

# **PLANNING JUSTIFICATION REPORT** 10163 GOLD CREEK DRIVE, MIDDLESEX CENTRE

PROPOSED OFFICIAL PLAN AND ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENTS TO PERMIT A SECONDARY DWELLING UNIT

> Prepared for: Bob and Margaret Robinson 10163 Gold Creek Drive Komoka, ON NOL 1RO



SBM-21-2280

February 2022



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Attn: Marion-Frances Cabral Planner, Planning Services Municipality of Middlesex Centre 10227 Ilderton Road Ilderton, ON NOM 2A0

# RE: Planning Justification Report – 10163 Gold Creek Drive, Middlesex Centre

Dear Ms. Cabral,

Strik, Baldinelli, Moniz Ltd. has been retained by Bob and Margaret Robinson (the "Property Owners") to coordinate the preparation and submission of Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications for the property municipally addressed as 10163 Gold Creek Drive and located on the south side of Gold Creek Drive approximately 600 metres east of Komoka Road and 1.2 kilometres west of Coldstream Road to permit a secondary dwelling unit within an existing accessory structure.

This report provides a policy review and analysis of the applicable relevant provincial and municipal policies in support of the proposed development. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

# Strik, Baldinelli, Moniz Ltd.

Planning • Civil • Structural • Mechanical • Electrical

Kypness

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#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the following land use Planning Justification Report (the "PJR") is to evaluate proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-Law Amendment applications within the context of existing land use policies and regulations, including the *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statement, the Middlesex County Official Plan, the Middlesex Centre Official Plan, and the Middlesex Centre Zoning By-law.

The PJR demonstrates that the applications are in keeping with Provincial, County and municipal land use planning policies, are suitable for the subject lands, and would be compatible with neighbouring land uses. This PJR and associated appendices are a "Complete" Application and are reflective of the discussions and correspondence that have been held prior to this formal submission.

#### 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property municipally known as 10163 Gold Creek Drive (the "Subject Property") is in southwest Middlesex Centre on the south side of Gold Creek Drive between Komoka Road on the west and Coldstream Road on the east, and approximately 631 metres east of the Komoka Road and Gold Creek Drive intersection (see **Figure 1** in Appendix A). The Subject Property is rectangular in shape (almost square) with an area of approximately 41.2 hectares. Access is from Gold Creek Drive.

The Subject Property consists of agricultural land used for cash crop farming of corn, soybean and wheat, a wooded area, two artificially created lakes (with a small connection between the two), a two-storey detached residential dwelling, and various accessory structures, including barns, storage, garage, and workshop (see **Figure 2** in Appendix A). The attached drawing titled Site Plan – Additional Residential Unit (the "Site Plan") found in Appendix C identifies the existing structures, including the cluster of three accessory structures located in the northwest corner of the Subject Property.

The photos shown in Appendix B were taken on January 12/22. Photo #2 shows the detached main farm dwelling (i.e., principal dwelling unit). Photos #7-12 show exterior views of the existing one-storey structure that is proposed to be used as a secondary dwelling unit. It has an area of 84.2 square metres. Photo #3 shows a former granary converted to a storage building known as the Gold Creek Saddlery with an approximate area of 70 square metres. The workshop (photo #4) is also an accessory structure intended to be used for the restoration of antique tractors and woodworking repairs. It has an area of approximately 89 square metres. There are no plans to use

the Gold Creek Saddlery and workshop for habitable purposes – these structures are accessory to the main farm dwelling.

The Subject Property is serviced via private septic and water well systems. It has two deep wells with a depth of 20 metres each (see Site Plan for the location of the two wells) and three private septic systems – one of these septic systems, which is labelled on the Site Plan, is located immediately to the west of the proposed secondary dwelling structure and will be used to service it.

The southwest corner of the Subject Property features a wooded area that is identified as natural heritage in the Middlesex Natural Heritage Systems Study (2014) – see **Figure 3** in Appendix A. The Property Owners have been involved in the conservation of the natural heritage features on the site by planting more than 5000 trees and creating and maintaining the twin lakes with fish stocks.

#### 3 SURROUNDING LAND USES

The Subject Property is surrounded by agricultural and agricultural residential uses – the main agriculture use is cash crop farming (see **Figure 4** in Appendix A). In the broader context, the Subject Property is in the rural part of the village of Komoka in the southwestern part of Middlesex Centre approximately 3.2 kilometres east of the boundary with the municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc.

#### 4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

As previously noted, there is an existing vacant accessory structure with an area of 84.2 square metres in the northwest part of the Subject Property. It was constructed in 2019 on a wheeled platform (without a foundation) based on a modular home design (see **Figure 2** in Appendix A or Site Plan aerial photo for its location). The Property Owners were advised by the Municipality of Middlesex Centre that a building permit was not required for a structure on wheels. However, they intend to remove the wheeled platform and have the structure placed on a proper foundation as part of obtaining a building permit once the zoning permits same. A private sewage septic system has been constructed to service the structure and is located to the west of the existing structure that would provide fresh water (see Site Plan for location details). Building plans were developed and stamped by an engineer licensed in Ontario. The Property Owners would now like to use the structure as a secondary or additional residential dwelling unit (the "Proposal").

The existing primary residence (i.e., farm dwelling) would be used by a family member of the Property Owners. The two-storey main residential building (i.e., primary dwelling unit) has an approximate gross floor area of 358 square metres (excluding the basement) while the proposed one-storey secondary dwelling has an approximate gross floor area (all of which would be habitable) of 84.2 square metres. Appendix B features recent photos of the interior and exterior of the proposed secondary dwelling. The interior features an open concept living area and kitchen, one bedroom and a bathroom. It would use an existing gravel access from Gold Creek Drive (see photo 6 in Appendix B). This access is approximately 515 metres away from the access for the primary residential dwelling. There are no proposed changes to the existing site conditions or access, and there is sufficient space to accommodate two or more parked vehicles.

#### 5 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

#### 5.1 Existing Planning Framework

The existing planning framework includes the *Planning Act*, as amended by *Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* (Bill 108); the Provincial Policy Statement (2020); the Middlesex County Official Plan (2006); the Official Plan of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre (2018); the Draft Municipality of Middlesex Centre By-Law 2021-XXX Being a By-Law to adopt Amendment No. 55 to the Official Plan of the Middlesex Centre as presented to Council on November 17, 2021; and the Middlesex Centre Zoning By-law (2005).

#### 5.2 Required Planning Applications

The Subject Property is designated Agricultural Areas in the County of Middlesex Official Plan – Schedule A Land Use (see **Figure 5** in Appendix A). It is also designated Agriculture in the Middlesex Centre Official Plan (see **Figure 6** in Appendix A). An Official Plan Amendment (OPA) is required as neither of the designations explicitly permit secondary dwellings (also known as additional residential units) on the same property. The current Middlesex Centre Official Plan has not had a significant policy update since 2011. The Municipality of Middlesex Centre has retained a consultant to conduct an Official Plan Review and propose changes to bring the Official Plan in conformity with provincial and county level planning policies that have been approved since 2011. A draft OPA to permit additional residential units as of right on a lot is in progress and will be discussed further below, but it has not yet been approved. The Subject Property is also zoned A1 (Agricultural) (see **Figure 9** in Appendix A). Among other things, the A1 zone permits agricultural use, accessory use, single detached dwelling and converted dwelling. A Zoning By-law Amendment is also required as a secondary dwelling is currently not a permitted use.

#### 5.3 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* is the provincial legislation that outlines how land use planning can be practiced in Ontario – it sets out rules and regulations which describe requirements for planning processes, how land uses may be controlled and by whom. Bill 108 amended the *Planning Act* to require that municipalities adopt policies in their Official Plans and update zoning by-laws to provide for additional residential units. Amendments to the *Planning Act* and related regulations came on effect on September 3, 2019 respecting additional residential units on properties which contain a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse. Section 16(3) of the *Planning Act* states the following:

(3) An official plan shall contain policies that authorize the use of additional residential units by authorizing,

(a) the use of two residential units in a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse; and

(b) the use of a residential unit in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse. 2019, c. 9, Sched. 12, s. 2 (1).

In other words, a maximum of two residential units can be in any primary dwelling identified as a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse, and one residential unit can be located inside a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse for a total of three possible residential units per property. Regulation 299/19 implements Bill 108 and indicates the following:

- Each additional unit shall have 1 parking space unless a zoning by-law amendment has been approved which requires no parking;
- Parking may be tandem parking;
- Property owners do not have to live on the property and tenants do not have to be related to the owner; and
- Additional residential units can be in existing and/or new construction.

The Proposal is consistent with Section 16(3)(b) of the Planning Act.

#### 5.4 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act, "provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development"* to ensure efficient and resilient development and land use patterns. Any land use planning decision shall be consistent with the PPS. The PPS provides direction for municipalities to promote efficient development and land use patterns, including intensification, and a range and mix of residential types (Policy 1.1.1). Policy 2.3.1 states that "*prime agricultural areas* shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture." The Subject Property is a rural farm property involved in cash crop farming and is considered a "prime agricultural area" under the relevant county and municipal official plans. The Proposal does not seek to change existing land uses and is consistent with the PPS.

#### 5.5 Middlesex County Official Plan

The County of Middlesex is the upper-tier level of government for the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. The County's Official Plan has three primary land use designations: Agricultural Areas, Settlement Areas (Urban and Community), and Natural Environmental Areas. The Subject Property, like most of Middlesex Centre, is designated Agricultural Areas as per Schedule A (see **Figure 5** in Appendix A).

Section 1.3 of the County Official Plan states it does not address in any great detail those planning matters which can better be dealt with by the local municipalities. Further, it states, "*Local Official Plans complement the County Plan by providing more detailed strategies, policies and land use designations for planning and development at the local level*." In conjunction, the current County of Middlesex Official Plan supports a range and mix of housing units. Section 2.3.7.2 states that local municipalities *"shall include policies in local official plans that will encourage a range of housing types, housing densities and housing options to meet the needs of their share of current and future County residents."* 

Section 3.3 of the Official Plan outlines detailed land use policies for areas designated Agricultural Areas. Section 3.3.1 summarizes the intent of this designation, which is to protect and strengthen the agricultural community, a major economic component within the County. The policies for this designation are meant to protect agricultural lands from the intrusion of land uses that are not compatible with agricultural operations, especially non-farm related residential dwellings on small lots. Policy 3.3.3 outlines permitted uses, including "b) up to two farm residences provided the second farm residence is a temporary residential unit;".

The Proposal is not intending to replace or materially change the existing Agricultural Areas land use designation. It seeks a minor amendment to permit a *permanent* second farm residence/unit, whereas Policy 3.3.3 currently only permits a *temporary* residential unit – this temporary residential unit is most likely meant to accommodate seasonal farm workers. The proposed secondary dwelling within an existing accessory structure to accommodate members of the same family to live on the same property does not detract or adversely affect future agricultural operations, interfere with the viability of existing farming operations, or detract from the character of the agricultural community. The proposed use would occur on a very small portion of the area of the Subject Property (i.e., 0.02%). Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would function like a true secondary dwelling in relation to the principal farm dwelling. Indeed, the proposed secondary dwelling gross floor area is approximately 17% of the principal dwelling gross floor area. Finally, the above interpretation is assisted by Bill 108, previously described, and if the County Official Plan were updated, it would likely have permissive policies to permit the proposed secondary dwelling. The Proposal substantially conforms with the relevant policies of the County Official Plan.

#### 5.6 Middlesex Centre Official Plan

The Subject Property is designated Agriculture in the Middlesex Centre Official Plan, as per Schedule 'A' – Land Use Plan (see **Figure 6** in Appendix A). It is a rural property north of the Komoka-Kilworth Urban Settlement Area. Portions of it are also designated Significant Woodlands as per Schedule 'B' (see **Figure 7** in Appendix A) and Hazard Lands (Steep Slopes/Fill Lines) as per Schedule 'C' of the OP (see **Figure 8** in Appendix A). The Proposal has no impact on the woodlands as the existing accessory building where the secondary dwelling is proposed to be located is in the northwest portion of the Subject Property and the designated woodlands are to the south.

Section 2.0 of the Official Plan outlines policies for Agricultural Areas. Section 2.2 outlines the following general agricultural policies:

- a) Non-agricultural urban uses within agricultural areas are prohibited, unless specifically permitted in other subsections of Section 2.0 of this Plan.
- b) New estate residential lots outside of settlement areas are prohibited.
- c) The fragmentation of farm parcels in agricultural areas is strongly discouraged.
- d) The expansion of farm parcels through lot assembly is encouraged wherever possible.

The Proposal is a minor residential addition (i.e., not a new estate residential lot) that would not change the existing land use designation, does not seek a severance or fragmentation of farm parcels, will maintain the existing rural character of the Subject Property, and is in conformity with approved Provincial policies permitting

up to three residential units on a property. As noted above, Regulation 299/19, which implements Bill 108, permits additional residential units to be located in existing construction and this is what is being proposed.

Permitted uses under Policy 2.3 include all forms of farming, including the principal farm dwelling, related buildings and structures, practices and uses of land – a residence surplus to a farming operation is also a permitted use. Although a secondary dwelling or additional residential unit is not currently permitted, requiring a site-specific OPA to permit the Proposal, municipal staff are currently working with a consultant to update the Official Plan to include additional residential units as part of an Official Plan Review. The proposed changes are summarized below.

#### 5.7 Middlesex Centre Official Plan – draft OPA – Additional Residential Units (ARU)

On November 17, 2021, municipal staff and planning consultants from WSP presented the draft OPA to Council – the proposed OPA included 150 amendments to the Official Plan addressing a number of items, including additional residential units.

Section 9.6.1 of the draft OPA states that up to two additional residential units (ARUs) are permitted per lot within the primary dwelling and within an accessory building, and the ARU must be less than 49% of the size of the primary residential unit. Clustering of buildings is encouraged in Agricultural Areas. The following conditions are also contemplated prior to the issuance of a building permit:

- a) A maximum of two Additional Residential Units will be permitted on a lot, one within the principal dwelling and one within a detached building or structure. A garden suite shall not be permitted where an existing Additional Dwelling Unit is located within a detached building or structure.
- b) Demonstration of adequate sewer and water servicing capacity;
- c) Demonstration that the Additional Residential Unit is not located within the natural heritage system, floodplain areas, or other hazardous lands.
- *d)* Demonstration that the proposal complies with the Minimum Distance Separation formulae, where applicable.
- e) Demonstration that the Additional Residential Unit has a floor area of 49% or less of the primary residential unit.

The Subject Property would have a total of two residential dwelling units. The existing structure already contains water servicing and sewage treatment capacity in the form of a private well and septic system, respectively. According to the Property Owners, the well was drilled in 2016 and is 20 metres deep, and a permit was sought and issued in 2020 for the private septic system that would service the proposed secondary dwelling. The Property Owners would apply for any additional permits required for the proposed residential use should the requested official plan amendment and zoning by-law amendment applications be approved. The MDS formula is not applicable as there are no livestock operations or feedlots within 1 kilometre, and the proposed secondary dwelling gross floor area is approximately 17% of the primary residential unit gross floor area. Furthermore, the existing accessory structure proposed to be used as a secondary dwelling is already part of a small cluster of farm-related structures, as identified in the photos on Appendix B and on the Site Plan in Appendix C.

#### 5.8 Proposed Official Plan Amendment

Since the existing Middlesex Centre Official Plan does not permit additional residential units pursuant to Bill 108, an OPA is required. The following site-specific OPA is suggested: "On the property municipally known as 10163 Gold Creek Drive, one additional residential dwelling unit is permitted on full private services within the existing cluster of accessory structures located in the northwest portion of the property that would use the existing vehicle access to Gold Creek Drive."

#### 5.9 Zoning Analysis and Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment

The Subject Property is zoned A1 (Agricultural) (see **Figure 9** in Appendix A). Among other things, the A1 zone permits agricultural use, accessory use, single detached dwelling and converted dwelling. A secondary dwelling is currently not a permitted use in the A1 zone, or in any other zone within the Middlesex Centre Zoning By-law. A new zone is not proposed – instead, a site-specific provision is proposed to be added to the existing A1 zone to permit a secondary dwelling unit or additional residential unit as a permitted use in conformity with Provincial regulations. Specifically, the Zoning By-law Amendment application would amend section 5.1.11 (Maximum Number of Dwellings Per Lot), which currently permits "(*a*) one single detached dwelling or one converted dwelling, or one bed and breakfast establishment.". The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment description is "permitted use addition – one additional residential unit".

#### 6 <u>CLOSING</u>

Based on a review of the relevant policies and regulatory framework for the Subject Property, the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment are justified for the following reasons:

- The Proposal conforms to amendments to the *Planning Act* as of September 3, 2019 resulting from the adoption of Bill 108 to require that municipalities adopt policies in their Official Plans and update zoning by-laws to provide for additional residential units on properties which contain a detached house (as in the case of the Subject Property), semi-detached house or row house.
- The Proposal represents a minor additional residential use of an existing accessory structure that is compatible with the surrounding agriculture uses, would have no impact on the existing cash crop farming, and would not change the rural character of the Subject Property or surrounding area.
- The Proposal substantially conforms to existing Middlesex County and Middlesex Centre Official Plan policies.
- The Proposal would substantially conform to the draft OPA policies respecting additional residential units proposed by the Middlesex Centre Official Plan Review project team, as outlined in the November 17/21 public meeting, should the draft OPA be approved.

For the reasons noted above and throughout this report, the proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment represent sound land use planning practice.

# Appendix A: Figures 1-9



Figure 1. Subject Property and surrounding streets (Middlesex County Public Map)



Figure 2. Oblique aerial view of Subject Property looking southwest (Google Earth Pro)

Proposed secondary dwelling location



Figure 3. Natural Heritage (MNHSS 2014) (Middlesex County Public Map)



Figure 4. Subject Property and surrounding land uses (Middlesex County Public Map)



Figure 5. County of Middlesex Official Plan – Schedule A Land Use



Figure 6. Middlesex Centre Official Plan – Schedule 'A' Land Use Plan



Figure 7. Middlesex Centre Official Plan Schedule 'B' – Greenlands System



Figure 8. Middlesex Centre Official Plan Schedule 'C' – Natural Hazard Lands



Figure 9. Middlesex Centre Zoning By-law – Key Map 56

# Appendix B: Photos #1-16



**Photo 1**: Main access to Subject Property from Gold Creek Drive



Photo 2: Main farm dwelling (primary residential unit)



Photo 3: Gold Creek Saddlery – accessory building – northwest cluster



**Photo 5**: View of northwest cluster of accessory structures from Gold Creek Drive



Photo 4: Workshop – accessory building – northwest cluster



**Photo 6**: Secondary access to northwest cluster of accessory buildings from Gold Creek Drive



**Photo 7**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – exterior view 1



**Photo 9**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – exterior view 3



**Photo 8**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – exterior view 2



**Photo 10**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – exterior view 4



**Photo 11**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – exterior view 5



**Photo 12**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – exterior view 6



**Photo 13**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – interior view – open concept living area



**Photo 14**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – interior view – kitchen and living



**Photo 15**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – interior view of kitchen, living area and bathroom



**Photo 16**: Existing accessory structure – proposed secondary dwelling unit – interior view of bathroom; to the left is the opening to a bedroom, to the right is door leading to a closet.

# Appendix C – Site Plan – Additional Residential Unit



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#### RE: Requested Planning Justification Report Addendum - 10163 Gold Creek Drive, Middlesex Centre

A Planning Justification Report (the "PJR") in support of Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications was submitted to the Municipality of Middlesex Centre on February 4, 2022 to permit a secondary dwelling unit at 10163 Gold Creek Drive (the "Subject Property"). The purpose of the planning applications was to legalize an existing structure identified as an "existing vacant accessory structure with an area of 84.2 square metres" which was "constructed in 2019 on a wheeled platform (without a foundation) based on a modular home design" (PJR, page 2) to permit its use as a secondary dwelling unit (or additional residential unit). Photos of the existence of this structure in the northwest corner of the Subject Property are provided in Appendix B.

On March 7/22 Marion Cabral advised via email that an addendum to the PJR was required "which can be a letter noting that the applicant is aware that the building is constructed but further approvals per the OBC are needed." This memo is intended to serve as the requested addendum – please note the following:

- Although the owners told the Applicant that they were advised by the Municipality of Middlesex Centre that a building permit was not required for a structure on wheels (as noted on page 2 of the PJR), the Applicant independently contacted the Municipality of Middlesex Centre in early 2022 and was advised by the Chief Building Official that the structure was not legally recognized (i.e., legitimized) by the municipality.
- 2. The PJR refers to the structure as existing only in the factual sense of its existence as a constructed object and not in reference to its legitimacy.
- 3. The Applicant is aware that the structure must comply with Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements, but this can only be done on the condition that the required zoning is in place to permit a secondary dwelling as the existing zoning does not permit it. An official plan amendment for this purpose is also required and an application was concurrently submitted.
- 4. Should the rezoning request be approved, the owners or the Applicant intent to submit the necessary documents required by the OBC and any applicable law, to be able to use the existing structure for habitable purposes. This is referenced on page 2 of the PJR, which states that the owners "intend to remove the wheeled platform and have the structure placed on a proper foundation as part of obtaining a building permit once the zoning permits same."

I trust this is satisfactory and a complete application notice can be issued.