

23 August, 2017

Planning & Development – Current Planning  
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Attention: Urban & Rural Planning Applications

**Re: Development Agreement Application/LUB Amendment, 2842/2856 Gottingen Street, Halifax, Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential. Case 18149.**

Since being granted a Development Agreement in December of 2013, the owner has acquired an adjacent property, 2856 Gottingen Street (PID#00127522). Through consultation with HRM Planning Staff, we have confirmed that we are unable to use the Substantive Amendment process to include this new parcel into the existing Development Agreement, but will have to apply for a LUB amendment to include this property in Schedule Q. Because of this, we are initiating a new application seeking a LUB amendment to Map ZM-2/ Development Agreement process.

The additional property is approximately 2,500 sq ft and presently has two buildings on it, one a street-front two storey shop/office and the other a storage building located at the rear of the property. This property, if left as is, would be sandwiched between two new developments. One of these would be our clients already approved DA project while the other is a project on the corner of Gottingen (2858, 2866) and McCara (5518) Streets that is in the final stages of DA approval. Both of these projects are mixed use with ground floor commercial along Gottingen and residential uses above.

Our client's project has been approved for seven stories and 39 residential units while the 2856 Gottingen project has applied for eight stories and 71 residential units. With the proposed inclusion of 2856 Gottingen Street the two projects would occupy the entire street frontage along Gottingen between Bilby and McCara Streets. We are proposing to extend the approved building onto the additional property maintaining the theme and materiality of the approved structure. This will result in both additional ground floor commercial and additional residential units. We are also proposing an increase in height of one storey to better match the proposed building at 2858 Gottingen Street. We feel that when viewed in conjunction with this neighbour and the eight story project under construction south of Almon Street on Gottingen that the continuity of height will read better along the street than having a shorter building between the others.

The following table outlines the major differences between the approved project and the proposed project:

- <b>Site Area:</b>	Previous: 10,344 sqft	Current: 12,850 sqft.
- <b>Gross Site Area:</b>	Previous: 16,928 sqft	Current: 20,210 sqft.
- <b>Residential units:</b>	Previous: 39	Current: 64
- <b>Parking:</b>	Previous: 28	Current: 41
- <b>Bicycle Parking Spaces:</b>	Previous: 20	Current: 32
- <b>Commercial Space:</b>	Previous: 3,194 sqft	Current: 4,360 sqft
- <b>Landscaped open space:</b>	Previous: 1,803 sqft	Current: 3,647 sqft
o Per Person	Previous: 17.3 sqft/person	Current: 23.3 sqft/person
- <b>Density:</b>	Previous: 104 persons	Current: 132 persons
o Persons per Acre:	Previous: 267 ppl/acre	Current: 286 ppl/acre

With the increased property size, we feel that our initial rationale for justifying the density is still applicable. The following is an excerpt of this rationale from our original application

*The property in question is on the corner of Gottingen and Bilby Streets in the North end of peninsular Halifax. Gottingen Street is a busy thoroughfare with a mix of residential and minor commercial, while Bilby is a sidestreet, again with a mix of minor commercial and residential. Its location places it directly across from the Stadacona Military Base. The property is zoned C2, which, while primarily intended for commercial use, also permits R3 residential. If the project was of a fully commercial nature its property setbacks, heights, etc. would meet HRM Land Use Bylaw requirements and be deemed as-of-right. The residential use proposed exceeds the R3 requirements in several areas, hence the need for the schedule 'Q' plan amendment and a development agreement process.*

*This area of Halifax has seen increased development in the last number of years. Traditionally the North End was thought of as 'almost' suburbia but with increased growth in more traditional areas of Halifax people have realized the untapped resource that is close at hand. Besides being a walkable area, it is located on transportation routes which make it readily accessible to all areas of HRM. As mentioned, the Canadian Forces Base Stadacona is directly across from the site and the Irving Shipyards are located close by on the other side of Stadacona. The Hydrostone retail area is a few blocks North while the nearby Robie and Young Street areas offer grocery, drug stores and an abundance of other services. The addition of nearby schools, churches, restaurants, etc. make this area a highly desirable location to live. Unfortunately the housing stock is older, in some cases in need of repair and in many instances housing sub-standard rooming houses.*

*There is a desire for people to occupy newer accommodations in this area as proven by the low vacancy rates of recent building projects. There is also demand for small scale commercial service space in this neighbourhood, due to its central location. The ground floor commercial component is sized to fit this mold without creating extraneous space that could remain vacant. The proportions of the space allow for up to 2-3 units of +/- 1,000 - 1,500 square feet each, all with adequate frontage and light, or a single tenant use. This commercial space fronts on Gottingen Street and respects the traditional zero building setback which is present for the majority of this area. A recessed entry area at grade is provided allowing for protective cover for the retail/service occupants. The residential entrance is highlighted on Bilby Street and leads to the lobby and elevator beyond.*

Since the original DA application, trends in the housing market on the Halifax Peninsula have evolved. Therefore, we are proposing to include more 'loft like' residential units with a greater open area living and kitchen space availing them of the exterior light while repositioning the bedroom to within the unit. This will result in a unit mix with studio/bachelor units in addition to the one and two bedroom units previously planned.

The underground parking has a capacity of 41 spaces for the 64 residential units and a commercial allowance. The strategy of providing reduced parking is associated with the building being directly on a major transit route, future personal automobile usage forecasts and the walkability of the neighbourhood. This works in conjunction with HRM planning strategy for a transit friendly and walkable city.

In general we feel that the revisions to this previously approved project continue to meet the overall aims of the existing Municipal Planning Strategy and the Schedule Q area. This area of the peninsula is under review via the Centre Plan but we feel that the inclusion of this additional property to the approved DA should be evaluated separately due to project commencement restraints associated with the original DA. The properties are designated as 'Corridor' in the proposed Centre Plan and as such the proposed development closely adheres to the intent for this area in what may become the new Planning norm.

Regards,  
Original Signed

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