

ROBIE + BILBY + MACARA PROJECT BRIEF

PROPOSED BY

WM FARES
ARCHITECTS

PURPOSE OF SUBMISSION

W M Fares Architects is pleased to make an application for a Map amendment to the Halifax Peninsula Land Use Bylaw to enable a development agreement of a mixed-use building located at 2859 Robie Street, Halifax, NS (00160598).

It is our understanding that the proposed development project requires an amendment to Map ZM-2 of the Halifax Peninsula Land Use Bylaw to apply a Schedule Q to the subject lands. Schedule Q allows Council to consider areas that would benefit from comprehensive site planning through a development agreement process. We are seeking to undertake the required bylaw amendment and development agreement processes concurrently.

To date, we have submitted a pre-application (December 12th, 2013) and received comments from HRM staff regarding appropriate mass, setbacks, and ground floor interface with the sidewalk. Subsequently, a revised concept has been submitted to the case planner.

EXISTING PLANNING DESIGNATIONS & ZONING

The subject property is designated Regional Centre (Urban Core) under the HRM Regional Plan, and Major Commercial under the Peninsula North Planning Area (Area 5) of the Halifax Peninsula Planning Strategy. High density residential and commercial uses are permitted and encouraged in the Major Commercial designation as-of-right under the current General Business (C-2) Zone. For Council to consider promoting investment in commercial and residential redevelopment at greater densities, these properties require a Schedule Q designation to enable a development agreement.

SITE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD COMPATIBILITY

The subject site is approximately 19,000 square feet in area and is currently vacant. The site is a flank lot bound by Robie Street, Bibly Street and Macara Street in the north end of Halifax currently designated as a centre zone in the draft centre plan urban structure map. Both Bibly and Macara Streets service mid-rise apartments and some single family residences. In general, the civic block between Robie and Agricola street is fragmented and underutilized primarily due to inconsistencies in building typologies and parking lots facing the street. The surrounding context along Robie Street is also under-utilized and characterised by sparse streetscapes defined by 'big-box' retail, front-loaded parking and vacant lots that hinder urban form. The proposed project, along with other known infill developments along Robie Street seek to revitalise current conditions and meet the Regional Plan's objective of densifying Major Commercial designation under schedule Q.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION + DESIGN STRATEGIES

The proposed 17-storey building (including mechanical penthouse) is approximately 184 feet in height at its maximum and employs an upper storey building setback ranging from 10-feet to 27-feet.

Considering the larger width of the Robie Street right-of-way, the streetwall height has been capped at 4-storeys and is broken up into vertical volumes separated by deep inset balconies. The mixed-use project includes approximately 10,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space, and a total of 107 residential units with 56% 2-bedroom (or more) unit ratio. A large indoor amenity space has been allocated on the penthouse level totaling 1,500 square feet in area. It is coupled with an outdoor terrace with views North and East towards Bedford basin and Dartmouth. Parking entry is located off Macara Street and includes a total of 93 parking stalls and reserved bicycle parking on all parking levels.

The tower takes on two pure and simplified contrasting forms – one taller slender volume with solid paneling, and the other characterized by a floor to ceiling glazing system. The urban streetwall includes articulated architectural details with quality material finishes such as brick and clear glazed retail fronts. The integration of ground level store-fronts reinstates a proper sense of urban enclosure and pedestrian commercial permeability that will begin to revitalize the streetscape through pedestrian vibrancy and activity.

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for considering our application; we look forward to working with HRM staff, Council and the public on this exciting project.

Original Signed

Jacob JeBailey

Principal Architect | WM Fares Architects
RAIC, NSAA, OAA, M.Arch, BEDS