

Urban Design Guidelines for Low-rise Infill Housing

Proposal:

Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control Applications to Permit a Low-rise Mixed-use Development

Location:

352 Somerset Street West

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Low-rise residential buildings are the most common built-form typology expected to be built within most areas of Ottawa, particularly in areas designated as 'Neighbourhood' in the City's Official Plan.

Low-rise residential infill can contribute to achieving the strategic directions outlined in Section 2 of the Official Plan and address the cross-cutting issues of "Intensification", "Energy and Climate Change" and "Healthy and Inclusive Communities", described in Section 2.2.

Low-rise residential infill will help achieve Ottawa's intensification objectives outlined in the Growth Management section of the Official Plan, which directs most of the residential growth to occur within built up areas by 2026. Low-rise residential infill supports the development of a compact and connected city and helps prioritize a shift to energy efficient transportation modes, as this development provides an opportunity for more people to live closer to existing services and amenities, including transit.

Well-designed low-rise residential infill contributes to a high-quality, human-scale urban design that creates a sense of place and a vibrant public realm. This typology can contribute to the creation of healthy, walkable 15-minute neighbourhoods as identified in the official plan and can add a range of housing options for all ages and income groups, including large-sized units suitable for families. These infills can also reinforce mature neighbourhoods that have already evolved to include the necessary components, by adding more density and expanding housing options.

The development of the site at 352 Somerset will significantly contribute to the notion of the 15 minute neighbourhood in Centertown as the project typology addresses creation of a vibrant streetscape with the proposed building renovations to this heritage structure, providing a potential retail node and contributes the grounded livable residential infill. The restoration of 352 Somerset will achieve an excellent fit into the existing neighbourhood, as it was one of the original structures created pre 1900, and respects the character of the neighbourhood and its architectural and landscape heritage.

Although we have not expanded established landscaping, the completion of the project will make the existing streetscape and landscaping part of the public realm again as the areas has been hoarded off for the better part of 15 years. We have retained the existing carbon footprint of the heritage structure and will not be consuming resources for a new structure on the site and will promote sustainability by the use of electricity for heating and cooling of the building thereby not adding directly to greenhouse gas emissions via natural gas sources.

The form of the building is compact and will add 14 residential units into the Centertown fabric and will provide a sense of identity for the community residents, and will provide a uniquely heritage design focused building that offers variety, quality and a sense of identity. The lack of parking for the building emphasizes front doors and windows rather than garages and the building also promotes interaction with the streetscape and will be a very unique address in the city core.