

Proposed Development

New Build

Under the HRM Heritage Development Agreement policy, developers are afforded increased development rights in exchange for conservation work to the character-defining elements of the registered property. If Victoria Hall was demolished, the as-of-right development rights on the proposed property could allow for a 104-unit building, depending on the unit mix, whose height limit was determined by the citadel rampart heights (see chapter 3). The developer's expectation is to achieve a higher yield than the as of right in order to fund the proposed conservation work outlined in chapter 5. This development agreement proposes a simple 16-storey tower building containing 145 units. The addition is strategically located behind Victoria Hall in order to allow Victoria Hall to maintain its important presence on Gottingen St thus maintaining the fabric of the Gottingen streetscape. A 3-storey base on Creighton St allows the building to maintain the human-scale streetscape on Creighton St. The tower is stepped back 10ft from the street wall with the top 2 storeys stepped back another 5-ft for a total stepback of 15ft from the street wall. The main entrance and parking entry would be accessed off of Creighton St. The 3rd storey of the Creighton St base will be masked with "mansard" roof giving it the appearance of a 2-storey base that matches the scale of the buildings on Creighton St. The design is a modern response to the architecture of Victoria Hall. Each ground floor unit would have its own entry on the street to capture the rhythm and scale of other buildings on Creighton. The main entrance to the tower would be from Creighton St in order to preserve the historic character of Victoria Hall. The tower (with a max 9810sqft/911sqm plate size) is set back 20'-7" (min) and 26'-7" (max) from the back of Victoria Hall keeping most of the back of Victoria Hall intact (except the rear Victoria Hall addition portion). An outdoor landscaped terrace creates ability for people to walk from 1 building to the other through an accessible outdoor link. The buildings are lightly connected through an open-air steel roof structure.

Property line setbacks/stepbacks:

Frontyard (Creighton) setback: 4'

Front yard stepback (tower): 10' min above the 3rd storey.

Project North:

Min. side-yard setback: 8'-1" min

Tower stepback: 12'-19"

Project East:

Min.setback from Heritage property: 20'-7"

Tower stepback from Heritage property: 26'-7"

Tower stepback from Gottingen St: 126'-10"

Project South:

Min side-yard setback: 0'-6"

Max side-yard setback: 53'-10"

Tower stepback: 13'-0"

The total parking count on 2 underground levels of parking is 78 parking stalls for 145 units (0.54 parking ratio). The design is flexible and allows for the possibility to add or subtract a level of parking depending on the results from the geotechnical investigation.

Calculation of extra density

Under the current design, a reconfiguration of units on levels 1-11 would result in the allowable density of 242 persons. Thus the client is requesting for an additional gross buildable area of 46,815 sqft (levels 12-16). Based on a Halifax Land Sales Data review dated March 8, 2020, the rate/ft² of gross buildable area in the North End ranges from \$40.00/ft² to \$50.00/ft². This results in a range of \$1,872,600 - \$2,340,750 associated with the requested additional gross buildable area.

Victoria Hall

In addition to the proposed conservation work on the CDEs, the building's health needs to be addressed (as mentioned in chapter 5). The project proposes to renovate the basement floor into 4 -6 units in order to generate funds to deal with Victoria Hall's basement moisture problem. This shall help extend the overall life-span of the building. However this contribution is not accrued towards the Heritage Development agreement CDE contribution as it does not directly affect the CDEs.



Fig. 19 View of development from Park



Fig. 20 View of Development from Creighton St

The existing units in Victoria Hall shall total 17-19 units for an overall unit count of 162-164 units on site. The total GFA for the new building is 159,270 sq.ft (14,797 sq.m.). The GFA for the Victoria Hall portion of the project is 25,000 sq.ft. (2,325 sq.m.). The total GFA for both buildings is 184,270 sq.ft. (17120 sqm.). The total lot area is 36,400 sq.ft. giving a FAR of 5.06.

Community Benefits:

Given the social history of Victoria Hall as a home for underprivileged old women, the complex history of the Gottingen st, the African Nova Scotian community that has historically been marginalized in this area, and the many other complexities associated with this neighborhood whose demographic landscape is quickly changing, the client believes that this project cannot shy away from positively contributing to the community. Over the course of the summer and fall of 2019, the developers hosted 7 community engagement sessions at the Halifax North Memorial Library, Northwood Terrace, the Community Y, and the Sqauretown Festival. Written comments were collected at the final three sessions and are included in appendix 8.10. Out of the sessions, a number of areas emerged as meaningful ways that this project could give back to the community. This project shall focus on the following:

Affordable Units:

4 units at a maximum cost of 50% of market rate for 15 years. Will increase as per consumer price index.

3 units at a maximum cost of 10% below market rate for 15 years.

Community Room:

600 sqft in Victoria Hall available for use by the Gottingen Community for 15 years. This room shall be designed as flexible space that is able to accommodate community programming and other community needs as discovered through our community engagement sessions.

Local Employment:

Opportunities for local employment via building operations.

Site Safety:

On-going consultation with Joseph Howe Elementary in regards to pre-existing safety concerns at the intersection of Creighton St and Charles St.

Local History:

Artistic, interpretive elements to be used in and around the building to highlight and celebrate local history. The proposed Heritage wall on Victoria Hall shall be another key component of this community contribution.



Fig. 21 Representational renders of proposed community room in Victoria Hall

6.2 Design Alternatives

Multiple alternative design options were considered at the start of the project:

Alternative 1: Demolition of Victoria Hall.

Considering the development rights of the site at the time, the complexities involved with conservation work, and the financial and time costs associated with the Development Agreement Process, one option was to demolish Victoria Hall and develop a new building on the site. However, in recognizing the importance of preserving Heritage and the significance of Victoria Hall, the team agreed that this was the least viable option.

Alternative 2: Build an attached addition to Victoria Hall

This option would allow the tower to be stepped back further from Creighton St. However, construction would be complex as it would involve adding a building of non-combustible construction to Victoria Hall which is combustible construction. Building onto Victoria Hall would also be more complex to reverse.

Alternative 3: Move Victoria Hall to the front to front of the site

This option would have altered the presence of Victoria Hall on site thus changing the heritage value of the land; which includes the presence of landscaped manicured lawns at the front of the building. It would have involved a high cost, structural complexities and the potential of damaging Victoria Hall in the process of moving it forward.

Alternative 4: Lower building, more lot coverage

As mentioned, the requirement was for increased density to fund the conservation of Victoria Hall. One option was to have a lower building that covers more of the lot. However this option changes the heritage value of the lot. The landscaped gardens at the back of Victoria Hall have always been accessible to the residents of the home. Just like the front lawn, the existence of a landscaped garden at the back of the lot is part of the site's character. This option would have also reduced the skyview due to the building's proximity to the neighboring Sunrise Manor.

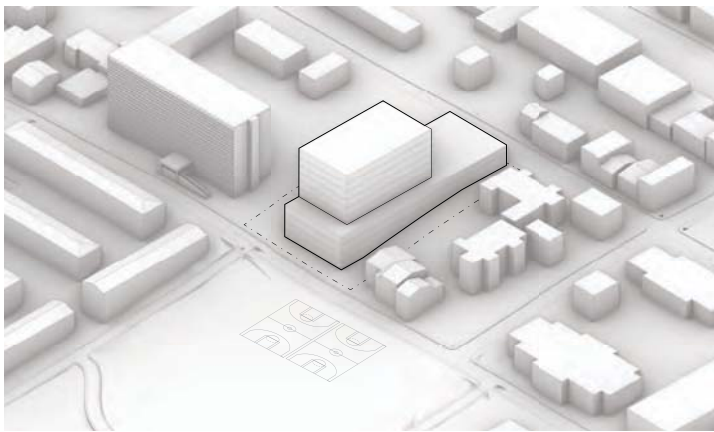


Fig. 22 Alternative 1

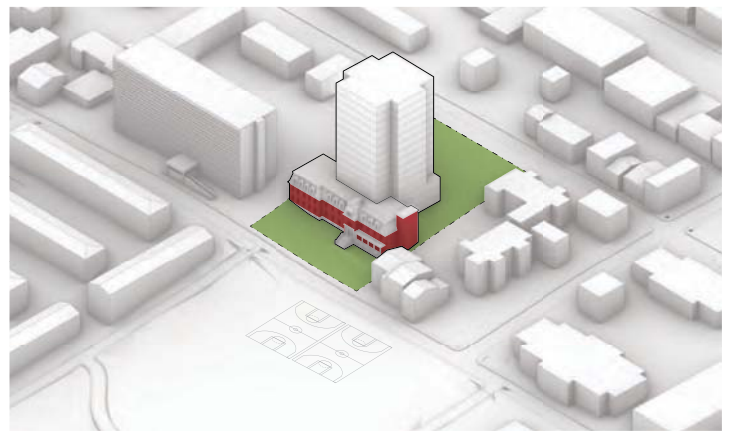


Fig. 23 Alternative 2: Tower with no base

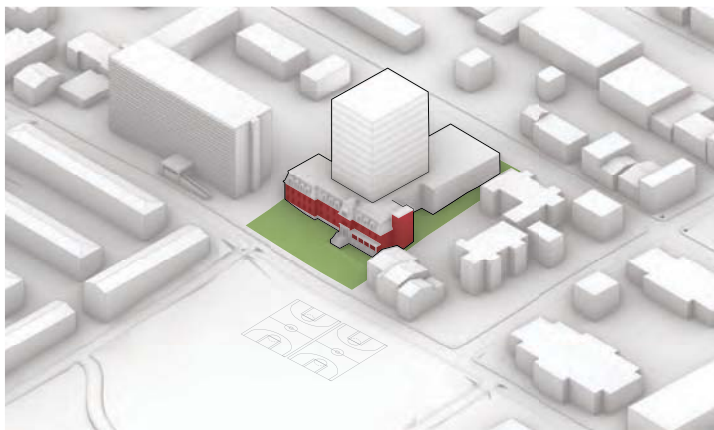


Fig. 24 Alternative 2: Tower with base

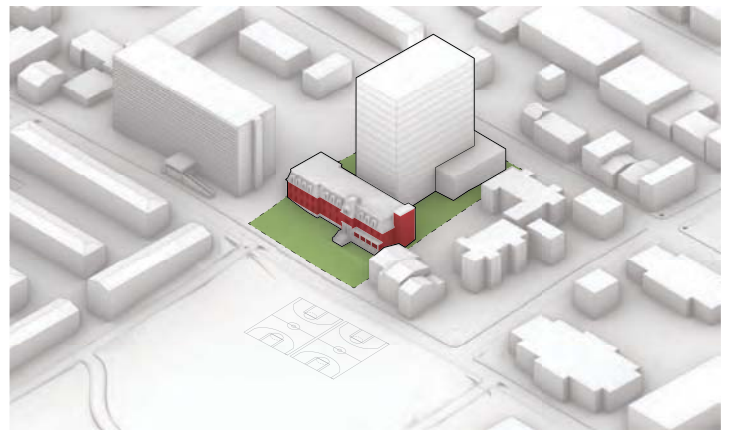


Fig. 25 Proposed design

6.3 Compliance with Standard 11

Standard 11 of the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada requires that one

(a) Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to a historic place or any related new construction.

(b) Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic place.” (Page 34)

6.4 Conservation of Heritage Value

The majority of Victoria Hall’s CDEs are located on its Gottingen St Facade and on Dumaresq’s 1914 addition. The proposed high-rise is located behind Victoria Hall from Gottingen St to ensure that the above mentioned CDEs remain completely visible. The additions’s CDE’s will be remembered on the heritage wall. Its form was selected because a vertical distribution of occupant density ensures that the 1914 addition remains as visible as it currently is from Creighton St.

The building’s history shows consistency in the way it has kept up with changing needs. The high-rise, the latest iteration of this cycle, is appropriate for 2-reasons:

1. increase of site density. The lot is currently located in an HR-1 zone under the new center plan and was located in an R-3, schedule A zone under the former by-law (the by-law that this Development Agreement is being processed under).
2. to make it financially viable to carry out the proposed conservation work on Victoria Hall.



Historically, any additions to Victoria Hall have been located on the secondary facades of the building (1862, 1904 additions to the west, 1914 addition to the south and the elevator addition to the north). The new build shall attach to the back facade of Victoria Hall via a light open-air steel frame roof structure that allows the addition to maintain a connection that is easily reversible. The geometry of the connection directly corresponds to the part of the 1904 addition that shall be demolished for the new build.



Before 1862



1862/3: Finlay’s back addition



1904: Gate’s back addition

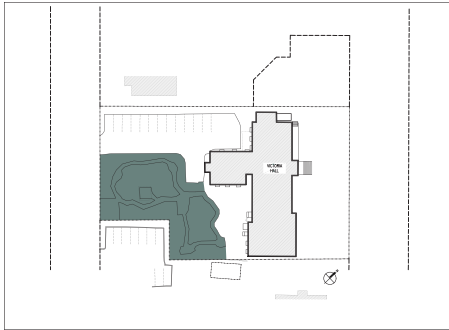


1917-2013: Elevator addition

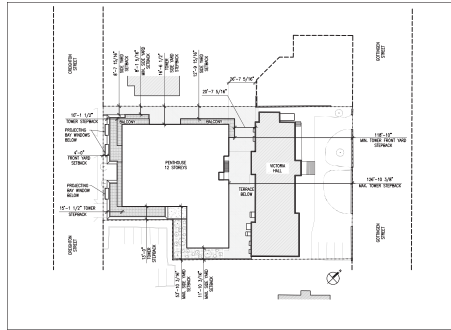


Current design: proposed high-rise with symbolic connection

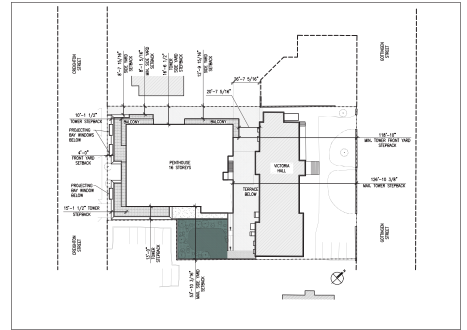
The use of the high-rise form also allows for resident accessibility to landscaped open space thus preserving the lot's heritage character.



Victoria Hall (current condition)



Alternative design 3



Proposed design

Usable landscaped open space



Fig. 26 Render showing the connection between the back facade of Victoria Hall and the proposed new building

6.5 Compatible, Subordinate and Distinguishable

Compatible:

All additions are required to be compatible with the heritage building in terms of construction, materials and assembly. This criteria does not directly apply to this project as the new build is a separate, non-combustible building. However given the proximity of Victoria Hall to the building, it will be key to create a safe and robust demolition and construction plan to ensure the structural integrity of Victoria Hall (especially the ironstone foundation).

Subordinate and distinguishable:

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada defines subordination as not causing a detracting from the historic place or an impairment of heritage value. It goes on to state that "Subordination is not a question of size; a small, ill-conceived addition could adversely affect an historic place more than a large, well-designed addition." (page 34) The new build has been carefully designed to direct ones eye to the character defining elements of Victoria Hall in a number of ways:

Location on Site:

The high-rise is subordinate to Victoria Hall in its location to the west of the building, behind the Gottingen Street frontispiece. This allows Victoria Hall to maintain its current street presence on Gottingen St. The East building face is set back 118'-10" from the property line on Gottingen St to reduce the perceived presence of the building from the street.

Material Palette:

The choice of a predominantly black, white and grey cladding color palette was derived from the white trim and wood details, black mansard roof of Victoria Hall and the granite fence at the street. The selection of white, black and glazed materials allow the red color of Victoria Hall to stand out as a feature along Gottingen Street thus maintaining a visual hierarchy on Gottingen St. Although the red color of the building has become one of it's identifying features, it is not a character-defining element. Thus there is flexibility on maintaining the color or changing it in the future. The color of the background addition allows for flexibility in selecting a different color which will still allow Victoria Hall to visibly stand out on Gottingen street. The choice of standing seam metal on the mansard roof on the Creighton St base creates a modern connection with Victoria Hall on the Creighton St side. The addition of copper adds some color and vibrance to the walk up unit entrances on Creighton st.



Fig. 27 Color palette is derived from Victoria Hall



Black metal panels or similar



White metal panels or similar



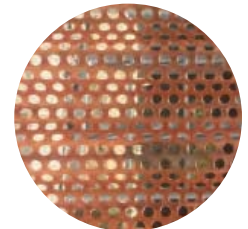
Granite cladding or similar



Grey standing seam metal



Grey brick



Copper perforated metal or similar

Massing and Articulation of the Gottingen St Facade:

The massing of the proposed building was driven by Victoria Hall. The width is driven by the 1885 portion of Victoria hall. The glazed portion of Gottingen St facade directs the eye towards the prominent frontispiece and front entrance of the building. Efforts were made to simplify the Gottingen St facade of the new build so as to allow it to act as a visual backdrop for Victoria Hall. The fenestration and cladding pattern was simplified and derived from the fenestration rhythm of the windows on Victoria Hall. The number of visual bays on the new build directly reflect the number of bays on Victoria Hall.



Fig. 28 Articulation and glazing on the East facade of the new building intentionally draws the eye to Victoria Hall's frontispiece



Fig. 29 Rhythm of bays along Victoria Hall and the new building



Fig. 30 Overall massing of East facade of new building emphasizes the 1884 portion of Victoria Hall.