

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair and Members of Districts 7 & 8 Planning Advisory Committee

From: Mitch Dickey, Planner

Date: December 11, 2013

Subject: Case 18565 - Request by Dino Capital Ltd to amend the South End Area Plan of the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy to redesignate properties located at 1034, 1042, 1050 and 1056 Wellington Street from Medium Density Residential to High Density Residential and to amend the height precinct, in order to allow consideration of a 58 unit building by development agreement.

Overview

As noted above, the applicant is proposing to construct a 58 unit building (consisting of two towers of 7 and 9 storeys atop a 3 storey podium) on Wellington Street. However, this proposal cannot be considered under any existing provision of the MPS and the applicant has therefore submitted a request to amend plan policy to allow a development agreement application. This request was addressed in a staff report (Attachment A) that was submitted to Regional Council. The report contains a detailed overview of the request and existing MPS policy. Regional Council on September 10, 2013 initiated the MPS amendment application and directed staff to undertake public consultation on the proposal.

Public Meeting

A public meeting to enable community input on this proposal was hosted by the PAC on November 20, 2013. The minutes of this meeting will be provided to PAC for its January meeting.

Input Sought from the Committee:

Pursuant to the Committee's Terms of Reference, feedback is sought from the committee relative to the applicant's request. The recommendation will be included in the staff report to Halifax and West Community Council.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Staff Report to Regional Council Attachment B: Submission by Applicant

Attachment A - Staff Report to Regional Council



P.O. Box 1749 Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3A5 Canada

> Item No. 11.1.12 Halifax Regional Council September 10, 2013

TO:	Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council
SUBMITTED BY:	Original signed by
	Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer
	Original Signed by
	Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
DATE:	August 23, 2013
SUBJECT:	Case 18565, MPS Amendment, 1034, 1042, 1050, & 1056 Wellington Street, Halifax

ORIGIN

Application by Dino Capital Ltd.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter, Part VIII, Planning & Development

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council **not initiate** the process to consider amending the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy for the lands located at 1034, 1042, 1050 and 1056 Wellington Street to enable a multi-unit residential building with increased density and height by development agreement.

BACKGROUND

Dino Capital Ltd. owns four properties, currently developed with single unit dwellings, located at 1034, 1042, 1050 and 1056 Wellington Street in Halifax. Development permits have been issued for additions to each building to enable as-of-right development of a total of 23 units with a total of 117 bedrooms on the four properties. As an alternative, the applicant is now seeking the ability to develop up to 58 units in a single multi-unit residential building. The proposed density would be comparable to that allowed within the existing R-2A zoning. The conceptual plan is for two towers of 7 and 9 storeys atop a shared 3 storey, townhouse style podium with resulting overall heights of 10 and 12 storeys. The individual units would be very large, all 2 and 3 bedroom, with an average floor area of 3700 square feet. However, this proposal cannot be considered under existing policy and zoning established in the Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS) for the South End Area due to the height, massing and number of units proposed. Attachment A contains the applicable policies. Dino Capital is, therefore, seeking an amendment to the MPS to enable consideration of their proposal.

Site Description and Surrounding Land Uses

The four subject properties are located on the west side of Wellington Street, as shown on Maps 1 and 2. There is one building on each property, each originally built as a single unit dwelling. The properties:

- have a total area of approximately 26,940 square feet and a total street frontage of about 210 feet.
- abut the HRM-owned Gorsebrook Park to the west and south, and to the north properties which contain 13 storey and 15 storey residential buildings; and
- face a high density five storey condominium building on the opposite side of Wellington Street, while the rest of the street is characterized by mixed medium density development consisting largely of three storey apartment buildings with some two unit dwellings. Along Inglis Street, on the same block, development consists of low density dwellings.

Designation and Zoning

The subject properties are located within Area 6 of the South End SMPS, which was adopted in 1983, and are:

- designated Medium Density Residential (MDR) as shown on Map 1. The designation is intended to support a mixed residential environment with both family-oriented units and smaller housing units in buildings not exceeding four storeys. Family units are defined as those with more than 800 square feet of floor area, and 50% of units in any building must be of this form. There are no density limits established within this designation;
- zoned R-2A (General Residential Conversion Zone) under the LUB as shown on Map 2. This zone seeks to implement the MPS intent by establishing limits on lot coverage, setbacks, building height, unit mix and size, and a cap of 14 units per building. There are no density limits established within this zone; and
- within the 35 foot height precinct as shown on Map 3. This height limit is established within the MPS for much of the nearby district.

DISCUSSION

MPS Amendment Process

Amendments to an MPS are generally not considered unless it can be shown that circumstances have changed since the document was adopted to the extent that the original land use policy is no longer appropriate. Site specific MPS amendment requests, in particular, require significant justification to be considered. To support the request to amend the MPS in this case, the applicant submits that conditions have changed considerably in the 30 years since the existing Medium Density Residential designation and 35 foot height limit were applied to the properties. The following reasons are given by the applicant:

- The properties are no longer used as single family homes and can be extensively redeveloped as high density housing under existing policy;
- That larger scale high density development has since taken place on the opposite side of Wellington Street;
- The context of the properties relative to the HDR designation, the presence of existing taller buildings of 13 and 15 storeys, the abutting park, and relative isolation from Low Density Residential properties justifies greater height and density;
- That regulation of urban design and architecture through use of a site specific development agreement policy is a better approach than simply limiting height as a means of ensuring quality development and protecting neighbourhoods;
- Although the 23 units which are permitted as of right meet the LUB definition of "family type units", it is more likely that these units will be student housing, and that allowing a single larger building would better enable the "family type" goal to be met; and
- Allowing an MPS change will result in assurances through the development agreement process of a better quality of development than can be achieved otherwise.

The application is addressed under three considerations, these being evaluation of development proposal, the amendment to the land use designation, and the amendment to the height precinct.

Evaluation of Development Proposal

The proposal is for up to 58 large units in a wholly residential building. The three storey building base has very high lot coverage, with minimal setbacks provided from the street and from adjacent properties. On top of the building base are two slender towers of 7 and 9 storeys, presenting an overall height of 10 and 12 storeys. A separation distance of approximately 30 feet is provided between the two towers. Despite the substantial height and massing, the proposed density of the development is relatively low due to the proposed units being very large with an average unit size of 3700 square feet. Staff has several concerns with this design:

- The lot coverage is excessive for a residential environment. There should be greater setbacks in order to provide substantive at-grade landscaped areas, and to provide visual and physical separations which keep the building from becoming dominant within the streetscape;
- The project height as proposed is excessive for this area despite the presence of two existing towers (of 13 and 15 storeys) to the north. These older towers with their stark architecture are not a positive factor within the streetscape, and additional tall buildings of similar height would not be appropriate; and

• The tower separation distance of only 30 feet is insufficient to break up the massing, and may create uncomfortably close distances between facing units and balconies.

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Amendment to Land Use Designation

No density limits are established in either the MPS or LUB regarding development in the MDR designation and R-2A Zone. The zone allows interior conversions, additions to existing buildings and infilling between buildings, provided that height and yard requirements are met, to a maximum of 14 units in any one building. There is no limit on the number of bedrooms per unit, which enables very large units with a high occupancy count. This regulatory framework enables substantial additions to each of the existing buildings on the site in order to create additional units. Development Permits have already been issued for a total of 23 units across four buildings with 117 bedrooms. Should the construction of the permitted development proceed, it could:

- include up to six bedrooms per unit, meeting the criteria of family type housing as required under the LUB; but possibly could be expanded to 201 bedrooms as-of-right;
- be used as student accommodation rather than family-type units;
- contain densities approaching that permitted within the R-3 (Multiple Dwelling) Zone which is applied within the High Density Residential designation;
- be built with on-site parking for only 16 vehicles provided; and
- result in a development that is not in character with the street. The ability for such high density development to take place in the MDR designation was not intended when the MPS was adopted.

A redesignation to High Density Residential (HDR) may be considered through the MPS amendment process. Through the R-3 Zone which is applied under the LUB to the HDR designation, a density limit of 250 persons per acre is imposed for as of right development. This limit is higher than what can be achieved under the existing R-2A zoning. There is justification to consider applying the HDR designation to the site, for the following reasons:

- The subject properties already abut the HDR designation to the north, where it was applied to two existing high rise towers. Directly across Wellington Street, the HDR designation was applied in the 1990's, to allow for two five storey buildings;
- The site backs onto Gorsebrook Park which, as an open space, is not as sensitive to the density of adjacent development; as is a residential area;
- The HDR designation does not automatically support taller buildings, as high density housing can be provided even in a low rise form that would be generally more compatible with the general neighbourhood;
- Council could, through the development agreement process, limit allowable density on this site to that permitted by the R-2A Zone; and
- Staff would not support applying the R-3 Zone to this site, as that would enable as of right development with very limited controls over the design and construction of the development. The development agreement process, however, could be enabled in MPS policy in order to establish clear site and building design requirements.

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Amendment to Height Precinct

The original 1983 intent of the MPS was to strictly limit the development of tall buildings within the South End. Allowable height limits for this area are generally restricted to 35 feet, as shown on Map 3. The subject properties are within the 35 foot height precinct while several mid and high rise residential properties, including the 13 and 15 storey towers immediately to the north, were also placed within the 35 foot height precinct and as a result became non-conforming structures. Lands directly across Wellington Street are developed with 5 storey buildings and have height precincts of 55 feet and 90 feet. Until 2004, allowable heights could be changed through the LUB amendment process. However, to ensure that any change to height precincts went through the MPS amendment process, height limits became entrenched in MPS policy in 2004. Amendment requests to height precincts are now to be evaluated based on the land use designations and on the criteria of Policy 7.0 (Attachment A).

Given the context of the properties to nearby development and to parkland, an increase in allowable building height may be justified where the density and design of a development can be controlled through a development agreement process. However, the height of the proposed development at 10 and 12 storeys is considered excessive. On this basis, initiation of the MPS amendment process is not supported. A building in the low to mid rise range is seen as being more appropriate in this area. Council may wish to consider initiating the process in order to allow community engagement to take place. This process could be used to determine what height, density and design may be appropriate for the properties as an alternative to development under the R-2A Zone. Staff suggest that development in the range of 4 to 7 storeys is likely the best alternative.

Conclusion

Staff do not support initiation of the MPS amendment process for the subject proposal. Staff consider the scale of the proposal, with towers of 10 and 12 storeys, to be excessive for the area. There is merit, however, in considering MPS amendments to allow the High Density Residential designation and to allow greater building height on the applicant's lands on the basis of their context within the existing community. Council could choose to initiate the MPS amendment process to enable consideration of a low to mid rise building form. In that event, the applicant would be required to prepare an alternate design concept if they wished to proceed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HRM costs associated with processing this planning application can be accommodated within the approved 2013/2014 operating budget for C310 Planning & Applications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Should Council choose to initiate the MPS amendment process for this proposal or to enable an alternate proposal, the *HRM Charter* requires that Council approve a public participation program when considering any amendment to an MPS. In February of 1997, Regional Council approved a public participation resolution which outlines the process to be undertaken for

proposed MPS amendments which are considered to be local in nature. This requires a public meeting be held, at a minimum, and any other measures deemed necessary to obtain public opinion.

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The proposed level of community engagement would be consultation, achieved through a public meeting and online forum early in the review process, as well as a public hearing before Regional Council could consider approval of any amendments.

Amendments to the MPS and LUB would potentially impact the following stakeholders: local residents, property owners, developers, community or neighbourhood organizations, other HRM business units, and other levels of government.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal meets all relevant environmental policies contained in the MPS.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1. Council may choose to refuse to initiate the MPS amendment process for this proposal. A decision of Council to not initiate the potential amendments is not appealable to the N. S. Utility & Review Board as per Section 262 of the *HRM Charter*. This is the staff recommendation.
- 2. Council may choose to initiate the MPS amendment process for the proposal. This is not recommended for the reasons discussed above. A decision of Council to initiate the potential amendments is not appealable to the N.S. Utility & Review Board as per Section 262 of the *HRM Charter*. Should Council choose to initiate the MPS amendment process, they should request staff to follow the public participation program for the MPS amendment process as approved by Council in February 1997.
- 3. Council may choose to initiate the MPS amendment process and provide direction that only low to mid-rise building form may be considered. A decision of Council to initiate the potential amendments is not appealable to the N.S. Utility & Review Board as per Section 262 of the *HRM Charter*. Should Council choose to initiate the MPS amendment process, they should request staff to follow the public participation program for the MPS amendment process as approved by Council in February 1997.

ATTACHMENTS

Map 1	Generalized Future Land Use
Map 2	Zoning
Map 3	Height Precincts
Attachment A Attachment B	Excerpts from the Halifax (South End Area) MPS Conceptual Building Rendering

A copy of this report can be obtained online at http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-Law Area

18 July2013

Case 17156

file: T:/work/planning/Holly/offical_maps/casemaps/Case_18565 (HK)

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of

any representation on this plan.

Attachment A Excerpts from the Halifax (South End Area) MPS

- 1.1 Residential neighbourhoods shall be maintained and expanded by encouraging retention and rehabilitation of existing structures and units and by permitting new stock through infill and complementary redevelopment.
- 1.1.1 Several forms of infill housing shall be encouraged by the City as appropriate to the diverse physical characteristics of the individual districts and neighbourhoods.
- 1.1.1.1 Forms of infill housing which shall be permitted in the South End include:
 - (a) the interior conversion of existing structures;
 - (b) additions to existing structures, either through infilling between existing structures or additions to the rear of existing structures;
 - (c) building on vacant lots in the forms prescribed by this Section of the Plan; and
 - (d) low-rise housing within the densities prescribed by this Section of the Plan.
- 1.1.1.2 The Zoning By-law shall further define elements of scale, proportion, setback and use consistent with the policies of this Plan to ensure compatibility with the districts and neighbourhoods.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this Plan, the City shall further define residential environments as comprising three categories:
 - (i) Low-Density Residential;
 - (ii) Medium-Density Residential; and
 - (iii) High-Density Residential.
- 1.4.1 Areas shown as "Low-Density Residential" on the Future Land Use Map of this Plan shall be regarded as areas for family-type housing accommodation. All new residential developments in these areas shall be detached single-family dwellings.
- 1.4.1.1 In low-density residential areas conversion of existing housing stock shall be permitted, provided that:
 - (i) a maximum number of dwelling units in any building shall be three;
 - (ii) family-type dwelling units shall be at least 1,000 square feet in floor area;
 - (iii) where the conversion is to two units (that is, adding an additional dwelling unit), one of the units shall be a family-type dwelling unit; and
 - (iv) where the conversion is to three units (that is, adding two units), two of the three units shall be family-type dwelling units.
- 1.4.2 Areas shown as Medium-Density Residential on the Future Land Use Map of this Plan shall be regarded as residential environments which provide a mix of family and non-family dwelling units in buildings of not more than four storeys. For such areas, the City shall amend its Zoning By-law in accordance with Policies 1.4.2 to 1.4.2.3 inclusive. In any building a minimum of 50 percent of the units shall be family-type dwelling units.

- 1.4.2.1 The forms of infill housing permitted in Medium-Density Residential Areas shall include:
 - (a) interior conversion;
 - (b) additions to existing structures;
 - (c) infilling between existing structures; and
 - (d) small-scale development on vacant lots.
- 1.4.2.2 In Medium-Density Residential areas, family-type dwelling units shall be a minimum of 800 square feet.
- 1.4.2.3 In Medium-Density Residential areas, the City shall not permit any building to be converted or added to such that more than 14 dwelling units are contained within the building.
- 1.4.3 Areas shown as High-Density Residential on the Future Land Use Map of this Plan shall be regarded as primarily non-family residential areas.
- 1.4.3.1 In High-Density Residential areas the City shall amend its Zoning By-law to require a minimum of one family-type housing unit for every two non-family units in each building and the minimum size for such family units shall be 800 square feet.
- 1.4.3.3 The City shall review the open space, angle control and density requirements of the Zoning By-law, and shall consider such alternative control mechanisms as lot coverage, ratio of floor area to site area, and setback requirements for siting of apartment buildings, provided that the intents of this Plan will be furthered.
- 1.4.3.4 Pursuant to Policy 1.4.3.3 and within six months of the approval of this Plan, the City shall confirm or amend, as appropriate, such controls.
- 7.0 Height Precincts shall be established by policy in accordance with the general intent for landuse control as defined by the policies of this Plan. These heights are based on:
 - (i) the forms of development and distribution of land uses identified on the Generalized Future Land Use Map of this Plan;
 - (ii) the necessity to ensure that appropriate development of any given lot may be secured within the policies of this Plan; and
 - (iii) to fulfill the policy intent that quality residential, commercial, institutional and industrial environments are maintained and encouraged without undue impact on adjacent land use.
- 7.0.5 Any change in the allowable height or any increase in height by a development agreement as shown on Maps 2.1 to 2.8 inclusive, except pursuant to Policies 7.2.1.1, 7.5.2.1, 7.8.2.1 and 7.8.2.2, may be permitted only by amendment to the Municipal Planning Strategy.



Attachment B - Submission by Applicant

Plan Amendment Submission

1034 to 1056 Wellington Street

From

Dino Capital Limited

5 July 2013

(revised 08 August 2013)

Summary

This is a submission to request the consideration of a plan amendment to permit the development of a condominium building on a property to be created from the lots at 1034, 1042, 1050 and 1056 Wellington Street, PIDs 00053512, 00053520, 00053538 and 00053546 respectively. There has been a change in circumstances in the 30 years since the South End Secondary Planning Strategy Medium Density Residential designation and R-2A zoning were applied to the site and we have proposed a development which is consistent with good planning principles.

Site Information

As a consolidated lot, the property will have 213.9 ft. frontage, 125 ft. depth and contain 26,959 sq. ft. in lot area.

The property is bounded on the west and south by Gorsebrook Park, on the north by a 13 storey multiple unit residential building and Wellington Street on the east. Across Wellington is a 5 storey multiple unit residential building and two smaller rental buildings.

The neighbourhood is a mix of low density dwellings fronting on Inglis Street, the major open space of Gorsebrook Park, mid and higher rise multiple unit residential buildings and low rise, medium density converted dwellings.

The property is within District 6 of the South End Secondary Planning Strategy and is designated Medium Density Residential. The housing on Inglis Street is designated Low Density Residential, the open space lands to the west and south are designated Open Space, and the lands occupied by the multiple unit residential buildings to the east and north are designated High Density Residential.

The area is subject to a 35 ft. height precinct save the 5 storey multiple unit residential building lot which has a mix of 35, 55 and 90 ft. height precincts.

The site abuts the Urban Core as defined in the 2011-16 HRM Economic Strategy.

The site is currently occupied by four vacant buildings. The owner has received Development Permits which will permit the development of 23 dwelling units in four buildings meeting the R-2A controls.

Proposal

We understand that amendments to the MPS are not routine undertakings and Council is under no obligation to consider such requests. Amendments should only be considered when there is reason to believe that there has been a change in circumstances since the MPS was adopted or reviewed or where circumstances are significantly different from the situations that the Plan anticipated. Moreover, we acknowledge that an amendment to the MPS require general consistency with good planning principles before it can be adopted.

We offer the following rationale to demonstrate that there has been a change and that the proposal follows good planning principles.

Change

The property's current Medium Density Residential designation and zone, R-2A, was the City of Halifax's reaction in 1981 to the perception of high-rise multiple unit residential buildings in the area and as an alternate plan and development control mechanism to provide a reasonable level of density in the Plan area. The R-2A zone permitted the development of medium density housing in the form of low-rise, infill attached to existing housing. In 1999, the zone's controls were modified to restrict the form of development that the zone was permitting.

As evidenced by the property owner's Development Permits, the R-2A zone will permit the development of four multiple unit buildings through additions to the existing buildings on this site. The development permits grant approval for a total of 23 dwelling units, including 201 bedrooms and 16 parking spaces. This would be a higher density then the condominium buildings which we are proposing for the site.

Thirty two years after the adoption of the R-2A zone, there has been in a change in the way HRM residents, elected officials and staff view urban design, quality of architecture and development controls for development in the Regional Centre. The plans for the Regional Centre are intended to deliver a new approach to create dense Regional Centre growth and investment at lower cost to HRM and the environment and to deliver development scaled and designed compatibly with Regional Centre neighbourhoods. HRM by Design has raised the level of awareness of the quality of the built form and has confirmed a vision and a set of principles and tools to guide development in the Regional Centre. These principles include:

- Sustainable
 - Design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability; and
 - Create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.
- High Quality
 - New development should be of high quality and compatible with other high quality developments
 - Promote high quality architecture and urban design that respects great heritage resources, including neighbourhoods.
- Heritage and Culture
 - Ensure lasting legacies (buildings, open spaces and streets) are maintained and new ones are created
- Growth & Change
 - Every new building should contribute to the betterment of the public realm
- Process
 - Foster a culture of support for the building / construction of quality urban design;
 - Recognize and reward design excellence

These principles and tools are considerably different and more sophisticated than the policy and regulation of the early 1980's as described below. We submit that after a passing of 30 years, HRM by Design has advanced HRM to a new development control regime, has created heighted awareness and desire for good design among citizens, elected officials and professional staff, has stimulated design professionals to create built forms with much more design sensitivity and has changed the perception of taller buildings.

Change – Awareness of Good Urban Design

We are of the opinion that the citizens of HRM are becoming more aware of urban design issues and in particular, there is demand for high quality building design. This has recently been advocated by the HRM by Design extensive public engagement process which led to forms based development controls with qualitative assessment by a Design Review Committee in the Downtown. We submit that this approach, forms based quantitative controls and a qualitative design assessment, is better able to assess the neighbourhood context, define a building envelope and ensure excellent urban design and architectural detailing to create better built form than the current MDR designation and R-2A controls.

Another change brought about by the HRM by Design process is a heightened awareness of good urban design principles among design professionals. The general public's perception of mid to high rise residential buildings in the past was in part based on their unimaginative design, slab form and lack of attention to the building's presence at the street. High rise was equated with poor design.

Such is not the case now. Many current buildings, built and in design, reflect a new ethic of quality design within the context of the neigbourhood, with particular emphasis at street level. From examination of this design ethic, it's clear that a process which would permit new building forms not restricted by 35 feet of height, can provide strong, compatible, exciting additions to the neighbourhood fabric. This has not always been the experience with by-right R-2A development.

HRM by Design has introduced a design vocabulary to the discussion of new development in the Centre. Base, middle and top, streetwall, articulation, all are common terms used when referring to the design of a building. Citizens, elected officials and staff are paying attention to these elements and their contribution to superior design outcomes.

Change – Family Type Accommodation

Both the current South End Plan and the Regional Plan advocate for family type accommodation in the Plan Area. However, the R-2A controls permits, as evidenced by the Development Permits issued for the subject property, units with 2, 3, 4, 5 or multiple bedrooms each. Some of these units may accommodate families; however, a more likely outcome is an group of single persons living together in one dwelling unit. Using a stricter development control possible through this Plan Amendment, the neighbourhood will benefit from 36 to 58 family type units which have a significantly higher potential of being inhabited by families and thereby further the plan policies.

Change – Development Controls

Another change, again related to the HRM by Design initiative, is the availability of a new development control regime for multiple unit residential buildings. In the South End Secondary Planning Strategy, a policy required the City of Halifax to review the open space, angle control and density requirements and consider alternative control mechanisms. No change occurred and the open space, angle control and density requirements remain essentially the same as they were in 1981. Now, forms based controls are being introduced for by-right development in downtown Halifax and in development agreements, as evidenced by the use of forms based controls in the Irishtown Road development, to guide building massing and streetwall height. This development control method is much more sensitive to the neighbourhood context; it provides for appropriate density while protecting the character and scale of the neighbourhood.

It is interesting to note that the site on the east side of Wellington Street used a rudimentary form of forms based controls by incorporating stepped 35, 55 and 90 foot height controls on the site.

Change – Tall Buildings

Height of buildings has been an issue in the past and continues to be. The MDR designation and R-2A zone were established, in part, as a reaction to taller buildings. Taller buildings can be either a negative or a positive force depending on their design and location. Taller buildings cast longer shadows than low to mid-rise buildings and they can sometime create harsh wind conditions, which can impact the comfort and safety of pedestrians at street level. In addition, tall buildings can be detrimental in terms of visual impact if they are located in the middle of a primarily low-rise neighbourhood or if they have large floor plates and a simple rectangular shape.

On the positive side, tall buildings can be beneficial to their local environment by providing a strong edge to a public square, plaza, park or wide street or boulevard. Tall buildings can also provide a positive visual impact to the urban landscape if they are located in areas that already have tall buildings, if they possess interesting architecture through the use of articulation, which adds variety to the building surfaces and breaks up the massing of the building, and if the upper storeys promote visual interest in the urban skyline by incorporating an ornamental or signature top. Furthermore, the shadow and wind impacts attributable to tall buildings can often be mitigated through design. Firstly, tall slender buildings, while casting longer shadows than low to mid-rise buildings, may have less of an impact than mid-rise buildings with larger floor plates, which cast wide shadows and therefore tend to impact a larger area for a longer period of time. Secondly, designs in which the building steps back and gets narrower as its height increases have a tendency to substantially reduce the wind impact at street level.

The current zone and designation does not permit the introduction of taller buildings, above 35 ft. in height. However, this constrains design professionals and removes the opportunity to create interesting built form in taller buildings.

Good Planning Principles

In addition to identifying a change as above, the proposed development must also follow good planning principles. The evidence for that is below.

The Regional Plan advocates for density on Peninsula Halifax to make use of existing infrastructure and services while respecting the neighbourhood context. As noted above, the current proposal will create comparable density to that which is permitted by the current Development Permits on the site. The proposed 36 to 58 dwelling units will create 80 to 130 theoretical persons, based on an average person per dwelling count of 2.25 persons, an accepted standard. The proponent intends to sell the condominium units to families who currently live in large dwellings in Peninsula Halifax and who want to 'down-size' but maintain a substantial living area in their homes, and, be freed of home maintenance responsibilities. The homes which they sell will be occupied by new owners and all will contribute to more density on the Peninsula.

The proposal is also consistent with the HRM Economic Development Strategy's short term actions for the Regional Centre. It will contribute to rebalancing the Regional Plan's current population distribution to be more sustainable so as to increase density in the urban core. The site abuts the Urban Core.

Parking - The site will provide approximately 84 parking spaces in two underground levels. This is a reasonable ratio of parking considering the number of proposed condominium units, and, the site's location and the ability to walk or take transit to employment and services. In contrast, the 23 unit (201 bedrooms) development permitted by the R-2A development requires 16 parking spaces, a ratio of 1 parking space for each 7 bedrooms. Because of the nature of the occupancy of the units by single persons, some of whom may not have a vehicle to park, there may not be an issue with excessive demand and competition for on-street parking. However, if there is competition, it may be a disruption to the neighbourhood.

Traffic - The attached traffic impact statement demonstrates that the existing street network will not experience a change in the level of service from the traffic flow generated from the proposed development. As noted in the report, the access to the two underground parking access doors also provides good visibility for drivers exiting the parking garage.

Design - As noted above, in conformance to HRM's awareness of good design, the building both reflects the neighbourhood context, provides a quality design incorporating the urban design and architectural principles of HRM by Design, in particular detailing at street level, articulation of the mid levels and an interesting building top. The building design reflects the height of current buildings in the neighbourhood, in particular the 13 and 15 storey buildings to the north, the 5 storey building across the street and lower rise buildings. As noted above, the 5 storey building site has the ability to extend to 9 or 10 storeys (within the 90 foot height limit). The 12 storey portion of the building is comparable in height to the two adjacent buildings. The 10 storey portion steps down from the taller portion to introduce a graduation of height towards the abutting open space and the rear yards of the Inglis Street properties beyond. As well, the building introduces a strong streetwall break at 3 storeys to provide a comfortable perceived height for the pedestrian at street level and also to articulate the front of the

building. Finally, the top stories of each tower have a smaller penthouse floor plate with a completely glazed exterior and an interesting roof form which finishes the building with a light and open top. This development seeks neither to be the lowest or the highest building in its immediate neighbourhood but rather to serve as a transition piece that blends with its surroundings.

The success of any project can often be attributed to how it interacts with its neighbourhood and the pedestrian experience. It is important that a building and its site be gracious with space, provide visual interest, be well detailed, and that the overall mass be properly scaled so as not to be imposing. Depending on the program and scale, variety in ground level treatment can work to engage the pedestrian in a meaningful way.

This project is conceived as a residential condominium building, on a residential street, with large setbacks from the front property line (ranging from 6'-0"- 18'-0") and street curb (21'-0"- 33'-0"). Open space such as this gives the pedestrian green space, sunlight, and reduced wind velocities. To help reduce the visual length of the building the proposed project provides two separate towers that are architecturally joined together with a strong base to create a unified rhythm to the facade. The base of the building is given an architectural masonry treatment - different from the middle and upper portion of the building. This helps create a streetwall element that is materially and visually different than what is above while maintaining a comfortable relationship to the street environment frequented by passersby. This visual break again reduces the mass of the building and helps blend the project with its varied architectural surroundings.

The building provides another important urban design principle, enclosure of public open space. The building continues the enclosure provided by the 13 and 15 storey buildings to Gorsebrook Park and provides a strong edge to the portion of Gorsebrook Park abutting the site to the south. This edge will follow CPTED natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement principles to provide additional security to person using this portion of the park because of the additional 'eyes' on the park.

Wind and Shadow - See letters from Michael Napier Architects



5540 Kaye Street Halifax, Nova Scotia B3K 1Y5

> Tel 902 455 5522 Fax 902 455 5523

08 August, 2013

Planning Applications – Community Development Bayers Road Centre 7071 Bayers Road, Suite 2005 Halifax, NS

Attention: Kelly Denty

Re: Development Agreement Application – Proposed Apartment Building Development, 1034-1056 Wellington Street, Halifax, NS

Shadow Impact Statement

The proposed project is situated on the consolidated lots comprising 1034-1056 Wellington Street, Halifax. The site is currently occupied by four vacant residential buildings. Proposed is a new condominium project comprised of a 3-storey podium with 2 buildings sitting atop (one at 7 storeys above and the other at 9 above - each with a penthouse over) with between a total 38 and 58 residential units with a mixture of unit types, approximately +/-84 underground parking spaces, and indoor and outdoor residential amenity space.

Wellington Street is a two-way street that connects South to North from Inglis Street to South Street. The street has concrete curbs and sidewalks on both sides of the street. The proposed development includes approximately 65 meters of street frontage on the West side of Wellington and is located approximately 70 metres North of Inglis Street.

The property is bounded on the West and South by Gorsebrook Park, on the North by a 13 storey multiple unit residential building and Wellington Street on the East. Across Wellington is a 5 storey multiple unit residential building and several smaller 3-4 storey rental buildings. The neighbourhood is a mix of low density single family dwellings fronting on Inglis Street, mid and higher rise multiple unit residential buildings and low rise, medium density converted dwellings all surrounding the major open space of Gorsebrook Park.

The building extends 3 storeys above grade on Wellington Street, stepping back above the 3rd floor where it changes form to be two independent towers at 10 and 12 storeys on the southern and northern sides of the podium respectively. Each tower is capped by a penthouse that is stepped in on all sides. On the East side (Wellington Street), the primary building face (Levels 1, 2, and 3) is comprised of a series of undulating volumes mimicking townhouse proportions. These faces are set back varying distances from the property line (6'-0" to 8'-0") with an additional step back (8'-0 - 10'-0") on the upper storeys (Levels 4-10 and 4-14 respectively). Along the West side (rear of the building) the facade is broken into five sections which are set back various distances from the property line ranging from 4'-0" at the corners, 10'-0" in the flanking middle sections and 23'-0" in the center section. On the Northern and Southern ends of the building, the primary building faces are set back 0'-0", 4'-0" and 6'-0" varying again with an undulating facede.

The effects of the buildings' shadows on the adjacent neighborhood were analyzed through

computer modeling. Four observation periods were recorded through time animation. Three times were analyzed at Winter Solstice (December 21st) and Summer Solstice (June 21st) - the least and most intrusive time periods respectively. Three times were analyzed at the Spring and Fall Equinox (March 21st and September 22nd) - the mid-points in between the Solstice. All times noted are Atlantic Standard Time.

On the Spring and Fall Equinox, early morning shadows created by the proposed building are cast across the adjacent Gorsebrook Park fields from sunrise until early morning and have completely moved off the fields by approximately 9:15am. At approximately 8:45am the shadow of the proposed 12-storey building starts to touch the perimeter of the existing adjacent circular 13 storey residential tower to the North. The shadow falls on the lower 2-3 storeys until approximately 1:30pm when it leaves the tower altogether. At 1:00pm the shadow of the 12-storey building is beginning to touch the buildings across Wellington Street while the shadow of the 10-storey building has not yet reached the base of the 5-storey building opposite it. By 3:30pm the shadows are cast over the two smaller scale residential buildings and over less than 1/2 of the adjacent 5 storey residential building across the street. By 4:30pm only one of these smaller buildings is cast in shadow and still less than half of the 5-storey building to the East is affected. The existing 5-storey building will remain partly in shadow until sunset which occurs at 6:07pm (Source for sunrise and sunset times: SketchUp).

At the Winter Solstice, December 21st, the sun rises at 7:53am and the proposed building casts shadow to the Northeast. In the early minutes of daylight the shadows cast by the proposed building, and existing homes along Inglis, cast shadows over Gorsebrook field. At 8:30am the proposed building casts shadow on the Western side of the adjacent circular building. At 8:45am the shadows cast onto the field by the homes along Inglis have receded to less than one-half the way across the field while the shadows cast by the proposed building has left. In the early morning the proposed building casts shadow on the Western side of the circular tower to the North and on the lower 2 storeys of the Eastern side as well. At 2:15pm the shadow of the proposed building is no longer affecting its neighbour. By this time, shadows are being cast across Wellington Street on the low-rise residential buildings and just touching the edge of the 5-storey multi-unit building. At 4:00pm, just before the 4:30pm sunset, the shadow lies over the 3 small buildings and about 1/3 of the 5-storey building.

On the Summer Solstice, June 21st, the sun rises at 4:34am. The proposed building casts partial shadow over the Gorsebrook field and in turn, is cast partially in shadow by the existing properties on the opposite side of Wellington Street in the early morning hours. By 8:00am shadows on the field are limited to their Eastern borders and by 9:00am no shadow remains on the playing field. The high summer sun means shadows are short and no impact to other properties is felt until mid-afternoon when at 2:00pm the shadows begin to skirt the edges of properties on the opposite side of Wellington. Starting at this time, a shadow begins to be cast upon the Southern-most low-scale residential property across the street and by 4:30pm the shadows have moved away from this building as well. By 5:00pm the shadow is cast over most of the facade of the 5-storey residential building where it will remain until sunset at 7:57pm.

The proposed building will contribute little to the diminishment of solar penetration to the built environment in this neighbourhood. More importantly the effects on the adjacent recreational field will have no impact during the hours of maximum usage.

Regards, **ORIGINAL SIGNED**

Michael Napier NSAA AANB MRAIC



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08 August, 2013

Planning Applications – Community Development Bayers Road Centre 7071 Bayers Road, Suite 2005 Halifax, NS

Attention: Kelly Denty

Re: Development Agreement Application – Proposed Apartment Building Development, 1034-1056 Wellington Street, Halifax, NS

Wind Impact Statement

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The building extends 3 storeys above grade on Wellington Street, stepping back above the 3rd floor where it changes form to be two independent towers at 10 and 12 storeys on the southern and northern sides of the podium respectively. Each tower is capped by a penthouse that is stepped in on all sides. On the East side (Wellington Street), the primary building face (Levels 1, 2, and 3) is comprised of a series of undulating volumes mimicking townhouse proportions. These faces are set back varying distances from the property line (6'-0" to 8'-0") with an additional step back (8'-0 - 10'-0") on the upper storeys (Levels 4-10 and 4-14 respectively). Along the West side (rear of the building) the facade is broken into five sections which are set back various distances from the property line ranging from 4'-0" at the corners, 10'-0" in the flanking middle sections and 23'-0" in the center section. On the Northern and Southern ends of the building, the primary building faces are set back 0'-0", 4'-0" and 6'-0" varying again with an undulating facede.

Prevailing wind conditions were considered during the preliminary design phase of this project and the proposed design elements were influenced by the effects of wind on the building and the surrounding area. The shape of the building is highly articulated to minimize the effects of flat slabs, harsh corners and downwashing. There are two at-grade entrances which are well protected for residents, and setbacks above break up the massing and minimize laminar flow. These interventions will also aid in reducing wind events for pedestrians on the adjacent sidewalk.

Streetwall Channeling occurs when wind flows at lower levels along streets and between parallel adjacent building faces. Given the lower stature of the 5-storey building across the street, the proposal's large setback from the street and the abundant tree canopies along the street, any low level winds that might concentrate in this area will fan out and diffuse resulting in minimum impact to the site and its' immediate surroundings.

Downwashing Flow occurs when wind strikes tall vertical surfaces and cascades, accelerating to the ground below. This is exacerbated when the vertical surface continues unabated to the sidewalk below. To mitigate this phenomenon the building has been designed with multiple step-backs and extrusions, and landscaped terraces that not only visually breakup the overall mass of the building but also minimize the ability of the wind to channel down the façade ensuring that this downwashing flow does not reach pedestrians.

Prevailing winds primarily enter the site from the Northwest quadrant in the fall/winter (November-April) and the South-west quadrant in the spring/summer (May-October). Winds from the Northwest will most commonly come across the open space of Gorsebrook Park before reaching the rear of the building. Winds that encounter the adjacent 13-storey 'round' residential building are anticipated to move around the sides of this building without dramatically affecting their flow before they reach the proposed development.

Although the landscaped podium that encircles the sides and front of the building on the northwest side is not accessible to the public, for the comfort of the residents, balconies have been wrapped around the building edges to provide protected outdoor areas for residents wherever possible. The northern corner of the building and the 3rd floor setback physically blocks the wind (see Downwashing above) from being able to run down the face of the building and out onto the street that runs perpendicular to this face.

Any winds arriving from the Northeast will encounter the 12 storey tower first which will, in some instances, provide protection to the shorter, adjacent Southern tower. Given that higher velocity winds typically arrive at higher altitudes the absence of a parallel wall opposite the 12 storey tower (levels 10-12) will allow these high level winds to dissipate. Lower velocity winds may travel between the two at the lower level and these facades features protected balconies and terraces in order to aid in the disbursement of laminar flow and to provide additional protection for residents. Should these lower altitude winds be strong on stormy days the podium will aid in mitigating transfer of these winds to the sidewalk below thus protecting pedestrians along Wellington from feeling the adverse effects of these winds.

During summer months when wind approaches the site from the Southwest, it will come to the building from over the top of the adjacent residential properties along Inglis Street where it will then encounter the existing open right of way which provides access to Gorsebrook Park. This well vegetated open space will aid in wind coming from the Southwest to disperse and slow down before reaching the Southern face of the building.

Although wind does not typically approach the front (Wellington Street side) of the building directly except in major storm events from the Southeast, the building façade has been broken down, bumped out, and stepped back numerous times to mitigate any increase in increased wind velocity as well as to provide comfort for residents and pedestrians. For added protection the entrances have been recessed.

In summary, at various times and under certain prevailing wind directions, Halifax will, as always, present wind challenges for pedestrians. We feel that the proposed project will create a built form that will not add appreciably to the wind conditions in this area of Halifax or adversely affect pedestrians on Wellington Street or participants on the sports field to the rear of the project.

Regards,

Michael Napier NSAA AANB MRAIC











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