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Design Rationale - 1266 Barrington Street, Halifax NS, March 2021 Update

Introduction

ZZap Consulting Inc., on behalf of Grafton Developments, is pleased to submit the following Site Plan Approval design rationale for the proposed addition of the existing building located at 1266 Barrington St. currently the Waverley Inn. The existing building occupies a small portion of the lot in the Northeast. The lot is located within the Old South Suburb heritage conservation district. Separate to this proposal the developer is undertaking the necessary applications and processes for the substantial alteration of the existing building.

This proposal is to develop a rear addition to the existing building to allow for additional hotel rooms. The sub roof of this new addition will create a new terrace accessed from the second level of the existing inn as well as the new addition. As part of the redevelopment one level of internal parking will be incorporated using the existing curb cut. To achieve the desired outcomes of this project, we are requesting two variances to the land use bylaw:

1. A reduction in the minimum streetwall height to match the existing heritage building
2. A reduction in the upper storey streetwall stepback to respect and frame the existing heritage resource.

Site Consideration

In accordance with Section 17.2.1 of the Downtown Halifax Land Use Bylaw this application is subject to the Heritage Design Guidelines of the Design Manual. As this project is an integrated development, it is additionally subject to sections 4.1 (New Developments in a Heritage Context) and sections 4.4 (Integrated Developments and Additions) of the Heritage Guidelines. The subject site is located within District 2 of the Downtown Halifax Plan area. The Downtown Halifax Design Manual has a number of design goals specific to District 2. The proposed development responds to these goals in the following ways:

(a) To promote the District as a heritage and cultural destination for residents and visitors capitalizing on a unique community identity;

The Waverley Inn expansion contributes to the built heritage of the district through the development of the vacant portion of the site with a rear wing that respects the Victorian-era architecture of the original structure without mimicking its form. The design keeps the rhythm, look, and feel of the Old South Suburb neighbourhood.

(b) To secure and encourage public and private investments in heritage resources protecting and conserving the traditional character of the District; and

The proposed Waverley Inn addition incorporates a substantial restoration of the heritage resource. This includes restoring the original character defining elements of the structure and replacing those that have been removed over time. The new addition picks up on the materiality of the existing structure.

(c) To encourage cohesive development that supports a setting consistent with the traditional character of the District.

The Waverley Inn addition fills the currently vacant portions of the site with a structure whose height framework transitions from the taller Thompson Building on Barrington Street and Letson Court on Morris Street, through to the existing Waverley Inn. The proposed building also provides cohesion to the Barrington streetscape through appropriate height transitions, the façade rhythm, and the continuation of the historic streetwall cornice line.

Downtown Halifax Design Manual Guidelines

The following outlines how the proposed development responds to the general Downtown Halifax Design Manual Guidelines:

General Guidelines:

Guideline 3.1.1 – Pedestrian Oriented Commercial

- a. Does not comply - no new shop fronts are created in this proposal. Street facing components of the rear addition consist of the main hotel entrance and underground parking access. Streetwall articulation is difficult to achieve on this site as the majority of the streetline abuts the historic hotel portion of the building. To accommodate fire separation between the combustible heritage structure and non-combustible addition, portions of the building are setback significantly from the street.
- b. The first floor of the rear addition is designed so it does not detract from the existing heritage resource. Therefore clear glass glazing is makes up more than 75% of the first floor of the new addition to emphasize the materiality of the Victorian Era building.
- c. Two ground level entrances are proposed. One in the existing heritage building and one in the new addition. Additional entrances would require significant alteration to heritage building.

- d. An awning is provided for the new pedestrian entrance. However, an awning over the existing heritage entrance would be inappropriate in keeping with the heritage defining elements of the building.
- e. Spill out activities are possible in the 5.9 metre setback from the property line provided.
- f. Non-commercial spaces like the proposed lounge area could be converted to commercial space in the future.

Guideline 3.1.2 – Streetwall Setback

- a. N/A
- b. Guideline conflicts with LUB clause 11.2.2(a)(ii). The LUB requires that the new development must be setback 3m greater than the setback of an abutting heritage property. In this instance the new addition is setback 6m from the property line.
- c. N/A

3.1.3 Streetwall Height

Variance requested: See site plan variance section

3.2.1 – Design of the Streetwall

- a. The proposed addition contributes to the 'fine-grained' character of the streetscape by maintaining the vertical rhythm and proportions of the existing three bay Victorian heritage building.
- b. The streetwall occupies 100% of the property's frontage. However, a significant streetwall setback is used to frame the existing heritage resource and allow the re-instated breakfast room to have sufficient access to light.
- c. The streetwall height is consistent with the guidance provided in section 3.2.1(d). Areas of the building above the streetwall height are stepped back.
- d. The proposed addition's streetwall matches the cornice line of the existing heritage resource.
- e. The streetwall of the proposed addition used a combination of clear glass glazing and aluminum composite panels to accentuate the detailing of the heritage resource.
- f. The entirety of the streetwall of the new addition consists of clear glass glazing, which provides many opportunities for eyes on the street. The ground floor functions as a lounge for hotel guests.
- g. No blank walls are proposed at grade level.

3.2.2 - Building Orientation and Placement

- a. The recessed main entrance is clearly defined and provide direct access from the sidewalk. However, the main entrance cannot be located at the street edge because this conflicts with the requirements of LUB clause 11.2.2(a)(ii). Additional setback beyond the minimum is required to maintain adequate separation

between combustible and non-combustible materials on the heritage resource and the new addition.

- b. N/A
- c. N/A

3.2.3 Retail Uses

N/A – No retail uses are proposed. However, the ground level is easily convertible to a retail use at a later date if desired.

3.2.4 – Residential Uses

- a. N/A no individually accessed residential units are proposed
- b. The recessed main entrance of the hotel picks up on the vertical rhythm of the existing Waverley Inn and effectively acts as another bay in the overall development.
- c. N/A
- d. N/A
- e. N/A
- f. N/A

3.2.5 - Sloping Conditions

N/A site does not have sloping conditions along the street line.

3.2.6 – Elevated Pedestrian Walkways

N/A. None are proposed

3.2.7 – Other Uses

N/A. No other uses are proposed.

3.3.1 Building Articulation

- a. The base of the building consists of the existing heritage building, and a 2.5 storey streetwall that complements and frames the heritage resource. The material quality, and articulation of the base positively contributes to the quality of the pedestrian environment. The middle and top of the building are visually distinct from the base. They are simple forms that act as a backdrop to highlighting the heritage resource.
- b. The addition is of modern design that is sensitive to the historical context where it is placed and accentuates the existing heritage building.
- c. The building mass is articulated by a change in materials. A combination of high transparency glazing and spandrel glass are used for the middle and upper portions of the building, while copper aluminum architectural detailing and prismatic glass is used to frame the streetwall and carry on the features of the existing heritage property. The decision was made to move the bulk of the addition's mass away from the Heritage property to meet snow loading requirements of the building code. This is why there is very little articulation in the upper floor mass.

d. A consistent design language is used throughout the building carrying on from the design language of the existing heritage resource.

3.3.2 – Materials

- a. Building materials are chosen to complement the local heritage context and respect each other aesthetically. High quality building materials will be selected.
- b. Limited materials are used to adequately respond to the site context. The intention is to frame and accentuate the existing heritage resource.
- c. The glazing used in the front façade is carried through to the sides and rear of the proposed addition.
- d. No changes in material occur at building corners.
- e. The proposed addition uses a combination of glass, in-situ concrete, and aluminum cladding materials.
- f. No attempt is made to mimic other building materials
- g. No stucco is used.
- h. The proposed addition uses a combination of glass, in-situ concrete, and aluminum cladding materials.
- i. No darkly tinted glass is proposed as part of the addition
- j. No unstained wood is proposed for decks, patios or balconies.

3.3.3 – Entrances

- a. The main pedestrian entrance is recessed from the street to emphasize the heritage building.
- b. The main building entrance is covered with a canopy
- c. N/A

3.3.4 – Roof Line and Roofscapes

- a. The upper storeys of the building serve as a modern architectural beacon, with glass and metal construction that integrates into the lower building volume and existing heritage building. The copper tabs on the façade of the upper storeys of the new addition are meant to complement the existing heritage building while not detracting from its significance.
- b. The building top is related to the middle and the bottom through similar materiality. However, the intention is for the upper storeys of new addition to not distract from the heritage aspects of the development.
- c. Landscaping treatment is provided above the first storey roof.
- d. Elevator overrun will be screened from view and integrated into the design of the building
- e. N/A
- f. The parapet design treatment is carried over to the back side of the parapet.

3.4.1 – Prominent Frontages and View Termini

- a. N/A
- b. N/A

3.4.2 – Corner Sites

N/A – Building is not on a corner site.

3.4.3 – Civic Buildings

N/A – Building is not a civic building.

3.5.1 – Vehicular Access, Circulation, Loading and Utilities

- a. All parking is located underground.
- b. The proposed parking access is the narrowest possible to service bi-directional traffic.
- c. Loading, Storage, and Waste areas are all located internal to the building out of view of public spaces.
- d. High quality materials (i.e. paving stones, stamped concrete) will be used for driveway surfacing. Driveway entrance surfacing matches pedestrian pathways in style.
- e. Internal utility room are proposed.
- f. Mechanical and Electrical requirements will be resolved at the building permit stage. However, the intention is to locate utilities away from public view.

3.5.2 – Parking Structures

N/A

3.5.3 – Surface Parking

N/A

3.5.4 – Lighting

- a. Architectural spot lighting will be used to highlight the existing heritage building and tower form behind it, please see attached night rendering.
- b. See 3.5.4(a)
- c. Architectural lighting will be used to illuminate the streetwall portion of the addition, please see attached night rendering.
- d. N/A
- e. Full cut-off fixtures will be used to shield light from adjacent residential properties.
- f. Lighting shall not create glare for pedestrians or motorists by presenting unshielded lighting elements in view.

3.5.5 – Signs

- a. Signage indicating the buildings name and address will be at the street level on the existing heritage building and as an ornamental art piece on the front façade above the streetwall.
- b. Signs do not obscure windows, cornices, or other architectural elements.
- c. The primary Inn signage will be on the existing heritage building.
- d. No freestanding signs are proposed.

- e. The Inn signage on the heritage building is located under the centre eave. This is consistent with the sign's historic location.
- f. Street addressing will be clearly visible.
- g. Signage above the streetwall is made of metal and copper, and signage at street level on the heritage property will be inlaid wood.

Design Guidelines in a Heritage Context

The following outlines how the proposed development responds to the heritage specific Downtown Halifax Design Manual Guidelines:

4.1 New Developments in a Heritage Context	
4.1.1 Replicas and Reconstructed Buildings	<p>The proposed development intends to restore the existing Waverley Inn to its original grandeur. Grafton Developments intends to undergo the following restorations using historic images, found in the Nova Scotia Archives, of the building as guidance (subject to substantial alteration approval):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-instate the breakfast bay window 2. Re-construct the cupola 3. New standing seam copper roof above bay windows 4. New period wood siding 5. New wood windows in existing dormers 6. Twinning the front columns
4.1.2 New Buildings in Heritage Contexts	<p>The proposed edition replaces an existing parking lot and does not displace an existing heritage resource. The addition fits in with the existing non-heritage context as well. Matching the size and scale of the Thompson Building abutting to the South and the Letson Court Condos to the West.</p>
4.1.3 Contemporary Design 4.1.4 Material Palette	<p>The intention of the materials chosen for this project is to transition the new addition from the Thompson Building abutting the property and the existing Waverley Inn. While the materials used in the new addition are largely modern in nature, several materials historically used on the Waverley Inn are carried through to the new addition. For example, the Waverley Inn at one point had a standing seam copper roof on the front façade bay windows and rooftop cupola. The property owner is proposing to reinstate these copper elements and extend the materiality of the copper onto the architectural details of the bay window</p>

	<p>on the new addition and fenestration of the tower portion building on the rear of the property. (see note 1 on sheet A06.1).</p> <p>The new, modern addition complements the existing heritage resource but does not overshadow it. Continuing the cornice line of the existing building and carrying over the copper elements from the heritage resource to the new building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recesses the bulk of the new building so as to not detract from the existing Waverley Inn - Carrying the copper cupola and dormer accents of the existing Inn to frame the hotel atrium above the parking entrance - Angled structural glazing is used in the second and third storey atrium to mimic the skin of a pineapple, the emblem of the Waverley Inn. <p>The new addition seeks to frame the existing heritage resource.</p>
<p>4.1.5 Proportion of Parts</p>	<p>The proportions of the new addition reflect the neighbouring context. The design intention is to delicately transition the scale and mass of the addition from the 6-storey Thompson Building abutting the property to the south and the 2.5 storey Waverley Inn and historic neighbouring buildings to the north of the property. The addition transition from a ceramic cladding wall that is similar in style to the Thompson Building (see note 2 on Sheet A07.1) and transitions both the height framework and horizontal proportions to be similar to the Waverley Inn. The second-floor bay window (see note 3) of the new addition is a modern interpretation of the historic bay windows on the existing Inn.</p> <p>Good fitting proportional relationships are achieved though the bay widths, projections, and recesses of the new addition. The width of the street facing bay of the new addition closely matches</p>

	<p>the width of the larger bays on the existing Inn. While it was necessary to recess the main building entrance of the new addition due to fire separation requirements and to allow for solar access to the re-instated breakfast room, the recessed entrance closely matches the width of the centre bay of the existing Inn (see note 4 on Sheet A07.1). These design decisions seek to align with the Downtown Halifax Urban Design guidance on proportion of parts as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Heritage Properties in Canada.</p>
<p>4.1.6 Solidity versus Transparency</p>	<p>The proposed addition is transparent compared to the existing Waverley Inn. The intention is to not detract from the solidity of the Victorian Era building. This transparency works to subdue the addition and place emphasis on the grandeur of the heritage components of the Waverley Inn.</p>
<p>4.1.7 Detailing</p>	<p>The detailing of the new addition is generally compatible to the surrounding heritage context. Many of the elements of the new addition are modern interpretations of the heritage attributes of the Waverley Inn and surrounding context. The intention was to complement but not mimic historic building construction or materials, but to present a subtle nod to them. The cornice line is maintained between the addition and the original Waverley Inn (see note 5 on Sheet A07.1). Additionally, the copper detailing (present on historic photos and drawings of the Waverley Inn), are continued throughout the new addition. Lastly, the second story bay of the new addition (see note 3 on Sheet A07.1) is a modern interpretation of the bay windows of the Waverley Inn, keeping with the historic use of dormers and bay windows in building forms in the area.</p>

	<p>Existing column capital detail has Corinthian order with two rows of leaves similar in shape and orientation as the head of a pineapple. There is a nod to this detailing on the pineapple logo at located at the top of the new addition (see note 6 on Sheet A07.1). The pineapple is also the international sign of hospitality and the copper pineapple is meant to pick up on the copper roof features of the existing bay windows and cupola.</p>
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<p>4.3 Guidelines for Abutting Developments</p>	
<p>4.3.1 Cornice Line</p>	<p>The cornice height of the new addition is in line with the cornice height of the existing Waverley Inn. The existing building's cornice height is in line with the abutting building's (1274 Barrington Street) cornice height. 1256 Barrington Street (The Thompson Building) is not considered a heritage asset in the Old South Suburb Plan and therefore the proposed addition is not required to match that structure's cornice line.</p>
<p>4.3.2 Rhythm</p>	<p>Steps have been taken to maintain the vertical rhythm of the streetwall. Each bay of the new addition picks up on the proportion of the bays of the existing inn.</p>
<p>4.3.3 Grade Level Height and Articulation</p>	<p>The proposed addition's first story is of a similar height of the first storey datum line of heritage buildings.</p>
<p>4.3.4 Height Transition</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>

<p>4.4 Guidelines for Integrated Developments & Additions</p>	
<p>4.4.1 Building Setback</p>	<p>The new addition is setback from the street frontage of the heritage building to give the heritage structure visual prominence.</p> <p>Additionally, the portions of the heritage building that will be hidden from view are not character defining elements, as indicated in the Heritage Impact Statement provided.</p>

<p>4.4.2 Cornice Line & Upper Level Stepbacks</p>	<p>The proposed addition's podium matches the height of the cornice line of the existing Waverley Inn. Above the streetwall height, the building is stepped back 6.4 metres so as not to distract from the Waverley Inn's hipped roof and cupola.</p>
<p>4.4.3 Façade Articulation and Materials</p>	<p>The proposed addition maintains the same architectural order and rhythm of both the horizontal and vertical division in the existing façade. This is achieved by using void spaces to continue the articulated bays of the Waverley Inn.</p> <p>The addition does not try to achieve the same materiality of the Waverley Inn. Instead the primarily glass structure picks up on the copper trim elements to complement the Heritage building.</p>

Site Plan Variances

As part of this application, the developer is requesting two variances from the land use by-law. The following outlines the proposed variance and how each aligns with the design guidance in the Design Manual.

3.6.3 – Streetwall Height Variance

We are requesting a variance to the streetwall height to reduce the minimum streetwall height to 10.87 metres. The intention behind this variance request is to keep the streetwall height consistent with the cornice line of the existing heritage building. This variance is consistent with the design guidance of section 3.2.1 (d), which says that, “in areas of contiguous heritage resources, the streetwall height should be consistent with heritage buildings.” Additionally, this variance aligns with guideline 4.4.2 which discusses maintaining the same or similar cornice height of a new building with adjacent heritage resources.

3.6.6 – Upper Storey Side Yard Stepback Variance

We are requesting a variance to the Upper Storey Side Yard Stepback as indicated in the attached drawing. As we understand it, the requirements of section 2.4(b) may be relaxed where the relaxation of the requirement is consistent with the Design Manual.

Specifically, we are requesting a variance under Section 3.6.6(b):

“where the height of the building is substantially lower than the maximum permitted building height and the setback reduction is proportional to that lower height”

In this instance, a floor area ratio of 4.0 is permitted on the site. However, only a floor area ratio of 3.68 is achievable under the as-of-right land use bylaw requirements due to the presence of View Plane 8, which limits the maximum height of the building. This reduces to overall achievable gross floor area by 5,316 sqft. To recover some of that gross floor area and to resolve building code compliance issues on the site, we are requesting a variance to the upper storey streetwall setback to permit an additional 2,000 sqft (as indicated on Sheet A03).

The proposed stepback relaxation does not detract from the visual prominence of the existing heritage resource and therefore keeping consistent with Design Manual Guidance.

3.6.15 - Ground Floor Height Variance

We are requesting a variance to the Ground Floor Height requirement of section 8(13). As we understand it, this requirement may be relaxed if the requirement is consistent with the Design Manual, and where (e) the site of the proposed new building or the proposed addition to an existing building is constrained by sloping conditions to such a degree that it becomes unfeasible to properly step up or step down the floor plate of the building to meet the slope and would thus result in a ground floor floor-to-floor height at its highest point that would be impractical.

The existing building ground floor height is 4.6m and the proposed addition ground floor height is 3.6m. It is not feasible to lower the ground floor elevation as this would impede on the clearance for the underground parking entrance. Additionally, lowering the ground floor elevation of the proposed addition would require internal ramping between the addition and existing building to meet accessibility requirements of the buildings code. However, there is not enough space internally to meet these requirements, rendering the connection between the proposed addition and existing building inaccessible.

It is not feasible to raise the parapet and top of the ground floor to achieve the requirements of section 8(13) because this would impact the cornice line detailing of the existing Waverley Inn's breakfast room where the new addition connects with the existing building. The intent of this project is to restore the heritage detailing of the Waverley Inn and raising the ground floor height would conflict with that intent and the intent of guideline 4.3.3(f).