



May 13, 2020

Carl Purvis, MCIP, RPP
Planning Applications Program Manager
Planning & Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
40 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 2N5

Subject: Application for a Development Agreement 2032-2050 Robie Street, Halifax

Dear Mr. Purvis,

On behalf of our client Westwood Construction Ltd. (Westwood), WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) is pleased to submit a Development Agreement (DA) application for the above referenced project located at 2032-2050 Robie Street (PIDs: 40448037, 41340613, 00140038, 40448045, 00140061 and 00140079) based on Policies with Section 10.10.2 of the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS). The properties currently include an existing funeral home, a surface parking lot associated with the funeral home, and a single unit residential building, which together have three driveway accesses off Robie Street. This proposal is for 102 residential units, and ground floor and possible second story commercial between 2,125 sq. ft. and 20,000 sq. ft. with one two-way driveway leading to underground parking.

This application follows from the previous application (Case 19281) from 2015 for the policy creation for the subject site. That application was previously joined with APL Properties Ltd.'s 6009-6017 Quinpool amendment application (Case 18966), which subsequently received Regional Council approval. The applications were separated as Westwood elected to spend more time considering their design through further engaging with the Halifax community.

Civic addresses 5032 Robie Street (PIDs 40448037, 00140038, 41340613, and 40448045) and 2046 Robie Street (PID 00140061) are each subject to an existing DA. These DAs are for funeral services and surface parking lot uses. As part of this application process, we are requesting that the existing DAs be discharged from these properties and replaced with a new proposed DA.

To assist with this application submission, the following supporting materials are enclosed:

- Attachment A: Site Plan (2020)
- Attachment B: Building Drawings (2020)
- Attachment C: Preliminary Landscape Plan (2020)
- Attachment D: Traffic Impact Statement (2104) and Addendum (2018)
- Attachment E: Preliminary Servicing Schematic (2020)

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- Attachment F: Preliminary Consolidation Plan (2020)
- Attachment G: Legal Property Descriptions (2020)
- Attachment H: Existing Development Agreements

Note that a Qualitative Wind Study is being completed by Gradient Wind and will be submitted to HRM as soon as possible. This is anticipated to be completed within four weeks.

The following are details associated with the proposed building, in addition to what is provided in the Attachments.

USE	Residential / Mixed Use (Commercial ground floor and possible second storey of podium)
TOTAL # OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS	102
TOTAL AREA OF COMMERCIAL	Between 2,125 sq. ft. and 20,000 sq. ft. (will be dependent on market conditions)
TOTAL FLOOR AREA	109,327 sq. ft. (10,157 sq. m.) to 115,132 sq. ft. (10,696 sq. m.) depending on final area of the second level mezzanine. Based on the revised definition of floor area from the Regional Centre LUB.
FAR (Floor Area Ratio)	5.0 to 5.3 (depending on final area of the second level mezzanine)
BUILDING HEIGHT	278 ft. (85 m)
STREETWALL HEIGHT	24 ft. (7.32 m)
NUMBER OF UNDERGROUND PARKING SPACES	Maximum of 126 u/g spaces (no surface parking spaces); but would like to have reference to current regulations to allow for flexibility to respond to market conditions.

DESIGN RATIONALE

The proposed building is designed to address four key design features:

1 Massing

The proposed building includes several design elements relating to its mass to respond to the site’s context and adjacent land uses, which include:

- A predominately two-storey podium that extends the majority of the lot width (excluding underground parking entrance) to create a defined street presence. This better ‘fills missing teeth’ along the street than currently as there is a surface parking lot for a portion of the streetline.
- The small floorplate of the high-rise portion of the building moving up the tower creates a slender form that tapers upwards preserving air space and minimizing shadow impacts on adjacent lands. This tower width is significantly reduced from the original 2015 application; and is smaller than the maximum tower area within the SMPS (676 sq. m. compared to 750 sq. m.).
- The high-rise portion of the building includes multiple insets at the corners of the building at different building heights to minimize the impact of downdraft wind effects; and also creates an elegant form and adds to the skyline view around the Halifax Commons.

- The podium and tower also include various setbacks to the property line to the west (as set out in the policy) to create buffer and relief to the abutting low-rise residential buildings. Landscaping is also used to enhance this buffer.
- The proposed building height of 22 storey's plus penthouse (85 m) is relatively consistent with the existing and approved buildings abutting the site to the north and south, and further south along Robie Street on the opposite side of the intersection of Robie Street and Quinpool Road. This tower height is also less than the max. height within the SMPS CEN-2 zones, which is 90m.

2 Density

Higher density residential development at this location is appropriate given the presence of amenities and services, and the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy's (RMPS) goal to support dense development within the Regional Centre, as well as the goals of the SMPS. Providing higher density housing at this location allows more people to live on the Peninsula, which reduces travel distances to the amenities on the Peninsula and downtown Halifax allowing residents to choose active transportation and transit to access their daily needs. Based on the latest definition within the SMPS for gross floor area, the proposal has between 5.0 to 5.3 FAR depending on the final area of the second level mezzanine.

3 Tower Spacing

The proposed residential tower is strategically located towards the northern portion of the site to create balanced separation distances between it and the existing high-rise building located immediately to the north (Welsford Apartments) and the approved high-rise building located immediately to the south at the intersection of Robie Street and Quinpool Road. The proposed location of the high-rise portion of the building would maximize separation distances between it and the two other high-rise buildings that are located on the same block.

4 Human Scale Design

The building has been designed and sited to respond to the human scale. A cantilever is provided over the ground floor of the tower portion to provide climate protection and wind mitigation for pedestrians. Corner balconies were also added to the design at the lower levels of the tower to mitigate wind effects for pedestrians.

The tower portion gets slenderer as it increases in height, to provide 'air space' when viewed from ground level. This also minimizes shadowing on the pedestrian realm by creating a narrow fast-moving shadow when compared to the previously proposed wider tower (which would cast more continuous shadowing for longer periods of time over a given area). By allocating density within a tower form, most of the building along the Robie Street frontage to be two-stories in height. This greatly reduces shadowing of this highly-used pedestrian realm along Robie Street and to the Parker Street neighbourhood, which would not be achieved through a mid-rise form.

The two-storey height portion of the building is setback from the streetline to allow space for 'spill out' activity from the ground floor commercial units. Additionally, the rooftop patio space also brings vibrancy and activity to the streetfront. This contextually responds to the building's location on a prominent street and green space (Halifax Common), which are popular destinations.



TRAFFIC IMPACT STATEMENT AND ADDENDUM

A Traffic Impact Statement was completed in 2014 by JRL Consulting as part of the 2015 application. A Traffic Impact Statement addendum was subsequently completed by WSP Canada Inc. in 2018.

The 2014 TIS showed site access through a one-way driveway in and a one-way driveway out to Robie for southbound traffic and was to evaluate:

- 100 residential suites
- 55,600 sq. ft. of general office space
- Parking for 106 cars

The TIS notes that: *The addition of the 100 residential units at this location has the potential to reduce traffic entering the Halifax Peninsula in this urban infill scenario as the location is very close to downtown Halifax which will promote use of transit and walking for its residents who work in the downtown core.*

The TIS concluded:

- The residential component of the proposed redevelopment has potential to reduce traffic entering the peninsula if it attracts residents who currently live off the peninsula and work downtown. The close proximity to downtown as well as numerous key transit routes may reduce the estimated traffic generated by the residential apartments as provided in this report based on ITE rates.
- We estimate that the proposed redevelopment will generate additional net new traffic volumes of 172 vehicles in the AM peak hour and 213 vehicles in the PM peak hour after our analysis of the estimated trips generated by the existing buildings in comparison to the estimated future site generated traffic.
- New site generated traffic will most likely follow existing trip distribution patterns along Quinpool Road and Robie Street in the AM and PM peak hours.
- A preliminary site review of stopping site distance at the proposed driveways on Robie Street which are located near existing driveways did not identify any issues with stopping site distance.

The 2018 Addendum accounted for the changes to the proposal which were:

- The residential development is proposed to increase from 100 units to 102 units.
- The ground floor commercial space is proposed to include approx. 2,125 sq. ft.
- The office space (originally 55,600 sq. ft.) is proposed to be eliminated.
- Site Access has been modified to be via a single two-way driveway onto Robie Street allowing right-in right-out movements.

The 2018 Addendum concluded:

- Trip generation estimates for the revised development include about 30 two-way trips (10 entering and 20 exiting) during the AM peak hour and an estimated 42 two-way trips (25 entering

and 17 exiting) during the PM peak hour. This represents a substantial decrease in the estimated trips when compared to the estimates for the initially proposed development.

- With excellent access to several existing transit routes as well as nearby active transportation links along Windsor Street, Vernon Street, and Allan Street, the trips generated by this development are not expected to have any significant impact on levels of performance on adjacent streets and intersections or to the regional street system.

The current application is proposing 102 residential units, site access as proposed in the 2014 addendum, and between 2,125 sq. ft. to 20,000 sq. ft. of commercial space (to allow flexibility within the market).

POLICIES OF SECTION 10.10.2 REGIONAL CENTRE SMPS

The following table outlines the policies from the Regional Centre SMPS as they relate to the subject site. Section 10.10.2 states:

In recognition of the substantial investment made in the preparation of a planning applications for the site located at 2032- 2050 Robie Street, Halifax, this application was submitted in advance of this Plan being given first reading by Council, this site will be designated as the Robie Street Special Area on Schedule 4 of the Land Use By-law where for a limited period of time a development agreement may be considered for a single residential tower no greater than 85 metres in height, located atop a two storey podium containing primarily commercial uses. Consistent with other transition policies, the project will be required to be commenced and completed within a reasonable timeframe.

POLICY 10.29

APPLICANT COMMENT

<p><i>Council may consider development on the site identified as the Robie Street Special Area on Schedule 4 of the LUB by DA, subject to the following requirements:</i></p> <p><i>a) the development shall consist of a mix of residential and commercial uses;</i></p>	<p>(a) The development is proposed to have 102 residential units and between 2,125 sq. ft. and 20,000 sq. ft. of commercial at the ground level. Flexibility is desired in the DA to allow the development to respond to the market at the time of permitting. Complies.</p>
<p><i>b) the tower portion of the development shall consist of a max. of 22 storeys, located above a 2-storey podium;</i></p>	<p>(b) The podium has a height of two-storeys (which includes one full storey and a second level mezzanine) and there is a 22 tower above the podium (21 storeys plus a penthouse). Complies.</p>
<p><i>c) the development shall be limited to 102 residential units located within the tower portion of the building;</i></p>	<p>(c) There are 102 residential units proposed. Complies.</p>
<p><i>d) a min. of 43% of the units within the building contain 2 or more bedrooms and are a min. of 75 sq. m. in size;</i></p>	<p>(d) A min. of 43% of the units within the building contain 2 or more bedrooms and are a min. of 75 sq. m. in size. Complies.</p>
<p><i>e) land uses located at the ground floor of the development, and fronting on Robie St., shall be primarily commercial in nature to maximize street-level activity;</i></p>	<p>(e) The ground floor consists of commercial units and the lobby for the residential portion of the building. Complies.</p>

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APPLICANT COMMENT

<p><i>f) the building shall comply with the following massing and height requirements:</i></p> <p><i>i. an overall height of 85 m, inclusive of all mechanical spaces, penthouses, and other structures;</i></p> <p><i>ii. the development provides a continuous 2-storey streetwall podium with a max. height of 11 m for the majority of the Robie St. elevation;</i></p> <p><i>iii. the ground floor of the building is setback a min. of 1.5 m from the front property line, inclusive of stairs, ramps, or other access points;</i></p> <p><i>iv. the building is setback a min. of 6 m from the rear property line from ground to a height of 6.2 m, and above a height of 26 m, and further no portion of the building may be closer than 4.5 m to the rear property line;</i></p> <p><i>v. any portion of the building above a height of 26 m does not exceed depth and width of 23 m; and</i></p> <p><i>vi. all floors above a height of 26 m do not exceed a floor area of 523 sq. m. per floor, and all other floors above the podium do not exceed a floor area of 676 sq. m.;</i></p>	<p>(f) (i) Complies</p> <p>(f) (ii) Two storey podium height (including one storey and a mezzanine) with railings above on the rooftop terrace to a height of 36 ft. (11m). Complies.</p> <p>(f) (iii) Complies</p> <p>(f) (iv) The building is setback 6m from the rear property line. We would like flexibility to have balconies within the setback, as permitted within the Centre Plan. Complies.</p> <p>(f) (v) Complies</p> <p>(f) (vi) Complies. It is requested that this area max. not apply to balconies, exterior wall thicknesses, and all vertical penetrations.</p>
<p><i>g) the development shall comply with the Pedestrian Wind Impact Assessment Protocol and Performance Standards in Appendix 1 of the Land Use By-law;</i></p>	<p>(g) A Quantitative Wind Study has been commissioned and will be provided to HRM once complete. It is anticipated that this will be completed and submitted within 4 weeks. Previously a Qualitative Wind Study was conducted, and design changes have occurred based on the recommendations to respond to pedestrian comfort which are included in this submission.</p>

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<p><i>h) the external design of the building shall provide visual architectural interest;</i></p>	<p>(h) Visual architectural interest is provided by using vertical and horizontal lines and geometric shapes which create consistent rhythm from the base to the top of the building. Fenestration patterns are largely consistent throughout the tower with selectively placed sections of more ornate window trims. The use of both aluminum glazing and panelized cladding systems provides material intrigue and the corner-cut setbacks at different storeys create an interesting and asymmetrical tower shape.</p> <p>The top two storeys of the building are differentiated from the rest of the tower using a reflective accent cladding system. The point tower connected to the predominately two-story podium height also adds visual interest when viewing the building from locations such as the Halifax Common.</p> <p>Complies.</p>
<p><i>i) the size and visual impact of utility features such as garage doors, service entries, and storage areas shall be minimized, and other features such as mechanical equipment or similar shall be concealed;</i></p>	<p>(i) The garage door is setback considerably from the streetline and accessed through a ramp. Mechanical Features and terms of concealment can be addressed within the terms of the DA. Complies.</p>
<p><i>j) adequate supply of vehicular parking and bicycle parking shall be provided;</i></p>	<p>(j) We request that vehicular parking and bicycle parking spaces be as per the applicable Land Use Bylaw (Regional Centre LUB). There is proposed to be a max. of 126 u/g parking spaces. Complies.</p>
<p><i>k) accessible and usable on-site amenity space shall be provided of a size and type adequate for the occupants of the development;</i></p>	<p>(k) Amenity spaces are provided in the form of a large rooftop terrace on top of the two-storey podium (see preliminary landscape plan) and individual balconies for residential units. Additional interior amenity space has not yet been defined. Complies.</p>
<p><i>l) the development shall include a landscaping plan;</i></p>	<p>(l) See Appendix C attached. The applicant also would like some flexibility if possible in the terms of the DA regarding DO approval for revisions to the landscape plan at permitting stage. This would relate to possible ‘courtyard’ considerations with the properties to the rear in common ownership. To be discussed further with HRM Planning staff.</p>
<p><i>m) suitable on-site solid waste facilities shall be provided and internalized within the building;</i></p>	<p>(m) Suitable solid waste facilities and specifying to be internalized within the building to be within the terms of the Development Agreement.</p>
<p><i>n) the sewer and water servicing capacity for the development shall be deemed adequate; and</i></p>	<p>(n) See Appendix E attached.</p>



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<i>o) that incentive or bonus zoning is provided in accordance with Part XII of the LUB.</i>	(o) An incentive or bonus zoning agreement will be signed as part of the DA process.
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POLICY 10.30

APPLICANT COMMENT

<i>Policy 10.29 shall only apply to an application for a DA that has proceeded to public hearing within 24 months of the adoption of this Plan.</i>	The Plan was adopted in November 2019 with an application submitted in May 2020 allowing sufficient time for HRM Planning Staff to assess and bring forward to Council for Public Hearing.
<i>A DA adopted pursuant to this Policy shall include: a) project commencement dates not exceeding three years; and b) project completion dates not exceeding six years; from the date the agreement is filed at the Land Registry Office</i>	To be addressed within the terms of the DA. It may be desired to have an extension of this timeline by request to Council within the terms of the DA.

CONCLUSION

WSP would like to thank you for taking the time to process this application submission and we look forward to working with Staff and Council throughout the development agreement application process.

Should you have any questions, comments or require additional information with regards to this application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Original Signed

Christina Lovitt, MCIP, LPP
Manager, Planning – Atlantic Canada

Cc: Danny Chedrawe, Westwood; Michael Christian, Architecture49

Attachments

Ref: 161-12351-01