

Land Use Policy Analysis

Development Agreement

Property located at **6421 Cork Street & Young Street, Halifax**
PID 00122358, Lot 124-B

Prepared for: **HRM Planning & Development, on behalf of Vedanta Ashram Society**



Image 1: Hindu Temple, 6421 Cork St., Vedanta Ashram Society

Introduction:

This report outlines the planning rationale and policy considerations for a proposed development agreement (DA) at 6421 Cork Street, Halifax, PID #00122358 (*Images 1 & 2*). The owners of 6421 Cork Street, the Vedanta Ashram Society, would like to build a 2-storey addition (approx. 28 ft. wide x 68 ft. length) to the rear of their existing temple, which would be constructed on columns above the existing parking area off Young Street. This submission includes plans showing the proposed addition. This application for development agreement is submitted pursuant to the HRM Regional Centre MPS Policies IM-19, IM-21, and IM-7. The analysis includes:

- Research/ review of the existing Regional Centre MPS objectives and policies pertaining to a proposed DA on the site (*Table 1* below), and a review and comments regarding the HRM requirements for the DA submission; and
- Analysis and comments related to how the proposal complies with the Regional Centre MPS objectives and policies, for the purposes of the proposed DA submission (*Table 2*).

Site Description:

- PID 00122358, Civic 6421 Cork Street, Lot area: approx. 8,541 sq.ft./793 sq.m.;
- Subject parcel is a 'through lot', with frontage on both Cork St. and Young St.;
- Lot Consolidation (Lot 124-B): approved Apr. 13, 2011; registered July 6, 2011;



Image 2: Hindu Temple site, 6421 Cork St.

Proposal Details:

The owners of 6421 Cork Street, the Vedanta Ashram Society, would like to build a 2-storey addition to the rear of their existing temple. The property extends through and has street frontage on Young Street. The temple has existed in this location in the community for over 40 years. The society needs more space for the growing Hindu population and would like to remain in their current location in the community.

The development proposal is to construct an addition, measuring approximately 28 ft. wide x 68 ft. long, to the rear of the existing temple. Details include:

- 2-storey addition proposed to be constructed on columns above the existing parking area to the rear, in order to maintain the existing parking area (room for 8 spaces), with the potential for some landscaping abutting the Young Street sidewalk, and one less parking space;
- Existing basement area includes offices, washrooms and meeting area (no expansion);
- Main level to include expansion of kitchen, dining areas, coatrooms and storage rooms;
- Upper level to include expanded prayer hall and relocation of the shrine further towards Young Street;

***Notes:** The temple is a non-conforming use, since a 'religious institution' is not a permitted use in the ER-3 zone (see Table 1 below). The non-conformity began upon the adoption of the Regional Centre MPS and LUB. The temple dates back to the late 1970s. The two former lots fronting Cork and Young streets were consolidated in 2011 to form Lot 124-B, following which it is understood that a former dwelling on Young Street was demolished, a small rear addition to the temple was built, and rear parking was introduced. The consolidation (survey) plan is included with the submission documents.

Bicycle parking will be provided, as per the LUB requirements.

Documents and Process Matters:

It is requested that the following matters related to the documents submitted for evaluation and steps in the planning process be determined by staff through the evaluation of the application:

- It is our understanding that there has been a further postponement by the Province of involvement of advisory committees in the planning application process until November 25, 2026, as the Financial Measures (2025) Act received Royal Assent and a commencement date of March 26, 2025;

- It is suggested that for this proposal, the form of community engagement be via the mailing of notices to area residents, instead of an in-person public information meeting;
- The client has not undertaken a Traffic Impact Statement at this point, since there are two existing driveways, one off Cork Street for one vehicle, and one off Young Street, including a small parking area off Young Street, all of which are not proposed to change as a result of the proposal, as noted below. As prayer services and meals are held on Sundays and there is minimal usage of the temple during weekdays, it is suggested that a TIS may not be necessary, as on-street parking, transit and active transportation are utilized on Sundays by most attendees and there will be minimal traffic impacts; and
- The technical documents submitted include a site plan, floor plans, 3D renderings of the proposal, survey plan, legal description of the land, and site photos. If building elevation drawings are required for the development agreement, it is requested that those be provided following the community engagement, at the time of the drafting of the DA.

Planning Analysis

The following Table 1 lists the most relevant HRM Regional Centre MPS/ LUB (local) planning policies and land use designations, and the Regional MPS policies which are most applicable to the site, and associated details.

Table 1 - Regional Centre MPS/LUB Designations & Regional MPS Policies

Regional Centre MPS Policy/ Designation	Comments
Generalized Future Land Use Designation (Map 1)	Established Residential designation (ER)
Zoning (LUB Schedule 2)	ER-3 (Established Residential 3)
Maximum Height Precinct (Map 4 & Schedule 15)	11 metres (building height)
Minimum front/ flanking yard setbacks (LUB Schedule 18)	3.5m /11.5 ft *(proposed variance from Young St. via DA process)
Maximum lot coverage in the ER-3 zone (LUB section 231(1)(b)(i))	50% coverage *(proposed variance to 55.5% via DA process)
Regional MPS Land Use Designation	
Generalized Future Land Use Designation (Map 2)	Urban Settlement (US)

The following Table 2 reviews the most relevant Regional Centre MPS policies which apply to the development agreement application, and associated comments on how the proposal meets the intent of the MPS policies.

Table 2 - Review of Development Agreement Policies

Regional Centre MPS Policies	Comments
<p>Policy IM-19 Council may, by development agreement, allow non-residential non-conforming uses located on a lot that existing on the coming into force of this Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) expand the structure containing the non-conforming use; or b) change to another less intensive non-conforming use. 	<p>The proposal represents an expansion to the structure as noted in IM-19 a). As noted above, the temple is non-residential and is a non-conforming use, as a 'religious institution' is not a permitted use in the ER-3 zone (see LUB Table 1B). The non-conformity began upon the adoption of the Regional Centre MPS and LUB. The temple dates back to the late 1970s. The former LUB for Halifax Peninsula permitted religious institutions ('church') as-of-right in residential zones. There was an expansion to the lot and building in 2011, as two former lots fronting Cork and Young streets were consolidated (to form Lot 124-B), following which a former dwelling on Young Street was demolished, a small rear addition to the temple was built, and rear parking was introduced. Population growth has resulted in the need for a further expansion, which is the preferred option by the society over a complete relocation.</p>
<p>Policy IM-21 In considering a development agreement under Policy IM-19 and IM-20, Council shall consider the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) that controls are placed on the development to reduce conflict with and impacts on adjacent residential and other land uses; 	<p>There are no anticipated conflicts. The society/ temple has existed in this location for over 40 years and are part of the community. As with other religious institutions, the hours of activities are typically limited to daytime and evening hours.</p>

<p>b) the adequacy of the siting, height, bulk and scale of the development with respect to its compatibility with the existing neighbourhood;</p>	<p>The siting, height and bulk/ scale are compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood. The site abuts a 7-storey building under construction on Oxford St. in the COR zone to the NE and is located across Young Street from a 3-4 storey apartment building in the HR-1 zone. While the site is a through lot and the proposed finished building will have a depth greater than most houses to the immediate SW, it will be similar in height to those adjacent houses and act as a transition between the 7-storey building and houses.</p> <p>The building height is not expected to exceed the 11m height limit (precinct) above 'average finished grade', with the possible exception of the rooftop architectural cupola, which is exempted pursuant to LUB Table 8. The sloped roof appears to be exempted by Section 104(1.3) - it is requested that staff confirm this through the DA process and that rooftop height exemptions be included in the DA for clarification purposes.</p> <p>The building addition is proposed to be sited approximately 2.5m (8 ft.) from the Young street line. However, the minimum setback in the LUB is 3.5m (11.5 ft, Schedule 18), a difference of 1 metre. It is requested that this be varied via the DA process.</p> <p>The maximum lot coverage in the ER-3 zone is 50% (section 231(1)(b)(i)). A small variation is requested to 55.5% via the DA process. These requested variations are minor in nature and will not have an impact on the neighbourhood.</p>
<p>c) facilities for parking, loading, vehicular access, outdoor display and outdoor storage are designed to avoid significant adverse effects on adjacent properties;</p>	<p>There are two existing driveways, one off Cork Street for one vehicle, and one off Young Street, including a small parking area off Young Street for up to 8 vehicles. Loading utilizes either of these driveway locations as well as occasional on-street loading.</p> <p>The only outdoor storage would be green bins which are stored off Cork Street, behind the driveway and elevator 'bump out' in the east side yard, and are hidden from view of the street.</p>

<p><i>c) continued..</i></p> <p>c) facilities for parking, loading, vehicular access, outdoor display and outdoor storage are designed to avoid significant adverse effects on adjacent properties;</p>	<p>A TIS has not been prepared at this point. As the existing driveways and parking area are not proposed to change, and main activities (prayer services and meals) are held on Sundays, there is minimal usage of the temple during weekdays, it is suggested that a TIS may not be necessary. On-street parking, transit and active transportation are utilized on Sundays by most attendees and there will be minimal traffic impacts.</p>
<p>d) the layout and number of parking spaces and loading areas;</p>	<p>As noted above, loading is conducted from the existing driveways & parking spaces, and the occasional on-street loading. Additional parking is not considered necessary. There are other religious institutions in the Regional Centre that do not have on-site parking. An email in early 2024 from HRM Parking Services staff (S.Gillis) provided an opinion that parking for the proposed addition and use should not be required.</p>
<p>e) the location of the use on the site;</p>	<p>The existing 'through lot' with frontage on two streets allows for possible expansion of the building in a way which provides street presence and building facades along both street frontages, and to utilize the space above the existing parking area. As noted above, the setback of the addition from Young Street is proposed to be varied by 1m.</p>
<p>f) the surface treatment and storm drainage;</p>	<p>The proposal will be required to meet specific HRM & Halifax Water requirements and by-laws regarding storm drainage, including the Grade Alteration By-law and Municipal Design Guidelines. Details will be determined at the permitting stage.</p>
<p>g) that adequate landscaping, screening and buffering is required to reduce impacts on adjacent residential uses;</p>	<p>The existing front yard off Cork Street and side yards are landscaped. Storage (green) bins are hidden from Cork Street along the NE side property line. Additional landscaping could be provided along the Young Street sidewalk and side yards if desired.</p>
<p>h) the controls on signage;</p>	<p>There is one existing sign on the building on the Cork Street facade. A clause may be included in the DA to allow for one additional sign on the Young Street facade, in the event that the society wishes to include one.</p>

i) the hours of operation; and	The religious services and meals take place on Sundays, between the hours of 11am - 2:30pm. On other days, there is occasional use of the temple for meetings and other gatherings. As such, there is no need to specify hours of use in the DA, which will be similar to those of other religious institutions.
j) the general development agreement criteria set out in Policy IM-7 in Part 9 of this Plan.	See below.
Policy IM-7 In considering proposals to amend the Land Use By-law, amend the zoning boundaries, or enter into development agreements, Council shall consider that:	
a) the proposal is consistent with the Vision, Core Concepts, Urban Design Goals, and all applicable objectives and policies set out in the Regional Plan and this Plan;	The proposal is consistent with all objectives and policies.
b) the proposal is appropriate and not premature by reason of:	
i) the financial capacity of the Municipality to absorb any costs relating to the development,	There are no anticipated municipal costs. All costs will be borne by the property owner.
ii) the adequacy of municipal wastewater facilities, stormwater systems or water distribution systems,	Proposal will meet all requirements of HRM and Halifax Water, including the Grade Alteration By-law and Municipal Design Guidelines. Details will be determined at the permitting stage.
iii) the proximity of the proposed development to schools, parks, and community facilities, and the capability of these services to absorb any additional demands,	As this is a religious institutional use (as opposed to residential use), there are no additional demands on schools, parks and community facilities.
iv) the adequacy of transportation infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and vehicles for travel to and within the development, and	There are adequate transportation options available. Bayers Road (one block away) is a major road, AT corridor, transit and BRT route. Liverpool Street has temporary bicycle infrastructure (one block from Cork St.)
v) the impact on registered heritage buildings, heritage streetscapes, and heritage conservation districts;	N/A
c) the subject lands are suitable for development in terms of the steepness of grades, soil and geological conditions, locations of watercourses, wetlands, and susceptibility to flooding;	The site slopes gently downward from Cork Street to Young Street. As an urban infill site, there are no concerns related to the site's suitability for development.

d) that development regulations in the proposed rezoning or development agreement will adequately mitigate potential conflict between the proposed development and nearby land uses, by reason of:	As noted above, there is minimal to no potential conflict with nearby land uses.
i) type of use(s),	The temple use has existed for over 40 years and it's expansion will not conflict with surrounding uses.
ii) built form of the proposed building(s)	The proposed addition (and existing building) is in keeping with the height and scale of low-density residential uses in the area and is smaller in scale than the abutting 7-storey apartment building on Oxford Street and adjacent apartment building on Young Street. The building will act as a transition between the 7-storey and the house(s) to the SW.
iii) impacts on adjacent uses, including compatibility with adjacent residential neighbourhoods, parks, community facilities, and railway operations,	As noted above, the proposal is compatible with its surroundings.
iv) traffic generation, safe access to and egress from the site, and parking,	The 2 existing driveways have been in place for many years and are safe. No traffic issues are anticipated. However, if staff indicate that a TIS is required, the owner will undertake a study prepared by a professional engineer.
v) open storage and signage, and	There is no proposed open storage. Any additional (future) signage can be enabled via a clause in the DA.
vi) impacts of lighting, noise, fumes and other emissions.	There will be no impacts of lighting, noise, fumes, or emissions.

Conclusion:

The proposal by the Vedanta Ashram Society to construct a 2-storey addition to the rear of their existing temple at 6421 Cork Street, Halifax meets the objectives and policies and carries out the intent of the Regional Centre MPS. Please let me know if you require anything further regarding this submission.