

398-400 WINDMILL ROAD

Residential/Commercial Development Development Agreement Application and Re-Zoning Application



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Introduction

This is an application report in support of a proposed multi-unit residential/commercial project by Don Valardo Enterprises Ltd. at PID#'s 000663131, 000663149, and 000663156 on Windmill Road, Dartmouth. The proposed development is for two residential buildings on a two storey podium consisting of indoor parking and commercial space. The site is 1.38 acres in size. The attached report includes a site plan along with proposed development elevations, renderings and floor plans.



Figure 1 – Site Plan (Base Photo Source: Google Map)

1. Site Characteristics

2.1 Location

The subject site plan consists of three legal parcels (PID#'s 000663131, 000663149, 000663156) located at Windmill Road, Dartmouth. The site is in proximity of Fernhill Drive and Nootka Avenue and is owned by Don Valardo Enterprises Ltd. The property is 60,198 sf (1.38 acres). There is a NSPC right-of way over a portion of the site with an area of 7,722 sf which will remain undeveloped but used for additional surface parking. The remainder of the site (52,476 sf or 1.20 acres) will be used for the proposal. Access to/from the site is from Windmill Road.

2.2 Zoning

The subject properties are zoned C-2 (General Commercial) and C-3 (General Business). A re-zoning application for the parcels zoned C-3 to be re-zoned C-2 forms a part of this application to allow consideration of the mixed-use proposal (commercial/residential). According to Policy I-5 of Dartmouth MPS, apartment buildings in the City of Dartmouth are permitted through development agreement only. The project design is based on HRM R3 medium density guidelines. There are a variety of land uses in the vicinity of the site including commercial, light industrial and residential. The proposed mixed use of this project is seen as an opportunity to transition from the commercial/light industrial uses on Windmill Road, to the residential neighborhood immediately behind the subject property and up the hill to Victoria Road.

2.3 Amenities

The site is within walking distance from Harbor View School, John Martin Junior High and the Dartmouth North Community Centre. Within 2 km you are local restaurants, a major drug store and major grocery store.

The subject property is located opposite the Shannon Park site which currently has amenities that are underutilized but are available for use. The type and quality of these amenities will undoubtedly change for the better as these lands are redeveloped.

2.4 Public Transit

Windmill Road is serviced by Metro Bus route 51 Windmill which provides a direct route to the Dartmouth Bridge Terminal which in turn provides transit service to a majority of communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The High field Transit Terminal is within walking distance, 1.2 km away at the top of Trinity Avenue.

2.5 Access

The amalgamated property will be accessible from one new access driveway on the north end of the property. The one of the two existing driveways to the south will be infilled. The NSP easement has two access points, the north entrance will be maintained while the southern access point will be closed.

2.6 Current Regulations

The C-2 (General Business) Zone allows for a number of uses including R-1, R-2, R-3 as well as general businesses.

2. Proposed Development Summary

3.1 Two Tower Concept

The development proposal is for two residential buildings with a total of 72 apartment units. These buildings will sit on a two storey podium that accommodates two levels of indoor parking (116 spaces) and commercial space (17,450 sf) on both levels, fronting Windmill Road. In addition to the indoor parking, there will be 46 on-site exterior parking spaces. (22 on site, 24 utilizing the NSPC easement)

The podium provides a transition between the commercial/light industrial uses on Windmill road and the residential uses behind, and up the hill from, the proposed development. The design provides at grade commercial space and two residential entrances on Windmill Road. While the lower residential units are at grade with the neighboring apartment building on Fernhill Drive. This project will serve to strengthen both the commercial nature of Windmill Road while providing a buffer between the street and the residential neighborhood.

Special attention has been given to the separation of the two proposed residential buildings to;

- reduce the potential disruption of prevailing winds by the building
- reduce the building mass, maximize views from the building and enhanced identity
- minimize the impact on views across the site from the neighboring houses and apartment buildings

3.2 Proposed Lot Details

The following table provides detailed lot information for the proposed development:

Lot Area	60,198 sqft.
Lot Coverage	56%
Building Footprint	33889 sqft
Height of Podium	24 feet
Height of Residential Building	Tower 1 = 52 feet, Tower 2 = 72 feet above podium
Overall Maximum Building Height	96 feet

3.3 Density

The residential design density is based on the R3 medium density guidelines for residential unit mix as follows;

- 24 - 1 bedroom units - 750 sf
- 24 - 2 bedroom units - 1195 sf
- 24 - 3 bedroom units - 1329 sf

Total **72 Units = 144 bedrooms or 168 persons** (Assuming an average of 2.25 persons per unit)

The proposed project would have a **population density of 117 persons per acre**, as per the R3 guidelines.

3.4 Open Space and Amenity Spaces

The proposed 72-unit building will provide over 140 sf of recreational landscaped area for the residents. On-site, the **10,400 sf** open area of the podium will provide both active and passive recreational space for all residents of the project.

The podium will provide flexible shared green space for both towers. It will be at a similar grade level as the neighboring property on Fernhill, and will respect the existing dense tree buffer that exists currently along the upper east property line. Access and use of the secure green space will be defined to reflect the needs of the residents, the preliminary concept currently includes a gazebo, hard surface play area, playground, raised garden beds, benches and lounging areas.

At street level, 1400sf of green open space is designated for the ground floor commercial users. This front garden area could be utilized as a garden or possibly a future patio space for a commercial tenant.

Amble landscaping along the street will include trees, perennial gardens, planter boxes and accessible concrete walkways. Natural landscaping feature will be retained and enhanced along the south property edge.

There are numerous parks, playgrounds and public green spaces within a 1.4 km walk of the project. The Shannon Park Athletic Field, Farrell St Park, the Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club, Harborview School, Brule St and Yetter Park. The proposed development is across the street from, and overlooks, the lands of Shannon Park which, when developed, will provide much needed amenity space in this area of Dartmouth and the inhabitants of this project.

Please refer to the Proposed Landscape Plan attached.

3.5 Design and Material

The material for construction of the buildings will be a mix of curtain wall and precast concrete. The consideration of material enhances human scale of the development while harmonizing this project with both the commercial

nature of Windmill Road and the residential nature of the neighborhood to the east. The specifics of this design are visible in the building renderings attached to this report.

3.6 Access and Parking

Vehicular access to the property will be directly from Windmill Road. Pedestrian access to the residential buildings and commercial spaces will also be from Windmill Road. Forty-six (46) parking spaces will be provided at grade for visitors and commercial clients in addition to the 116 spaces within the two level podium. The project owner has an agreement with NSPC to continue utilization of the space within their right-of-way for this purpose (see letter attached in the Legal Description section of the submission).

Barrier Free parking and access to all spaces shall be provided including residential units which meet accessibility requirements.

3.7 Cycling and Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking is an important asset for the proposed development because of its connection to the bicycle route on Windmill Road. There will be a minimum of 19 Class "A" and 7 Class "B" bicycle parking spaces provided in various locations including the underground parking garage next to the elevator and stairs, and outside the building in the surface parking area. This is consistent with the Land Use By-law requirements for a .5 bicycle parking ratio per unit.

3.8 Services

The proposed development will be serviced with water, sewer and storm water, and will connect to the existing water, sanitary and storm sewer mains.

See detailed Servicing Schematic attached for more details.

3.9 Traffic

A traffic Impact Statement has been provided by Griffin Transportation Group Inc. It appears there is residual capacity available in the Windmill Road corridor to accommodate some future growth and the existing driver sightlines to/from both the proposed north and south access locations meet or exceed minimum design guidelines for drivers moving to and from the proposed development, given the expected vehicle operating speeds.

The findings flowing from this qualitative traffic impact statement indicate the new trips generated by the proposed mixed-use development are expected to have an acceptable level of impact on the study area streets and intersections

See attached letter for the full contents of the traffic impact findings.

3.10 Addressing Policy

Policy IP-5

It shall be the intention of City Council to require Development Agreements for apartment building development in R-3, R-4, C-2, MF-1 and GC Zones. Council shall require a site plan, building elevations and perspective drawings for the apartment development indicating such things as the size of the building(s), access & egress to the site, landscaping, amenity space, parking and location of site features such as refuse containers and fuel storage tanks for the building.

The following general provisions of the Dartmouth LUB have been addressed in this proposal;
Section 14. (Page 11 Dartmouth LUB)

- b) Every new building and every new extension or alteration to an existing building shall be provided with off-street automobile parking (1.25 parking spaces per unit).
- d) For business and professional offices, banks, medical clinics, governmental buildings and buildings of a similar nature, one parking space per 600 square feet of floor area shall be provided.

POLICY IP-5

<p>a) <i>Adequacy of the exterior design, height, bulk and scale of the new apartment development with respect to its compatibility with the existing neighbourhood</i></p>	<p>The proposed development will transition from commercial/light industrial to residential. From the west it must appear to be an extension of the uses along Windmill Rd., yet from the east, it must relate to the primarily residential neighbourhood. The design of this project and the choice of materials is intended to complement both scenarios by providing a modern, yet sedate backdrop for both.</p>
<p>b) <i>Adequacy of controls placed on the proposed development to reduce conflict with any adjacent or nearby land uses by reason of:</i> <i>The height, size and bulk of the buildings are in keeping with the community as there are two buildings of four-storey and six-storey at the site. The density, lot coverage, lot size and lot frontage are all in agreement with the Land Use By-Law requirements.</i></p> <p>i. <i>the height, size, bulk, density, lot coverage, lot size and lot frontage of any proposed building</i></p> <p>ii. <i>traffic generation, access to and egress from the site; and</i></p> <p>iii. <i>parking</i></p>	<p>The height, size and bulk of this proposal are a product of the topography as much as the surrounding built environment. There is a natural drop-off at the property line with the Fernhill Drive development that allows for the two storey podium to be built to reflect the current nature of Windmill Road. In turn, it brings the residential component of the project up to the level of the adjoining residential projects, extending their sense of community.</p> <p>All traffic will be generated on Windmill Rd. without affecting the residential neighbourhood and at a volume not drastically increased from existing.</p> <p>All parking will be accessed from Windmill Rd.</p>
<p>c) <i>Adequacy of transportation networks in, adjacent to, and leading to the development</i></p>	<p>Windmill Rd., is a main thoroughfare in Dartmouth which is an integral part of the bike lane program and offers regular transit service.</p>
<p>d) <i>Adequacy of useable amenity space and attractive landscaping such that the needs of a variety of household types are addressed and the development is aesthetically pleasing.</i></p>	<p>In addition to the almost 16,000 sf of open space on the podium, there are currently large open areas (including a soccer pitch) within a short walk to the Shannon Park area.</p>
<p>e) <i>That mature trees and other natural site features are preserved where possible</i></p>	<p>Although there is little mature growth on the current site, the surrounding lands do have mature growth that will be protected as much as possible.</p>
<p>f) <i>Adequacy of buffering from abutting land uses</i></p>	<p>Although the podium for this project will be built fairly close to the property lines, it will be below the grade of the existing uphill properties. The residential buildings on the podium have been pulled as far from this boundary as possible.</p>
<p>g) <i>The impacts of altering land levels as it relates to drainage, aesthetics and soil stability and slope treatment; and</i></p>	<p>Land levels are not being drastically altered and therefore will not be altering the current conditions.</p>

3. Opportunities

The proposed development offers an attractive project to transition the neighborhood from residential to the commercial/light industrial uses along Windmill Road. It will also provide a link to the currently proposed re-use of the Shannon Park lands.

4.1 Surrounding Community

As noted in previous sections of this report, primary land uses to the east and up the hill from this proposed project are residential. The property immediately adjacent to the east of this project contains a 3 storey apartment complex. Although there are adjacent residential dwellings along Windmill Road, the primary land use is commercial/light industrial.

The topography of the site is such that a two storey podium can be built to accommodate the parking needs of the development while also providing commercial space on two levels that could accommodate uses that would be appropriate for the residential neighborhood such as medical and professional offices.

The podium also provides the opportunity to enhance the residential environment by providing almost 16,000 sf of open space at a level more closely associated with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

4.2 Project Diversity and Viability

The proposed residential building configuration keeps the overall project height to a minimum by providing two residential buildings on the one podium. To minimize the impact on the neighboring three storey building, the towers have been placed to maximize view planes to the west and north and south as shown on the attached plan.



Figure 2 - Views

The proposed building unit configuration within the development offers a variety of residential options.

4.3 Summary

One of the early concerns expressed with respect to the location of this proposal was regarding the transitional nature of the property from the commercial/light industrial nature of Windmill Road to the residential developments up the hill to the east. As noted earlier, the topography of the property has provided a unique opportunity to blend these two uses in a way that keeps them separate yet allows the project to enhance both components of the existing fabric of the neighborhood.

The residential units being offered will complement those being offered on the adjacent property while strengthening the residential component of the newer developments in the neighborhood.

The proposal being put forward will offer a new, fresh opportunity for professional/commercial tenants to locate in a developing residential area which will be further enhanced in the near future with the development of the Shannon Park lands. The commercial space within the podium will strengthen the existing commercial mix by offering leasable space on two levels, easily accessible from Windmill Road.



Figure 3 - Preliminary Front Elevation

Building Renderings



Concept Elevation



Figure A - South approach along Windmill Road



Figure B - North approach along Windmill Road