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Sent by EMAIL

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RE: 178, 180, 184, 188, 190 & 194 Main Street South, – Our Project NO. 13-119-01
Peer Review Of Revised GBCA Heritage Impact Assessment

Purpose

Further to our peer review letter dated July 22, 2014, the purpose of this second peer review letter is to provide the Town of Newmarket (the “Town”) with an objective review of the revised Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) prepared by Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd. Architects (GBCA), dated February 1, 2016.

The current HIA incorporates and responds to recommendations contained in the July 2014 peer review letter, and describes the revised proposal in the context of the now in-force Lower Main Street South Heritage Conservation District (HCD).

Past Proposals

GBCA HIA dated August 19, 2013

The original proposal described in the 2013 GBCA HIA consisted of a six storey L-shaped mixed-use building fronting Main Street South and Park Street that adaptively reused the original portion of the former Post Office building and, where possible, incorporated facades of the 19th century commercial buildings at 184, 188, 190 and 194 Main Street South. The portion of the proposed new construction fronting Main Street South had a minimal stepback above the integrated 19th century commercial facades. At this time, ERA Architects had not been retained by the Town to conduct a peer review of the 2013 GBCA HIA.

Revised GBCA HIA dated January 10, 2014

A revised HIA was submitted to the Town in 2014. Following the submission of the 2014 GBCA HIA, ERA Architects was retained to review the document and provide comments to the Town. At this time, the original 2013 GBCA HIA was also reviewed to provide context.

The revised proposal described in the 2014 GBCA HIA responded to Town and stakeholder comments by reducing the height above the integrated 19th century commercial facades at 184, 188 and 194 Main Street South from six storeys to three storeys. It was noted that the south portion of the proposed east (Main Street South) elevation had an apparent height of four storeys due to the mezzanine condition at the ground floor. In addition, the stepback of the proposed new construction above the integrated Main Street South facades was increased from the 2013 proposal.

The proposed new construction on Park Street increased in height from the 2013 proposal to nine storeys.

The July 22 2014 peer review letter prepared by ERA Architects agreed with GBCA's recommendation to relocate the massing away from Main Street South, and recommended a reduction in the proposed height of the new construction on Park Street to six storeys to better respect the "Historic Landmark Buildings" identified in the Lower Main Street South HCD.

Current Proposal

The current proposal as described in the 2016 GBCA HIA consists of a seven storey L-shaped mixed-use building. The proposal continues to integrate the existing facades at 184, 188 and 194 Main Street South and adaptively reuse the original portion of the former Post Office building.

ERA Architects Inc. Comments

In reviewing the current proposal, the following observations were noted:

- The height of the proposed new construction on Park Street has been reduced from the 2014 proposal from nine to seven storeys. It is our opinion that the current proposed height on Park Street is appropriate.
- The height of the proposed new construction on Main Street South has been increased from the 2014 proposal from three (four) storeys to seven storeys.
- The proposed new construction above the integrated 19th century commercial facades has been further stepped back from the Main Street South property line.
- The proposed new construction is stepped back from the former Post Office clock tower by approximately 15 metres as described in the 2016 GBCA HIA.
- The intersection between the proposed new construction on Main Street South and the existing roof of the former Post Office building creates a potentially challenging condition that may have a negative impact on this Historic Landmark Building (refer to drawing A9, East Elevation, prepared by Forrest Group).
- The conservation strategy described in the 2016 GBCA HIA suggests that many approaches to conservation can be applied to the site but does not identify the intended approach to each building being conserved.

- A rendered pedestrian-level perspective was prepared looking south along Main Street South and included in the 2016 GBCA HIA (refer to drawing R10 prepared by Forrest Group). No equivalent was included for views looking north.

Recommendations

We recommend that additional refinements be considered by the applicant team to ensure that the Historic Landmark Building status/quality of the former Post Office clock tower and steeples of the adjacent Trinity United Church as identified in the Lower Main Street South HCD is maintained and reinforced.

Our recommendations are as follows:

1. Decrease the height of the proposed new construction on Main Street South by at minimum one storey so that the overall height does not compete with the height of the former Post Office clock tower. The proposed setback at the upper level should remain to maintain appropriate views of the clock tower from the south.
2. Clarify the conservation strategy by describing the intended approach to each building being conserved.
3. Consider revising the interface between the proposed new construction and the roof of the former Post Office building to mitigate the negative impact of the proposed new construction on the Landmark Heritage Building.
4. Include dimensions on architectural drawings appended to the GBCA HIA to demonstrate setback/setbacks from heritage fabric, including the former Post Office clock tower and Main Street South facades.
5. Include a rendered pedestrian-level perspective looking north towards the proposal along Main Street South to match drawing R10.

The recommendations contained herein help to achieve this balance in a manner that does not have a negative impact on the former Post Office building and clock tower or the existing historic 19th century commercial buildings fronting Main Street South.

Please contact us if you have any questions,

Sincerely,



Michael McClelland OAA FRAIC CAHP
Principal E.R.A. Architects Inc.