



Planning Rationale Report:
Kings Wood Apartments, 1000 Micmac Blvd., Dartmouth

**Development Agreement Application
(Case No. 21951 Re (Re)-Submission)**

Application for a 15-storey, 148 unit
apartment building

Application Submitted to:

HALIFAX | Planning Approvals
40 Alderney Drive, 2nd Floor
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

Application submitted by:

The Armour Group Limited
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ARMOUR GROUP

September 10, 2018

August 12, 2019

February 28, 2020

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Project Team

The Armour Group Limited

"The Company has focused on quality developments that create a 'sense of place' and thus allows for a long term view of economically sustainable buildings of enduring value within the community."

- *Armour (Ben) McCrea, Founder of The Armour Group Limited*

For over 40 years The Armour Group Limited has been recognized as one of the leading real estate development companies in Atlantic Canada. The firm has been driven by an overriding philosophy - creating a "sense of place." This philosophy has led to our structure and guided our work for the past several decades. The Company is unique in its integration of the concept, development, construction and management of all assets internally.

Ultimately, our approach is product-based. We seek to establish "places" of enduring value for the long term, in an inter-generational sense. In accordance with this belief, the Company has not sold developed assets in its history - we are not speculators or syndicators of real estate. The work of the Company is for its own account and that of its closely-held shareholders - there are no partners, investment companies, or institutional funds affecting decision making at the firm.

Architecture49

Architecture49 boasts a history spanning over half a century of profoundly significant contributions to cities and communities across Canada and beyond. Our people share a depth of experience in designing award winning, high-profile projects around the globe. Together, we create inspiring spaces that elevate the health, social vitality and sustainability of our communities.

We believe that our communities are enriched by a broader, more enlivened collaboration between clients, builders, architects, engineers, interior designers, landscape architects and urban planners. We believe in the strength of a multi-disciplinary view and in the ability to shape urban infrastructure to Canadian principals of honesty, diversity, practicality and regionalism.

Co:Work Architecture

As Owner and Architect of Co:Work Architecture, Heather Bown has been involved in all aspects of project delivery including conceptual planning, development agreements, and community consultation, through to contract documents and construction. Over the past 16 years Heather has acquired a roster of local, successful mixed-use residential and commercial projects where she has acted as the project team leader, many of which were developed under Development Agreements.

For this project Heather has teamed up with the planning and architectural teams at WSP and A49 respectively. With a focus on collaboration and community, Heather often joins forces with other designers to lend her experience to projects by forming specially selected consultant teams specially chosen for the needs of each Client, site, and project.

Proposal

The Armour Group Limited (Armour) is proposing to construct a new 148-unit apartment building on their existing property located at 1000 Micmac Boulevard, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (PID 40173627). There is an existing 130-unit apartment building located on the property; although, excess land can support additional development and residential density on the property.

The proposed development will be 15-storeys, comprised of a 2-storey podium and a 13-storey high-rise component. The proposal represents an urban infill development opportunity on an existing underutilized lot, which is supportive of existing and proposed land use policies and regulations.

Background

The existing Kings Wood building was constructed by Armour in 1979 in accordance with the land use regulations at the time. For nearly 40 years, the property has remained an Armour property holding, as well as an established home to hundreds of Dartmouth residents; however, there have been no major site improvements or building additions completed to date. As such, the subject property remains largely underutilized, particularly as an opportunity urban-infill development site.

Now, in response to changing market demographics and demands – as well as supportive Municipal planning policies and regulations – Armour is prepared to reinvest in the property, and community at large, as is reflected in this Application.



Image 1: Existing Kings Wood Building looking west through the tree garden

Enabling Policy and Regulatory Framework

Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

According to the *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy's* (RMPS, 2014), the subject property is designated Urban Settlement (Map 2) and is located in the area generally identified as the Mic Mac Mall Regional District Growth Centre ('Growth Centre', Map 1). The Growth Centre encourages a mix of uses, including high-density residential, which are intended to act as focal points to transit oriented development. The boundaries of the Growth Centre will be established through a secondary planning process which will more specifically determine appropriate land uses. At present, the boundaries of the Growth Centre are not yet defined; regardless, the subject property is well within the general area of policy intent.

Furthermore, the subject property is located within the Regional Centre where medium to high density residential uses – particularly on opportunity sites – are envisioned in support of the RMPS's growth objective: *"75% of all new housing starts should occur in the Regional Centre and urban communities"* (RMPS, "Vision and Principles", pg. 10).

Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy

Within Dartmouth, all multiple-unit development is subject to a Development Agreement (DA) in accordance with Policy IP-5 of the *Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy* (MPS).

Furthermore, the subject property is designated Residential (Map 2, pg. 21). Within all Residential areas, MPS policy preamble expresses a need and opportunity to accommodate additional residential growth, particularly on underutilized lots. Under both the "Directions for Growth" and "Housing" sections, there is recurring language supporting the '*infilling*' of '*undeveloped lots*' within the development boundary in order to better utilize existing services and support additional residential density.

Dartmouth Land Use By-Law

The subject property is zoned Multiple Family Residential – Medium Density (R-3). In recognition of Policy IP-5, a DA is required in order to accommodate all proposed multiple unit developments.

Centre Plan

Although Centre Plan is now in effect, this Planning Application has been submitted under – and must be reviewed against – the previous policy and regulatory framework. That being said, the proposed development has been designed in consideration of several Centre Plan policies and by-laws.

As a brief summary, the property is designated Higher-Order Residential (HR, Map 1: Urban Structure) and similarly zoned Higher-Order Residential 2 (HR-2, Schedule 3: Zone Boundaries). Generally speaking, the HR designation is **comprised** of *"areas that contain under-utilized lands which can accommodate the addition of mid-rise and high-rise buildings. The **intent** of this Designation is to accommodate some additional growth that supports better transit and pedestrian environment."* (Centre Plan, pg. 22, emphasis added) Furthermore, the HR designation establishes four main objectives (Centre Plan, pg. 41), which are outlined in **Table 1** below. Each objective includes compliance rationale in relation to the development proposal.

Table 1: Proposed Development's Compliance with Centre Plan's Objectives

Centre Plan	Development Proposal
Land Composition:	The subject property is underutilized and represents an infill development opportunity on an existing surface parking lot. The property can accommodate both mid and high-rise buildings.
Intent:	In support of Regional Planning – as well as <i>Centre Plan</i> – growth objectives, the proposed development will add 148 residential units (approx. 333 people at 2.25 persons per unit) within the Regional Centre. The subject property is within walking distance to a major transit hub (Mic Mac Terminal) and other public amenities such as parks and schools.
Policy HR1: <i>Protect and increase access to housing choices through infill and redevelopment that is complementary to the surrounding neighbourhood.</i>	The proposed development represents an infill development opportunity that protects and complements the existing residential market in the area in two ways: 1) there are no demolitions of existing low-rise, single or two-unit family properties, and; 2) the proposed development will offer a variety of housing types, including townhouse-style units and a range of studio to three-bedroom apartment-style units.
Policy HR2: <i>Allow home-based businesses, work-live units, professional offices, daycares and other businesses that are supportive of the neighbourhood.</i>	Nothing in the proposed development restricts the opportunity to provide supportive business uses in the neighbourhood.
Policy HR3: <i>Improve access to pedestrian, active transportation and transit transportation networks.</i>	The proposed development is within walking distance to the Mic Mac Transit Terminal, the Maybank Field Park & Ride, Crichton Park Elementary School and the Mayfield park facilities. The infill, urban development opportunity supports active and transit transportation objectives.
Policy HR4: <i>Create a safe and comfortable public realm for people of all ages and abilities.</i>	The proposed development is maintaining a twenty (20) foot naturally landscaped setback from Micmac Boulevard. This preserves the park-like, 'treed' pedestrian experience of the street. Building 'B' will also provide walk-up townhouse-type units with walkways connecting to the sidewalk in order to create a safe and comfortable relationship with the public realm.

Centre Plan also recognizes that “*there are large parcels within the Regional Centre that could benefit from a comprehensive planning approach to development.*” (Centre Plan, Section 3.4.2, pg. 43). Accordingly, Policy 23 dictates that “*developments of lots larger than one hectare (2.47 acres)...shall be considered by a development agreement to ensure that the development achieves the objectives of this Plan...*” (Centre Plan, Policy 23, pg. 23). As the subject property is 2.16 hectares (5.34 acres), an application for a DA would be required as part of the approval process whether applying under Centre Plan or existing regulations (MPS). Municipal policies, therefore, recognize that the subject property requires a site specific, comprehensive approach to development where prescriptive land use by-laws and built-form regulations should be considered differently.

Discussion

Whereas much of today's planning policy and regulation in urban-defined areas promotes active street frontages and 100% lot coverages, Kings Wood, in fact, represents an antithesis to this perspective. The existing Kings Wood development – and the nearby Kings Arms development, which is also owned and managed by Armour– is largely defined by its treed canopy, integration with nature and setback from the street. The vast lot size, coupled with the neighbourhood's forested aesthetic, argues for development that treats urban design and densification **differently**. Accordingly, the current development proposal embraces an alternative site and building design approach that focuses on landscaping and tree retention, neighbourhood compatibility, and, in essence, an insular 'campus-style' development.



Image 2: Bird's Eye View showing neighbourhood vegetation (Google Maps)

Landscaping & Tree Retention in the Neighbourhood Context

Contrary to an 'urban street frontage' approach, the proposed development's ideology reflects a 'house in the garden' perspective. Micmac Boulevard, and the nearby Crichton Park neighbourhood, is largely defined by its meandering (arguably suburban) road typology which is flanked by trees and other vegetation. Similarly, lower density homes in the area are defined by generous lot sizes, pocket parks and backyard greenbelts, all within proximity to lakes, parks and schools. Although densification is a Regional Planning objective, the subject property deserves a balanced approach to achieving this whereby the surrounding neighbourhood context is respected.

Accordingly, the proposed development maintains a varying 10-40 foot (3-12 metre) landscaped front yard setback along Micmac Boulevard. This visual buffer not only helps to diminish the appearance of building mass from street level, it also maintains the vegetative street line vernacular that currently exists on the south side of Micmac Boulevard. Along Micmac Boulevard, however, four townhouse-style units have been introduced that have direct access to the street. This is a nice balance between urbanity and 'garden'.

The remaining yards and neighbourhood context reinforce the landscaped 'garden' approach: HRM's Parkland to the south is completely treed; an HRM property at the end of Crichton Avenue is completely treed; an Armour Group Property near the end of Crichton Avenue is completely treed; and, The Armour Group's Kings Arms Properties echo the same 'house in the garden' design parti. The nearest single-family dwelling to the proposed development is approximately 201 feet (61.5 metres) away.

The driveway entrance to the development will also be enhanced with trees, sidewalks and pathways, and will be flanked by walk-up style townhomes at the base of the proposed building. Although not a public street, the driveway entrance is intended to create a true 'sense of entry', as if recreating a low-density urban streetscape. By formalizing the entrance driveway (and not having a garage door entrance fronting directly on the street, which is common practice in so many urban infill developments), an insular campus approach is maintained as if entering a garden off the main road.

Building Scale, Design and Density

The proposed building is appropriately scaled within the context of the neighbourhood and surrounding land uses. The existing Kings Wood building is seven storeys tall and is situated in the centre of the property away from neighbouring uses and the street. The proposed building stands at 15-storeys total (a 13-storey high-rise resting atop a 2-storey podium) and is pushed towards the south-west corner of the property. This was done strategically for two main reasons: first, the building's podium can blend into the steep grades along the southern property line and Micmac Boulevard; and, second, the tower portion of the building can be sensitively located far enough away from nearby low-rise residential uses as well as the street.



Image 3: Building Scale in the Neighbourhood Context (Architecture49 & Co-Work)

The proposed building is also appropriately scaled to transition in height from the Crichton Park neighbourhood to the South East as well as to the existing and proposed CanEuro developments to the North West. As a complete development, the Kings Wood's buildings will range from 7 to 15-storeys. Across Micmac Boulevard, the approved 'Europa' development will rise up to 29-storeys, which is scattered amongst other mid to high-rise buildings ('The Summit': 19-storeys; 'The Horizon': 17-storeys; and, 'Avonhurst Gardens': 9-storeys).

With respect to density, the proposed development will add approximately 148 new units (333 persons, at an assumed 2.25 persons per unit) to the Kings Wood development. In total, Kings Wood will have approximately 278 units (625 persons) spread across a 5.34-acre lot (52 units per acre or 117 persons per acre). This density is consistent with similar developments in the area. For example, 'Avonhurst Gardens' (DA Case No. 18755) contains 214 units (plus 13,900 sq. ft. of commercial) on a 3.69 acre lot (57.9 units per acre or 130 persons per acre); and, 'The Europa' (DA Case No. 17143) contains 216 units on a 3.48 acre lot (62.1 units per acre or 140 persons per acre).

Furthermore, when considering density from the perspective of Gross Floor Area Ratio (G FAR), which is an approach considered in Centre Plan, the proposed development falls well short of policy maximums. In fact, the draft Centre Plan document is not proposing any G FAR on the property.

A Servicing Plan was also prepared to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed development on the Municipality's existing infrastructure, and can be referenced as an Appendix to this application.



Image 4: Perspective Streetview looking south on Micmac Boulevard (Architecture49 & Co-Work)

Traffic, Transit and Mobility

A traffic impact study was prepared to evaluate potential impacts of the proposed development on adjacent streets and intersections, and can be referenced as an Appendix to this application.

The proposed development is exceptionally connected to HRM's Transit Services. The Micmac Terminal is located immediately across the street from the proposed development, which services Routes 10, 54, 55, 56, 66 and 72. Furthermore, the Maybank Field Park & Ride is located within a 500 metre walk from the proposed development.

The subject property is located in proximity to HRM parks, schools and employments notes such as Mic Mac Mall, Downtown Dartmouth and Dartmouth Crossing. The added density and mix of unit types and residents will help support active transportation initiatives as walking and biking to and from the development will be a major benefit to the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

The proposed Kings Wood development represents an excellent infill development opportunity on an existing underutilized lot within the Regional Centre. The application is consistent with existing RMPS, MPS and LUB policy and regulation (including similarly approved DA's in the area), as well as the draft Centre Plan policies and regulations. The new density has been delicately scaled and massed through the proposed building design, and the site planning has consciously respected the treed and natural surroundings currently found throughout the neighbourhood.

APPENDIX A:

Policy Tables

APPENDIX B:

Parcel Description

All that certain block of land on the southwestern side of Micmac Boulevard, in the City of Dartmouth, Province of Nova Scotia, shown as Block M-4 on a subdivision plan of Micmac Village signed by Granville Leopold, N.S.L.S., dated April 9, 1976, approved July 20, 1977, and more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING on the curved southwestern boundary of Micmac Boulevard at the most northern corner of Block M-5;

THENCE S 40 degrees 48 minutes 21 seconds W, 378.37 feet along a northwestern boundary of Block M-5 to a northeastern boundary of lands owned by the City of Dartmouth;

THENCE N 50 degrees 40 minutes 30 seconds W, 732.70 feet along said northeastern boundary of lands owned by the City of Dartmouth to the curved southern boundary of Micmac Boulevard;

THENCE easterly and southeasterly on a curve to the right which has a radius of 520.0 feet for a distance of 490.61 feet to the end of said curve;

THENCE S 58 degrees 08 minutes 51 seconds E, 79.98 feet along a southwestern boundary of Micmac Boulevard to a point of curvature;

THENCE southeasterly on a curve to the right which has a radius of 1,017.0 feet for a distance of 350.44 feet to the place of beginning.

CONTAINING 232,710 square feet (5.342 acres).

SUBJECT TO Rights granted with respect to that 7 and one half foot wide portion of a 15 foot wide Pole Line Easement lying adjacent to the southeastern boundary of the herein described Block M-4 as shown on the above referred to plan.

ALSO SUBJECT TO that 12 foot wide portion of a 20 foot wide Pole Line Easement lying adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the herein described Block M-4 as shown on the above referred to plan.

ALL bearings are referred to a transverse Mercator grid, 3 Degree Zone.

*** Municipal Government Act, Part IX Compliance ***

Compliance:

The parcel originates with an instrument (registration details below) and the subdivision is validated by Section 291 of the Municipal Government Act

Registration District: HALIFAX COUNTY

Registration Year: 1977

Book: 3174 Page: 338 Document Number: 50998

APPENDIX C:

Survey Plan

APPENDIX D:
Site Plan

APPENDIX E:
Building Drawings
(Floor Plans, Landscape Plans, Elevations and Perspectives)

APPENDIX F:

Servicing Plan

APPENDIX G:
Traffic Impact Statement