

INFORMATION NOTE

Title: 150 New Gower Street, MPA1800003

Date Prepared: May 6, 2020

Report To: Built Heritage Experts Panel

Councillor and Role: Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning & Development

Ward: Ward 2

Issue:

Review of the proposed design for a hotel and condominium/apartment building at 150 New Gower Street.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City has received an updated rendering from LAT49 Architecture Inc., on behalf of Manga Hotels for the development of a 12-storey hotel with the option for commercial/retail use, and a 9-storey condominium/apartment building. A Land Use Assessment Report (LUAR) is required by Council prior to consideration of rezoning the land to Commercial Downtown in order to permit the multi-building development. The applicant has requested that the Built Heritage Experts Panel (BHEP) review and comment on the revised drawings prior to finalizing the LUAR.

The subject property is currently located within Heritage Area 3, the Commercial Downtown and Residential Downtown Districts of the St. John's Municipal Plan and is zoned Commercial Central Office (CCO) and Residential Downtown (RD). The proposed development will sit next to and have a shared access with the Hilton Garden Inn at the corner of Springdale Street and New Gower Street. The City has recommended to rezone to entire lot to a new Commercial Downtown (CD) Zone to accommodate the height and multiple uses of the proposed buildings.

As per Regulation 5.9.4 Heritage Area Standards (Table), for modern buildings that do not meet the Heritage Area Standards, a comprehensive design package must be approved by Council. Approval of the design in the LUAR associated with this re-zoning would meet this requirement.

This application has been previously brought to the BHEP on two occasions in order to evaluate the design and heritage considerations proposed in the development. At the July 2019 BHEP meeting, the Panel offer the following recommendations/comments:

Hotel

- The ground level should be more reflective of the downtown. Should look like downtown St. John's from the street level. For example, more traditional materials should be used at the base, like brick.

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- Some of the colours should be taken off the tower to allow the tower to disappear against the sky, similar to 351 Water Street.
- The hotel should blend more with the residential building.

Residential Building

- Bring the colours down to the streetscape
- Building could be stepped back at the second storey.
- Try to make the ground floor blend with the rest of the building.

General

- Reconsider the use of punched windows
- Try to use elements to tie the three buildings together

At the January 2020 BHEP Meeting, the Panel offered the following additional recommendations/comments:

Landscaping

- Enhance the pedestrian experience throughout and surrounding the site by creating landscaped walkways that lead to surrounding streets. One area where this could be achieved is via the walkway adjacent to Tamarack Construction on Hamilton Avenue. The entryway from New Gower St. should also be reviewed to determine if any accommodations can be made to provide access to the bank (formerly Andrews' Range), without compromising the required easement.

Hotel elevations

- Though the developer's intent to break up the mass of the vertical elements was understood, the Panel reaffirmed their original recommendation to tone down the high-rise components with more muted tones.
- Color could be introduced at the street or podium level; however, the proposed use of black, white and grey stone should be replaced with traditional brick material and punched fenestration.
- Reference was made to datum line throughout the retail sector which creates a cohesiveness and rhythm which should be tapped into at this new location.
- The use of recessed porches for more urban relief.

The most recent designs will be sent under a separate cover as the LUAR is currently in draft form. Once the applicant submits a revised LUAR and staff is satisfied that it meets the terms of reference set by Council, the application will be referred to a Public Meeting chaired by an independent facilitator. The LUAR will become publicly available at that time.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Not applicable.

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: *A Sustainable City* – Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: Not applicable.
5. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Not applicable.
7. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
8. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
9. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
10. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Conclusion/Next Steps:

Any recommendations from the Panel will be forwarded to the applicants for inclusion in the updated LUAR. Once staff are satisfied with the LUAR, the application will be referred to a Public Meeting chaired by an independent facilitator.

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Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	150 New Gower Street, MPA1800003.docx
Attachments:	- 150 New Gower Street - Aerial Map.pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 7, 2020

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

Ken O'Brien - May 7, 2020 - 11:49 AM

Jason Sinyard - May 7, 2020 - 4:01 PM