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Heritage Impact Statement – Substantial Alteration of 1262 Bedford Highway, Bedford NS.

Introduction

Paul Skerry Architects have been retained by Zagroa Nova Home Developments Limited to develop a preliminary design for the property of 1262 Bedford Highway and adjoining lands and structures located at the corner of Bedford Highway and Meadowbrook Drive in Halifax, for a mixed-use, residential redevelopment of the site. This report will examine the historical and architectural significance of the existing building as well as an analysis of any impacts the proposed design changes will have on such significances.

Age

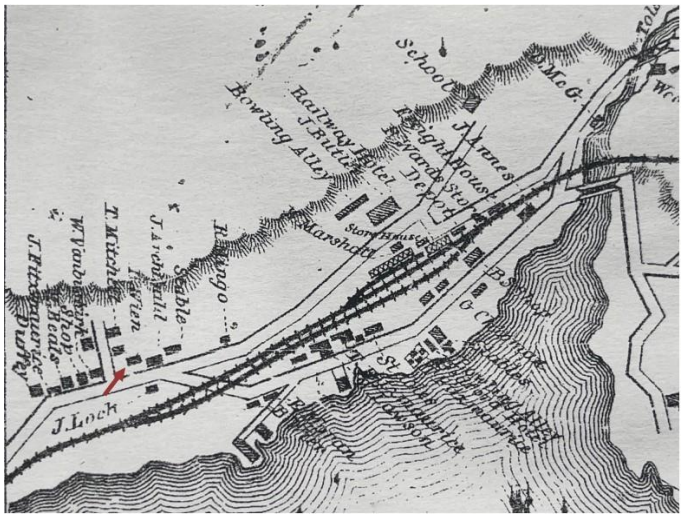

Figure 1 – A portion of the Bedford Village inset of A.F. Church's 1865 map of Halifax County showing the house now known as 1262 Bedford Highway being occupied by Benjamin Wier

The property of 1262 Bedford Highway can be dated back to apart of the Mitchell family's 600-acre farmland, owned by Joseph J. Mitchell. In 1855 a portion of the large parcel was sold to Judah Borden. Research suggests that upon purchase the smaller lot was vacant. When the property was sold to Benjamin Wier and Samuel Harvie in 1858 record of a dwelling house was present on the lot. The house that exists today was hence built between 1855 and 1858. The nearly 170 year old home experienced a rear addition sometime before 1926.

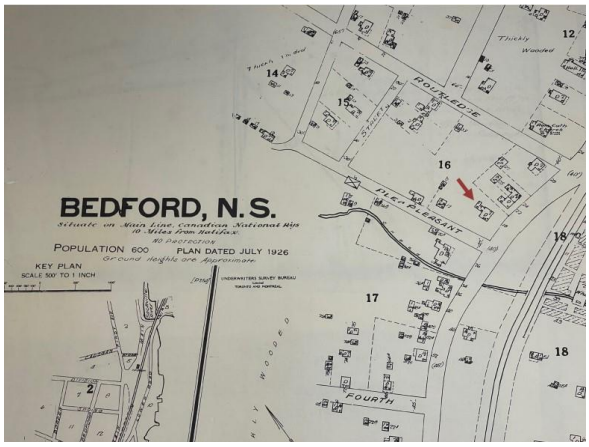

Figure 2 – A 1926 Fire Insurance Map of Bedford showing the dwelling and its rear addition, with the property being identified by an arrow (Underwriters Survey Bureau Limited, 1926)

Historical or Architectural Importance

1262 Bedford Highway was notably owned by the Mitchell family, one of the largest land owners in Bedford at the time. The family slowly subdivided their land into what is now seen as modern day Bedford. The property was purchased by Judah Borden from the Mitchell family in 1855. Judah Borden is believed to have built the house during his short ownership of the property from 1855 to 1858. The property was purchased in 1858 by merchant and politician Benjamin Wier and Samuel Harvie. Weir has a controversial role in history as a confederate supporter and ally during the American Civil War. A prominent member in Halifax society, Weir served in the Nova Scotia legislature, however was subject to scandal which inevitably contributed to Premier Joseph Howe's loss of government in 1864.

1262 Bedford Highway or "Honeycote", as it is sometimes referred to, was owned by Archbishop Thomas Connolly between 1866 and 1870. Connolly served as the priest at Saint Mary's Church in Halifax in 1845 and became the Archbishop of Halifax in 1858.

The DeWolf family of Bedford also has ties to this property. Henry ("Harry") George DeWolf purchased Honeycote in 1921. Harry G was president of T.A.S. DeWolf and Son Ltd. Harry had bought the property for his son, Henry DeWolf (Jr.), a decorated Canadian Naval Officer in World War II, and Vice Admiral of the Canadian Navy. The DeWolf family owned 1262 Bedford Highway until 1980.

Architectural Merit

The 1.5 storey wooden-frame building, constructed in the classical and popular Nova Scotia vernacular style of the era, originally had a simple rectangular plan. A rear addition was added sometime before 1926. Vernacular features include symmetry, the sloped gable roof, the Scottish

gable dormers, central entrance, pilaster detailing and dual side hearths. The front of the house exhibits a traditional steep gable roof, whereas the rear portion of the building has a saltbox-like appearance. Wood shingle siding remains and although the windows and doors have been replaced they have been done so to resemble their predecessors with six over six hung windows on the front façade.

Figure 3 – Photo of Honeycote c. 1912

Architectural Integrity

Based on historic photos (Figure 3), the dwelling's original appearance and classical features have been largely retained. Most of the original elements (chimneys, gable dormers, enclosed porch) still function at intended use.

The rear addition is a significant alteration done between 1918 and 1926. Other alterations include the replacement of windows and the addition of taller non-functional window shutters. New front stairs were added and new doors have replaced the original doors.

Relationship to Surrounding Area

Although most of the previously surrounding structures of the Honeycote's same vintage have since been demolished, the property's connections through the DeWolf family remain a rich part of Bedford's narrative.

The home at 1262 Bedford Highway is one of the oldest remaining homes in Bedford. Some nearby streets such as Pleasant St. and Rutledge St. still feature historic homes, which, along with honeycote act to highlight the old vernacular building style in a neighbourhood of growing modern design.

Proposed Alterations

1. Removal of Rear Addition
   The first proposed alteration is the removal of the existing rear addition (Figure 4). The removal of this addition is critical to the expansion and increased density of the site. The presence of the addition will not allow the construction of the second structure as the two buildings would not meet the limiting distance requirements in the National Building Code.
   The rear addition does not offer any historic significance as it was likely built in the 1920s and does not resemble the heritage values of the original structure, mainly symmetry. The removal of the rear addition will aid in highlighting the main structure, separating it from the proposed seven storey structure and further cementing it as a historic structure in Bedford.

Figure 4 – Side View of Rear Addition

2. Relocation of Honeycote.
   The second proposed alteration to the building is lifting the structure and relocating it closer to the Bedford Highway. The designed move would reposition Honeycote more central on the site, and improve the building's street presence through its closer proximity to Bedford Highway. Moving the existing structure closer to the street will allow more space for the proposed new building on the site. This gives the design of the new building the opportunity to be positioned appropriately in relation to Honeycote not to crowd it and to pay homage to the building's symmetry.

3. New Structure
   As part of the building's relocation, we will need to incorporate a new structural system that connects the existing building with the new design. This will involve removing the existing foundation, which is believed to be a masonry foundation. Incorporating a new foundation system will increase the energy efficiency of the house without taking away from the historic appearance.

4. New driveway on property
   To access the underground parking garage of the new building we will enter at the lowest part of the site, the North-East corner on Bedford Highway. Entering at this location will be possible once the house is relocated. The parking garage allows the required amount of parking for the structure to be held on site and further separates the existing building from other structures, framing it at the center of the site improving its street presence.

5. Construction of new rear addition
   Once the building has been repositioned on the site, a new rear addition connecting the existing building and the new structure is proposed. This addition is 29 feet wide by 10 feet long. This addition will act as the main entrance for both residential buildings. The addition is recessed on both sides from the existing building, ensuring it is hidden from the Bedford Highway. The material selection of this addition is proposed to be glazed window wall which will act as a strong contrast to the existing building, again, further framing its historic value.

6. Restoration of character defining elements
   The exterior of Honeycote has been well maintained and slightly upgraded to improve efficiency while attempting to remain conjoint with the rest of the design. Relocating the building, removing the exiting rear addition, incorporating a new structural system will all require restoration to the existing building. Every effort to repair rather than replace architectural details will be made. However, where this is not possible the replacement of any aspects of the existing building will be done in effect to preserve its original appearance to the greatest extent possible inside an efficient building envelope. Key

character defining elements such as the two single-stack brick chimneys, including the clay chimney pot on the left chimney, classical returns at eaves and the interior door surround will all be protected and retained through the construction process by on-site monitoring during construction.

Standards & Guidelines:

Standard 11: Conservation of Cultural Landscapes

Part A: Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction

Materials	-The shingle pattern siding of the historic house will remain, however, the exterior skin will be required by the building code to be of non-combustible material due to the addition.Trim and other detail items will be maintained to represent the Honeycote's history.
Forms	-We feel the real value in the Honeycote's history is its original form. The 1920's addition was not meant to stand out as the main architectural feature as it was built behind the main structure away from the streets. -Our plan is to document the entire existing building, and study the values that make this structure historically significant, then plan to remove the addition. -The main form is proposed to move closer to the street. This provides a greater visual of the building and street presence along the Bedford Highway. -The rear of the site consists of a seven-storey building setback away from the Honeycote.
Uses	-Originally used as a house, the Honeycote has recently been used as an office. -We plan to maintain the welcome feel of the Honeycote, and use the space as multi-functional amenity rooms. -the new addition will house the main entrance, elevators, utilities, parking, and residential units.

Part B: Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic place.

Physical compatibility with the Honeycote	-The addition's materials are meant to be a similar siding without the distinguished pattern.

Visually compatibility with the Honeycote	-The colour is designed to be more neutral, to make Honeycote stand out. -The goal is to maintain the look and feel of the Honeycote as its own building.
Addition subordinate to Honeycote	-A single storey link is proposed between the buildings that is setback from Honeycote to maintain the Honeycote's hierarchy.

Standard 12: Conservation of Archaeological Sites

Reversible Interventions	-The seven story building is minimally connected to the Honeycote home by a single storey link. To maintain the exterior wall of the Honeycote house. -The ground floor level matches the Honeycote first level, creating minimal effects should the addition be removed at a later date. -The pass-thru connection from the link and Honeycote is planned to be located where an existing door connects to the 1920's addition.

Implementation & Monitoring

To achieve the discussed alterations and overall design for this property a development agreement with the municipality is required. Pending the approvals of these agreements, the implementation of the conservation measures and monitoring will progress as follows, with the intentions of the developers to begin as soon as allowed:

- A detailed site inspection /assessment of the property and surrounding land to confirm and record the present condition.
- Pending all necessary permits, site work will begin immediately following.
- The rear addition of 1262 Bedford Highway will be removed under on-site supervision of from a project team member, ensuring all heritage aspects are protected.
- Excavation of the site will commence preparing for the new structural foundation and slab to be poured. To mitigate any impact towards the existing structure we shall implement shock-absorbing materials in temporary structures like scaffolding.
- Once the structure is set the existing house will be carefully relocated to its designed location. This will happen under close supervision from a project team member to ensure all heritage aspects are protected.

- The existing building will be secured to the new foundation and construction of the new addition will commence. We shall plan construction sequences to minimize heavy machinery and vibrations near existing structures during sensitive phases.
- Conduct baseline vibration assessments before construction to understand existing conditions.
- Implement real-time monitoring during construction to detect any unexpected spikes in vibration levels.
- Construction of the new building will commence.
- Buffer zones will be created between the construction site and existing buildings, using temporary barriers or empty spaces to absorb vibrations.
- A structural engineered report directing the removal process of the rear addition will be supplied and will be accompanied by on-site monitoring during construction.
- On-site presence and monitoring of Honeycote for vibration impacts during construction will be provided.
- We shall conduct post-construction evaluations to verify the effectiveness of mitigation measures and address any unexpected issues.
- Any effects to Honeycote caused by the construction of the new building will be mitigated (e.g. vibration during construction).

It is anticipated that the relocation and construction of the heritage components of the development will be completed within 12 months. Variances to the planned schedule may occur, pending any unforeseen results from the detailed site inspection. A finalized schedule will be provided to the municipality once available.