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Heritage Advisory Committee
February 27, 2013

TO: Chair and Members of the Heritage Advisory Committee
Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Brad Anguish, Director, Community & Recreation Services

DATE: January 31, 2013

SUBJECT: **Case H00374: Substantial Alteration to 5270 Morris Street, Halifax – Story-Wilson House, a registered municipal heritage property**

ORIGIN

Application by Jonathan Legate

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Heritage Property Act

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve the proposed substantial alteration to the Story-Wilson House as outlined in Attachment A of this report.

BACKGROUND

The property at 5270 Morris Street, Halifax, is a registered municipal heritage property (Map 1). The subject property contains a single residential dwelling known as the Story-Wilson House. On October 24, 2012, Jonathan Legate submitted an application for a substantial alteration to the heritage property on behalf of the property owners. The proposed addition will be attached to the rear of the existing main building. In accordance with Section 17 of the Nova Scotia *Heritage Property Act*, any substantial alteration to the municipal heritage building requires the approval of Regional Council.

History and Heritage Value

The *Heritage Property Act* defines "heritage value" as "*the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present or future generations and embodied in character-defining materials, forms, locations, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings.*" The Story-Wilson House is valued for its architecture and historical association with its occupants. The house was built circa 1834 by land owner Samuel Story. In 1863, the property was purchased by Margaret Cunard, the widow of Edward Cunard who was the younger brother of the internationally famous Samuel Cunard, founder of the Cunard Steamship Line, and a master mariner on several of his brother's ships. Margaret Cunard lived in the house with her daughter, Emily, and son, George, for many years.

The Story-Wilson House is an excellent example of the Halifax House style, a term that has been locally accepted and applied to a house style that was common between 1820 and 1900 in Halifax and is a derivative of the Georgian style. The Story-Wilson House exhibits many of the traits of the Halifax House style including a symmetrical three bay façade with a side hall plan.

Character-Defining Elements

Under the *Heritage Property Act*, "character-defining elements" of a heritage building are defined as "*the materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings that contribute to heritage value and that must be sustained in order to preserve heritage value.*" The following is a list of character-defining elements relating to the architectural significance of the Story-Wilson House:

- form and massing;
- three bay front façade with side hall plan;
- truncated gable roof;
- side chimney with seven pots;
- sill fascia on side elevation;
- two Scottish dormers in the front and rear;
- wood moulding on all windows;
- hooded windows on first storey façade;
- flush column detail with capitals on the corners of front façade;
- large cornice on front façade;
- double glazed door with entablature, columns with capitals, and transom light;
- wood shingle cladding.

Heritage Building Conservation Standards

Council's decision relative to the substantial alteration of registered heritage properties is to be considered within the context of the Heritage Building Conservation Standards. The Heritage Building Conservation Standards have been used by the Municipality on an informal basis since 1996 to evaluate substantial alterations to heritage properties. With the approval of amendments to By-law H-200 in 2009, the Conservation Standards became duly adopted and are to be used when evaluating proposed alterations to registered heritage buildings throughout the region. The Conservation Standards ensure that careful consideration is given and that different strategies may apply in different contexts to better integrate new development with existing heritage buildings.

DISCUSSION

Proposal

The proposed development involves an addition to the rear of the Story-Wilson House as shown in Attachment A. The rear of the building (Attachment B) is not visible from any street. The proposed addition will be attached to the rear of the existing main structure. It will have a footprint of 327 square feet in area and serve multiple functions including sunroom, family room, and mud room entry. Visible from the private rear yard, the proposed addition will include modern design elements, such as glass doors and sliding glass curtain walls, and it will also include features associated with a traditional carriage house.

Heritage Building Conservation Standards

The proposal has been evaluated against HRM's Heritage Building Conservation Standards (Attachment C) and staff offer the following comments relative to the applicable standards:

1. **Integrity of Original Structure:** The existing rear door, along with its sidelight, will be removed and converted into a large doorway to access an internal room. The width of the doorway will be unaltered. The door and sidelight are not original to the building. The applicant indicates that they were installed in the 1980s.

Two wooden framed windows on the ground floor level at the rear of the building will be removed. These two window openings in the brick and stone walls will be converted into doorways. The two wooden framed windows will be preserved and reincorporated as interior features in the rear addition. The window openings will be made taller, not wider, to accommodate the doorways by removing the concrete window sills and cutting into the stone foundation by approximately 1.5' below grade. Therefore, the windows could be returned to their original location in the future if the addition were to be removed. In the interior, steps will be installed to access these doorways. Despite the changes to the rear of the existing building, the integrity of the original structure will be maintained.

2. **Compatible Addition:** The proposed rear addition will comprise a modern design, including glass curtain walls on the rear and west side elevation. The proposed rear addition will also integrate design features associated with a traditional three bay carriage house, as this was a common landscape feature around the time the building was constructed. The proposed addition will not create a false sense of historical development as it will be distinguished as a modern structure that incorporates traditional features.

Conclusion

The proposed addition is modest in scale and it will not be visible from any public street. It will appear as a modern structure that incorporates traditional features from the time that the heritage building was constructed. The proposed changes to two wood-framed windows at the rear of the building will be minor and will be preserved and may be reinstalled in their original location in the future. Therefore, staff recommend that the Heritage Advisory Committee recommends that Regional Council approve the substantial alteration to 5270 Morris Street, Halifax, as contained in Attachment A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HRM costs associated with processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2012/13 operating budget for C310 Planning & Applications. HRM is not responsible for renovation costs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through the HRM website and public accessibility to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting and Regional Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No concerns identified.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Heritage Advisory Committee may recommend that Council approve the proposed substantial alteration to the Story-Wilson House as outlined in this report. This is staff's recommendation.
2. The Heritage Advisory Committee may recommend that Council approve the proposed substantial alteration to the Story-Wilson House with conditions or modifications and in doing so should provide reasons for the conditions based on applicable conservation standards.
3. The Heritage Advisory Committee may recommend that Council refuse the proposed substantial alteration to the Story-Wilson House as outlined in this report. The *Heritage Property Act* does not include appeal provisions for decisions of Council regarding substantial alterations, however, the owners would be permitted to proceed with their proposal three years from the date of the application. This is not the recommended course of action.

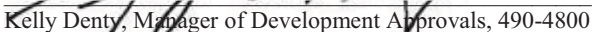
ATTACHMENTS

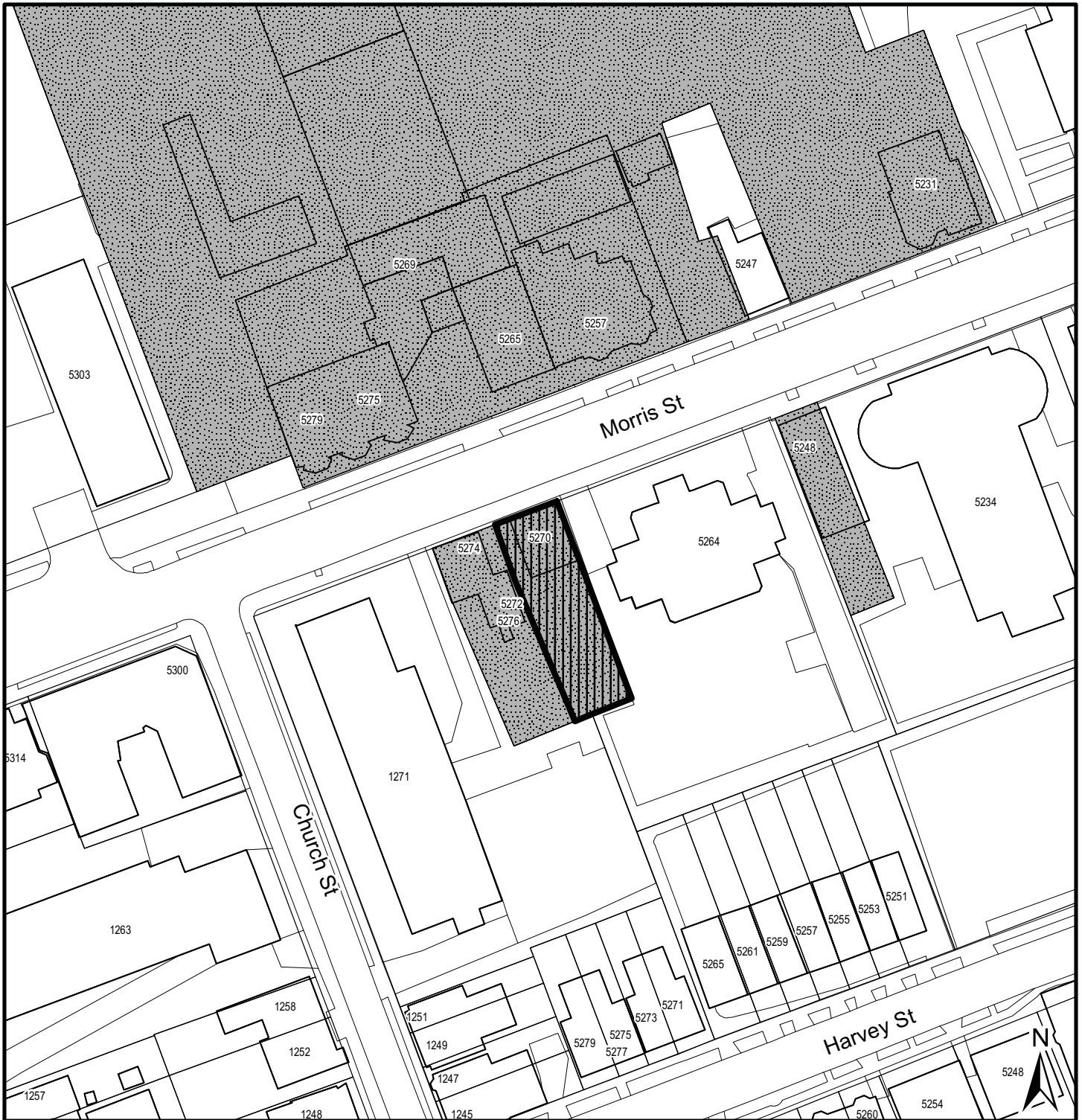
Map 1: Location Map – 5270 Morris Street, Halifax
Attachment A: Plan and Elevation Drawings of Proposed Addition
Attachment B: Photographs of Property
Attachment C: HRM Heritage Building Conservation Standards, By-law H-200

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Seamus McGreal, Heritage Planner, 490-5113

Original Signed

Report Approved by: 
Kelly Denty, Manager of Development Approvals, 490-4800



Map 1 - Location

5270 Morris Street
Halifax

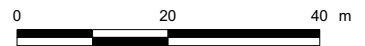


Subject property



Registered heritage property

Halifax Plan Area



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.

ATTACHMENT B

PHOTOGRAPHS OF PROPERTY



Figure 1: Existing view from rear yard (2012)



Figure 2: Two ground floor windows at the rear to be removed (2012)



Figure 3: Rear door and sidelight to be removed (2012)



Figure 4: Enclosed rear doorway that was removed (2004)

ATTACHMENT C

HRM HERITAGE BUILDING CONSERVATION STANDARDS

The following standards are used to assess all applications for property alteration and financial assistance. The historic character of a heritage resource is based on the assumptions that (a) the historic materials and features and their unique craftsmanship are of primary importance and that (b) in consequence, they are to be retained, and restored to the greatest extent possible, not removed and replaced with materials and features which appear to be historic, but which are in fact new.

1. The property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building, its site and environment.
2. The historic character of the property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize the property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding hypothetical features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design in colour, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials, shall not be used.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by the project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The above-noted standards are based on the Conservation Standards used by the United States Secretary of the Interior (36 CFR 67) (1991). They are generally in keeping with most Conservation principles, including the Venice Charter (1964).