

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY NOVA SCOTIA

HABITAT WAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, DRYSDALE ROAD, HALIFAX

DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT AMENDMENT APPLICATION

PID: 00334102

CASE NO.: 20924

Maggie Holm
Plannig and Development
Halifax, NS

July 31 2023

Reg.
Development Agreement
Amendment Application -
Habitat Community Development
(municipal case 20924)

OG

Maggie Holm, Principal Planner
Urban Enabled Applications - Planning and Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax NS B3J 3A5

Dear Maggie,

On behalf of Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia and members of the Project Design Team, Omar Gandhi Architects Inc. is pleased to submit an application for a Development Agreement Amendment for the proposed Habitat Community Development, located in the Spryfield community.

Since the initial DA agreement, new information relating to the site has been uncovered, including a covenant on the site that prohibits any development with a density greater than townhouses. The amendment application adheres to the restrictions of the covenant while meeting the aspirations of Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia. Through close consultation with HRM Planning and Development staff we propose an amendment to the existing development agreement including 52 freehold family-oriented dwelling units. Consisting of a mix of townhouses (48 units), single-family detached (4 units) and potential backyard suites (up to 7 units), the development will provide quality, accessible and affordable housing for Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia families and enhance the community of Spryfield.

We are very appreciative of the assistance that HRM Planning and Development staff has given over the past few months in preparing for this submission - many thanks. In reviewing the Regional Plan, Municipal Planning Strategy policies and Land-Use Bylaw zoning for Mainland Halifax, we feel that the proposed development meets the spirit and intent of the Municipality's growth and development policies.

Please see the attached documents for our application submission.

Sincerely,

Original Signed

Omar Gandhi, Principal

BA, BEDS, MArch, FRAIC, NSAA, OAA, AIBC

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We build strength, stability and self-reliance.

July 21st, 2023

Maggie Holm, Principal Planner
Urban Enabled Applications - Planning and Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax NS B3J 3A5

Dear Maggie,

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing safe, decent, and affordable housing for lower-income families and individuals in our community. Over the years, we have been successful in partnering with municipalities across Nova Scotia to create housing opportunities that improve the lives of families in need.

The purpose of this Development Agreement request is to seek Halifax Regional Municipality's support and cooperation in the development of a 52-unit affordable housing project in the Spryfield community. The proposed development aligns with HRM's goals of increasing the supply of affordable housing options that meet people's needs; reduce the number of residents living in core housing need; foster a strong housing sector.

Our objectives for this project are as follows:

Affordable Housing: The primary aim of this project is to construct quality, affordable homes for families and individuals who are struggling with housing insecurity within the HRM.

Community Engagement: Habitat for Humanity places a strong emphasis on community engagement and volunteers' involvement throughout the project. We believe that fostering a sense of ownership and belonging in the community is vital to the success of any development.

Environmental Sustainability: We are committed to implementing sustainable building practices, utilizing energy-efficient materials, and incorporating eco-friendly technologies wherever possible to minimize the project's environmental impact.

Infrastructure and Amenities: We will ensure that the project adheres to the municipality's zoning regulations and contributes positively to the surrounding infrastructure and amenities.

Collaboration and Partnership: We are eager to work closely with HRM to ensure the smooth execution of the project, from planning to completion. Collaboration will also extend to addressing any concerns raised by community members during the public consultation process.

We are grateful for the time and consideration invested by HRM in reviewing this Development Agreement. We must draw attention to the constraints that we face in terms of meeting CMHC

funding deadlines and kindly ask for a prompt review and approval process for the proposed development to ensure we can start construction in October 2024.

MILESTONE SCHEDULE	DURATION	COMPLETION
Development Agreement Amendment Submission	MILESTONE	31-JUL-23
HRM internal review for any major red flags: Halifax Water, Parks, and Planning	4 WEEKS (allocated 5 weeks for summer availability)	11-SEP-23
Public Consultation – HRM recommends a virtual, pre-recorded presentation	4 WEEKS (allocated 5 weeks for fall availability)	16-OCT-23
Final Sub-Division Agreement Submission	MILESTONE (could be as early as January 2024, but holding for DA Process)	APRIL 2024
Development Agreement Amendment Approval	12 MONTHS (worst case estimate)	JULY 2024
Final Sub-Division Agreement Approval	6 – 8 MONTHS, showing 6 MONTHS	SEPT 2024
Construction Start	MILESTONE **REQUIRED FOR CMHC FUNDING	OCT 2024
Construction Completion	MILESTONE **REQUIRED FOR CMHC FUNDING	DEC 2026

Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia looks forward to engaging in constructive dialogue to address any questions or concerns that may arise during the review process. We firmly believe that this partnership will be instrumental in fostering a stronger and more inclusive community. Our organization is committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency and accountability throughout the project's execution.

Thank you once again for your dedication to improving the lives of those in need within our community. We eagerly anticipate the possibility of embarking on this transformative journey together.

Warmest regards,

Original Signed

Donna Williamson
CEO

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APPENDICES

- A. Application Form
- C. Site Information, July 31 2023 - Omar Gandhi Architects Inc.
- B. Site Plan, July 31 2023 - Omar Gandhi Architects Inc.
- D. Preliminary Landscape Plan, July 31 2023 - Omar Gandhi Architects Inc.
- E. Preliminary Site Servicing, July 28 2023 - DesignPoint Engineering & Surveying Ltd.
- F. Traffic Impact Statement, July 28 2023 - DesignPoint Engineering & Surveying Ltd.
- G. NSECC Confirmation Letter, July 19 2023 - McCallum Environmental Ltd.
- H. Wetland Evaluation Report, December 6 2022 - McCallum Environmental Ltd.
- I. Habitat Way Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment, July 2023 - Cultural Resource Management Group Limited
- J. Habitat Way Klima Engineering Phase 1B Report, July 18 2023 - Transsolar Inc.
- K. Covenant Agreement Amendment, April 6 2021
- L. Fire Truck Turning Sketch, July 28 2023 - DesignPoint Engineering & Surveying Ltd.

1. Executive Summary

Habitat Way Community Development is a proposed affordable, family-oriented residential development located on a 5.26 acre site containing 52 freehold units consisting of 48 townhouse units, 4 single-family detached units and the potential for up to 7 backyard suites. The development is accessed off of Drysdale road with a proposed secondary emergency vehicle access off of River Road in the community of Spryfield. The proposed housing units are provided by the not-for-profit organization Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia (HFHNS). As a means of providing support and increasing their access to staff, HFHNS is looking to relocate their main offices to be situated within this community development. The development will provide affordable, quality homes to qualifying families and individuals and help to solve some of the housing issues that are prevalent in Nova Scotia.

2. Design Rationale

Changes from Previous Proposal:

- The following site plan conforms with the requirements and restrictions laid out in the covenant on the site (no density greater than townhouse - see Appendix K). Once the water management strategy (Schedule B - drainage sketch, of the covenant) is updated and satisfied, it should allow for the entire site to be zoned as R-2, R-2T and C-2A in south west corner.
- As per decision from HFHNS board meeting, all houses are freehold typology.
- The proposed residential dwellings consist of townhouses, backyard suites and single detached units, providing a mix of unit types to satisfy planning policy.
- Due to the proximity of a number of existing community oriented facilities nearby, it was decided that the community resource centre be converted to an office with a large flexible meeting space. To accommodate the growing HFHNS staff, a 2-storey, 6,000 sf building is being proposed.
- Multiple configurations have been explored with this option being the preferred option for its overall design, density potential, unit mix and park space location and allocation.

Streets & Parking:

The new street is 7m wide which allows for one-way traffic and parking on one side of the street. Having a one-way street eliminates concerns about vehicles crossing paths around the corners, increases the space for vehicles to park while allowing emergency vehicles to pass by comfortably. It also reduces the crossing distance across the road and means that people crossing the road only have to worry about vehicle traffic coming from one direction.

The design of the street, including a reduced radii at each of the four 'P' loop corners, and the limited distance between corners will serve as effective traffic calming for the neighbourhood. This is especially important where there are likely to be lots of families and children in the community.

Sufficient parking is provided for each residential unit. For the office building, as per the zoning, 3 parking space is required for every 1000 sf of gross floor area. We are using 6000 sf as a placeholder number for the office resulting in 18 required parking spaces. We have provided 9 space plus one barrier-free parking space, and would be seeking a relief in the parking requirements. Approximately 17 street parking spaces are provided nearby, which can act as overflow parking should the HFHNS office parking lot be full.

A variance will be required for the turning radius of the corners around the 'P' loop. HRM requires a 20m radius from the centerline of road and we have provided 16m. A 20m radius creates issues with driveway access for corner units as well as reducing parkland area. Please see the attached Traffic Impact Statement for more information (Appendix F). DesignPoint Engineering has provided a sketch showing how an HRM firetruck navigates the reduced turning radius (Appendix L).

Parkland:

The proposed parkland is located based on conversations with HRM's parkland planner. HRM requires minimum 30m of street frontage for all parks and prefers not to locate parkland adjacent to existing residential developments, thus the interior of the 'P' loop is the ideal location as it provides the best access to all families and creates a nice on-axis relationship when entering the community from Drysdale Road. 21,534 sf of Parkland is provided and any shortage of parkland dedication will be made up by work of equivalent value through the planting of trees and outdoor furniture.

HFHNS Office/Flexible Meeting Space:

To provide support for clients in the community, HFHNS would like to have a large boardroom as part of their new office that doubles as a flexible meeting space for their client programs, and program collaborators in the community. Kitchen facilities will be provided as part of this space to accommodate outreach programs that are currently not provided for in the adjacent community.

Environmental Considerations:

Sustainability is a critical part of the Habitat Way Community Development. Climate Engineers Transsolar Inc. have reviewed the proposed site plan and provided a framework to meet the project's sustainability and climate goals. Please see the attached report (Appendix J) for a more in-depth review of their findings.

Backyard Suites:

As part of the mainland south secondary municipal planning strategy, a mixture of dwelling unit types is a requirement for any new development. Backyard suites are considered a separate dwelling unit type and help achieve a mix to satisfy the planning policy. There is potential to build up to 7 backyard suites based on proposed site plan (see Appendix C for locations).

Backyard suites provide potential for HFHNS clients to use them for live-in caregivers, aging parents or adult children. Habitat for humanity does not permit homeowners to rent out space to earn income to offset their mortgage costs. The backyard suites will be used solely by the owner of the main dwelling. While we are aiming to meet the mix of units required in the planning policy, we are also trying to navigate the difficulties of the mortgage structure between HFHNS and home owners and not provide an excess of units that are not needed.

Density:

The planning policy states that an appropriate density for this site is 22 people per gross acre. The proposed development has a density of approximately maximum **46 people per gross acre**. The previous proposal had a density of approximately 42 people per gross acre and Halifax Water did not identify any issues.

Density calculation: one person per habitable room
52 x 3BR units + 7 x 1BR Backyard Suite units = 163 persons

The townhouse unit types includes 2 and 3 bedroom options based on HFHNS client needs. For the purposes of the density calculation, all 3BR options + all 7 potential backyard suites (1BR) chosen as worst case scenario. A mix of 2BR and 3BR townhouse types yields a density closer to **39 people per gross acre**.

Variances:

In general the proposal conforms to the zoning by-laws to meet the minimum required lot areas, minimum lot frontage, front, side and rear yard setbacks and unit parking space requirements. There are some known variances noted but we consider these to be minor in nature. Known variances include the following:

- Reduction in lot frontage requirements for rows of townhouses (+20' requirement for each run)
- Reduction in minimum lot frontage for corner lots.
- Reduction in the minimum turning radius of corners on a local street (20m minimum - 16m provided).
- Relief in maximum allowable front yard coverage for vehicular access (33% maximum).
- Reduction in the number of parking spaces required for the HFHNS Office/Flexible Meeting Space (18 required - 10 provided).

Unit Types:

The site plan includes unit types established in previous phases, showing a freehold mix of two, three and accessible three bedroom units. Note that the 2BR and 3BR units are interchangeable and have the same building footprint. All 3BR units have been assumed for the density calculation. All potential backyard suites shown are 1BR units.

Site Servicing:

Water servicing for this site will loop around the proposed street and connect to the existing 200mm stub in Drysdale Road. Sanitary servicing will split around the midpoint of the eastern leg of the loop and travel via gravity pipe to connect to the existing 200mm stub in Drysdale.

Stormwater servicing for the site will follow the same general alignment as the sanitary and connect to the existing 450mm stub on Drysdale. A control manhole will be installed upstream of the existing stub with oversized pipes upstream of the control structure to accommodate the necessary stormwater storage to balance pre- and post-development flows on the site.

A series of swales and catchbasins will collect stormwater from the rear of properties to direct into the new collection system. A swale along the eastern edge of the property will collect overland flow from 10 Foxwood Terrace which will be directed into double catchbasins to accommodate the increased catchment area. The proposed office site will include on-site stormwater management.

Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment:

The Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment (ARIA) has been submitted to NSCCTH for their review and approval and is included as Appendix I. We understand this is not required for the DA Amendment submission but have included it for reference.

3. Application & Project Design Team

NAME	PROJECT ROLE	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL
Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia - Client			
Donna Williamson	CEO HFHNS	HFHNS	donna@habitatns.ca
Elaine Brunn Shaw	HFHNS Board Member, Project Champion	HFHNS	brunnshawe@gmail.com
Design Team			
Omar Gandhi	Principal Architect	Omar Gandhi Architects Inc.	info@omargandhi.com
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Project Consultants			
Andy Walter	Senior Project Manager, Wetland Alteration	McCallum Environmental Ltd.	andy@mccallumenvironmental.com
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4. Municipal Policy Review

Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy Section X: Mainland South Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (SMPS)	
Part 1: Residential Environments	
Policy	PDT Comment
Policy 1.5 Areas designated as "Residential Development District" on the Generalized Future Land Use Map shall be residential development areas planned and developed as a whole or in phases under a unified site design, providing a mixture of residential uses and related recreational, commercial and open space uses, with an emphasis on a mix of dwelling unit types.	The proposed development is primarily residential with HFHNS office space containing a flexible meeting space and kitchen facilities. A mix of residential uses is provided in the form of townhouse units, single detached units and the potential for backyard suites.
Policy 1.5.1 Pursuant to Policy 1.5, the Land Use By-law shall provide a new zone, the Residential Development District, within which "Low-Density Residential" development and public community facilities shall be permitted and other development shall be permitted only under the contract development provisions of the Planning Act and the requirements in Schedule I.	See Schedule I - Guidelines for Residential Development Districts below.
Schedule I - Guidelines for Residential Development District RDD	
Pursuant to Policy 1.5.1, contract development in any area designated "Residential Development District" on the Generalized Future Land Use Map must conform with the following guidelines:	
Schedule I Development Standards	PDT Comment
Uses which may be permitted: 1. Residential Uses 2. Community Facilities 3. Institutional Uses 4. Neighbourhood Commercial Uses 5. Commercial Convenience Centres	The proposed development is residential with a request to rezone a portion of the site to permit office use (C-2A) .
Schedule I Development Guidelines	PDT Comment
5. Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A density of twenty-two persons per gross acre shall be permitted. Proposals in excess of twenty-two persons per gross acre may be considered provided that no development shall exceed the capacity of existing or proposed sewers. In calculating the permissible density of any project, the capacities available to the drainage area shall be considered. ▪ No more than 15 percent of any area covered by a development agreement may be developed for apartment uses including the building(s), ancillary parking, open space, and landscaping. 	Density The proposed density is approximately 46 people per gross acre (worst case scenario - 39 people more likely), which exceeds the suggested density for the site. The previous proposal has a proposed density of approximately 42 people per gross acre and Halifax Water previously did not identify any drainage issues and all water, wastewater and stormwater design will meet Halifax Water's Design and Construction Specifications. Coverage No apartment uses are proposed for this development.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The design and layout of the portion of new residential developments abutting existing residential areas shall endeavour to protect the character and scale of these areas by attention to such matters as use of open space, landscaping, and ensuring adequate transition between areas of differing building forms and densities. 	<p>Design and Layout</p> <p>The height (30') and massing of the proposed townhouses and office are in keeping with the scale of the existing neighbouring residential developments. Although there are no immediate townhouse developments within the area, there are a variety of housing types including multiple unit dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and single unit dwellings. The townhouse form is consistent with the existing housing typology and will have little impact on the scale and character of the area.</p>
<p>6. Commercial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighbourhood commercial uses are permitted at or near the intersection of local streets, and on the ground floor of high-density residential buildings. In addition, consideration may be given for a commercial convenience centre, except in the RDD areas generally west of the Herring Cove Road and south of Leiblin Drive. The amount of gross leasable space may be limited to ensure that the development primarily serves the adjacent neighbourhoods. The intent is to provide for a range of uses such as retail, rental and personal service, household repair shops, service stations, restaurants and office uses. The additional matters to be considered are found in the guidelines of Policy 3.7 of Section II. 	<p>HFHNS is looking to relocate their current office to provide support and increase their access to staff. Office space will be used only by HFHNS and a flexible boardroom/meeting space will provide facilities for HFHNS client use. Kitchen facilities will also be included to help support food programs for community members.</p>
<p>Landscaping and Open Space</p>	<p>PDT Comment</p>
<p>7. At least 5 percent of the area of the district development must be useable, landscaped, open space.</p>	<p>The proposed development provides a total of 9.4% (21,534 sf) of landscaped open space in the form of a public park.</p>
<p>8. No residential or accessory building shall be constructed within 50 feet of any lake, watercourse, or water body. No commercial or accessory structure shall be constructed within 100 feet of any lake, watercourse, or water body.</p>	<p>The proposed development meets these requirements.</p>
<p>9. Any proposal to construct a community facility or institutional use within 100 feet of the water's edge should ensure, through the use of landscaping or other means, that adverse effects on water quality will be avoided or ameliorated during and after construction.</p>	<p>The proposed office is not within 100 feet of a watercourse.</p>
<p>10. A landscape plan shall be submitted as part of the approval process and the preservation of natural amenities, including rock outcroppings, groves of trees, mature trees, ponds, streams, shores, and wetlands should be preserved whenever possible.</p>	<p>A preliminary landscape plan is provided. Due to the construction of the new public street it will be difficult to maintain existing trees on the site. New trees will be planted along the boulevard, in the public park and around the new office.</p>

Circulation	PDT Comment
11. Access to arterial or collector streets should be such that additional traffic along local streets in residential neighbourhoods adjacent to the development is minimized.	Please see the Traffic Impact Statement (Appendix F) - no issues have been identified.
12. Where common parking areas are provided, they should be so aligned as to restrict through traffic.	Only a single access is proposed to the development off of Drysdale Road, with on-street parking provided on one side of a one-way street. Secondary access from River Road is for pedestrian use only (knock-down or removable bollards) and for secondary emergency access if required.
General	PDT Comment
13. The minimum required site size for a contract within this area shall be three acres.	The site is approximately 5.26 acres.
14. Municipal infrastructure must be adequate to service any proposed development.	Halifax Water had not identified any issues with the previous development and we expect they will not have any issues with the revised design. At the permit stage, evidence that capacity exists will be provided.

Implementation Policies	
Policy	PDT Comment
Policy 4.6: For any proposed development, the City may permit modification of the yard or lot area or width provisions of the Peninsula and Mainland Zoning By-laws under the authority of Section 33(2)(b) of the Planning Act. A decision of the Council of the City of Halifax to permit such modification may be preceded by a public hearing if deemed necessary and such modification shall be granted provided that:	
(a) the amenity, convenience, character and value of neighbouring properties will not be adversely affected;	The site is currently zoned RDD and R-4. As mentioned under Policy 1.5.1, Schedule I - 5, the proposed development is in keeping with the scale and character of the existing neighbourhood.
(b) conditions necessitating such modification are unique to the lot and have not been created by either the owner of such lot or the applicant;	The lot has a substantial area (5.26 acres).
(c) the modification is necessary to secure an appropriate development of the lot where such lot is of such restricted area that it cannot be appropriately developed without such modification;	In order to provide enough density on the site to fulfill HFNHS goals, all areas of the property are to be developed. Units located in the corners of the property have reduced frontage as a result of the 'P' loop design.
(d) the modification is consistent with Section II of this Plan; and	The proposed development is consistent with Section II - City Wide Policies. Specifically, policies 2.1,2.2,2.4,2.4.1,2.8, and 2.10 - see next section.

(e) the registered owner of the land for which the modification is sought shall enter into an agreement with Council pursuant to Section 34(1) of the Planning Act.	The application is for an amendment to a development agreement.
Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy Section II: City Wide Objectives and Policies	
Part 2: Residential Environments	
Policy	PDT Comment
2.1 Residential development to accommodate future growth in the City should occur both on the Peninsula and on the Mainland, and should be related to the adequacy of existing or presently budgeted services.	The site is within the urban service boundary and evidence will be provided that capacity exists in the local wastewater system at the permit stage. Halifax Water have not identified any immediate issues with the previous proposal and the new development is similar.
2.2 The integrity of existing residential neighbourhoods shall be maintained by requiring that any new development which would differ in use or intensity of use from the present neighbourhood development pattern be related to the needs or characteristics of the neighbourhood and this shall be accomplished by Implementation Policies 3.1 and 3.2 as appropriate.	The existing neighbourhood is a mix of residential uses including multiple unit dwellings, semi detached dwellings and single unit dwellings. The proposed development is residential and like the existing neighbourhood, offers a variety of residential dwelling types. The majority of the site would be developed as townhouse units which are in keeping with the lower density forms found in neighbouring properties. While the office is not a residential use, the scale of the building is in keeping with the overall neighbourhood.
2.4 Because the differences between residential areas contribute to the richness of Halifax as a city, and because different neighbourhoods exhibit different characteristics through such things as their location, scale, and housing age and type, and in order to promote neighbourhood stability and to ensure different types of residential areas and a variety of choices for its citizens, the City encourages the retention of the existing residential character of predominantly stable neighbourhoods, and will seek to ensure that any change it can control will be compatible with these neighbourhoods.	The proposed development includes a variety of dwelling unit types to satisfy the requirements for HFHNS families. The mix is typical of the area and will not compromise the existing residential character.
2.4.1 Stability will be maintained by preserving the scale of the neighbourhood, routing future principal streets around rather than through them, and allowing commercial expansion within definite confines which will not conflict with the character or stability of the neighbourhood, and this shall be accomplished by Implementation Policies 3.1 and 3.2 as appropriate.	The proposed public street is a loop and does not direct traffic through existing residential neighbourhoods. Access from River road will be secondary emergency vehicle access only. Policy 3.1 - Repealed 6 June 1990 Policy 3.2 - N/A

<p>2.8 The City shall foster the provision of housing for people with different income levels in all neighbourhoods, in ways which are compatible with these neighbourhoods. In so doing, the City will pay particular attention to those groups which have special needs (for example, those groups which require subsidized housing, senior citizens, and the handicapped).</p>	<p>The proposed development provides affordable, quality homes for families in need and will add to the mix of uses within the existing neighbourhood.</p>
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5. Conclusion

Spryfield is a evolving and growing community within Halifax. There are a number of easily accessed amenities found in the area that make the community highly livable, making Spryfield an attractive area for working families to live.

HFHNS and the PDT behind Habitat Way Community Development believe the creation of this development will further enhance the strong residential community established in Spryfield. It will contribute to fulfilling the mandate of HFHNS, ensuring qualifying families will be provided quality, affordable housing. While prices of homes in the area have remained affordable, increases in mortgage rates recently have made home ownership more challenging for low income families. The Habitat Way Community Development will ensure deserving families and individuals are provided with the opportunity to purchase and own their own home at an affordable rate in a diverse residential community that adds to the existing fabric of the neighbourhood.