

Sept 25, 2018

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CONTACT
Rob LeBlanc
president
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Re: 2438 Gottingen Street - Planning Assessment.

Dear Aaron;

Aaron, thanks for your time and feedback as we navigated this Heritage DA process. The developer is keen to preserve and restore the historic portion of Victoria Hall, but as we've mentioned, he will require some additional density in order to pay for the substantial cost of the heritage restoration. To that end, we started with a calculation of what may be possible on the site if Victoria Hall were not on the site:

As-Of-Right Conditions

The site is currently zoned as R3 and falls in a Schedule A area (which permits 250 persons per acre (since the site sits in a Schedule A area). Height on this site is controlled by Angle Control provisions of the LUB for R3 zoned land. The as-of-right conditions will allow a building of unlimited height due to the 80 degree angle controls.

We used the 36,400 sq.ft lot size that was provided in the survey documents. However, there is some added 'Gross Lot Area' that comes from the allowed street frontage as the zoning by-law for the Peninsula allows you to calculate Gross Lot Area as follows;

Gross Lot Area: means the area of a lot plus the area of one-half the width of any street or permanent open space abutting upon such lot, or thirty feet, whichever is the lesser.

Depending on the unit type distribution, the number of units could increase or decrease as long as maximum density does not exceed the 250 per Acre while meeting the Open Space requirements. For example, having more 1 bedroom units would increase the amount of units allowed since they only count for '2 persons'. As the allowed density on this site increases, so does the open space requirements. The Tower version without base makes it easier to achieve the open space requirements as it covers less of the site. The key number is the allowed Density, which has been revised.

The current Land-Use by-law for the R-3 zone and in Schedule-A allows for a point tower provided that it is contained within the angle controls. Any portion of the building that protrudes outside of the 60 degree angle control must be contained within the 80 degree angle control (from plan view). See the two attachments (Fig 1) showing the two angle controls as they relate to this site. As shown, the height of the tower is not the limiting factor in the development and can vary depending on how many units are on each floor.

Here are the primary limiting factors for the R-3 zone Schedule-A as it applies to this property;

Landscape Architecture

Planning

Architecture

Civil/Transportation Engineering

01 MAXIMUM DENSITY:

Lot Area: 3300 sq.m = 0.8 Acres

Lot Area +1/2 width street frontage = 3930 sq.m. = 0.97 Acres

Persons per acre:

250 Persons per Acre allowed in in Schedule-A

242 Persons allowed on 0.97 Acres.

Persons per Unit Type:

1 BED = 2 Persons

2 BED = 3 Persons

Unit Mix:

1/3 Units > 800sqft

2/3 Units < 800sqft

Given these parameters, a variety of unit mix options can be explored provided that 1/3 of the units are larger than 800sqft and the overall allowed density is not exceeded. An example mix would be as follow;

34 X 2BEDS = 102 Persons

70 X 1BEDS = 140 Persons

TOTAL: 104 Units @ 240 Persons *bachelor apartments would have a 1 person per unit count

02 OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS:

This requirement determines the lot coverage. The Open Space and Landscape Open Space requirements vary per unit type and persons per unit. Based on the unit mix described above, approximately 19,000 sqft of open space would be required for 85 units with a density of 200. A large percentage of that is required to be landscaped, and small portions of the landscape open space requirements can be placed on the rooftop. The open space requirements are calculated by the number of persons per unit;

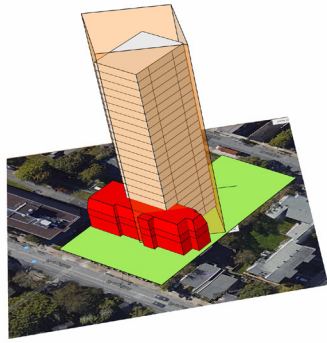
120sqft X 3 persons for 2 bedrooms (34) = 360 sqft X 34 = 12, 240 sqft

80sqft X 2 persons for 1 bedrooms (70) = 160 sqft X 70 Units = 11,200 sqft

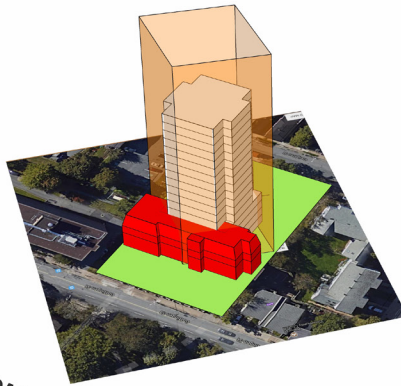
Total Required Open Space: 23,440 sqft

SUMMARY:

Given an allowable density of 242 persons and 104 units (34 2-beds and 70 1-beds as an example combination), a number of as-of-right options are possible on the site. The attached images show one where the all the units are within the existing building and a small tower, the other has a mix of base building and shorter tower. In both options, the tower plates are limited to approximately 5,500 sqft by the constraints of the 80 degree angle controls, resulting in 5 to 6 units per tower floor. Different configurations of units would result in slightly different numbers for the open space requirements. Both these options would allow the preservation of the heritage building. The tower needs to be located on the larger portion of the property as the larger distance between property lines allows for the tower form within the 80 degree angles. This means that portions of the tower base will intersect with the heritage building below.



smaller tower



tower only



base + tower

Figure 1. As-of-right R3 Angle Controls



smaller tower



tower only



base + tower

These calculations provide a baseline for what may be possible if this lot did not have Victoria Hall.

MPS and LUB Policy Conformance

According to Policy 99(1) of the Peninsula Land Use By-Law, Council may, by development agreement, pursuant to Section II of the Municipal Planning Strategy, permit any specific development on a lot which is a city registered heritage property in accordance with Policy 6.8.

Policy 6.8 of the MPS states:

“In any building, part of a building, or on any lot on which a registered heritage building is situated, the owner may apply to the City for a development agreement for any development or change in use not otherwise permitted by the land use designation and zone subject to the following considerations:

- (i) that any registered heritage building covered by the agreement shall not be altered in any way to diminish its heritage value;
- (ii) that any development must maintain the integrity of any registered heritage property, streetscape or conservation area of which it is part;
- (iii) that any adjacent uses, particularly residential use are not unduly disrupted as a result of traffic generation, noise, hours of operation, parking requirements and such other land use impacts as may be required as part of a development;
- (iv) that any development substantially complies with the policies of this plan and in particular the objectives and policies as they relate to heritage resources.”

To conform with Policy 6.8, this development proposes:

- (i) To preserve and restore the heritage value of the historic Victoria Hall building and facade that fronts on to Gottingen Street. This would include streetscape and front yard improvements to restore the urban design character of the traditional landscape and grounds on Gottingen Street.
- (ii) The integrity of Victoria Hall must be maintained as a key component of the development. While restoration is part of maintaining (and enhancing) the integrity, the architectural form of the proposed addition must be complimentary to the existing structure and, as per the federal Heritage Standards and Guidelines, the new addition must be designed in a manner that draws a clear distinction between what is historic and what is new. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic place. In either case, it should be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and colour, yet be distinguishable from the historic place.
- (iii) Adjacent residential uses must be considered in the design process so that traffic, noise, street scale, and any other impacts are mitigated as part of the design.
- (iv) The development must be consistent with the other policies of the MPS and the latest standards for Form Based Design as outlined in the draft Centre Plan and using the Downtown Halifax LUB standards.

Effectively, the trade-off for preserving and restoring Victoria Hall requires additional flexibility with respect to the 250 ppa limit in order to finance the restoration, while still maintaining the intent of HRM planning policies and the federal Standards and Guidelines. The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) outlines how this development will achieve the federal Standards and Guidelines requirements. This letter focuses on the conformance with HRM policies and standards.

The Design Proposal

The design proposal proposes preserving and restoring Victoria Hall, removing the rear addition on Victoria Hall (that was not part of the original build) to replace with a 13-storey tower, and a 3 storey ‘townhouse style’ street face on Creighton Street to match the 2 and 3 storey homes on that street. More specifically the design proposes:

- » Restoring the original Victoria Hall using the Heritage Standards and Guidelines. The addition on the back that was added in 1900’s will be removed to provide room for the tower. Once this back section is removed, the exterior will be restored back to the same style and condition of the remaining back of Victoria Hall.

- » A 3-storey street wall on Creighton Street to match the scale of the single family homes and nearby apartment buildings on the street. The main entrance and parking entry would be accessed off of Creighton rather than from the Victoria Hall facade. The 3rd storey of the Creighton Street townhomes would be masked with “mansard” roof giving it the appearance of a 2 storey unit but connecting this modern facade with some of the same architectural ‘Mansard features’ of Victoria Hall. The design is a nod to the roof architecture of Victoria Hall but with a much more modern interpretation. Each groundfloor unit would have its own entry on the street to capture the rhythm and scale of other buildings on Creighton. The main entrance to the tower would be from Creighton in order to preserve the historic character of Victoria Hall.
- » The 13 storey tower (822 sq.m. plate size) is set back 18'5 (min) and 23'5 (max) from the back of Victoria Hall keeping most of the back of Victoria Hall intact (except the rear Victoria Hall addition portion). The top 2 floors of the tower will be stepped back from the main tower to reduce the street presence of the tower, giving it the appearance of an 11-storey tower with a 2 storey penthouse. The Tower purposely does not match the heritage building and is purposely set back from Victoria Hall. An outdoor landscaped terrace creates ability for people to walk from 1 building to the other through an accessible outdoor link. The buildings are not connected.
- » The tower design is subdued to allow heritage building to remain as focus i.e monochromatic cladding and is designed with a significant amount of curtain wall so that it appears lighter than the heritage building at the base. The regularity of the building cladding pattern is in response to the regularity of fenestration on Victoria Hall.

Property line setbacks/stepbacks:

Frontyard (Creighton) setback: 4'

Front yard stepback (tower): 10' min above the 3rd storey.

North setback: 7' min

North stepback: 16'-6 ½"

Podium (terrace) setback from Heritage property: 13' (min.)

Low-rise setback from Heritage property: 18.5' - 23.5'

Tower stepback from Heritage property: 18.5' - 23.5'

Tower stepback from Gottingen St: 116.5' - 126.5'

South podium setback: 0' min, 57.5' max

South low-rise stepback: 0' min, 40' max

South tower stepback: 17.5' - 57.5'

The total parking count on 2 underground levels of parking is 76 parking stalls for 137 units (0.55 parking ratio). The design is flexible and allows for the possibility to add or subtract a level of parking depending on the results from the geotechnical investigation. The existing units in Victoria Hall shall total 13 for a total unit count of 150 units. The total GFA for the new building is 142, 835 sq.ft (13,270 sq.m.). The GFA for the Victoria Hall portion of the project is 18,330 sq.ft. (1,703 sq.m.). The total GFA for both buildings is 161,165 sq. ft. (14,973 sqm.). The total lot area is 36,100 sq.ft. giving a FAR of 4.46. Since the two buildings are not connected, we could either subdivide into two properties or keep the two buildings on one single property. We would be interested in HRM's perspective on subdividing or not. One block east of this property on Gottingen, the draft CentrePlan has designated the "Gottingen Street Centre" with a FAR of 3.5 and a height precinct of 20m.

Development Rationalization

2018.10.26

2438 Gottingen St Project Summary

New Building

Building Floor Level	GFA	Units	Parking Stalls	Bicycle Parking (Class A)	Bicycle Parking (Class B)
Parking -02			40		
Parking -01			36		
Main Level	11,340	6			
Level 02	11,390	11			
Level 03	11,390	11			
Level 04	8,190	10			
Level 05	8,515	9			
Level 06	8,515	9			
Level 07	8,515	9			
Level 08	8,515	9			
Level 09	8,515	9			
Level 10	8,515	9			
Level 11	8,515	9			
Level 12	8,515	9			
Level 13	8,515	9			
Level 14	8,515	9			
Level 15	7,625	4			
Level 16	7,750	5			
Totals	142835	137	76	76	15

Level	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total Units
Main Level	0	4	2	6
Level 02	0	7	4	11
Level 03	0	7	4	11
Level 04	2	5	3	10
Level 05	1	4	4	9
Level 06	1	4	4	9
Level 07	1	4	4	9
Level 08	1	4	4	9
Level 09	1	4	4	9
Level 10	1	4	4	9
Level 11	1	4	4	9
Level 12	1	4	4	9
Level 13	1	4	4	9
Level 14	1	4	4	9
Level 15	0	0	4	4
Level 16	0	0	5	5
Total Units	12	63	62	137

Unit %	Bachelor	1 Bed	2 Bed	Total Units
	8.76	45.99	45.26	100

Victoria Hall Building Floor Level

	GFA	Units	Parking Stalls
Main Level	6110	4	
Level 02	6110	4	
Level 03	6,110	5	
Totals	18330	13	

Total Units	150
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Development Lot Area	
PID	00148791
Total Lot Area	36,100
Total Development GFA excluding Parking	161165
Floor Area Ratio	4.46

The developer is proposing to restore Victoria Hall using the Standards and Guidelines for best practices in return for a new development that has a combined FAR of 4.46, a unit count of 150 units and a maximum height of 52m to offset the costs of restoring Victoria Hall. Over the last year, the developer has approached 7 restoration companies for estimates on restoration. Of the 7, only two responded due to the size and complexity of the project. Those two estimates have provided preliminary construction costs in the \$2-3m range. Under the existing LUB, the developer has effectively no height limits (due to the size of the lot and the 80 degree angles) but a density cap of 250 ppa (125 single bedroom units).

This project needs to recoup the costs of heritage restoration and the developer's pro forma has confirmed that this proposed development submitted in this DA application will allow enough density for the restoration of Victoria Hall. Anything less than what we have proposed would not cover the costs of restoration. The design and planning team believes that this is a complimentary trade-off and one that the community and council can endorse to restore and preserve this important heritage structure for the city.

We look forward to your review and comments.

Sincerely,

Rob LeBlanc
President, Ekistics Plan + Design

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob LeBlanc', with a stylized, flowing script.