

LETTER OF INTENT

The Narrows: A Halifax Public House

It is the timeless tradition of people and communities coming together over food and drink, to enjoy each other's company and lift spirits, that represents the foundation of our concept. Rather than try to transplant a concept drawn from elsewhere or another time, we have all the inspiration we need right here in Nova Scotia's rich history. Everything from food and drink to pictures on the walls, will be influenced by various aspects of our province's colorful past. As it existed in the past and still does today, the North End is represented by a diverse community with wonderfully different backgrounds. From farmland to a sugar refinery, Africville to Brunswick Street, the North End's residents were as diverse as the businesses and institutions that comprised its landscape. It is in the spirit of this diversity that our concept looks to maintain public house tradition of inclusivity as a major tenant of our operating principles. Public houses should be places where all people feel comfortable and an atmosphere of mutual respect is cultivated by the staff.

It is one thing to have a policy of inclusivity, and quite another to ensure your concept operates as such. In order to be inclusive of the community it is a part of, the public house must offer products and atmosphere that represents the diversity within it. Our concept seeks to balance affordability and quality by taking advantage of local ingredients prepared in traditional methods. Through choosing to sell out of products rather than throwing out product and by purchasing locally and seasonally, we will be able to offer something that is both affordable and appealing to everyone.

It is important to us that all members of our community feel connected to and reflected by some aspect of our concept, whether it is the food and drink offerings, the service, or the atmosphere cultivated in the home. We believe that the reason public houses have existed for so long and continue to do so, is that upon entering the home, any preconceived ideas of social status are left at the door and patrons are free to engage one another on equal footing. It is in this atmosphere that patrons often enjoy memorable experiences with others, whose paths may not have crossed had it not been facilitated by the indiscriminate nature of a true public house.

Although our concept begins with the vision we have for our home, the life it takes on is directed naturally by the patrons it comes to reflect over time. A concept can only evolve and persist if it is able to adequately meet the needs and adjust to the preferences of those who support it. The history and story our home shares with those who engage it, is only one of many others reflected by every single home in the Bloomfield Community and beyond. While the celebration of this history is an integral aspect of our concept, our focus is to provide an atmosphere and experience that brings people together to create a new narrative, reflective of current values, that add to this rich history.

Development Agreement

For the purpose of this development agreement, we are **NOT** seeking a rezoning of the property at 2720 Gottingen, but rather a request for a **'Change of Use'** in order to create a small scale, owner operated public house, restricted to the main level of the home. It is our hope that through a carefully crafted development agreement, we may put forward a business plan to planners and the community that will clearly outline our intentions as owner operators and address any questions and concerns all outside parties may have. The proposal we have submitted seeks to carefully balance both potential community concerns and providing the owners the opportunity to operate a viable small-scale business out of their home. The scope of this proposed business has been considerably restricted in occupancy and hours of operation that err on the side of community mindfulness, yet still offer the opportunity for long-term sustainable employment, operated with the owners acting as key staff.

In order to openly communicate our development agreement plans and engage our surrounding community, we started by sending letters of invitation to our immediate neighbors, encouraging the extending of this invitation to any residents in the Bloomfield community, to come to our home for an open house meeting prior to our formal public consultation. The letter of invitation provided a date at which our open house meeting was held, as well as a link to our website where residents can access in-depth information about the various aspects to our ongoing project. Areas of discussion include the following: history of the home, story about the owners, information regarding the project, the concept and community, the development agreement and a news section for up to date information regarding the project. We had a good turn out to our meeting and were able to answer questions from community members and understand their thoughts about the project.

We followed up this initial meeting with an update on our website news section as well as signing up to the Bloomfield Neighborhood Resident's Association list serve. We then had our development agreement proposal added to the agenda for the upcoming BNRA meeting. We attended this meeting and once again answered questions from local residents, many of which have been living in and advocating for the community for a long time. This was a great opportunity to further discuss thoughts on our proposal from local residents. Based on information we received from these two meetings with residents, we made changes to our development agreement to address their concerns. Based on feedback from our last meeting with residents, we would also like to state our desire to ensure that our development agreement includes a statement that prohibits the use of any Video Lottery Terminals (VLT's) to operate in our business at any time during the life of the agreement or business. This information was updated and provided on the news section of our website, including new drawings of our proposed backyard patio.

We firmly believe that this project provides a unique and refreshing example of the intended utilization of heritage planning policy and balances appropriate new development along Gottingen Street with long term plans for restoration and preservation of our cultural landscape. With the new center plan being rolled out in the near future, we believe projects

that balance development with preservation will be important examples and development agreements, through heritage policy, offer unique tools to accomplishing this.

Proposed Uses:

Main Level:

Our hope is to operate a traditional public house serving food and beverage on the main level of the house only. The basement will be used for storage purposes, including but not limited to; keg refrigeration, dry food storage, utility closet/janitorial storage, firewood storage, tools, etc. These two levels will make up the operation of the business concept, with the exception of washrooms and office space, located on the second level.

Business operations on the main level will allow the business to meet its financial obligations as well as costs associated with adequate house/property maintenance and improvements in line with heritage guidelines. Revenue generated from business operations on the main level above and beyond the aforementioned commitments, will be directed towards increasing pay and benefits for staff and funneled through our own charity or local organizations providing essential services to the surrounding community.

Main Level: Commercial Use (Public House).

Basement: Storage (Non-customer portion of Public House).

Second Level: Commercial/Residential (Public/Staff washrooms only, otherwise vacant).

Third Level: Vacant or Residential Bachelor Unit

Patio: Commercial Use (restricted to 3 months of the year as follows: June 15 - Sept 15).

Proposed Licenses:

For our business concept, we will be seeking a ***food establishment permit***, in order to allow us to safely store, prepare and serve food to our guests. After acquiring this license, we will be seeking a ***lounge license***. A *lounge license* allows us to serve drinks to guests without requiring them to purchase a meal. People often have a negative misperception of what it means to have a lounge license because they default to thinking of late night bars or the like. In reality, most restaurants and certainly public houses, have lounge licenses. This is to prevent them from having to require their guests to purchase a meal in order to have a drink. This is a restrictive rule to place on a business and detracts from the ability of the business to welcome all guests. For example, if a neighbor would like to meet a friend for a beer or coffee but does not want to have to pay for a meal, they are able to do so without feeling pressure to spend more money than they can afford. Similarly, if a neighbor is on their way home for dinner after work, but wanted to stop in for a beer, they technically are not permitted unless they intend to purchase a meal. These are just a few examples of ways in which a lounge license provides more flexibility to potential guests whereas other licenses can unduly harm the business.

Another concern people have with lounge licenses, are that they provide the business with the permission to serve alcohol until 2am. Simply because this license allows alcohol service until 2am does not mean a business has to operate as such. We are looking to significantly restrict these hours through a legal contract with the city, to help provide assurance to local residents that our concept has a focus on an early evening crowd from the local community and not facilitative of late night drinking. There are plenty of other local businesses that currently provide this service to the community quite successfully, and we are not interested in duplicating these concepts. This is in part due to the desire to differentiate ourselves from other local businesses but also to respect our neighbors and our own desire to provide a healthy work life balance for staff and ourselves.

In our case, we seek to utilize the added flexibility of the development agreement, which allows for us to get a lounge license but then legally restrict our permission to serve alcohol to whatever hours are deemed appropriate. Thus, in anticipation of the community's interests and our own, we have proposed significantly restricted hours of operation, in order to create a business that focuses on lunch and dinner, as opposed to late night drinking service. You can review our proposed hours of operation below.

Proposed Hours of Operation:

We are proposing those hours of operation that balance the interests of the business and the community. The hours of operation we have proposed are restricted well below the permissible amount of the license we are seeking and have been adjusted based on feedback from the community through our own public engagement process. As our combined experience of over 35 years of restaurant work has taught us, by carefully selecting appropriate hours of operation, a business establishes what its intended use will be. By focusing on lunch service, early dinner service and early last call for drinks, a business can clearly communicate the type of experience it provides and does not provide. We are hopeful and confident that the hours we have proposed below will be such that the community will be assured that our concept will operate safely, respectfully and without incident or disruption.

Main Level of Home:

Sunday -- Thursday: **4pm - 11:30pm** (service stops at **11pm**).

Friday & Saturday: **3pm - 12:30am** (service stops at **12am**).

Patio Hours:

Sunday – Thursday: **3pm - 9:30pm** (service stops at **9pm**).

Friday & Saturday: **3pm - 9:30pm** (service stops at **9pm**).

Note*

It will be our intention to extend our hours by opening earlier to offer lunch service to our community as soon as the business can successfully do so, as long as this extension is supported by the community. We anticipate the rough time line being no earlier than 6 months and no later than 1 year. Closing hours would remain the same with opening hours changing to **11:30am Sunday through Saturday**, in order to provide lunch service.

Proposed Occupancy:

We will be proposing an occupancy amount for our business, based on the safe and comfortable accommodation of guests on the main level of our home. As a business, this number is important in balancing operating costs and adequate ability to generate revenue. In order to minimize any potential concerns of the community around increased flow of people or noise, we have proposed as small of an occupancy amount as we believe the business can successfully operate under. This occupancy only applies to the main level of the home and a small portion of the second level dedicated to washrooms. The basement of the home will be used only as storage and the upper two levels of the home will be vacant. This allows us to keep our occupancy request, including all staff members, to a limited number as follows:

Main Level:

80 customers

5 Front of House Staff

4 Back of House Staff

Total Capacity 89

By our calculation, a business on the main level could easily accommodate upwards of 100 or more people and additional staff, however, we have reduced this number to help ease concerns regarding flow of people to and from the property. Although our proposed maximum allowance for guests is 80, that does not mean we will necessarily always have 80 guests filling the home. It will often be the case that the actual number of guests at any given time, will be much lower than our maximum allowance. Also worth mentioning, we will also require an occupancy permit from fire protection services, which has the final say as to how many people are legally allowed in the house at any given time. Based on our familiarity with other establishments, we anticipate this number being higher than the one we have restricted ourselves to.

For three months of the year, we hope to provide limited outdoor patio seating as part of our business service. As with all facets of our business operation, we are able to place legal limits and restrictions on how our patio operates, in order to reduce potential concerns of neighbors. Although we have a relatively large outdoor space along the North side of our home, we are proposing only a quaint seating area that accommodates 25 guests. We have proposed a patio operating from June 15th until Sept 15th and at no time outside of these dates, will service be permitted outside of the home. We have chosen these restrictions to try and mitigate any potential disruptions to our immediate neighbors.

Patio:

25 customers

2 Front of House Staff

Total Capacity 27

Considered Development: Heritage Policy

Policy 6.8: In any building, part of a building, or on any lot on which a registered heritage building is situated, the owner may apply to the City for a development agreement for any development or change in use not otherwise permitted by the land use designation and zone subject to the following considerations:

(i) that any registered heritage building covered by the agreement shall not be altered in any way to diminish its heritage value;

All alterations to the property and house thus far have increased the heritage value of the home. In regards specifically to preparing the house for business operations, every effort on the owner's part has and will be taken to retain the heritage value of the home and only those alterations which are required by law in order for the business to operate safely, will be undertaken. That said, these alterations will be done with upmost consideration for the heritage character of the home and will only stray from this principle if mandated by government officials. It is our goal to try and work with officials to develop alternative solutions to compliance if alterations should compromise the heritage value of the home.

(ii) that any development must maintain the integrity of any registered heritage property, streetscape or conservation area of which it is part;

As stated above, the development related to our house/property has and will always seek to restore and maintain the abundance of heritage value it currently has and once had. The development associated with our house is not typical of that generally seen with most Development Agreements in that we are looking to alter as little as possible. We are not a part of a conservation area however we do abut a registered heritage property, namely Fernbank, circa 1877. Although not a designated conservation area, we view our streetscape and surrounding community as a very important time capsule in the preservation of North End Halifax heritage. It is with this in mind that we place a great deal of consideration, time and finances towards designing our business concept to meld with these heritage principles.

(iii) that any adjacent uses, particularly residential use are not unduly disrupted as a result of traffic generation, noise, hours of operation, parking requirements and such other land use impacts as may be required as part of a development;

Traffic and Parking

Compared to the average development that typically occurs where Development Agreements are concerned, our undertaking will have minimal impact on our neighboring community. Most development involves new buildings and significant alterations of existing properties. In contrast, our development agreement is simply a request for change of use and does not seek to enlarge or significantly modify the existing building or property. Our location on Gottingen Street already sees a large amount of through traffic on a typical day and thus we do not anticipate a significant increase in traffic generation from a business of the size and occupancy we are proposing.

Further to this prediction, is also the fact that our business will rely heavily on, as well as directly target, the patronage of its immediate surrounding community in the North End. This by in large, will mean the majority of those customers that comprise our core base will be travelling to and from our business by foot or bicycle as opposed to motorized transportation. We believe this increase in foot traffic will have minimal disruptive impacts on our immediate community.

Speaking specifically to parking requirements, those patrons that do choose to drive personal vehicles to our business will have access to a number of parking spots available along Gottingen Street as well as immediate side streets. The side streets are already commonly used by those who do not necessarily reside in the immediate neighborhood such as personnel working at Stadacona for example. In addition to readily available street parking, our business will be providing an additional 3 parking spaces, including one barrier free space, located at the back of the property and accessed from Gottingen Street. It is worth noting that for the previous 28 years our house was operated as a business, namely Fresh Start B & B, which had a number of guests coming and going on a regular basis over the life of the business.

Hours of Operation and Noise

We chose our above hours of operation, not solely based on what would benefit the business but rather what we believe would be most desirable for our neighbors and community, while still allowing the business to succeed. The lounge license we will be seeking to obtain would technically allow us to serve alcohol until 2am, however we will be asking to restrict this license to the hours stated above, a significant reduction. It is worth mentioning that as owners and key operators of our business, we also see the personal benefits in the hours of operation we have chosen, in order to strike the appropriate work-life balance. As can be seen above, we have also chosen to further restrict the hours of operation on the patio portion of the business as this seating area will allow for noise to carry more easily than the inside seating areas.

Given that our house has operated as a bed and breakfast for the 28 years prior to our purchasing it, we do not believe noise will be significantly different than over that time period. It is also our understanding that the previous business operated successfully for 28 years without any major disruptions or issues caused to the immediate neighbors. In fact, many members of the community have shared personal stories regarding their experience with Fresh Start with a positive impact to the community. While we are not naïve to the fact that our business will likely generate more frequent foot traffic, we believe this will occur in a very controlled environment with constant supervision, where only respectful customers will be welcomed back, including regarding noise volume or other disruptive behavior. Please consider that this has been our home for nearly 3 years and we have a great deal of respect for it, our neighbors and community alike.

We will also be seeking to restrict the business to non-amplified music, which should help assure immediate neighbors of appropriate noise control. Due to the 9,000 square foot lot the house is centered on, a buffer zone is created between it and the immediate neighbors, helping to reduce potential noise concerns. Prior to operation of our patio, we will be erecting a privacy

fence along the South side of our property, that runs the full length of our patio, in order to protect the privacy of our closest neighbors and to help reduce to a small extent, the noise created by patrons. Noise inside the house is also very well contained and does not travel at a disruptive level, even to immediate neighbors.

Noise generated from the patio service area should be the only concern our neighbors and we will share. It is for this reason that we will only create seating and allow for a set number of patrons outside (25 patrons/2 staff), which will fall well below our anticipated fire code guidelines. As stated above, we will restrict the hours of operation on the patio, in particular during the workweek, in order to ensure our patrons do not disrupt neighbor's daily routines.

(iv) that any development substantially complies with the policies of this plan and in particular the objectives and policies as they relate to heritage resources.

As stated throughout this letter, we strongly assert that this development in particular not only will comply with the policies of this plan as they relate to heritage resources, but arguably offers a rare example of the exact type of development that most benefits the heritage program. This project offers an opportunity to support not only the complete restoration of the exterior and landscape of a historic home but also a considered restoration of the entire interior of the home as well.

Restoration and preservation of the inside of heritage buildings, has massive positive implications for increasing awareness and appreciation for the heritage value of our city. This project has the opportunity to share more than just an outward glimpse at a historic property, but rather encourages the community and visitors alike to engage in a narrated experience inside the home by service staff educated on the history of the home and community.

This type of project not only goes above and beyond the heritage policy objectives but also creates sustainable employment for several local residents and provides business to a large number of local food, beverage and service providers for years to come. If done successfully, this business project can result in a cementing of our historic home in a community that we understand values its heritage.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to ongoing discussions with city officials and community members in order to create a development agreement that adequately represents the interests of all parties involved in this process.

Kind Regards,

Myles

Shane

Tyson