

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: 716 Water Street, Renovations and Extension

Date Prepared: August 1, 2022

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Councillor Maggie Burton, Heritage

Ward: Ward 2

Decision/Direction Required:

To seek approval for exterior renovations and extension at 716 Water Street.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City has received an application for exterior renovations and an expansion at 716 Water Street. The building is owned by First Light (formerly the St. John's Friendship Centre), a registered non-profit organization that serves the urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous community with programs and services rooted in the revitalization of Indigenous cultures and languages in a spirit of trust, respect, and friendship. The building houses the Shanawdithit Shelter, which includes First Light offices, meeting space and public programming space.

The subject property is within the Institutional District of the St. John's Municipal Plan, zoned Institutional Downtown (INST-DT), and within Heritage Area 3. It is not a municipally designated Heritage Building. An Institutional Use is a permitted use in the INST-DT Zone. In 2020, a change of use was issued, however Development Approval and Building Permits are required for the proposed renovation and site work.

The existing building consists of two structures connected via a small link. The front of the structure along Water Street is a 2-storey wood framed building with full basement. The newer annex to the rear of the original building has a mix of emergency shelter/transitional housing rooms of various sizes, with associated support spaces (kitchen, laundry, and eating area). The applicant has indicated that the building layout is dated, somewhat inaccessible, and does not use space economically. The site layout and parking lot are inadequate.

The current proposal would see the creation of 10 transitional housing units, along with programming and transitional spaces. Each unit will contain a small lounge and eating area, fully accessible washroom, bedroom and outdoor space. The design is aiming to retain elements of the original building where possible (such as the roofline canopy over the second storey) and add a new elevator to connect the two buildings. Exterior renovations will include new windows, roof and cladding. The garage at the rear of the building is in the process of being reconfigured and will act as an informal meeting space for community members.

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First Light has been working with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for funding to support the proposed project. The applicant states that the proposed new design aims to:

- Accommodate First Light's programmatic requirements in a welcoming, comfortable, and safe environment;
- Create inviting community spaces for the building's residents;
- Increase access to outdoor spaces for residents;
- Update the front façade facing the street; and
- Provide dignified living spaces where residents can feel safe and at home.

Built Heritage Experts Panel Review

Prior to submitting an application, the applicants attended the April 20, 2022, Built Heritage Experts Panel meeting to gain initial feedback on their design. At that time, the design was generally a modern design and did not meet Heritage Area 3 Design Standards.

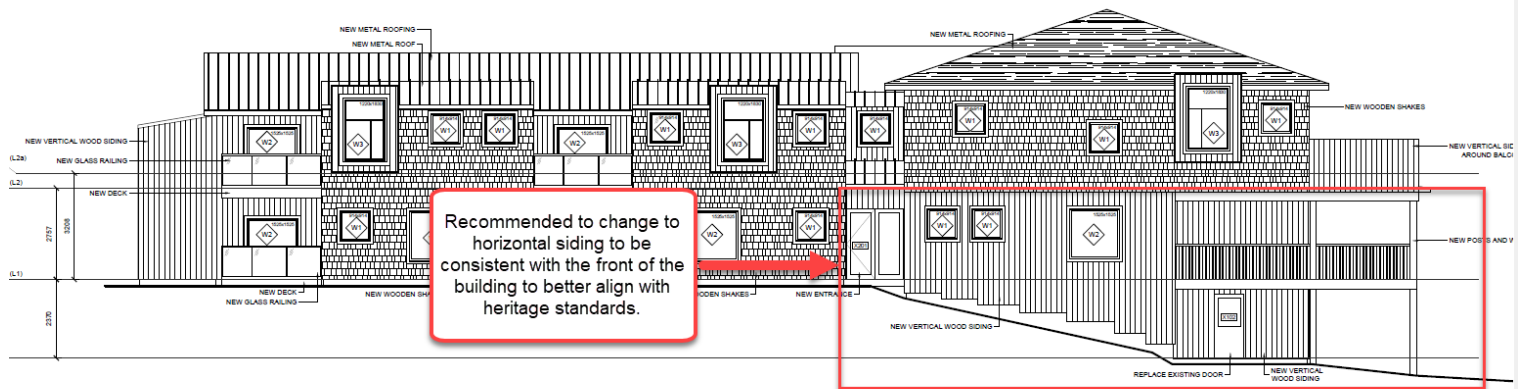
Panel members noted that the development would be located in an area surrounded by properties with various ages of architectural detail, and would be flanked by two Queen Anne style properties, including Horwood House, a designated property. The surrounding properties have strong architectural features and there would be an impact on three streetscapes – Water Street, Leslie Street and Thompson Place. Members were appreciative of the thoughtful design of the building, but felt the application was out of context and did not fit in with the heritage standards for Heritage Area 3.

The following recommendation was brought forward by the panel:

- The Built Heritage Experts Panel while recognizing that the proposed design of 716 Water Street is not aligned with Heritage Area 3 standards and guidelines and appreciating and recognizing the degree of design, recommends Public Consultation be directed by Council as per Section 11.1 (f) of the [Heritage By-Law](#).
- The Panel further recommended that all future applicants consult with the Built Heritage Experts Panel early in the design process when working in Heritage Areas.

The Panel felt that if the surrounding neighbourhood, who have invested in heritage, were in support of the project, then it could be supported.

Since that meeting, the applicants have redesigned the front façade of the building to better align with Heritage Area 3 standards. They have revised the third storey windows to include single hung windows, traditional horizontal cladding on the first two levels and have revised the front deck to make it less bulky and better align with heritage standards. A modern design remains on the side of the building. For Heritage Area 3, heritage standards are applied less stringent on the side and back of a building. Given the setback from the street, the front of the building has a greater impact on the streetscape than the side or back. However, it is recommended that the applicant carry the horizontal siding at the front of the building around the side of the building to better align with heritage standards (as shown below).



As this building is considered an Institutional Use, it has been evaluated against the Heritage Design Standards for non-residential buildings. From Schedule D of the Heritage By-Law:

- Building's façades shall be compatible with the period/architectural style of the streetscape;
- Materials used for the front façade shall be carried around the building where side or rear facades are exposed to the public street and/or publicly maintained space, unless otherwise approved by the Inspector;
- Where replacement is required, modern materials may be permitted where the appearance replicates the building's period/architectural style;
- Accent materials may be permitted;
- For any façade facing public street and/or publicly maintained space, the style and configuration of the windows shall be compatible with the period/architectural style of the streetscape and in keeping with the building's architectural style.
- Specialty windows may be added where, in the opinion of the Inspector, they are compatible with the period/architectural style of the streetscape.
 - In this case, the addition of large picture windows is not original to the building but typical of non-residential buildings in heritage areas (similar to WaterWest at 720 Water Street).
- Modern roofing materials, including metal roofing materials, are permitted provided the appearance replicates the building's period/architectural style.
- Decks and balconies may be permitted on any façade where, in the opinion of the Inspector, they are compatible with the period/architectural style of the streetscape.



- Additions must be compatible with the period/architectural style of the streetscape in their design, massing, and location without adversely affecting the character-defining elements of the existing building.
- Additions shall respect the rhythm and orientation of façade openings and fenestrations (windows) along the same elevation.
- Additions shall meet the Heritage Area Design Standard above. Notwithstanding, modern façade designs may be approved by Council provided the addition is physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the building; enhances the visual prominence of the building; and does not detract from the architectural details of the building.
 - The new stairwell located on the left of the front façade clad in vertical siding would be considered a subordinate modern extension.

The proposed front renovations and extension does meet the standards listed above. Therefore, it is recommended to approve the design as proposed except with a change from vertical siding to horizontal on the lower sides of the building (south and north elevation). As the applicants have incorporated suggestions from the Built Heritage Experts Panel, the application has not been referred back to the Panel for additional comments. Staff recommend that this revised design meets the intent of Heritage Area 3 design standards and therefore public consultation on the application is not recommended.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Neighbouring residents and property owners; First Light staff, residents and program users.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.

A Sustainable City: Facilitate and create the conditions that drive the economy by being business and industry friendly; and being a location of choice for residents, businesses and visitors.

4. Alignment with Adopted Plans: St. John's Heritage By-Law.
5. Accessibility and Inclusion: Any accessibility requirements will be evaluated at the building permit stage.
6. Legal or Policy Implications: Not applicable.
7. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.

8. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Not applicable.
9. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
10. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
11. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
12. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

That Council approve the design of the renovations and extension at 716 Water Street as proposed, with the following exception:

- that the horizontal cladding at the front of the building continue around the sides of the building.

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Approved by: Lindsay Lyghtle Brushett, MCIP - Supervisor, Planning & Development

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	716 Water Street, Renovations and Extension (COTW).docx
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Final Approval Date:	Aug 2, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to Ken O'Brien was completed by delegate Lindsay Lyghtle Brushett

Ken O'Brien - Aug 1, 2022 - 2:02 PM

Jason Sinyard - Aug 2, 2022 - 2:46 PM