

**Hybrid (In-person and Virtual) Public Meeting
4 Merrymeeting Road
Wednesday, March 1st, 2023**

Present: **Facilitator**
Marie Ryan

City of St. John's
Ken O'Brien, Chief Municipal Planner
Ann-Marie Cashin, Planner III, Urban Design & Heritage
Stacey Baird, Legislative Assistant

Proponents
Paul Chafe, Applicant Consultant
Philip Pratt, Applicant Consultant

There were approximately 7 members of the public attended in person and 10 members of the public joined the meeting virtually.

CALL TO ORDER AND BACKGROUND PRESENTATIONS

Marie Ryan, Chairperson and Facilitator, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, introducing Staff and Proponents that were in attendance. Chairperson Ryan informed participants that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed renovation of the Heritage Building to accommodate six residential units and build a second 4-storey Apartment Building on the property that will house sixteen dwelling units. Once City Staff and the Proponent had been given a chance to provide information on the proposal, the floor would be open for any member of the public in attendance to ask questions and express their viewpoint on the development. It was noted that people speaking would have 3 minutes to speak for their first turn, and then would be provided with an additional time to speak once everyone had an opportunity to do so. Participants were informed that this was the public's opportunity to ask questions and have a discussion on the project, and that minutes would be sent to Council to inform their decision.

Ann-Marie Cashin, Planner III, Urban Design & Heritage, read a land acknowledgement and then provided a brief tutorial on the zoom features that would be used during the presentation, including the raise hand feature, the mute button, and the chat feature.

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The City Planner outlined the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss a rezoning application from Emerald Atlantic Group Inc. for 4 Merrymeeting Road. A Municipal Plan

amendment would also be required. She provided the following background and current status of the application:

Background and Current Status

The subject property is currently zoned Institutional, in which an Apartment Building is not a listed use. The applicant has asked for it be rezoned to the Apartment 1 (A1) zone to accommodate the proposed development. The existing building on the site is designated as a Heritage Building. The property is in a mixed-use neighbourhood, with a mix of Institutional, Residential and Commercial Zones surrounding the lot.

At the July 25, 2022, Council meeting, Council decided that they wanted to consider the amendment and set a term of reference for Heritage and Land Use Report so that more information about the proposed development could be presented to the public prior to Council making a decision on the application. The report is available online.

The proposed development would contain two Apartment Buildings with a total of 22 units. Surface and underground parking will be available. The new 4-storey building will be 13.2 metres in height, which will require a 10% building height variance, as the A1 Zone allows a maximum of height of 12 metres. Staff have reviewed the Land Use Report and there are no development or engineering concerns at this stage. If the amendment proceeds, detailed drawings will be required at the development approval stage. The applicant is proposing a total of 44 parking stalls and 11 bicycle parking stalls. 19 of those will be surface parking and 25 will be underground. The St. John's Development Regulations state the maximum parking for 23 units is 33 parking stalls. The applicant will require council approval to exceed this maximum to allow the total of 44 parking stalls. The underground parking will connect the two buildings.

There is a trail at the rear of the site that is an informal trail, as part of this development the applicant will be formalizing that trail and there will be a city easement over that to make a pedestrian connection from Bonaventure to the City owned land adjacent to the Sobeys parking lot.

This application has been forwarded to the provincial department of archeology for their comments, which is a standard review process for any development within archeological areas, if there are any particular requirements the province will determine that prior to any building permits being issued.

The building is a heritage building and the applicant is proposing that the front façade will stay the same, there will be some new building materials on the roof and windows and some changes at the rear of the building. The third storey windows will be enlarged and some windows will be converted to doors. An elevator shaft and balconies are to be added. This is associated with converting the building from an Institutional Use to a Residential Use. They are currently doing exploratory work on the building and have

asked that the design of the dormers and design of the new building be deferred to a later stage.

Because council has adopted a terms of reference for heritage and land use report, if those details are not finalized by the end of this process, the applicants would have to revise the land use report at the development stage and additional public consultation may be required.

As it is a new building adjacent to a heritage building and within a heritage area, the design of the new building has to be approved by council, if it is not finalized by the end of this process it will have to require council's approval prior to any development or building permits being issued.

The City is accepting comments until Friday, March 3, 2023. All comments will be presented to council prior to making decision.

As the proposed development requires a municipal plan amendment, there will be additional consultation at the end of the process. Next step is to bring the amendment forward for Council's consideration to adopt the amendment in principle. If they proceed with that it is sent to the province for review. Once the provincial review is completed it will be brought forward to Council for consideration of adoption and setting the time and date for a public hearing.

PRESENTATION BY THE DEVELOPER

Paul Chafe presented the proposal on behalf of the developer. The new development is what makes the rehabilitation of the existing feasible. The existing building will have two residential units per floor. The new building will be of a similar scale as to not dominate the monastery. The monastery's exterior is in rough shape, new windows, new roof, and new cladding are needed. The parking will be replaced with modern materials that match the original and new roof in keeping with original esthetic and replace all the windows and repair the stone trim work. One challenge on the top floor is the lack of lighting, the applicant is proposing different windows and skylights.

Applicant has consulted with fire department on layout of the parking lot to confirm that they can provide firefighting services to residents.

There are two approaches being considered by the applicant, the balanced approach and the bold approach. The new building is not heritage construction and should be more modern, but it will still be subordinate to the monastery and be complimentary to the heritage building.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

COMMENTS	
Speaker #	Commentary
1.	The applicant's preference to the two approaches would be to go bold. The speaker inquired when drawings would be available to show the preferred bold design. The proponent advised that the final design has not been decided yet. New buildings should be distinguishable from and complimentary to the heritage building. Applicant is open to feedback and ideas.
2.	The drawings show that the balconies are on the southwestern side of the building. The speaker asked if the developer will consider changing that and switching the orientation. The proponent advised that the balconies are positioned to overlook the greenspace.
3.	The speaker asked if the land switch with the City would allow more passage for pedestrians. It was advised that it will offer more passage to pedestrians, as it allows the building to be moved away from place Bonaventure. A major item that the City Transportation Engineer look for during the review of the application were pedestrian connections.
4.	It was asked if parking for electric vehicles will be considered. It was advised that they will be accommodated, whether inside or outside has not yet been determined.
7.	It was asked if the archeological review has started yet. The City Planner advised it was sent and the city is waiting for initial comments. Nothing will happen on the site until permits are issued.
8.	The speaker asked if the proponent can you clarify if these will be condominiums or apartments? It was advised that the City doesn't regulate if a building is rented or owned but Mr. Chafe advised it is being proposed as condominiums.
9.	The Place Bonaventure Board sent a letter on October 26 outlining the boards concerns with development. Is there going to be another formal kind of meeting to address the 8 or 9 major things that were brought up that evening? It was advised that all of those items were addressed in the land use report. Applicant would be happy to have an informal meeting and to go through the details.
12.	The speaker asked about the parking standards before the regulations were changed. The City Planner advised that prior to November 2021,

	<p>the standard was two parking spaces per dwelling unit, since then the City set a minimum and maximum for parking. For an apartment building it is based on the number of bedrooms. Since most of these are proposed to be two bedrooms, it is recommended 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit. The applicant can request more or less as long as the applicant has rationale to do so, which can be found in the Land Use Report.</p>
13.	<p>It was asked where mini splits will be located and if there is any noise concern? The mechanical engineer for the project advised that the new building would have mini splits and the condensing units will be on roof, acoustic shrouding will be built into each units. In heritage building they have relocated the condensing units, and none will be located on the deck, it should be less noise then the tenants of Place Bonaventure has now. The generator is a small generator that runs the elevator, ventilation in garage, overhead doors in garage, and emergency lighting in stairwells. The generator won't be used unless there is an interruption of power. It is moved as far away from Place Bonaventure as possible.</p>
15.	<p>The speaker asked why the applicant is building a modern building and saying they are adhering to the heritage site regulations It was advised that the new building is not a heritage building. A balanced option will have elements of the old and new. The bold version works in a way that lets the monastery be the dominant building. Glass is one of the better materials for doing that, glass is very reflective and not as noticeable as it reflects the sky, the hills, the buildings around it. Glass is less aggressive than solid new buildings.</p>
16.	<p>It was asked, that should council decide not to rezone, and this property was to remain institutional, what kind of things would be allowed? The City Planner advised that there are both uses that are permitted and discretionary uses. Because the building is designated a heritage building, there are heritage uses as well. There is flexibility with uses of heritage buildings to ensure the buildings are being used. If council decides not to go ahead with the rezoning, the building at back would not be permitted to be an apartment building, but the applicant can still apply for the apartment building in the monastery.</p>
18.	<p>The speaker asked if the entrance of the property that goes out onto Merrymeeting Road would be widened, as it is narrow, and if so, will any trees be taken down? The proponent responded and advised that the trees shown on the landscaping plan are existing mature trees and</p>

	that the applicant wants to maintain as many of these trees as possible.
20.	It was asked what surface is going to be used on the pathways. The proponent advised they will be using asphalt. There will also be a fence on the property between the path and the condominium as the owners of the condos would not want people going through the parking lot.

Herein ended the discussion portion of the meeting.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chairperson Ryan thanked those in attendance for their participation and advised that their comments would be valuable for informing Council’s decision on the proposal.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Marie Ryan
Chairperson/Facilitator