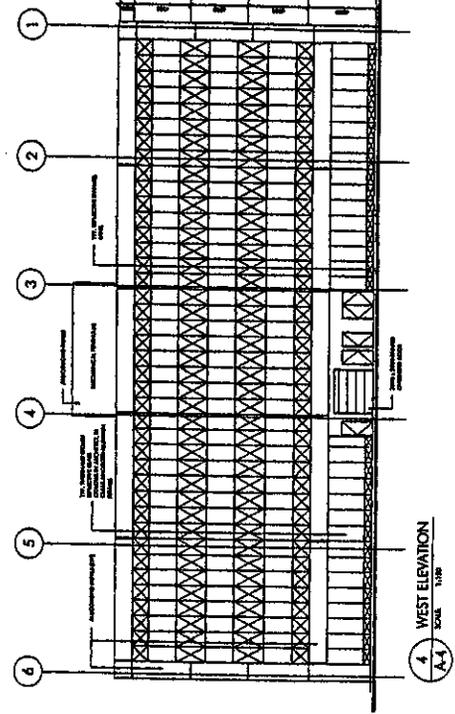
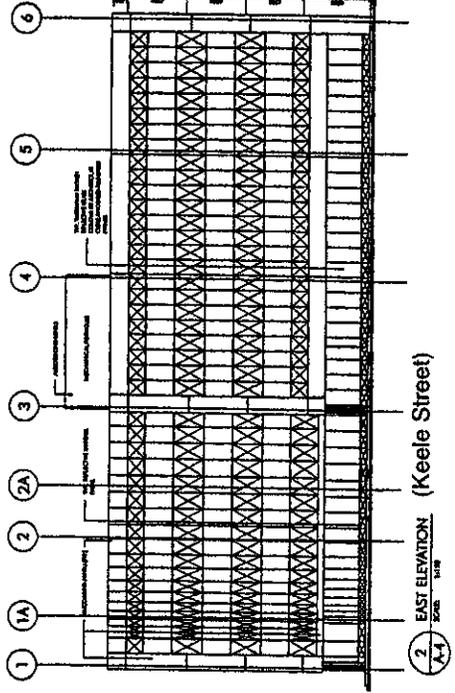
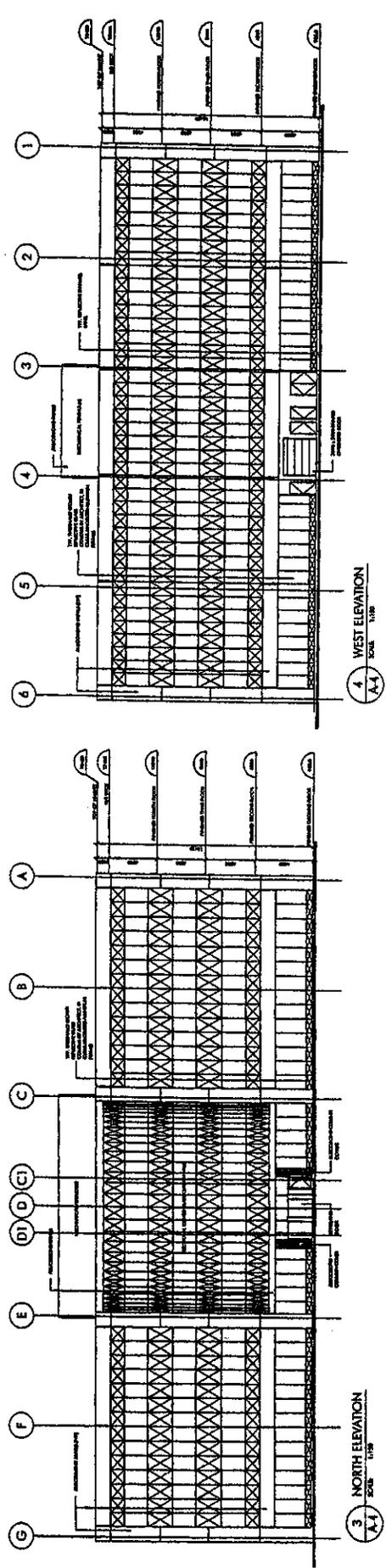
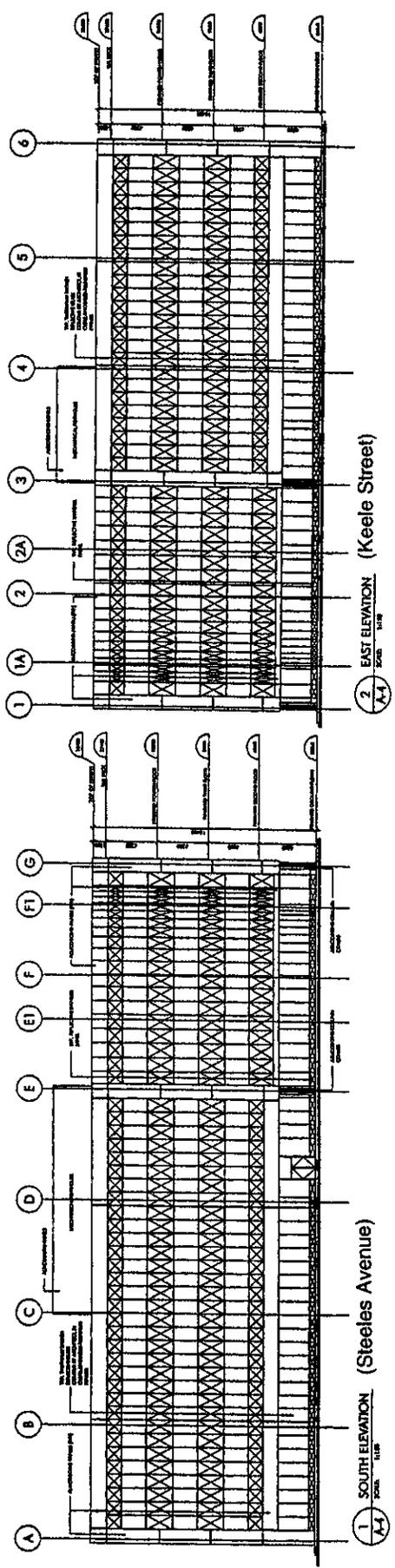


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Elevations

Lot 1,
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