

PLANNING RATIONALE

Purpose of Application: To convert an existing 7-plex to a 12-plex by removing all the existing interior and creating a new optimized layout.

Contextual Analysis:

The subject property is an existing multi-unit residential (MUR) building in Centre Town and is in an area where there is a very high density of MURs. The zoning is R4UD(478). This particular street is nearly all MUR. The property fronts on James Street between Bay St and Lyon St. The site has ready access to pedestrian, cycling, transit and automobile services.

The existing building was bought by the current owners with 7 pre-existing units. The city compliance report identifies it as a legal 7-plex. The existing interior and infrastructure is extremely dated with the last know renovation done circa 1929 and thus the existing interior cannot be effectively reused. The intent of this application is to create a 12-plex in compliance with city and associated provincial requirements by completely removing the existing interior and laying it out for 12 units.

Like most properties in this area, there is limited lot space to address certain planning aspects and thus a minor variance application will be required to address existing nonconformances including: Minimum yard setback, minimum rear yard setback, and minimum number of 2-unit bedrooms. These variances are in line with other properties on this street and area.

Market demand in the Centretown area calls for more one bedroom and bachelor apartment units as opposed to the larger multi-bedroom units. That said, the existing building has a two-bedroom unit, and the new proposal will maintain a two-bedroom unit. In addition, it supports the city's intensification objectives while improving the amenities and visual aspects from the street.

Exterior Amenities:

The existing property has limited ground level amenity space but much of the existing yard will be converted from its existing hardscape to softscape and amenity space. Further, the project will add balcony space to most of the units for the benefit of the tenants and enhancing the visual appeal of the front face.

In the redesign, the following improvements will be made:

- Expansion of the soft and hard amenity area in the rear yard for improved tenant enjoyment. Features will include significant landscaping improvements, a common area for socialization and a BBQ area.
- Improved front yard landscaping to improve the aesthetic appeal of the property.
- New bicycle parking spots in excess of the minimum required. At our other properties in the area, bicycle parking has proven to be important.
- New dedicated garbage and recycling storage including space for each bin type.
- Addition of storage sheds for landlord and tenant use (such as winter bicycle storage)

Historical there has been very limited need for parking as the tenants have generally not had cars due to the significant access to transit and general walkability of the area. However, 2 parking spots will be retained.

The Proposal:

Most of the development will occur within the existing building envelope with the following exceptions:

- The third-floor structure will be extended towards the back to create more interior space but will stay within the existing building footprint.
- A new protrusion will be added to the west front face of the building to provide symmetry in the front face architecture as well as adding amenity and living space to the residents.
- The roofline of the current eastern front face protrusion will be modified to make it more visually appealing.

The existing units will be demolished, and new units constructed to provide significantly more appealing accommodations, better use of space, and focus on affordability. The majority of the units will be one-bedroom units with one bachelor and one two bedroom unit. This aligns with current and evolving demands in the area.

As the building has outdated infrastructure, questionable insulation and in some cases structural issues, the existing interior will be completely removed and reengineered.

Initial plans have been reviewed in their various aspects with the following city planning staff and their feedback has been incorporated into this application:

- Moe Nadeau (building code)
- Jean-Charles Renaud (planning)

Approval of this plan will bring additional and more affordable high quality rental units into the Centretown market meeting the market demand.