

MCGIBBON CONDO ZONING APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL

APPROVAL BRINGS YEARS OF UNCERTAINTY TO A CLOSE

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Plans for a 10-storey condominium on the former McGibbon Hotel site have received a stamp of approval by town council, bringing years of uncertainty about the downtown Georgetown property to a close.

During their Nov. 15 meeting, council members unanimously endorsed a zoning bylaw amendment for the plans from Amico, which took over the project last year, intending to erect a 169-unit building on the site at the northeast corner of Main and Mill streets.

The structure will include 49 one-bedroom units, 108 two-bedroom

condos and 12 three-bedroom units, with the developer indicating that the smaller units will sell for under \$500,000. There will also be 361 square metres of retail space on the ground floor of the building.

The condo project has been years in the making. Plans were first put forth in 2015 by Silvercreek Commercial Builders, which had intended to build an 11-storey, 125-unit building with 1,200 square metres of retail space on the prominent downtown lands.

The Ontario Municipal Board went on to issue an order in 2017 to allow for a 10-storey building, but Silvercreek was forced to cancel the project in 2018 after being unable to achieve

suitable financing.

Now, members of Halton Hills Council are expressing their enthusiasm over finally being able to move the project forward.

"It's vitally important to have people downtown, and to enhance the vibrancy and activity in that area," said Ward 4 Coun. Ann Lawlor during the council meeting. "I think it's important that we move ahead with this."

She noted she's happy to see that some of the units will sell for under \$500,000 — a price point she said the municipality is "desperately in need of" in today's costly housing market.

The sentiment was echoed by Coun. Jane Fogal, who commended Amico for planning some smaller, more affordable units in

the building.

"It's also a form on intensification, which we are looking for, so that's a positive thing," she said.

Ward 3 Coun. Moya Johnson said while she's objected to the height and scale of the building from the beginning, she accepts and respects the decision made by the OMB, and thinks the design put forth by Amico fits better with the character of the downtown.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said he also favours the current design and voiced his general support for the project.

"I think once this is built, downtown Georgetown will be vibrant for years to come," he said.

Other aspects of Amico's plans that were highlighted at council include:

- Four auto-share spaces in the building's parking



Town of Halton Hills photo
An architectural drawing of the planned McGibbon condo in downtown Georgetown.

garage that will contain vehicles residents can rent when needed. The concept is intended to offset a reduction in resident parking spaces.

- Each unit will be assigned one parking spot, which will include an optional bicycle rack at the front of the space for those interested. An additional 29 spots will be made available for households that

have two vehicles, and 26 spaces will be marked for visitors/retail shoppers.

- An on-site pedestrian pathway will connect the municipal parking lot behind the building to Mill Street.

- The upper two floors of the Main Street façade will be preserved and reconstructed using original brick from the McGibbon Hotel, while the Mill Street façade will be reconstructed with replica brick.

One local resident, Jim Waldbusser, attended the virtual council meeting to share his thoughts on the condo plans.

He said the size, mass and density of the project were a concern during the OMB hearing and "continue to be a concern," but he noted that he's pleased with the plans to retain heritage aspects of the building and integrate a pedestrian pathway.

To read the staff report on the project, visit <https://bit.ly/3Dqqq5G>.

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