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RESEARCH REPORT

RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

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Residential Intensification Case Studies

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Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Angus, Montréal, Quebec	A-1
Bishop's Landing, Halifax, Nova Scotia	B-1
Co-opérative d'habitation du Couvent de Saint-Henri, Montréal, Quebec	C-1
Convoy Quay Gardens, Bedford, Nova Scotia	D-1
Cranberry Commons, Burnaby, British Columbia	E-1
Fifth Street Lofts, Edmonton, Alberta	F-1
Garrison Woods, Calgary, Alberta	G-1
Gower Gardens, Gibsons, British Columbia	H-1
Harmony, Toronto, Ontario	I-1
Koo's Corner, Vancouver, British Columbia	J-1
Les Lofts du Pont, Montréal, Quebec	K-1
Les Lofts Laliberté, Québec, Quebec	L-1
London Lane, Guelph, Ontario	M-1
Parkside Mews, Ottawa, Ontario	N-1
Portland Park Village, Toronto, Ontario	O-1
Salsbury Heights, Vancouver, British Columbia	P-1
Seagram Lofts, Waterloo, Ontario	Q-1
Sterling Place, London, Ontario	R-1
The Carlings at Arbutus Walk, Vancouver, British Columbia	S-1
The Prince Edward, Moncton, New Brunswick	T-1
The Renaissance at North Hill, Calgary, Alberta	U-1
Waterford Suites, Halifax, Nova Scotia	V-1
Western Elevator Lofts, Winnipeg, Manitoba	W-1

Introduction

For the last 50 years, new development in Canada has typically occurred on greenfield lands at the urban edge, resulting in the loss of farmland and natural areas, rising car-dependency and traffic congestion. Moreover, many municipalities lack the resources to pay for the infrastructure needed to support expansion into greenfield areas.

One of the ways municipalities have sought to address these issues is through residential intensification, i.e., encouraging housing development in existing urban areas where infrastructure and transit services are already in place. Infill development, adaptive reuse, brownfield redevelopment, lot splitting and secondary suites are examples of intensification that can result in:

- reduced infrastructure costs
- increased housing opportunities
- more efficient land use
- preservation of rural and natural areas outside existing urban boundaries
- revitalization of urban areas in decline
- more transportation choice through easier access to daily destinations such as work, shopping and entertainment (e.g., mixed-use, pedestrian and transit-oriented neighbourhoods).

Intensification comes in myriad forms depending on unique local opportunities and conditions. However, as a development process, intensification can be broken down into four distinct types:

- **Infill** – Infill involves new housing construction on small parcels of vacant or underutilized land within existing serviced residential areas. Gaps in the existing urban fabric (e.g., on a parking lot, behind a church or on a vacant parcel or side lot) are “infilled” with residential development.

- **Redevelopment** – Residential intensification through redevelopment involves replacing an existing type of urban land use (e.g., industrial, commercial, or vacant brownfield) with residential or mixed-use development. This may also include converting low-density residential areas to higher-density ones, e.g., demolishing single-family houses and replacing them with mid-rise apartments, or replacing low-rise apartments with high-rise condominiums. Redevelopment is usually on a larger scale than infill and often involves significant infrastructure improvements.
- **Adaptive reuse** – The renovation of an existing non-residential (i.e., industrial, commercial or institutional) building for residential use, e.g., lofts in a former warehouse, factory, school or office.
- **Addition** – The addition of residential units to existing buildings (with or without the expansion of the building), such as introducing secondary suites into a detached house, converting a single family house to a fourplex or adding residential units above shops.

These four types of intensification can be found in a variety of intensification settings including:

- **Mainstreets** – Adding housing above retail uses along arterial streets or converting existing non-residential buildings to include residential uses.
- **Brownfields** – Redevelopment/adaptive re-use of contaminated sites and buildings previously used for industrial or commercial purposes.
- **Greyfields** – Redevelopment/adaptive re-use of shopping malls or plazas (including their parking areas) to residential or mixed-use development.
- **Waterfronts** – Infill or redevelopment of sites in a waterfront location (ocean, lake or riverfront).

- **Transit-oriented development** – Increased densities around transit nodes to support adequate transit ridership, typically through infill or redevelopment.
- **Downtowns** – Infill, adaptive re-use or additions focused on downtown revitalization.
- **Neighbourhoods** – Infill on small vacant lots or conversion of existing buildings resulting in the intensification of a whole neighbourhood.
- **Suburbs** – “Retrofitting” suburbs to increase densities through infill development, e.g., splitting large lots in half to double the number of smaller lots.

Purpose

This project profiles examples of residential projects that have overcome the barriers to intensification and are generally considered to be successful by the developers, residents and municipal officials. The lessons learned about what worked and what didn’t can be of use to developers, municipal officials and others looking for innovative solutions to overcoming these obstacles and realizing the many benefits of intensification.

Research Approach

The report profiles 23 completed intensification projects. To ascertain the information most needed by potential audience members, developers, planning consultants and municipal officials in four locations across the country were asked for their input regarding their information needs for such a report.

The research identified a list of over 80 potential intensification projects through Web searches, industry databases and suggestions from industry professionals. From this list, 23 projects were chosen as detailed case studies. The selection attempts to strike a balance between regional

representation, different urban contexts (e.g., downtown, waterfront, suburban, brownfield), and different types of intensification (e.g., redevelopment, infill, adaptive re-use), while presenting the most innovative, successful and hopefully transferable examples.

The 23 initiatives are summarized in Table 1. For each case study, the research team interviewed the developer, the municipal official most familiar with the project and a number of residents.

Developers were asked to provide information on the following topics:

- project overview and statistics
- surrounding context
- design features
- marketing, finances and costs
- obstacles encountered and how they overcame them
- the development process including key partners and municipal support
- lessons learned
- a list of residents who could be interviewed
- supporting documentation and contact information

Municipal officials were asked to provide information on the following topics:

- level of success of the project from a municipal perspective
- general municipal planning concerns about the project
- level of neighbourhood support for the project
- public process
- alignment with municipal objectives
- municipal initiatives/incentives that facilitated the project
- the approvals process
- supporting data and contact information

Residents were asked to provide information on the following topics:

- description of occupied unit
- location and access to amenities
- costs/affordability
- satisfaction with design and features (e.g., views, sunlight, open space, parking, unit size)
- neighbourhood character and mode of travel to work, shopping/entertainment
- general likes/dislikes about the project

Findings

The 23 case studies demonstrate different approaches to successfully achieving residential intensification in a variety of circumstances. One thing was clear throughout the study—intensification faces a number of significant challenges and requires concerted effort on the part of developers, their consultants and municipalities. Almost all the projects met with practical challenges, which can be grouped into the following general categories:

- higher development costs
- neighbourhood opposition
- regulatory issues.

As a result, developers of intensification projects are generally exposed to more financial risk, delays and complexities and, therefore, have to be more creative and perhaps more daring in response.

Despite the risks, there are rewards for those who succeed. These rewards come in the form of higher sale prices or rent as a result of better proximity to amenities and rapid sales as a result of pent-up demand for urban living and unique project attributes, such as heritage restoration. Also, with some large, high profile projects there is a measure of respect and prestige bestowed on developers who have wrestled with a large or challenging project—respect and prestige that

helps attract buyers. However, the challenges in some cases can make the developer's return on investment unsatisfactory. The challenges include cost overruns for contamination cleanup, delays from regulatory hurdles and special design features included to ensure the project fits the neighbourhood.

To help developers overcome these challenges, many municipalities have introduced policy initiatives supportive of intensification. Indeed, some of the projects profiled in this report would not have been built without such support. Some of these initiatives are documented in a separate CMHC report entitled *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*.

Higher development costs

A number of factors can limit the economic feasibility of intensification projects when compared with greenfield projects. These include:

- Higher construction costs due to upgrading and restoring heritage buildings, often with unforeseen issues with the existing building (Sterling Place, Western Elevator Lofts, The Prince Edward, Seagram Lofts, Salisbury Heights).
- Special design-architectural features in response to neighbourhood concerns about the project fitting in (The Carlings, Parkside Mews, Gower Gardens, Koo's Corner and many more).
- Cleanup costs on contaminated sites and the ongoing risk of liability even after development has been completed (London Lane, Angus, others).
- Extra costs of tight sites, including paying for road closures, crew parking, extra security, compensation to neighbouring property owners for blasting damage or overhead crane swings, higher insurance premiums, etc (Waterford Suites, Portland Park Village).

- Structural issues on reclaimed waterfront land (Convoy Quay, Bishop's Landing).
- Time delays caused by regulatory hurdles, public input and approvals process, which ultimately lead to cost increases for the developer.

How was this overcome?

Despite these obstacles, most developers were satisfied with the return on investment. The selling prices or rents for most of the projects were about the same as average prices and rents for similar housing types in the same city.

- In many cases there was large, pent-up demand, driven largely by the projects' excellent locations in close proximity to urban amenities. The projects often fulfilled demand where there was limited supply of new downtown housing (e.g., Sterling Place, Fifth Street Lofts, The Prince Edward, Western Elevator Lofts) and consumer taste for a unique product (Koo's Corner, Garrison Woods, Seagram Lofts). This resulted in rapid sales and a positive return on investment for many projects.
- Municipal support for the projects was key, generally motivated by the municipalities' desire to encourage intensification.
- Many of the larger redevelopment projects involved a close partnership with the municipality (Garrison Woods, Angus, Seagram Lofts), often with the municipality paying for a significant portion of infrastructure costs. In two cases, Bishop's Landing and Convoy Quay, provincial support and large-scale planning were key.
- Municipal incentive programs helped to ensure the financial feasibility of many of the projects. Incentives included:
 - financial assistance for heritage restoration and urban neighbourhood revitalization projects, including grants, tax credits, gap financing and interest-free loans, (Western Elevator Lofts, Sterling Place, Lofts Laliberté, Salisbury Heights, Fifth Street Lofts)
- grants for cleanup of contamination, in two cases financed by the province, but administered by the City (Angus, Co-op du Couvent de Saint-Henri)
- elimination or reduction of development charges (Parkside Mews, Seagram Lofts, London Lane)
- In many cases, the municipality was flexible and receptive to changing regulations such as zoning and parking, which helped reduce the cost from delays that can put projects in jeopardy. Some projects were allowed density increases in return for heritage restoration (Salisbury Heights, Sterling Place, Seagram Lofts). Flexibility on other issues, such as height, open space, parking and live-work units, also benefited many of the projects.
- Many developers did careful cost control (Lofts du Pont) and extensive research to establish requirements before embarking on the projects (Western Elevator Lofts).
- Although most of the projects studied were financed conventionally, some developers adopted more unusual, creative financing approaches. These included a co-housing model, where the future owners acted as the developer and collectively provided the equity necessary to obtain financing for the project (Cranberry Commons), and a project where future residents tied their RRSPs to their purchase in order to provide down payments, which were used to leverage more financing (The Prince Edward). In the case of London Lane, units were initially built as rent-to-own units to allow owners to build up some equity in the project before conversion to condominiums.

Neighbourhood opposition

There is often considerable opposition to intensification projects, frequently relating to perceived threats to property values, incompatible building scale or character, blocking of sunlight and views, as well as parking and traffic problems. Compared to greenfield development, neighbours are usually living closer to the projects and there is more interest in ensuring the project fits in because a unique architectural fabric has already been established. Neighbourhood opposition is usually most intense in well-established residential neighbourhoods surrounding infill projects. Certain municipalities, therefore, require a high standard of design and public process to ensure the project “fits” into the existing urban fabric.

How was this overcome?

- Neighbourhood support was fostered in some projects because the developer restored vacant heritage buildings that were valued by the neighbourhood (Seagram Lofts, The Prince Edward, Salisbury Heights). In other cases, the existing land use was considered to be undesirable by the neighbourhood, so the new development was seen as an improvement (Lofts du Pont, Waterford Suites, Co-op du Saint Henri). In other cases, projects were developed in commercial areas where there were few existing residential neighbours (Portland Park Village, Fifth Street Lofts).
 - Many developers engaged in public consultation early, prior to formally submitting an application. Through open houses, forums or meetings with community groups, neighbours could voice their specific design concerns and there were opportunities for dialogue and for the developer to understand those concerns and modify the design (Renaissance, Bishop’s Landing, Salisbury Heights, Gower Gardens, Seagrams Lofts, Parkside Mews, Koo’s Corner).
- For some larger redevelopment projects, working groups or advisory committees were established to represent the neighbourhood and liaise with the developer (The Carlings, Garrison Woods, Angus). Generally, developers genuinely responded to local concerns and this was cited as a key success factor and ensured both municipal and neighbourhood support. Developer responses to concerns included incorporating:
- Retail space and employment (Parkside Mews, Angus).
 - Materials and architectural detailing reflective of the neighbourhood (most projects, especially The Carlings, Parkside Mews, Koo’s Corner).
 - Reduced building heights and terracing to ensure a compatible scale and to avoid blocking views of neighbours (Bishop’s Landing, Gower Gardens, The Carlings). Two building scales, like townhouses and taller apartment buildings, were used in some projects (Waterford Suites, Portland Park Village) for attractiveness and scale compatibility, while achieving sufficient density.
 - Public amenity space (Bishop’s Landing, The Carlings, Convoy Quay Gardens, Harmony).
 - Traffic calming (Garrison Woods) and screened parking that allows pleasant streetscapes along public streets (Angus, Harmony, Portland Park). Many projects included underground parking.
 - Some of the projects suffered in the early stages from public resentment left over from previous proposals by other developers (Parkside Mews, The Carlings). Having previously fought proposals they didn’t care for, neighbours were wary of all development proposals. Developers in these situations had to be even more sensitive to neighbourhood concerns and manage the public process with extreme care.

Regulatory issues

Despite support offered by municipalities, many projects encountered complex or lengthy approvals processes that created time delays and cost overruns. Creative solutions, lengthy negotiations and compromises were needed to proceed. Requirements to fit in with the surrounding context require more careful design consideration.

In some cases, complex negotiations and time delays undermined financial performance, resulting in disappointing profits for the developers concerned. This was the case even when municipalities were supportive of the project and had policies encouraging intensification (Parkside Mews, London Lane, etc.). In others, developers made the modifications or negotiated alternatives and still made satisfactory return on investment.

Specific regulatory hurdles and solutions

- Adapting old buildings to modern building codes often requires extensive construction work that can make a project uncompetitive. Heritage façade restoration can also increase costs (Sterling Place, Western Elevator Lofts, The Prince Edward, Salisbury Heights, Seagram's Lofts). These projects can involve unforeseen building conditions that require upgrades, like sound and thermal insulation, ventilation and fire safety. Some municipalities have adopted a more flexible regulatory approach to these issues and/or provided financial incentives that tip the balance in favour of adaptive reuse rather than demolition (Western Elevator Lofts, Sterling Place). There were examples of developers negotiating code equivalencies to help reduce the costs of meeting the code. One developer recommends that when doing adaptive reuse, add 25 per cent contingency to anticipated costs due to unforeseen building conditions. Another says to be fully aware of all the heritage requirements before embarking on heritage restoration projects.
- Parking requirements can increase costs. For example, for Cranberry Commons the extra parking required by the City proved to be costly and unnecessary. However, many projects were able to obtain parking reductions or cash in lieu of parking.
- Most projects involved zoning modifications, including changing a land use, allowing additional density, increasing building heights and reducing building setbacks. Developers either conformed to the requirements or negotiated alternatives that were acceptable to the City and the neighbourhood, for example, allowing density increases for restoration of a heritage building (Salisbury Heights, Sterling Place, Seagram Lofts). Creative solutions were often required. For example, the Lofts du Pont townhouses are built on a laneway but the City requires that the address and main entrance to dwellings be on a street, not a lane. The developer, therefore, had to design the project so that the main entrance fronted onto the municipal street even though most of the project façade faced the lane.
- Some projects were required to adhere to design guidelines that dictate architectural style, streetscaping, etc. This was the case particularly for larger-scale projects, such as The Carlings, Garrison Woods and Angus.
- In some cases, this regulatory complexity resulted from contrasting visions between City departments, like those between engineering and planning regarding street standards (Garrison Woods, Angus). Developers recommend that proponents ensure that both the planning and engineering departments are supportive of the project before proceeding. If possible, they suggest obtaining detailed expressions of support for the project from the municipality. In some cases, staff disputes were only settled after council gave clear direction to staff to resolve conflicts through a compromise solution.

- Innovation often brings a higher quality product but can lead to more complicated approvals and regulatory roadblocks. Developers who went this route displayed a high level of personal interest and determination, which resulted in eventual success.

Resident satisfaction

Residents were generally very satisfied with their units and most had willingly traded off disadvantages, such as less green space, reduced parking and smaller unit size, for the benefits of convenient access to amenities and a high level of neighbourhood vitality. In some cases (Cranberry Commons, Koo's Corner) residents had purchased their units, in part, because of the environmental benefits of intensification projects.

Residents appreciated the efforts of most developers to provide good access to sunlight and to improve views through the use of large windows and careful unit orientation, and these were important factors in their purchasing decisions. Lack of parking, although the most frequently raised issue, was rarely a huge concern for residents. In fact, many residents accepted that reduced parking in the urban areas is both necessary and desirable.

As one would expect, the location and convenient access to amenities encouraged many residents to use alternatives to the car. In general, the percentage of residents using alternative forms of transportation (transit, bike, walk) was greater for these projects than in the Census Metropolitan Area as a whole.

Selling prices and rents, with a couple of exceptions, were similar to the average prices in the municipality for comparable housing types in the same year.

Conclusions

Despite the challenges of developing residential intensification projects, many Canadian municipalities are witnessing a shift in the balance between greenfield development and intensification. Acting with the knowledge that there is a market demand for such projects, both municipalities and developers are becoming more creative in their attempts to incorporate additional residential units into existing urban areas. City programs are helping to remove the obstacles to intensification, e.g., contamination, renovation costs for heritage, DCCs and generally creating a supportive environment.

Despite initial neighbourhood concern about many of these projects, in none of the cases was lingering opposition noted by municipal officials. Issues were either non-existent, resolved in the design-approval stages or the neighbourhood has grown to like the project. In many cases, developers worked closely with neighbourhood groups to resolve issues by finding creative solutions. For example, in some cases, the public argued for non-residential uses to be included (Parkside Mews, Angus), which arguably resulted in a better project for all.

While residential intensification is well established and self-perpetuating in some municipalities (Vancouver, Toronto), many medium- and small sized municipalities are still witnessing early attempts to intensify and they still struggle to reduce barriers.

From this study, it is clear that the challenges of intensification are numerous. However, through the concerted effort and partnership of developers and municipalities, and driven by an increased demand for urban living, residential intensification is providing good results for all those involved.

Table 1—Summary of built project case studies

Project name, developer	Municipality	Intensification type	Description	Completed	Pre-development use	Challenges	Lessons learned, success factors
Angus, Canadian Pacific Railway Real Estate Group	Montréal, Que.	Redevelopment (brownfield)	1,200 housing units: condo apartments and townhouses, seniors rental apartments (max. 8 storeys) plus commercial and industrial uses	Final phase 2006 -700 units built at time of study (2003)	Industrial rail yard complex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major soil contamination Lengthy and complex public consultation process Required to incorporate industrial and commercial uses City departments lacked a shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be flexible Listen to the neighbourhood: find creative ways to include their desired features, e.g. included industrial, commercial uses Meticulous planning, common understanding of goals and positive partnership with City in large projects will minimize delays Grants for cleaning up contamination instrumental in helping to deal with cost disadvantage of brownfield sites
Bishop's Landing, Southwest Properties Ltd.	Halifax, N.S	Redevelopment (waterfront)	206 rental apartments (max. 7 storeys), retail uses at grade	2001	Surface parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working efficiently with multiple government stakeholders Neighbourhood opposition because of impact on views etc. Approval decision was appealed to Supreme Court of Nova Scotia Reclaimed land (underground parking issues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a crown corporation as a development partner improved visioning and approvals process A good relationship with the municipality ensured solid support A flexible design plan and a positive housing market made this project a success Reduced height to avoid blocking views Obtained City and neighbourhood support by including large, high quality public amenity space
Co-op du Couvent de Saint Henri, GRT Bâtir Son Quartier	Montréal, Que.	Adaptive reuse	48 co-op rental units (max. 4 storeys)	2000	Vacant school building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building asbestos removal required Soil contamination from former industrial uses on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project made possible by Accès Logis, a community housing subsidy program of the Quebec government Land and building donated by City of Montréal Soil remediation assisted by Revi-sols program
Convoy Quay Gardens, Provident Development Inc.	Bedford, N. S.	Redevelopment (waterfront)	91 condo apartments (max. 9 storeys)	2000	Industrial waterfront and reclaimed river basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complexity of structural engineering on unstable, reclaimed land resulted in time delays and cost overruns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perseverance is key to overcoming setbacks (such as engineering problems) Provincial support and large-scale waterfront planning were key to success City and neighbourhood support gained by including large, high quality public amenity space
Cranberry Commons, Cranberry Commons Co-housing Development Corporation	Burnaby, B.C.	Infill (increasing density on existing residential lots)	22 condo units: townhouses and apartments (max 3½ storeys)	2001	5 single detached lots with 2 existing single- detached houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra costs of unnecessary municipal parking requirements Extensive rezoning negotiations with municipality (setbacks, density, parking) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socially and environmentally progressive project appealed to municipality that approved density increase Innovative design takes longer to approve and requires lengthy negotiations with the municipality

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Fifth Street Lofts , Five Oaks Developments	Edmonton, Alta.	Adaptive reuse (downtown revitalization)	39 condo loft-style apartments (max. 3 storeys)	1998	Nightclub in former textiles warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asbestos removal Project insurance difficult to obtain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By building during the initial stages of a municipally designated intensification area policy, the land costs were still low, giving better returns Providing unique product that was in limited supply resulted in fast sales and profits City grant and no development charges helped make project more viable
Garrison Woods , Canada Lands Company	Calgary, Alta.	Redevelopment (suburban) and adaptive reuse (New Urbanist community development)	1,600 units: condo apartments, townhouses, semi-detached former military houses, single-detached houses, apartments above retail and coach house units plus retail (max. 4 storeys)	2003/4	Canadian Forces Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convincing City engineers to accept customized street and park standards Soil contamination Public consultation process Reusing former military houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insist on timely and common sense approvals from government officials Building what you envision takes extra time and effort Cooperation between developers and government officials makes a much better product Be flexible in incorporating neighbourhood wishes: advisory committee is a good way to communicate Traffic calming and high streetscape quality (e.g., preserved mature trees)
Gower Gardens , Ken's Lucky Dollar Foods	Gibsons, B.C.	Adaptive reuse and infill (downtown revitalization)	11 condo townhouses and apartments plus retail (max. 4 storeys)	1998	Grocery store and parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conforming to development permit guidelines Gaining support from neighbourhood residents, e.g., blocking views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistence is vital in these types of developments to balance requirements of municipality with project objectives Having a single point of contact (development liaison) in the municipality would have made the development much smoother Flexibility in incorporating neighbourhood concerns, like reduced height: terraced buildings to preserve views and scale
Harmony , Rockport Group	Toronto, Ont.	Infill/redevelopment (suburban)	242 condo townhouses (max. 4 storeys)	1999	Vacant land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise and aesthetic issues from nearby power lines Major redesign needed due to a high groundwater table (no underground parking) and altered phasing requirements (needed to sell most attractive units first) Gaining neighbourhood support re. traffic, safety, site access, parking Awkward triangle-shape site bounded by busy arterials and hydro lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Success of infill projects comes down to careful planning, quality design and superior marketing skills Infill projects also require a developer who is less averse to risk Overcame sound issues through careful unit location/orientation and window placement All parking, driveways in rear lanes, preserved safe and friendly streetscape on public roads Public park in centre used up space that was difficult to develop

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Project name, developer	Municipality	Intensification type	Description	Completed	Pre-development use	Challenges	Lessons learned, success factors
Koo's Corner , Chesterman Property Group Inc.	Vancouver, B.C.	Adaptive reuse and Infill (urban neighbourhood)	6 condo townhouses (max. 2½ storeys)	2002	Car repair shop and parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggled to reach agreement on responsibility for cleaning up contamination Alleviating neighbour's concerns (re. density, character, façades, garages) Fitting building and required parking onto very tight site Integrating high density, ground oriented project into surrounding heritage community Reusing existing building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early, open neighbourhood consultation needed to gain community and municipal support Thoughtful design, colour selection, and massing to fit with heritage residential community and reflect commercial/industrial history of site Green building features attracted buyers Knowledgeable municipal urban designer and City's density bonus for building retention
Les Lofts du Pont , Les Développements Mas Inc.	Montréal, Que.	Infill (urban neighbourhood)	7 condo townhouses fronting a lane (max. 3 storeys)	2002	Vacant lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conforming to municipal bylaws and guidelines regarding access onto laneways Keeping costs low to keep prices within range of target market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart site selection created a project where many would have seen none Innovative design required to meet municipal bylaw requirements for lanes Careful cost control kept prices within range of target market
Les Lofts Laliberté , Laliberté	Québec City, Que.	Adaptive reuse (downtown heritage revitalization)	51 rental apartments plus offices, and retained retail store (max. 6 storeys)	1999	Heritage department store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resident parking Costs of renovating heritage building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive relationship between the developer and the municipality Large municipal grants offset costs of heritage restoration
London Lane , Reid Heritage Homes	Guelph, Ont.	Redevelopment (brownfield, suburban)	105 units: condo townhouses and semi-detached houses (max. 2 storeys)	2001	Industrial land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil contamination Risk and cost of contaminated site Site requirements resulting from close proximity to railway tracks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unforeseen costs can arise on brownfield projects Environmental risk can never be fully eliminated City allowed increased density in recognition of site challenges City reduced DCCs for infill project
Parkside Mews , Domicile Developments Inc.	Ottawa, Ont.	Infill and adaptive reuse (urban neighbourhood)	31 freehold townhomes, 6 condo apartments, 8 retail units (max. 3 storeys)	1998	Florist (green- houses) and four residential buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making concessions to gain community support, e.g., including retail units Conforming to government regulations and requirements, e.g. zoning, parking, rental protection Act, setbacks for snow and garbage removal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even an excellent plan and attractive features can be financially compromised by a lengthy, complex approvals process even when the municipality is supportive of the project. Be flexible in incorporating neighbourhood concerns e.g. incorporated at grade retail as well as architectural features and scale of surroundings City's elimination of development charges helped financially

Table 1—Summary of built project case studies

Project name, developer	Municipality	Intensification type	Description	Completed	Pre-development use	Challenges	Lessons learned, success factors
Portland Park Village, CityScape Development Corporation	Toronto, Ont.	Infill (downtown revitalization)	193 units: condo apartments and townhouses, plus retail (max. 9 storeys for apts. and 4 for townhouses)	2001	Parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil contamination • Construction on a small and tight site -access problems during construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this case, reducing density to gain unique features and quality design was a successful strategy • High quality townhouses attracted buyers and made higher density apartments more viable • Parking, driveways in rear lanes preserves safe and friendly streetscape on public roads
Salsbury Heights, VHL Group Inc.	Vancouver, B.C.	Adaptive reuse and infill (heritage revitalization)	16 condo units: apartments, single-detached houses (max. 35 ft. tall)	2001	Heritage house used as private hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working around heritage requirements • Gaining community support for increased density • Dealing with heritage renovation costs and time delays affordably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware that the heritage approval process is longer and more strict than usual • Make sure the heritage requirements are fully understood by doing preliminary research to determine a more accurate development schedule • Extra density was allowed in exchange for heritage restoration to help offset costs
Seagram Lofts, Barrel Works Group Ltd.	Waterloo, Ont.	Adaptive reuse (downtown heritage revitalization)	103 condo loft-style apartments (max. 10 storeys)	2001	Distillery warehouses for aging whisky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial risk of large investment with no phased returns • Salvaging original brick and barrel wood • Working around heritage requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the political and economic environment is conducive to your project vision • Shared visions and goals between the developer and municipality make for a faster and more rewarding project • City support by eliminating development charges, building an adjacent public park and extra density helped make project viable • Developers need to be dedicated and have real interest in their projects to be successful
Sterling Place, Spriet Investments Inc.	London, Ont.	Adaptive reuse (downtown, heritage revitalization)	32 rental apartments (max. 5½ storeys)	1999	Vacant commercial heritage building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective demolition and residential retrofit • Anticipating building code conditions and having to adapt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure building code issues for old buildings are fully understood before the planning process starts • Providing unique product that was in limited supply resulted in fast sales and profits • City grants and programs offset heritage revitalization costs
The Carlings at Arbutus Walk, Concert Properties Ltd.	Vancouver, B.C.	Redevelopment (urban neighbourhood, brownfield)	100 condo apartments (max. 4 storeys-The Carlings).	1997	Molson Brewery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inherited neighbourhood concerns about height, density, character; scale, open space • Conforming to detailed guidelines of Neighbourhood Policy Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would have been preferable to be involved in the rezoning process • Be flexible and innovative in incorporating neighbourhood design concerns, e.g. height, architectural features, scale, public open space • Working groups and charrettes are good ways to enable communication and resolve design issues • Once neighbourhood support was obtained, subsequent phases went smoothly

Table 1—Summary of built project case studies							
Project name, developer	Municipality	Intensification type	Description	Completed	Pre-development use	Challenges	Lessons learned, success factors
The Prince Edward, Prince Edward Developments Ltd.	Moncton, N.B.	Adaptive reuse (heritage revitalization)	18 rental, loft-style apartments (max. 3 storeys)	2000	Vacant school-house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranging subdivision of lands with the municipality Code issues in restoring old building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not be discouraged by poor state of building; look forward to the quality finished product Add up to 25% to the estimated construction budget to cover unanticipated costs of restoring heritage buildings
The Renaissance at North Hill, Apex Lifestyle Communications Inc.	Calgary, Alta.	Infill/redevelopment (suburban, greyfield, transit-oriented.)	170 condo apartments (max. 10 storeys)	2003	Shopping centre parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major obstacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being up front, honest and communicating effectively with all partners greatly increases the success of a project
Waterford Suites, Olive Properties	Halifax, N.S.	Redevelopment and infill (downtown revitalization)	77 rental apartments and townhouses (max. 8 storeys)	2001	Liquor store, warehouse and parking lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction difficulties on small, tight site Finding parking for crews in busy downtown Conforming to noise bylaws during construction caused delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infill projects that have high site coverage pose many complex challenges that require acute planning and lots of determination to overcome Townhouses along street blend in with adjacent buildings, while taller apartment set back from street enable increased density
Western Elevator Lofts, Exchange Lofts Inc.	Winnipeg, Man.	Adaptive reuse (downtown revitalization)	7 condo loft apartments (max. 4 storeys—will be 5)	2002	Vacant heritage commercial building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code issues for renovating heritage building City was not used to dealing with this type of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial incentives from CentreVenture and City offset costs (grant, tax credit, etc.) Having a single point of contact with the municipality would have facilitated a faster process Unusual product in Winnipeg market helped with sales

R

RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

ANGUS

Montreal, Que.

Area bounded by Boulevard St-Michel, CP railroad, Rue Rachel E. & Rue Gilford

Developer

Canadian Pacific Railway Real Estate Group

Date completed:

Final phased completion 2006
(Commercial zone 2003,
Residential 2005, Industrial 2006)

Site area:

50.6 ha (125 acres)

Number and type of residential units:

700 completed so far: in total, 1200 residential units including 600 condominium townhouses, 160 condominium apartments, 315 seniors rental apartments and 125 additional condominium or rental units

Floor area:

Approximately 84 to 232 m² (900 to 2500 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density:

23.7 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space:

Nine parks total: seven small, two large including Jean Duceppe Park which total 2.5 ha (6.3 acres). All townhouses have a private yard, apartments have small common courtyards.

Maximum height:

Eight storeys (seniors residence)

Parking:

One space per townhouse, 0.33 per rental unit, 0.25 per condo (mostly underground), plus minimal visitor parking and street parking.

Non-residential units:

Grocery store and mall, liquor store, office building, two light-industrial buildings

Pre-development usage:

Industrial rail yard complex: The Angus Shops

Selling price:

\$180,000 to \$300,000 (in 2003)



Figure 1: Angus uses similar colours and materials, while varying the style to create character. (Photo: CP Railway).

Angus is a 50.6 ha (125-acre) site located in the Rosemont district of Montreal, just 5 km outside of the central downtown business district. Formerly housing the Canadian Pacific Railway Angus Shops, the redevelopment of this brownfield site includes a total of 1,200 housing units in the form of townhouses, condominium apartments, and seniors' apartments. The project also includes a large grocery store and other shopping opportunities in a commercial district, as well as a significant portion of land set aside for light-industrial purposes. Incorporated among the housing are small parks and grassy areas for recreation and the soon-to-be completed Jean Duceppe Park will provide a larger park space within walking distance for all Angus residents.



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Figure 2: A south-facing aerial view of Angus in 2003, with Jean Duceppe Park at the top-right, due to be completed in 2005. (Photo: CP Railway).

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Rosemont district of Montreal had been the home, for most of the century, of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) manufacturing yard and industrial lands, being fully or partially operational from 1904-1992. Rosemont was devastated by the final closure of the CPR Angus Shops in 1992. In the 10 years between 1976 and 1986, Rosemont lost 14% of its population as employment opportunities became scarce.¹

With an economic resurgence occurring in Montreal in the mid- to late-1990s CPR set out to redevelop the Angus lands that had been underutilized for so many years. Development started in 1998 and is slated for completion sometime in 2006.

The development grew out of a desire from both CPR and local residents to utilize the site. Montreal's Official Plan, published in 1992, provided guidelines for the Angus development to City planners, CPR developers and neighbourhood residents. This resulted in a development proposal for a mixed-use site incorporating residential, commercial and industrial zones.

The initial stages of development, spanning five years, were dedicated to the assessment and cleaning up of significant contamination on this urban brownfield site. As a rail yard, the site had accumulated heavy metal deposits and other subsoil contaminants and a major investment was needed to prepare the site for residential development. With provincial assistance, the contamination soils were removed and community consultations took place before the development proceeded.

The location of Angus is optimal for downtown employees, young couples, or first-time buyers looking for a relatively inexpensive alternative to a single-family home with the convenience of being near downtown. However, the developer has noticed that many former Rosemont residents have returned to live at Angus.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

[The most challenging aspect of redeveloping a large complex brownfield] is having people believe – someday – there would be life again on what at the time looked like a gloomy, gigantic scrap yard.
**Pierre St-Cyr, Angus Project Director,
Canadian Pacific Railway**

Costs and Financing

The estimated cost of redeveloping the site was \$500 million². The project was financed through working capital from CPR, including company reserves and phased sales to three builders.

Development costs	
Residential development	\$205 million
Industrial development	\$250 million
Commercial development	\$ 20 million
Soil & infrastructure restoration	\$ 25 million
Total	\$500 million³

The brownfield decontamination of the site was a considerable expense, eventually costing \$10 million. The Québec Ministry of Environment, through the Revi-sols program, granted CPR \$3.3 million to aid in the clean-up process. For more information on Revi-sols (Urban Contaminated Sites Rehabilitation Program), refer to the CMHC report entitled *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*.

Marketability and Profitability

The Angus project appeals to many Montrealers because of the reasonably priced housing and convenient location.

¹ Lamey, Mary. "La vie en rose: Quality of life and affordable housing drawing young families to Rosemont." Montreal Gazette, 10 July 2001.

² Wilson, Heather D. "Brownfield Redevelopment: An Urban Revitalization Tool for Reducing Urban Sprawl." URBANA Independent Study. Montreal, QC: Laval University. 2002.

³ See Note 2.

Marketing initially targeted first-time buyers such as young couples but also young families as well. After the initial stages, the development became attractive to a range of other buyers including second- and third-time buyers moving into the core from the suburbs or moving into a newer house from older parts of the city.



Figure 3: A model of one of the apartment condominiums on the Angus site. (Drawing: CP Railway).

In most cases, units were sold before the construction had started. This was especially important for the developer in the initial stages. It created an already occupied neighbourhood that attracted buyers in subsequent stages of development.

As the project moves along, profit targets are being met and CPR is happy with the progress of the development. For residents as well, property values are rising at a steady pace.

Obstacles

The major concern with the Angus site was the contamination from the previous use as a railway yard with associated industrial activities. Between 1992, when the site became fully non-operational, and 1996, environmental assessments and soil remediation took place to meet Québec's Ministry of Environment standards set out under the 'Soil Protection and Contaminated Sites Rehabilitation Policy'.

Neighbours became involved in the project because of their interest in saving the site for employment opportunities. Heather Wilson states, "The Angus Development Society (SDA) was created by the Rosemont Petite-Patrie Community Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) to represent the employment needs of the area residents, providing a link between decision-makers and the public."⁴

This interest and pressure to include community groups resulted in the City of Montreal negotiating a compromise between the neighbourhood needs and the developer's original intention. This compromise eventually led to a residential-industrial mixed-use site, and extended the planning process by a few years. Refer to "Municipal Planner's Perspective" for details on the public input process and neighbourhood concerns.

At times, the developer became frustrated because it was felt that the progress and efficiency of the project were disrupted by the involvement of too many City departments that couldn't arrive at a shared vision. The mayor eventually instructed the City departments to develop a compromise that worked for all parties.

Municipal Support

Once the development agreement between CPR and the City had been finalized in 1995, the two became important partners to realize requirements for site function, building type and architectural style. As CPR planner Pierre St-Cyr states, "The game plan was very clear in defining each party's responsibilities." This partnership worked well in getting the development off the ground and implementing their collective objectives.

Lessons Learned

The developer acknowledges that nothing is ever guaranteed and changes will always occur throughout the development process to create delays. The developer's advice for large redevelopments such as Angus is that meticulous planning will minimise delays such as resident concerns, development approvals, etc. It is important to be organized and clearly understand the goals before starting the project.



Figure 4: The smaller neighbourhood parks provide open space within minutes of all housing. (Photo: CP Railway).

⁴ See note 2.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

I am very glad to have several possible modes of transportation to get to a given place, which is a great advantage of Montreal. My trips are pleasant, as they take little time. **Resident**

Affordability

Angus features a variety of medium density housing in the form of townhouses, condominiums, and apartment buildings. The housing units range from 84 to 232 m² (900 to 2500 sq. ft.) and a range of floor plans allows for a variety of lifestyles. The selling prices in 2003 for the townhouse condominiums were between \$180,000 and \$300,000. When the first houses went on the market, the prices were affordable and the majority of residents were thrilled with the value for money they received. The homes have turned out to be solid investments with one resident's townhouse value gaining \$65,000 in 3 years, for example.

Real estate values have risen in the past few years, but the average price still hovers around \$225,000. For a downtown location close to many amenities, the residents feel the costs are comparable, if not better, than the other options on the market.

Design Features

The majority of the residents surveyed commented on the large private outdoor yards and patios. The favourable size and number of windows allow a significant amount of light into the homes. They also allow a good view of the neighbourhood streetscape, which most residents are happy with.

The developer tried to interest Hydro Quebec in burying the electrical infrastructure but was unsuccessful. Consequently, some residents felt the electricity poles and transformers in back yards detracted from an otherwise visually pleasing environment.

The parking situation is a problem for most residents. Some residents have only one parking space and park second cars on the street, while one resident noted most people just don't use their garages at all, opting for the street instead. This has created quite clogged street parking and caused visitors some difficulty in finding a space, especially in the evening.

Neighbourhood & Transportation

The majority of the residents surveyed like living in the Rosemont district of Montreal. The district is a predominantly residential neighbourhood which also has an adequate amount of service, shopping and entertainment options as well as being close to public transit and downtown Montreal.

Most of the residents like the uniform look of the project although some think it could be more varied in colour and style. The new neighbourhood is welcoming and the residents seem to be enjoying the company of their neighbours, many getting together to share landscaping duties.

As Angus is still under construction, many residents have views of vacant lots and non-landscaped areas, but they appear to be patient and understanding of this situation. They are also optimistic about what the neighbourhood will look like and feel like once it is completed.



Figure 5: The SAQ liquor store was one of the commercial ventures introduced to Angus in a redeveloped rail yard building, a former fire station (Photo: CP Railway).

There is a large Loblaws grocery store on the Angus site as well as other nearby shopping areas. A bank, liquor store, fruit store, and a few restaurants are in the vicinity and the Saint-Joseph market and Maisonneuve shopping centre are within walking distance. A few of the residents would have preferred more small boutique stores, cafés, and restaurants instead of superstores, but the convenience of a nearby grocery store was noted.

Driving can be congested in Rosemont and the surrounding districts. For Angus residents, buses or the metro are popular alternatives when travelling to nearby destinations such as Old Montreal, downtown, and the Plateau Mont-Royal. Of the five residents surveyed, two of the four currently working drive to work half of the time while the other two take public transit for all their commutes. In comparison, 27 per cent of workers in the Montreal CMA walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.⁵

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNERS PERSPECTIVE

*One of the major issues at the outset of the project was to design a subdivision that would reconcile the intent of the developer to use the site for residential purposes...with the intent of the City to ensure a certain number of businesses to replace the Angus Shops. **Élaine Gauthier, Planning Consultant, City of Montreal***

Neighbourhood Opposition or Support

Angus went through a long development proposal stage in the 1990s when the developer and the City worked together to create a project that would fit into the fabric of the surrounding neighbourhood and still retain industrial uses on parts of the site and maintain some of its previous functions. During this multi-year process, neighbourhood residents and community stakeholders were invited to give their input. The City and the developer took into account such concerns as maintaining industrial employment on the site while creating new residential areas.

As a result, when the project approached the development approval stage, there was minimal opposition from the neighbourhood. Bernadette Duquesnoy, planner for the Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie arrondissement, explained that residents were not so much opposed to the project as concerned with the overall framework and operation of the project.

Indeed, the issues centred mostly on the interface between the industrial and residential functions as well as the distribution of residential building heights on the site.

Through formal public forums and meetings, citizens were able to be involved in the development process and voice their opinion. Once development had started, yearly open houses were initiated where residents are constantly able to submit their ideas and concerns with the ongoing development. Some initial concerns have been alleviated by the proposed construction of a large park which will separate the residential portion of the site from the industrial portion. The building heights have also been arranged in a fashion that creates uniformity within each block.

Planning Objectives

At the time when CP Rail was considering the redevelopment of the Angus site in 1992, the City of Montreal was going through a planning policy change. The City was drafting its first Master Plan and because the CPR site was a significant parcel of land within the Rosemont neighbourhood, the site became a significant issue in the new City planning strategy.

After a lengthy process involving the City, the developer and the neighbourhood, the land was zoned in 1995 for both industrial and residential uses. At this point, a Development Agreement between the City and CPR was formulated to clarify each party's responsibilities in the development of the overall site, which was to occur in several stages over time. CPR was responsible for 33% of the infrastructure costs (roads, sewers, water, lighting, trees) with the City paying the balance. At the time, the City of Montreal's policy was to attract and support development in this way.

Does It Fit Into The Neighbourhood?

The current Angus site was only a portion of the entire former-CPR yard and a residential development was built adjacent to Angus in the mid- to late-1980s. The intention was to integrate the new community with the old as well as the surrounding Rosemont neighbourhood and this has been successful.

The neighbourhood stakeholders were adamant about the inclusion of retaining some of the industrial land so as to provide employment opportunities for residents of Rosemont. The inclusion of the commercial district and the redevelopment of the industrially-zoned lands have added a significant number of jobs to the area.

⁵ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Angus is generally homogenous in its architectural features, with similar colours, tones, building arrangement, and building materials, but there are minor style differences that vary the façades. The style and colours aim to blend into the community and mix well with the retained heritage buildings in the commercial/industrial area, which primarily use brick. The ground level landscaping of Angus provides plentiful grassy and unpaved areas because 90 per cent of the off-street parking spaces are hidden underground.

Regulations and Approvals

The development approval process was a lengthy and involved process between the City, the developer and the neighbourhood. Once the City of Montreal Master Plan had been completed, City planners developed a bylaw that set out general conditions and guidelines for the development of the residential and industrial land proposed for the site.

These regulations and guidelines imposed on the Angus site included density, architectural style, commercial and industrial activity, housing type, building heights, preservation of heritage buildings and parking. As the timeline for the project was long (10-15 years), the guidelines were quite broad, though a clause was written to subject the buildings to an architectural review.

Thus, the landscaping, open-spaces, parking and architectural aspects were evaluated and approved as required. As time passes, the City has been and is willing to change the development bylaw to reflect current market conditions and resident concerns, while still maintaining the spirit of the original proposal.

LESSONS LEARNED

From the beginning, the City of Montreal was an important player in the development of Angus. Though the process was long, the final product reflects the visions of all of the parties involved and captures the history of the site while providing opportunities for the future.

A large-scale project like Angus is a significant challenge, especially when it is proposed on a brownfield site. CPR, with financial support from the provincial government, was able to tackle the large-scale remediation of polluted soils.

Significant pressure from local residents resulted in a mixed-use project providing much-needed residential units and valuable jobs. Furthermore, this project saw entire or parts of existing buildings preserved and enhanced, thus contributing to a better environment. Few companies have the financial assets to finance a development of this scale and length, but CPR dedicated over 10 years to make this project a success.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Marc Lapierre
Director Real Estate Group, Montreal,
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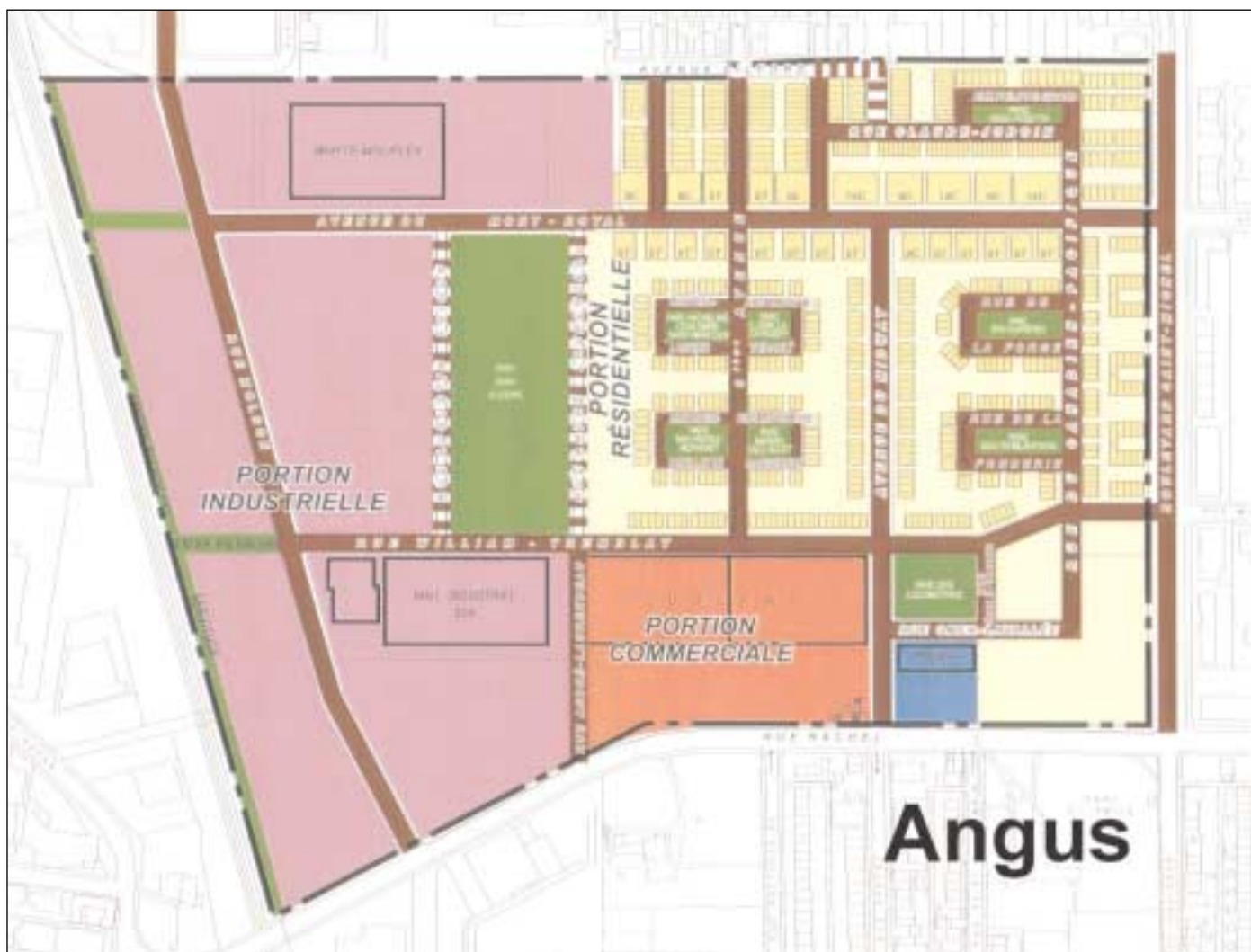


Figure 6: Site Plan of Angus (CP Railway).

R

ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

BISHOP'S LANDING

Halifax, N.S.

1475 to 1479 Lower Water Street

Developer

Southwest Properties Ltd. and Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd.

Date completed

Phase 1, 2001

Site area

Public: 1.74 ha (4.3 acres),

Private: 1.31 ha (3.23 acres)

Number and type of residential units

206 rental apartment units

Unit sizes

42–161 m² (450–1,735 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

157 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

Approximately .75 ha (1.9 acres) of park, private landscaped area, public square and waterfront boardwalk

Height

3–7 storeys

Parking

77 underground, 120 at grade, 13 outdoor,

42 public pay and display parking spaces

Non-residential units

Ground level retail

Pre-development usage

Surface parking lot

Rental price

Prices start at \$792 a month. Median prices:

studio \$897, one-bedroom \$1,081, two-bedroom

\$1,542, three-bedroom \$2,043



Figure 1: Artist's rendering of Bishop's Landing

Bishop's Landing is a 206-unit, mixed-use project on the historic Halifax waterfront. A collaboration between Southwest Properties and the Nova Scotia government's Waterfront Development Corporation, the project features a range of apartment-style units, a number of specialty retail shops and a substantial public waterfront park and boardwalk. As the first major redevelopment of the Halifax waterfront, the project received a lot of public scrutiny and required negotiations with three levels of government. High quality design that considers adjacent heritage properties was encouraged by detailed planning policies and guidelines.



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Figure 2: Bishop's Landing and waterfront boardwalk at night

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A century ago, the site now occupied by Bishop's Landing was water and wharves. The site was filled-in to accommodate a number of marine-related industries, most recently a fish processing plant. Purchased by the Waterfront Development Corporation (WDC)¹ in the 1980s for future development, the site had been used for the last 20 years for public parking and access to the waterfront. After prolonged public use, many considered the site as public space.

Bishop's Landing includes a public square and park, part of an extensive waterfront boardwalk, as well as a landscaped terrace with extensive amenities for the tenants. Bishop Street was extended to the waterfront to ensure open space connection and views. Inspired by the finger wharves that used to occupy the site, the project's buildings are oriented east-west towards the water, a design move that allows considerably more water views (80 per cent) than would be expected.

As the first significant mixed-use development on the Halifax waterfront, the project attracted a lot of media attention. Initially, the project was controversial because of its use over the years as a public parking lot that provided access to the waterfront.

The project uses underground, indoor-at-grade and outdoor parking to provide slightly less than one parking space per unit, with additional "pay and display" public parking.

The project is a significant step forward in realizing the City's goal of increasing the residential population in the downtown core. It is conveniently located near many urban amenities and the project itself includes three restaurants and a number of specialty stores.

In 2002, the Waterfront Center in Washington, D.C., honoured Bishop's Landing as the year's best Mixed Use and Commercial Project.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

We dealt with all three levels of government on this project...the project is the result of a co-operation between Southwest, the [Provincial] Waterfront Development Corporation, and the municipality.

Jim Spatz, Chairman and CEO, Southwest Properties

Costs and financing

Cost data was not available.

The project was financed through a CMHC-insured mortgage from Royal Trust. There was no government financial assistance for development of the buildings. However, the WDC, a provincial Crown corporation, sold the land to the developer through a request-for-proposals process and developed the public space and boardwalk adjacent to the project. The Halifax Regional Municipality contributed \$500,000 to the completion of the boardwalk.

Marketability and profitability

The first tenants occupied the building in March, 2001 and rentals have been swift, with more than 95 per cent of the building now occupied.

The developer directed marketing at empty nesters, young professionals and executives. Marketing activities included advertisements in newspapers and lifestyle magazines, bus shelter posters, sponsorship opportunities with a local theatre, public relations, brochures and mail-outs to prospective clients.

Despite development costs being about eight per cent higher than anticipated, the project has so far met the developer's profit expectations partly because the market strengthened during and after construction.

¹ For more information on the Waterfront Development Corporation, see CMHC's report *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*. The WDC is a provincial Crown corporation with a mandate to rejuvenate the waterfront of Halifax Harbour.

The developer attributes the additional costs to the difficulty of developing underground parking on a filled site and delays as a result of the lengthy appeals process.

Obstacles

The developer dealt with three levels of government during development. The WDC sold the land to provide public access to the urban waterfront and to stimulate private sector investment in the area. The working port to the south is under the jurisdiction of the federal government, which also had some claim of ownership to the project lands. Finally, the Halifax Regional Municipality has jurisdiction over land-use planning and had a number of objectives for development of this part of the waterfront, which is critical to the proper functioning of the downtown. While there was a high level of co-operation between the three governments and the developer, the number of stakeholders added to the complexity of the approvals process.



Figure 3: The Halifax waterfront

There was some opposition to the project, mainly from neighbours who had recently purchased condominiums. They would have preferred more park space and were concerned that the proposed buildings would block their oblique views of the water.

A number of public open houses and forums were held during the process, as well as one-on-one meetings. To try to alleviate neighbours' concerns, the original proposal for a nine-storey building was scaled back to seven storeys, stepping down to three storeys as it approaches the waterfront.

There was also some opposition from members of the public who had become accustomed to using this undeveloped space for parking and access, perhaps not realizing that the space had always been earmarked for development when it was purchased by the WDC.

As a result of this opposition, the 17-4 council decision approving the development was appealed by a group of residents to the Utility and Review Board (a provincial planning tribunal) and eventually to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. Although the project was eventually approved, this process took a year and severely delayed construction.

There was some soil contamination from former industrial uses but it was fairly simple to deal with.

Lessons learned

The WDC's involvement in the development process was definitely an asset in the success of the project. As a provincial Crown corporation, the WDC was able to work effectively with the municipal and federal governments that had jurisdiction over the area to generate a cohesive vision of the waterfront. The partnership between the WDC and Southwest Properties created a dynamic relationship that produced a high quality product for both new residents and the citizens of Halifax.

Like many projects that vastly change the development pattern of a site, the key elements in creating a successful endeavour were the good working relationship with City officials, the flexibility of the design plan and a positive housing market.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

[It is] outstanding for a rental property; a real effort by management to make this a community. Resident

Affordability

Bishop's Landing features several different unit styles. Sizes range from an average 42 m² (450 sq. ft.) for studio apartments to an average of 161 m² (1,735 sq. ft.) for three-bedroom apartments. Rents start at \$792 a month. Median rents are \$897 for studios, \$1,081 for one-bedroom apartments, \$1,542 for two-bedroom apartments and \$2,043 for three-bedroom apartments. In 2001, average rents in Halifax ranged from \$537 for studios to \$955 a month for three or more bedrooms.²

² CMHC, Atlantic Market Analysis Centre, Halifax

Apartment unit rental prices (2001)

Studio	\$792 to \$1,253
One bedroom	\$955 to \$1,829
Two bedroom	\$1,339 to \$2,471
Three bedroom	\$1,800 to \$2,978

All residents surveyed said the location, with excellent access to waterfront, is a big factor in making the project good value for money in their eyes. In addition, the excellent concierge and the option of units with enhanced views for increased rental charges were contributing factors to the value.

Design features

For many residents, the view seemed to compensate for a smaller unit than originally desired. Although smaller, the units are still considered comfortable and the large living rooms were mentioned as a benefit when entertaining guests. The open-concept design creates a spacious feeling in the unit interior.

Many residents surveyed described the project as a combination of modern unit interiors in a building with a heritage look that fits into the mid-1700s cobblestone neighbourhood in lower Halifax. A few residents attribute this harmony to the mix of local citizens' meetings and government planning processes. Noteworthy are the variety of colours used for the facades, a common feature in Halifax, and the terraced look of multiple levels.

Residents surveyed find their private balcony adequate, especially due to the immense shared courtyard complete with pool, garden, putting green, barbecue and guest room, all of which encourage socializing.

All residents surveyed delight in the view of the harbour and harbour-side streetscape in downtown Halifax. One resident described the view of the horizon as appearing to extend the interior space of the units. All noted the floor-to-ceiling windows, which allow lots of unobstructed sunlight.

All residents surveyed expressed satisfaction with the one underground parking space, on average, per unit. The limited visitor parking space (which can be booked through the concierge) can be supplemented by the adjacent paid public parking.

Neighbourhood and transportation

Local shopping, restaurants and entertainment are all within walking distance of the project, with three restaurants, shopping and a spa within the complex itself. In addition, all residents surveyed commented on the excellent service of the project's 24-hour concierge.

Most residents surveyed commented on the convenient downtown location of the project, but reported driving a few minutes to a large grocery store, especially in bad weather. Bus stops and a scenic waterfront boardwalk, which includes a bike trail, are only a short distance from the project.

The one resident of the five surveyed who is working drives to work. In the Halifax CMA, 20 per cent of workers walk, bicycle or use public transit to get to work.³

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

*Halifax has suffered from an exodus from the old city core. After offices closed, the city became dead in the evening. This project (along with others) has brought people back to the downtown and made the place feel more alive again. **Paul Morgan, Planner, Halifax Regional Municipality***

Initially very controversial, Bishop's Landing has turned into a great success story for the Halifax Regional Municipality. Despite the approval of a number of projects in the 1980s, none were built, so Bishop's Landing was the first significant redevelopment of the Halifax Waterfront.

The project has enhanced the waterfront boardwalk, built by the WDC, by adding visual interest and additional park space for the public, including additional seating areas. Extending the street to the waterfront has preserved views of the water from Bishop Street. Residents' views have been maximized through building orientation and massing.

The fiscal impacts have been great for the municipality, with the project generating in excess of \$300,000 annually in tax revenues.

³ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Neighbourhood opposition or support

As a port city, Halifax is defined by its relationship to the waterfront, which created immense public scrutiny of the proposal and intense media coverage.



Figure 4: The terrace gives residents a feeling of openness from their units.

Neighbours were concerned about protection of their views and access to the public waterfront. Adjacent condominium owners formed a "Save the Waterfront Society." Their concern resulted in an appeal to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board and eventually the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

Both the Regional Municipality and the developer held well-attended public information meetings. The Regional Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the project because of its proximity to registered heritage buildings. The developer ensured that the design was compatible through a number of features, such as iron railings and balconies, roofing materials, colour and facade materials.

While many neighbours were initially apprehensive about the project, the post-development attitude is now more accepting and most neighbours are happy with the final product. Commercial property was slow to lease at first but now many fine shops have opened, adding to the vitality of the project and the waterfront as a whole.

The municipality also contributed \$500,000 to the cost of the waterfront boardwalk, which everyone was grateful for.

Planning objectives

The project is consistent with a number of municipal policy objectives contained in the Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) for the Waterfront Development Area, including the following:

- The project helps fulfil the long-term objective of redeveloping the surface parking lots along the waterfront to create a dynamic focus for the waterfront area.
- The project puts people closer to where they work, play and shop downtown.
- The project increases the number of people living in the downtown area, an objective supported by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission.

The project realizes design objectives expressed in the MPS, including a continuation of a well-landscaped park along the water's edge, preservation of strategic view corridors and creation of high-quality building design and construction that respects the waterfront context and adjacent heritage buildings.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

As the site of Bishop's Landing is in the heart of downtown Halifax and along the historical waterfront, many of the buildings in the neighbourhood are of historic significance. This resulted in the development proposal being reviewed by the heritage review committee, which was happy with the plans and approved them with little opposition.

The buildings are relatively low, especially near the water, and have flat roofs and use square angles to give a certain warehouse feel to the residences, which fosters a sense of old, waterfront industry. A beautiful boardwalk was also included to extend the waterfront through the project, allowing the continuity of the public realm and integration with the community.

A small park and a public square provide the public with recreation spaces along the waterfront as well as affording more residents of Bishop's Landing a waterfront view. The public square, which is mostly used for parking, has also been used for special events such as the Busker's Festival, during which all of the residents were on their balconies watching the performances.

Regulations and approvals

The property was originally zoned C-3 (General Commercial) and is located in the Halifax Waterfront Development Area established under the Municipal Planning Strategy. The C-3 zone allows commercial and residential uses but restricts height to 25 feet unless a development agreement is reached with council. Consequently, the project was approved using a development agreement to allow for the extra height. This is a contract between the developer and the municipality that in the Halifax Region is used to tailor site-specific requirements rather like a comprehensive development zone in other municipalities.

A long public hearing resulted in 17 of 21 councillors voting in favour of approval. The decision was subsequently appealed by the Save the Waterfront Society to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board and then the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. However, Council's decision was upheld at both levels.

The municipality reduced the parking requirements from one space per unit to 0.8 spaces per unit recognizing that many people in this location would choose not to own a vehicle.

The property was subdivided into three lots, with Southwest Properties assuming ownership of two lots on which the two buildings are located and WDC retaining ownership of the rest of the land.

The project has spurred additional development in the area and the adjacent property has now been offered for development through a request for proposals from the WDC.

LESSONS LEARNED

Bishop's Landing is the result of a high level of co-operation between the public and private sector. This collaboration delivered a project that achieves

a substantial public asset as well as a significant privately owned project that is generating tax revenues for the municipality. The design acknowledges the waterfront context, is sensitive to the history of the area and is very popular with residents and government officials.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Maurice Pez, Vice-President of Development
Developer: Jim Spatz, Chairman and CEO, Southwest Properties
Phone: (902) 422-6412
E-mail: jim.spatz@southwest.ca
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Municipality: Paul Morgan, Planner II, Halifax Regional Municipality
Phone: (902) 490-4482
E-mail: morganp@halifax.ca
Web: www.halifax.ca

Architect: Lydon Lynch Architects Ltd.
Landscape architect: Vollick, McKee, Petersman

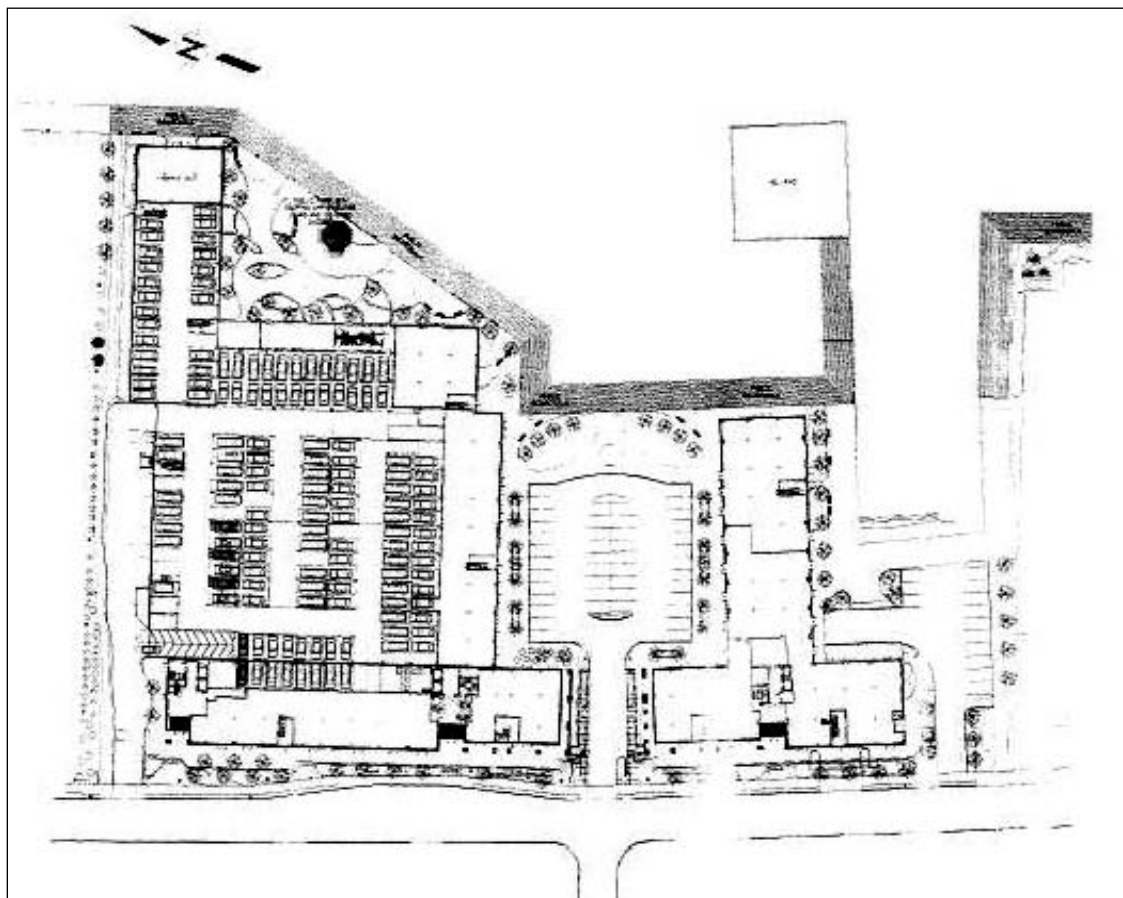


Figure 5: Site Plan for Bishop's Landing (provided by Lydon Lynch Architects)



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

CONVOY QUAY GARDENS

Bedford, N.S.

89 Waterfront Drive



Figure 1: The two residential towers of Convo Quay Gardens (at left), part of the redevelopment of the Bedford Waterfront.

Developer

Provident Development Inc.

Date completed

2000

Site area

1.82 ha (4.5 acres)

Number and type of residential units

91 condominium units in two, nine-storey towers.

Floor area

82 m² to 353 m² (880 sq.ft. to 3,800 sq. ft.) per unit

Gross residential density

50 units per hectare (uph)

Site coverage

Approximately 35 per cent

Landscaped open space

Approximately 45 per cent

Maximum height

9 storeys

Number and type of parking spaces

1 underground space per unit for most units.

Additional 50 above-ground rental spaces available.

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Industrial waterfront uses.

Land reclaimed by dredging Bedford Basin.

Selling price

average \$236,000

Convo Quay Gardens is two, nine-storey condominium towers and is part of the Bedford Waterfront Redevelopment Project. The land is a part of the Bedford Basin, which was reclaimed by dredging silt from the Sackville River, moving it to the water's edge and then filling and capping it to create the development parcel and surrounding community.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: The two nine-storey towers at ConvoY Quay Gardens

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project is built on land reclaimed from the Bedford Basin, using silt dredged from the Sackville River. The area was developed before Confederation and was originally used for water-related industries, such as pulp and paper, ship repair and other marine transportation uses. The waterfront was busiest during the Second World War, when it was an assembly area for convoys. In recent years, the Bedford Bay and Basin shoreline has been mainly used for public and private recreation, such as the Bedford Basin Yacht Club, as well as for numerous small, private docks for recreational boating.

The project was developed as a residential condominium and includes a 325 m² (3,500 sq. ft.) clubhouse in a separate building for use by residents of both buildings. Units range from 82 m² (880 sq. ft.) for the smallest to 353 m² (3,800 sq. ft.) for the largest, which are penthouses.

Architecturally, the two buildings are similar. Both feature concrete construction and full brick facades. Each tower has ample green space, with easy access to adjacent park space and waterfront boardwalks along the shoreline.

Most units come with a single, underground parking spot, but two units have an assigned outdoor space. There are another 50 outdoor spaces available for rent. Two penthouse units have separate double car garages within the underground parking.

The buildings at ConvoY Quay Gardens are designed to give water views for virtually every unit. This design created buildings with tight cores and intimate hallways.

The buildings share a common podium, which features a craftsman-style pavilion for fitness and recreational facilities. A large fountain and waterfall complement the grounds around the swimming pool and bring interest to what would otherwise be a rather bland, concrete expanse between the towers.

Every unit features 2.3 m x 2.1 m (7.5 ft. x 7 ft.) windows to provide lots of light. Ten units in the building also feature solariums that make the most of the water views.

The developer has provided a number of amenities including a swimming pool, fitness centre, gathering hall, golf practice area and workshop.

The project is located close to the amenities of the town of Bedford, but most residents interviewed drive to almost all destinations.

About 45 per cent of the site is landscaped open space, which is complemented by extensive, public, open space adjacent to the project, which includes a waterfront boardwalk and park.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*Being reclaimed land, the entire community at the Bedford waterfront was planned around park space and a seaside boardwalk. Creating an attractive flow from private to public spaces has resulted in a unique neighbourhood. **John Greenough, President, Provident Development Inc.***

The entire residential community at the Bedford Waterfront was conceived through the vision of the Bedford Waterfront Development Corporation (BWDC), established when the need to dredge the Bedford Basin became evident. It is a private corporation, incorporated in Nova Scotia, to oversee development of the waterfront. In order to create the land where ConvoY Quay Gardens is built, BWDC worked with the municipality to acquire government funding to dredge the Bedford Basin, deposit the silt, cap it and compact it. The land was then designated for development.

The BWDC and Town of Bedford consulted the public on what type of community they wanted, established a development agreement on that basis, and issued a call for proposals for developers for the residential and commercial components of the plan.

Provident Development Inc. won the right to develop the residential community in 1989 and the commercial component in 1997.

Costs and financing

The total cost of the project was approximately \$20 million. A breakdown of the costs is not available.

The project was financed through a trust company, Esquire Trust. Although no financial assistance was granted for the actual project, the land was created with funds from the municipal, provincial and federal government, through the former Bedford Waterfront Redevelopment Corporation, which developed the lands and then sold parcels through a request-for-proposals process. For more information on the Waterfront Development Corporation, Halifax, refer to the CMHC publication entitled *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*.

Marketability and profitability

The project proved to be highly marketable with record-breaking sales on the first weekend it was offered. Tower One was sold out before completion and Tower Two sales were so strong that the project started a year ahead of schedule.

The developer made use of a database of preferred customers that has been built up over five years. Direct mail and special invitations resulted in a number of sales, which were boosted by regular open houses, classified advertising and high-quality brochures.

Despite strong sales, the project suffered from cost overruns as a result of structural piling problems in the early stages. This caused major delays and significantly hurt what would otherwise have been healthy profits for the project.

Obstacles

The major obstacle was the instability of reclaimed land, which required engineered structural piling to support the building. Perseverance eventually overcame this obstacle.

There was very little public opposition to the project. Because it was the last residential component of the Bedford Waterfront redevelopment, most public issues had been resolved during earlier projects and through the extensive and successful public process used for planning the waterfront redevelopment.

Lessons learned

The developer says perseverance is key to successfully developing these kinds of projects. Setbacks are inevitable but can usually be overcome with enough determination.

There will always be people who have difficulty envisioning the final product. By consistently communicating with the public and being willing to compromise to see the best end for the community, your project is more likely to succeed. **John Greenough, President, Provident Development Inc.**

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

We like it very much. We have lived in the area for 10 years. We are right in the town of Bedford and are approximately 20 minutes from the Halifax city centre.
Resident

Affordability

Units at Convoy Quay Gardens range from 82 m² to 353 m² (880 sq. ft. to 3,800 sq. ft.) and selling prices ranged from \$173,000 for a 121 m² (1,300 sq. ft.) unit to more than \$450,000 for the largest unit. The average selling price was \$236,000. Condo fees range from \$220-300 a month. The average selling price for new condos in Bedford in 2001 was \$222,562.¹

Unit selling price	
121 m ² -139 m ² (1,300-1,500 sq. ft.)	\$173,000 to \$210,000
139 m ² -175 m ² (1,500-1,883 sq. ft.)	\$193,000 to \$363,000
260 m ² -353 m ² (2,800-3,800 sq. ft.)	\$450,000 plus

All residents surveyed considered their units very good value for money and enthused about the great location and views of the harbour.

Design features, unit size and character

All residents surveyed were happy with the size of their homes and felt that they fit their needs very well. All residents felt the single parking space was adequate for their needs. There is also parking on the surrounding streets that visitors often use.

¹ CMHC, Atlantic Market Analysis Centre, Halifax, N.S.

Residents liked the character of their homes and the project. One resident characterized the development as "high class."

With windows looking over the Bedford Basin, the views were felt to be very good—even spectacular—and the amount of sunlight coming into the building was described as very good.

The neighbourhood and transportation

All residents interviewed said that the neighbourhood was a very good one and they enjoyed the close proximity to amenities, especially the waterfront park and boardwalk.

Everything you need is in the Town of Bedford **Resident**

The project is only half a kilometre from the needs of most residents. Four out of five residents surveyed use a car to travel to work. The fifth works from home. This compares with 95 per cent of Bedford workers who use a car to travel to work.²

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

[An] important factor that has lead to such wide [public] acceptance relates to the overall design of the project. Considerable time and energy was devoted to creating a very distinct and identifiable design for the waterfront project. Andrew Whittemore, Planner II, Halifax Regional Municipality.

The project was the last residential component of the first phase of waterfront development in Bedford. From the municipality's perspective the project is a success for several reasons:

- it has increased tax assessment;
- it uses existing infrastructure;
- it revitalized this area of Bedford and kick-started other renewal and redevelopment projects; and
- it reduced reliance on private automobiles.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

An agreement guiding the development of the waterfront required a full public process before any construction. This included the opportunity for the public to view building plans.

During the initial planning stages of the waterfront, there was considerable public interest. Opposition focused primarily on the truck traffic that would be required to carry fill to and from the site as land for the waterfront project was created. In addition, there was opposition to the proposed marina, which was viewed by some to be in competition with an adjacent marina. The public was also concerned that public access be provided to the waterfront and that the view corridor be maintained to the water.

There was also a difference in opinion between planners, the Waterfront Development Corporation and Town Council regarding social exclusion and social housing. While planners felt that social housing was an important component that should be included, others felt strongly that low-income housing in this location was inappropriate. The latter argument eventually prevailed.

The level of community interest in the development has waned considerably since the first construction, which began in 1991. Now a thriving neighbourhood, the waterfront is seen by most as a great success and asset to the community. There were, however, some complaints voiced by neighbouring condominiums about noise, dust and truck traffic generated by construction activity for Convoy Quay Gardens.

While all the original public concerns have been resolved, new issues have arisen. There is a growing concern about trespassing as the public is treating private, landscaped open space as an extension of the public right-of-way. This is, in part, because the division between public and semi-private open space is blurred. Some condominium corporations have placed signs and landscape barriers to deal with the problem.

Planning objectives

The project helps to meet the objectives for the Bedford Waterfront as stated in the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy:

- To promote the development of Bedford's waterfront project area as an active, year-round, mixed-use urban waterfront area with public spaces and activities with residential, commercial, cultural and institutional uses that when developed, emphasize the waterfront project area's location, heritage and environment;

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

- To improve public physical and visual access to the Bedford waterfront project area, including the water's edge.
- To work towards the waterfront project area becoming a major recreational resource providing a mix of recreational activities on both land and water.
- To encourage residential development on the lands designated for the waterfront project area.
- To encourage commercial development on the lands designated for the waterfront project area.
- To approve only developments that enhance the unique nature of the waterfront project area and that will improve and enhance the environmental features of the Bedford Bay and Basin.³

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The waterfront development has succeeded in creating an active, mixed-use, urban waterfront. A development agreement between the Town and the developer dictated window types, heights for the development blocks, roof treatments and facades. The project has been designed with a Georgian architectural theme, consistently using brick and matching elements for railings and landscaping.

Underground parking necessitated a large podium, which required careful design and landscaping to ensure that it fit with the surroundings.

Regulations and approvals

*The creation and adoption of planning policy and implementation tools that regulate the Bedford Waterfront today, took considerable amount of time, energy and commitment on the part of local and provincial governments, as well as the local development community, and the general public. **Andrew Whittemore***

The process first required an amendment to the municipal planning strategy, whereby the policy to develop the waterfront was created. This involved an extensive public process. On approval of the planning policy in 1991, a development agreement was signed between the former Town of Bedford and the Waterfront Development Corporation. The development agreement says that no buildings shall be constructed until Town Council approves detailed plans. Council is also required to seek the advice of the Planning Advisory Committee.

LESSONS LEARNED

Convoy Quay Gardens and the entire Bedford Waterfront Development is an unusual example of residential intensification in that it uses waterfront land that has been created through dredging—which created many technical challenges. It provides useful lessons about how a successful waterfront development can be created that ensures full public physical and visual access, celebrates active, outdoor recreation, and enhances the environmental and esthetic quality of its locale.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: John Greenough, Provident Development
Phone: (903) 835-5855
E-mail: provident@accesswave.ca

Municipality: Andrew Whittemore, Planner II, Halifax Regional Municipality
Phone: (902) 869-4274
E-mail: whittea@region.halifax.ns.ca

Architect: Rick Buhr, Fowler Bauld & Mitchell Ltd.
Landscape design: John Greenough, Provident Development Inc.



Figure 3: Artist's drawing of aerial view of Convoy Quay Gardens

³ Excerpt from the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy.

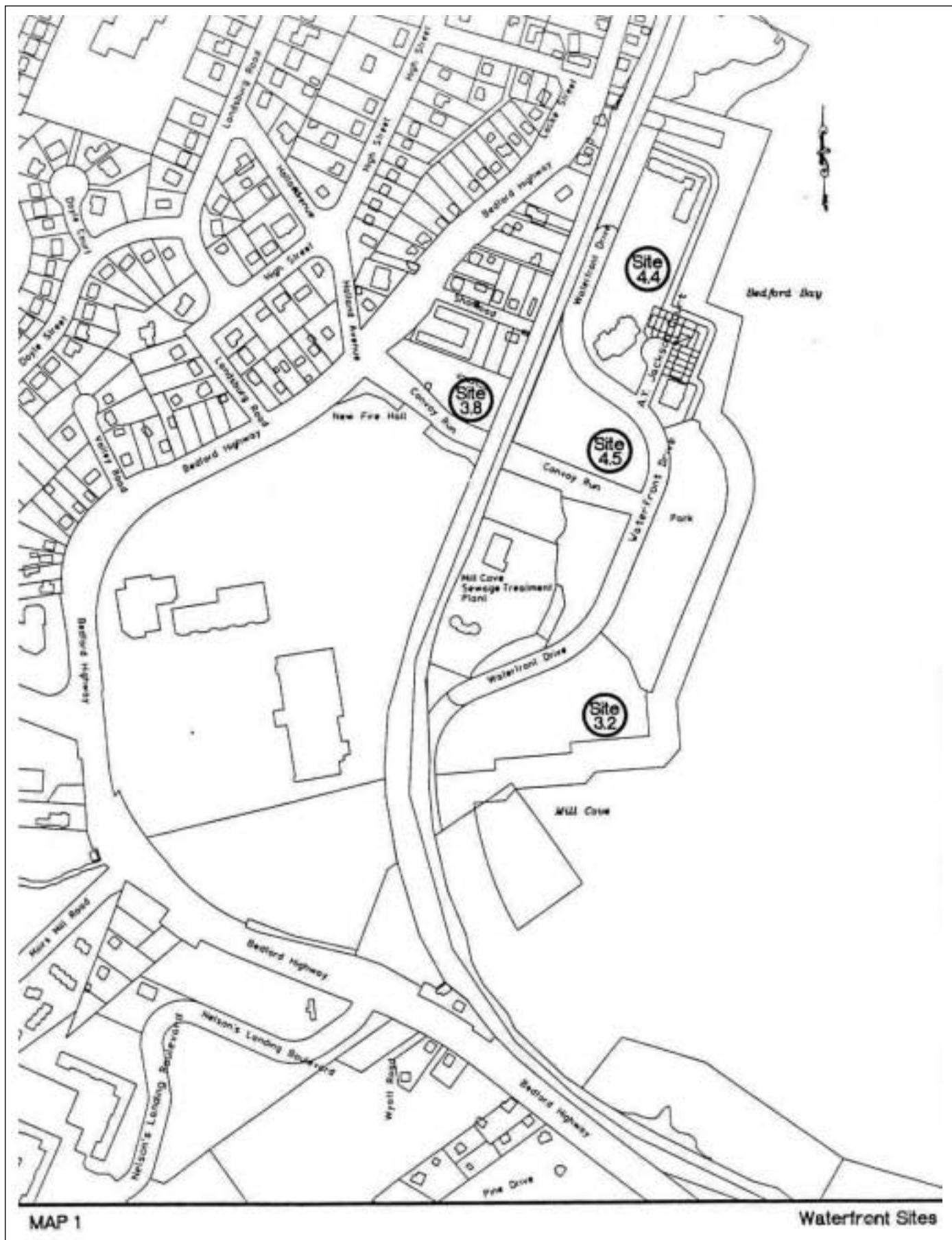


Figure 4: Site plan—Convey Quay Gardens is Site 4.5



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

CRANBERRY COMMONS

Burnaby, B.C.

4272 Albert St.

Developer

*Cranberry Commons Cohousing
Development Corporation*

Date completed

October, 2001

Site area

0.16 ha (0.4 acres)

Number and type of residential units

22 condominium townhouse and apartment units

Floor area

2,480 m² (26,662 sq. ft.) total

26–149 m² (493–1,600 sq. ft.) per unit

Gross residential density

137 units per hectare (uph)

Site coverage

42 per cent

Maximum height

3 1/2 storeys

Parking spaces

38 underground spaces

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Five single-detached lots with two existing houses

Selling price

\$130,000 to \$375,000



Figure 1: The interior courtyard looking west towards the common house

Cranberry Commons is a 22-unit co-housing development in Burnaby, B.C. It is in an established neighbourhood that supported the project. Residents enjoy the many innovative features, many of which posed challenges, including some regulatory issues like parking requirements.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: View from Albert Street (October, 2001)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Previously, the site was used for five single-detached lots with two existing houses. It now includes a diverse range of home styles and sizes to meet the needs of singles, families and couples. Units include single-level apartments, two-storey stacked townhouses and three-level townhouses. The 38 parking spaces required by the municipality are located underground. The inner courtyard is designed for safe children’s play. Increased density along the streetfront allowed this combination of unit types and produced usable green space. The developer made efforts to ensure a high standard of architectural quality and esthetics for the project.

Cranberry Commons is close to shopping and all residents interviewed reported travelling chiefly on foot to local shopping and local entertainment. But most prefer their cars for longer journeys and major shopping trips. Despite a strong environment ethic, most who work away from home found it impractical to take public transit to work most of the time because of complicated, busy lifestyles.

The project is one block from a major commercial arterial street (Hastings) where there is a grocery store, cafés, bakeries, delis and other shopping. There is a large park and recreation centre three blocks away and two elementary schools within two blocks. Neighbouring housing is mixed, including single-family homes across the street and apartments and townhouses nearby.

The building covers 42 per cent of the site, leaving a considerable amount of open space. Some of it is small private yards. The rest is a courtyard and gardens shared by all residents.

All units have north- and south-facing windows (there are no single-loaded corridors) and there are good views of the mountains from second- and third-floor units.

Co-housing is a form of intentional community in which members own self-contained units that focus around extensive shared amenities. Cranberry Commons includes a 232 m² (2,500 sq. ft.) common house designed to encourage resident participation, including shared meals and entertainment. In addition, the project features a children’s playroom, lounge with fireplace, shared kitchen (all units also have their own kitchens), vegetable garden, recycling facilities, a children’s sandbox, space for outdoor dining, usable roof deck (with plans for a hot tub), guest room, meeting room, shared laundry room and office.

The project contains a number of green building features, including solar panels to augment the domestic hot water boiler (50 per cent load offset), concrete high in fly-ash content, in-floor radiant heat, high-efficiency gas boilers, recycled wood (10 per cent) and compact, fluorescent lighting. Low-flow toilets and showerheads and native landscaping reduce water consumption.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER’S PERSPECTIVE

I know it is a terrible thing to say but [if I were to give advice to other developers] I would say stay away from innovation for the sake of innovation. Only innovate where necessary or it will end up costing you a lot more time and money. Ronaye Matthew, Co-housing Consultant, Resident.

Cranberry Commons Co-housing Development Corporation is a not-for-profit corporation formed by the project’s future homeowners expressly for the purpose of developing an intentional community.

Costs and financing

Development costs	
Land	\$1,230,000
Building construction	\$3,000,000
Soft costs (such as taxes, development charges, consultants)	\$835,000
Infrastructure (paid by the developer)	\$220,000 to \$230,000
Total	\$5.3 million

The project was partly financed by the members, who raised 25 per cent of the development cost. The balance was in the form of a mortgage from the North Shore Credit Union. A small grant from the federal government helped make the solar panels affordable.

Marketability and profitability

The project proved to be very successful and all units were sold before project completion. The high degree of participation of future residents in the project design undoubtedly accounted for this success.

The project was marketed using word-of-mouth, posters and a Web site. Free advertising was also secured through the interest of local and national media. The project was featured on the CBC radio program *Ideas*. Newspaper advertising was completely unsuccessful.

The project was designed as a not-for-profit development, so profit was not a consideration. However, there were cost overruns the residents had to pay. They amounted to about \$15,000 a unit, mainly as a result of design complexity, including the townhouse-apartment combination and fire inspection concerns about the exterior hallways.

Obstacles

The developer asked the City to relax parking requirements. Despite the commitment of the developer and the community to reduced vehicle ownership and use, the City insisted on the standard 37 parking spots for the 22 units. Neighbours were concerned about a shortage of on-street parking in the area and were concerned the project would make the situation worse. Despite this, only one person attended a public meeting about rezoning.

Only 22 of the 38 stalls were being used in 2003. The fire code prevents the spaces being used for storage. The developer considers these spaces a very expensive, unnecessary cost.

While the City was ultimately very supportive, there were extensive discussions and negotiations because of the unusual type of development and requests for zoning adjustments, including increased density, setback variances (reduced side, rear and front yard setbacks to allow more area for the courtyard) and reduced parking.

City support

The municipality awarded a density bonus (from 1.1 to 1.3 FAR (floor-area ratio) in recognition of the additional internal "circulation space" created by including the diverse unit types (apartments and townhouses—original zoning was for townhouses only) and the common amenity area. The additional density helped make the project financially feasible and allowed the stacked-townhouse footprint to work architecturally.

Lessons learned

The development consultant warns that despite the success of the project, which includes a number of innovative features, innovation always takes much longer to approve and requires lengthy negotiation with the City. She warns others to pursue innovation only where it is really required and wherever possible to make do with traditional approaches that will save considerable time and money.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Almost everything that one could possibly need is available within walking distance. Resident

Affordability

Cranberry Commons has a range of unit styles and sizes. Selling prices ranged from \$130,000 for the smallest bachelor apartment (46 m² [493 sq. ft.]) to \$375,000 for the largest (149 m² [1,600 sq. ft.]), a three-bedroom unit with a den. Condo fees range from \$82 to \$277 a month. In 2001, the average selling price for new townhouses in Burnaby was \$233,809 and \$218,553 for new apartments.¹

Unit selling price

Bachelor	\$130,000
One bedroom	\$165,000–\$195,000
Two bedroom	\$220,000–\$230,000
Three bedroom	\$235,000–\$375,000

¹ CMHC, B.C. and Yukon Market Analysis Centre

All residents surveyed considered their units good value for money, but there were complaints about the cost overrun, which meant members had to find an additional \$10–15,000 per unit. This made prices a little higher (\$10,000) than comparable units in the surrounding area but most feel this is more than offset by the value of the common facilities.

Design features: Unit size, character, open space, etc.

Most residents noted that they required a little less private space because some of their needs were provided by the common amenities (laundry, office, and so on) but some would still like a little more space in their units. The units satisfy most residents' concerns for adequate privacy, although some complained about noise from adjacent units.

Many residents report that opportunities for interaction with neighbours is very good and they have made new friends within the project because the design promotes interaction through well-designed, common open space and shared facilities, such as the common house and dining area, laundry facilities, community garden and office space.

Many residents enthuse about the suitability of the project for families, mainly because of the project's very usable open space. However, some would prefer more, soft, grassed-landscapes and fewer paved amenity areas. The on-site open space is complemented by good access to neighbourhood parks and trails.

There are good views from the 3rd and 4th floor units of the North Shore mountains and the daylight coming into most units is good because of the central courtyard design chosen by the residents.

The neighbourhood and transportation

All residents interviewed said that the project's nearness to amenities was one of the major benefits of the location, although some complained that they didn't like the busy arterial corridor one block away and the neighbourhood suffered from drivers making shortcuts. Amenities within easy walking distance include a park, recreation centre, library, grocery stores, restaurants and entertainment, professional offices and bookstores. Some have managed to do without a car as a result.

Reducing car ownership and use was an important consideration and all residents reported making most local shopping and entertainment trips on foot but using a car (or less frequently, a bus) for larger shopping trips and more distant entertainment. There are also express buses to downtown, the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University campuses and good bus access to major regional shopping centres. The Millennium SkyTrain is a 10-minute bus ride away.

The project has a number of retired people but all those interviewed who are still working (three of five) mainly travel by car to work, but use the transit system when convenient. This compares with 23 per cent of Vancouver CMA workers who walk, cycle or use public transit to get to work.² Although the transit system is good, the complex lifestyles (different work locations, children in daycare and so on) of those surveyed don't allow regular bus travel to work.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The Cranberry Commons project is viewed as very successful from the City's perspective. As a co-housing development, the project brought a new and positive type of community into the [Burnaby] Heights area, one which is supportive and happy to participate in the surrounding community. In addition, the project provides an alternate form of housing, which includes resources and support to residents in ways traditional multi-family housing developments do not. **Paul Faibish, Community Planner, City of Burnaby**

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The project was viewed as very successful from the municipality's perspective. Aside from minor comments about the possibility that the development would contribute to the lack of on-street parking in the neighbourhood, there were few neighbourhood concerns before construction. Since completion there have been several positive comments from the surrounding community and the municipal planner is not aware of any complaints.

Planning objectives

The project meets Burnaby's Official Community Plan and the Hastings Street Area Plan objectives of increasing residential densities in designated urban village areas.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

This policy is intended to increase residential densities in areas well-served by commercial, municipal and transit facilities. In doing so, it helps to meet Burnaby's commitment to the regional planning goal of complete communities and increasing residential density in already developed areas to reduce personal vehicle use and to reduce development pressure on agricultural lands and ecologically sensitive areas.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project provides a pedestrian-oriented streetscape through the use of street-fronting townhouses with direct street access and incorporates traditional residential elements such as sloped and gabled roofs, siding and neutral colours. The low-rise scale fits in with the scale of the neighbourhood.

Regulations and approvals

The municipality allowed a slightly higher density (1.3 FAR vs. 1.1 FAR) than the zoning permitted in order to accommodate the novel design and to encourage the provision of usable shared open space.

This increased density was permitted because of the high level of social benefit the project would provide to both the community residents and the area as a whole.

The request for increased density, relaxed parking restrictions and unusually large amount of common space made the approvals process somewhat more complex than is usual, despite there being virtually no public opposition to the project.

*Working on this project was also unique due to the amount of involvement from residents through the design stage, which is not typical in multi-family projects. It was a positive experience to know about some of the specific needs of residents at the early design stage and to be able to incorporate these into the design. The design team was also very aware of designing a safe project by adhering to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles due to the residents being involved in the design process. **Paul Faibish***



Figure 3: Cranberry Commons streetscape

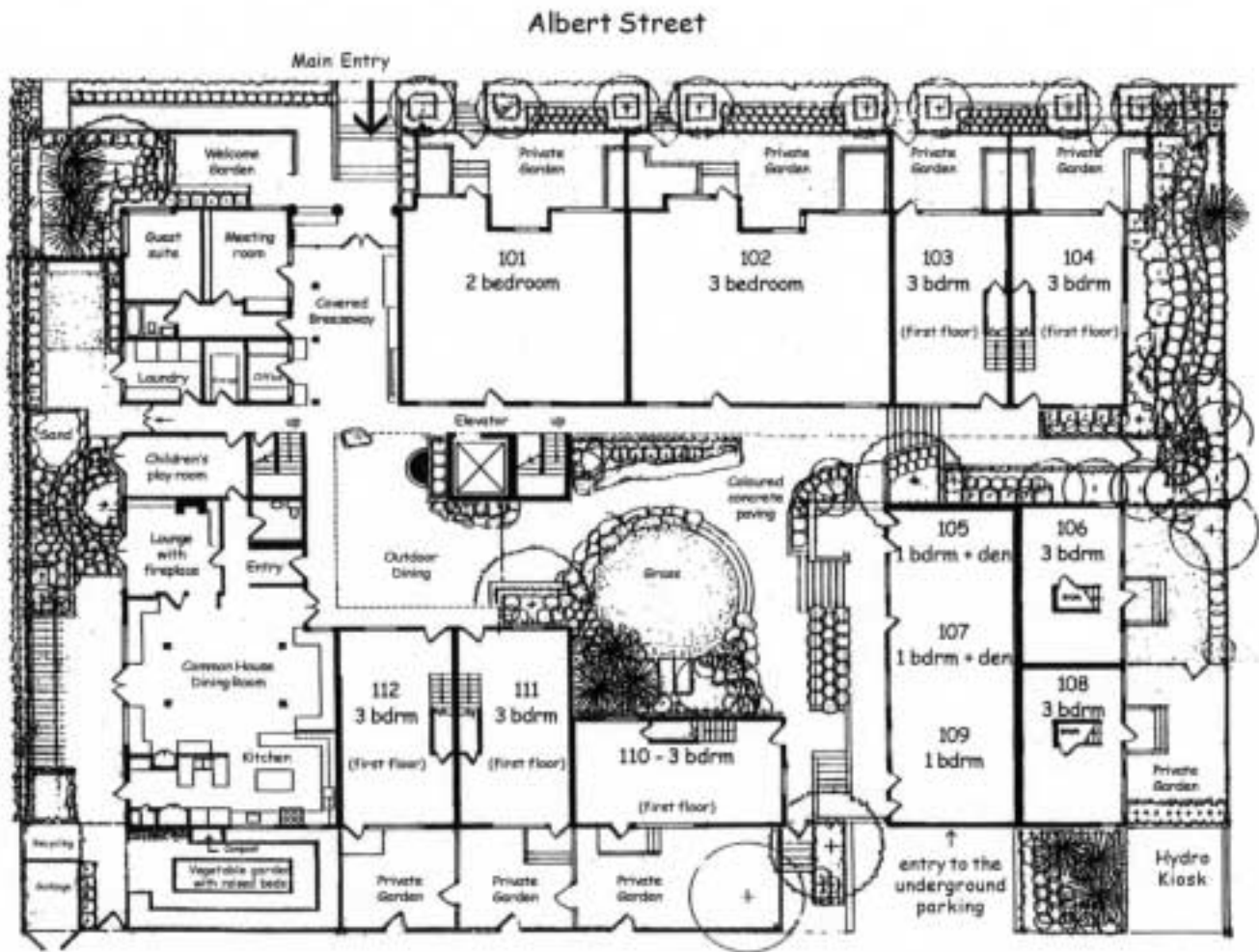


Figure 4: Site Plan

LESSONS LEARNED

This project illustrates the substantial benefits of resident involvement in the design process. By collectively taking on the role of developer, the residents have produced a design that suits their own needs very well and makes a positive contribution to the community.

The City of Burnaby recognized and supported the efforts of the community to create a new type of housing by allowing slightly increased density. However, the extensive negotiations that were required and the challenges of dealing with the design complexity that resulted from the mixed townhouse –apartment concept did lead to some cost overruns and higher prices than were anticipated.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Development consultant: Ronaye Matthew,
Co-housing Development Consulting
Phone: (604) 570-0742
E-mail: ravens2@axion.net

Municipality: Ed Kozak, Long Range Planner,
City of Burnaby, Planning and Building Department.
Phone: (604) 294-7249
E-mail: ed.kozak@city.burnaby.bc.ca

Architect: Birmingham and Wood (Susan Moore)
Landscape architect: Vagelatos Associates
Municipal Planner: Paul Faibish, City of Burnaby



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

FIFTH STREET LOFTS

Edmonton, Alta.

104th Avenue

Developer

Five Oaks Inc.

Date completed

1998

Site area

0.2 ha (0.4 acres)

Number and type of residential units

39 condominium apartments

Floor area

54–103 m² (580–1,106 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

195 units per hectare (uph)

Site coverage

Approximately 50 per cent

Maximum height

3 storeys

Landscaped open space

Approximately 10 per cent

Parking spaces

One space per unit surface parking

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Clothing manufacturer (1960s); night club (1990s)

Selling price

\$49,000 to \$75,000



Figure 1: Fifth Street Lofts, once a clothing manufacturer; more recently, a nightclub

Five Oaks Inc. has converted a building used in the 1960s by a clothing manufacturer and in the 1990s as a nightclub into the Fifth Street Lofts housing project of 39 affordably-priced loft-style condominiums.



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Canada



Figure 2: Interior of one of the loft apartments

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project was the second residential conversion in Edmonton’s warehouse district, where there had been several non-residential conversions in previous years. It was one of the first to introduce small lofts in the area, which is changing from a commercial-industrial warehouse district to a mixed-use residential and commercial area. Because there was a lack of inexpensive downtown housing and because downtown land and buildings were inexpensive at the time, the developer could sell the units at affordable prices. Units have since doubled in value, reflecting the desire for downtown housing and the leap in real estate prices in Edmonton in recent years.

*This was an early downtown project and land costs were low in Edmonton. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. **Gene Dub, President, Five Oaks Inc***

The units are one and two storeys and range from 54 to 103 m² (580 to 1,106 sq. ft.). Thermally separated commercial windows improve energy efficiency in the building. The developer made few alterations to the exterior. Fifth Street Lofts is within walking distance of schools, shopping, movie theatres, a golf course, gyms and restaurants. Bike trails and pedestrian footpaths in the North Saskatchewan River valley are within a 10-minute walk. The project has little landscaped open space but six units have balconies, where there was a loading dock. Units have large windows and residents say there is good natural light in most units. The City encouraged the project and the City Investment for Downtown Housing program provided a grant of \$4,500 a unit.

There were very few obstacles. The major obstacle was removal of asbestos from the building, which cost \$10,000. Neighbours supported the project.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER’S PERSPECTIVE

*There seemed to be a lack of interesting loft-type housing to satisfy the niche market...the building [and land] was inexpensive. **Gene Dub***

Costs and financing

Development costs	
Land	\$ 300,000 (\$11.30/sq. ft.)
Building construction	\$1,200,000 (\$45.70/sq. ft.)
Infrastructure	\$ 200,000 (\$7/sq. ft.)
Total	\$1,700,000 (\$64/sq. ft.)

The project was financed by conventional bank financing. The City Investment for Downtown Housing program granted \$4,500 a unit. City Investment is a City of Edmonton program to support downtown housing.

Marketability and profitability

The project proved to be moderately successful for the developer and all units were sold within three months of completion. The project was marketed using advertising in a local guide to condominiums.

Obstacles

There were no major obstacles to this project and the site was not contaminated. The building contained some asbestos, which cost \$10,000 to remove. There were no other major obstacles to the project. The developer was also the architect and consequently there was some difficulty in obtaining adequate insurance for the project. There was no neighbourhood opposition and the City was very supportive.

City support

The City supported the project by providing the downtown housing incentive grant and by quickly processing the application for a building permit.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS’ PERSPECTIVE

*There is a great variety, never a shortage of things to do. The locale is perfect. **Resident***

Affordability

Selling prices for Fifth Street Lofts units ranged from \$49,900 for a 54 m² (580 sq. ft.) unit to \$75,000 for a 103 m² (1,106 sq. ft.) unit. Condo fees range from \$82 to \$277 a month. The average resale selling price for condos in Edmonton in 1998 was \$78,534.¹

Unit selling price	
54 m ² (580 sq. ft.)	\$49,900
65 m ² (700 sq. ft.)	\$56,700
90 m ² (966 sq. ft.)	\$73,000
103 m ² (1,106 sq. ft.)	\$75,000

All residents surveyed consider their units good value for money. The value of their real estate has increased dramatically (2.5 times) since purchase in 1999.

Design features: Unit size, character, open space, etc.

Residents were happy with the size of their homes, primarily because many live alone or without children and "loft living" suits their lifestyles. They were pleased with the overall character and quality of the building and that the developer had retained the original yellow brick facade of the building. The building's large windows give residents on higher floors great views of downtown Edmonton. The large windows on all sides also allow plenty of sunlight into the building.

Parking (one space per unit surface parking) was considered to be adequate most of the time, although on weekends there is sometimes not enough space for visitors. There is an agreement with a local business that makes additional space available from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. Among the few negative comments were concern about the project's lack of open space or common areas. Also, one resident referred to the unpleasant noise level from an adjacent building, which is a nightclub.

The neighbourhood and transportation

The surrounding neighbourhood is full of apartment buildings, art galleries, retail shops, restaurants and older homes. Overall it is excellent. Resident

The residents all like the neighbourhood and said the project is very conveniently located for getting to amenities. Some described the neighbourhood as "funky," with a good mix of elderly and young people and plenty of activity. There is a bus stop right outside the door of the building and three of four residents walk to work. The fourth is retired. This compares to 16 per cent of Edmonton CMA workers who walk, bicycle or use public transit to get to work.²

All residents surveyed stated that they generally walk to do local shopping or for local entertainment. Some use a car for larger shopping trips.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

Planning objectives

The project meets a number of objectives of the City of Edmonton's Capital City Downtown Plan (1997), including substantially increasing the downtown residential population over the next eight years. The plan supports a range of housing types, encourages residential development on vacant lands and the conversion of warehouse and office buildings to residential use.

The plan proposes a new housing incentive, for three years, in the form of a \$4,500 grant for each new unit built in the downtown. Edmonton's Warehouse District, where the project is located, is one of two focus areas identified for residential growth. Key initiatives include:

- Conversion to residential development
- Creating an urban village concept
- Encouraging mixed use buildings and artist live/work studios/lofts.

The Plan resulted in an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw designating downtown as a special area containing unique land-use districts (zones). Each zone has been created to encourage a high-quality built environment. Zoning changes include relaxation of standard regulations for amenity areas, density, floor-area ratios, height, landscaping, parking and setbacks.

¹ CMHC, Prairie and N.W.T. Market Analysis Centre

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

LESSONS LEARNED

Fifth Street Lofts has created affordable, market-based housing units in an area of downtown that the municipality has slated for residential intensification. The project benefited from a generous grant from the municipality that enabled the developer to be a pioneer of this type of development in Edmonton.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer and Architect: Gene Dub, Five Oaks Development
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Municipal Planner: Peter Odinga, Senior Development Officer, Permitting and Licensing, City of Edmonton.
Phone: (780) 496-8485
E-mail: peter.odinga@gov.edmonton.ab.ca



Figure 3: Site plan, Fifth Street Lofts

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ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

GARRISON WOODS

Calgary, Alta.

Between Crowchild Trail, 20th Street, 34th Avenue and 47th Avenue

Developer

Canada Lands Company

Date completed

2003/04

Site area

65 ha (161 acres), plus 6 ha (15 acres)
of established uses

Number, type of residential units

1,600 units—new townhouses; new, single-detached houses;
new apartment buildings (three and four storey); refurbished
single- and semi-detached former military housing units; new
single-family infill among the refurbished units; apartments
above retail outlets; and, some coach house (mortgage-helper)
units above garages on lanes

Floor area

60 to 232 m² (650 to 2,500 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

25 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

Eight per cent in parks and common open space,
as well as private landscaped areas

Maximum height

Four storeys

Parking

Two-stall garages for all single, semi-detached houses and
townhouses. Each apartment unit has 1.5 spaces underground
parking, except a senior's project, which has substantially less.

Non-residential units

6,500 m² (70,000 sq. ft.) retail space; two private schools,
4,090 m² (44,000 sq. ft.) and 2,790 m² (30,000 sq. ft.);
existing museum and twin hockey arena

Pre-development use

Canadian Forces Base (CFB), with 565 low-density housing units
for military personnel

Selling prices

	2003	2000
Apartment condos	\$120,000–\$220,000	\$90,000–\$190,000
Townhouse condos	\$325,000–\$425,000	\$250,000–\$325,000
New singles	\$500,000–\$700,000	\$330,000–\$425,000
Refurbished singles	\$290,000–\$340,000	\$195,000–\$340,000
Refurbished semis	\$240,000–\$290,000	\$150,000–\$190,000
New infill singles	\$350,000–\$450,000	\$290,000–\$350,000



Figure 1: Garrison Woods: townhouses look onto the neighbourhood square

Garrison Woods, the redevelopment of the eastern part of the former Canadian Forces Base (CFB) in Calgary, is made up of 1,600 residential units including new townhouses, new single-family homes, new three- and four-storey apartments, refurbished single- and semi-detached former military housing units, and new single-detached infill homes among the refurbished units. Secondary suites (mortgage helpers) are included above garages on some of the lanes. Many of the former military buildings have been reused for community amenities. Developed by Canada Lands Company, a federal Crown corporation, this "new-urbanist" project challenges conventional standards of the City's engineers with rear lanes, customized road standards, mixed uses and a mix of densities to achieve an overall gross density of almost 25 units per hectare—high for a new subdivision.



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Figure 2: Commercial corner at Garrison Woods showing customized road standards

PROJECT OVERVIEW

When the military moved out of the Canadian Forces Base in 1998, more than 182 ha (450 acres) of land were left vacant. This huge tract was split into three parcels (one on the east, CFB East, and two on the west) with west and east separated by an arterial road. CFB East was the site of 565 housing units for military families, at a density of approximately 7.5 units per hectare. In 1997 Canada Lands Company (CLC) acquired CFB East. CLC, a federal Crown corporation, buys surplus federal land at market prices and creates socially responsible developments without subsidies, acting at arm's length from the government.

The site is surrounded on three sides by 1950s-style, lower-density residential development with commercial to the north. CLC persuaded Canada Safeway to be the anchor tenant for an existing retail area at the site's north end. Higher-density housing surrounds this anchor and other retail uses and forms the neighbourhood core of Garrison Woods.

From the outset, CLC wanted to respect the principles of smart growth and sustainable development. CLC was convinced that a well-planned and executed redevelopment scheme would be successful from both a financial and community perspective. The site's location, just a 10-minute drive from the core, combined with the high level of available services and site amenities, like mature trees, were also key considerations and led the company to believe it could deliver a development unique to the City of Calgary.

The community that has quickly developed at Garrison Woods is characterized by diversity. It is mixed-use and mixed-scale. It contains mixed housing types, including refurbished military housing. Echoing a 1920s pedestrian-oriented community, the project is very urban for Calgary, which has a history of suburban development.

The CLC invested heavily in the public realm with high-quality landscaping, interpretative signage recognizing the site's military history, customized road standards allowing many mature trees to be saved and a high-quality design esthetic.

The project was not originally conceived as a new-urbanist development, but Mark McCullough, CLC's general manager of real estate, says the approach grew out of the company's desire to ensure respect for Calgary's strategic planning policies, such as sustainable development, transportation and housing. CLC also had its own goals, including a commitment to smart growth. There was a deep desire to integrate with the surrounding community. The new-urbanist approach, including a modified-grid street pattern that enables integrated vehicle and pedestrian movement between Garrison and the surrounding area, grew out of this desire.

CLC identified four traditional architectural styles that have stood the test of time in Calgary: Tudor, Colonial, Craftsmen and Victorian. The company's architectural consultants then developed codes for participating builders and each elevation and plan was individually approved to ensure conformity with the code. This approach produces plenty of variety while allowing a compatible architectural theme to emerge. It also allowed integration of the old stock with the new stock and the multi with the single.

CLC required builders to refurbish 400 of the 565 existing military housing units. CLC also required that some existing buildings be reused for the two schools. These existing buildings were relocated and rearranged to fit the denser site plan of Garrison Woods.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

If you are going to ask people to live at higher densities, our view is that you have to provide quality public space. We put a lot of money into tree-lined boulevards, specialty lighting and interpretative signage to celebrate the military history.

**Mark McCullough, general manager, real estate,
Canada Lands Company, Calgary**

Costs and financing

Development costs are not available but the project is achieving rates of return consistent with, or perhaps slightly higher than, industry standard.

CLC estimates that it was 30 per cent more expensive to develop Garrison Woods than a traditional suburb. Increased costs are associated with heavy investment in the public realm, the extensive use of consultants, the time required to get approvals for a non-traditional subdivision, the use of lanes and development and implementation of detailed architectural codes.

The project's initial phases were financed from corporate equity with subsequent phases being financed from the revenue generated by sales and interim leasing activity. No third-party financing was required and there was no government financial assistance at any level.

Marketability and profitability

By August, 2003, all lots had been sold and 70 per cent of the units were built and occupied. Canada Lands sold serviced lots to six participating builders and concentrated on developing a unique product in a considerably undifferentiated Calgary market. Assisted by a good location, the project has been very successful for the developer, and has exceeded profit expectations because of the increase in real estate values since the project was started.

A fairly aggressive marketing program was adopted costing \$500,000 a year. This wasn't the first new-urbanist project in the city. McKenzie Town had proved the value of this high-quality design approach, which gave Canada Lands confidence that Garrison Woods could sell well, given its excellent location.

The Calgary real estate market has been extremely hot in the last two to three years. Even by City standards, however, Garrison Woods has seen a remarkable lift in prices fuelled by a high demand for this type of product.

Obstacles

*We have great support at the senior [planning] level, but the line guys [engineering department] put up huge obstacles...In most instances, the support is not there for traffic calming, narrower streets, higher level improvements in the public realm, etc. **Mark McCullough, CLC***

Despite supportive senior City staff, the major obstacle for the developer was the tremendous resistance to customized street standards from the engineering department at the implementation stage. This made it very difficult to negotiate approvals.

The site was considered a brownfield site. There was some contamination from leaking fuel tanks, which the developer had to pay close attention to by undertaking comprehensive audits. The former owner eventually removed the contaminated soil at a cost of \$1.5 million.

Residential and commercial neighbours were involved in planning using a public advisory committee during a 17-month public process. This process was co-managed by the City and the developer and resulted in very little opposition from the adjacent community. Some concerns about increased traffic were addressed by introducing traffic-calming measures, including a modified-grid street pattern that attempted to slow down vehicles, disperse traffic and discourage shortcutting.

Lessons Learned

The developer's advice to others wanting to pursue non-traditional approaches is to get assurances from regulators that you will get timely and common-sense approvals. Otherwise, developers need to lobby forcefully. "You have to love this type of work/project and really be determined that you want to go in this direction," says Mr. McCullough.



Figure 3: An extra-wide boulevard creates space for a pedestrian and cycling greenway lined by mature trees.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

*They have done a very fine job of the project all around. The whole feeling of the place is impressive. It is a good use of former public lands. **Resident***

Affordability

A wide range of housing types is available at Garrison Woods, including single-detached houses, apartments and townhouses. Most of the units are in the 84–139 m² (900–1,500 sq. ft.) range and are geared towards individuals and families looking for housing in a unique, well-planned, integrated community. Units are as small as 60 m² (650 sq. ft.) and as large as 232 m² (2,500 sq. ft.) to attract a range of buyers.

Unit costs follow a similar pattern, selling for a low of \$120,000 for an apartment condominium, to a maximum of \$700,000 for a new, single-detached house. Refer to the price ranges shown on page 1. The average selling price in Calgary in 2003 was \$264,373 for new single-detached homes; \$222,470 for new semi-detached homes; \$168,478 for new townhouse condominiums and \$158,115 for new apartment condominiums.¹

The residents surveyed felt that their purchases were competitive yet affordable and were extremely happy with their new homes. One resident described his apartment building as "a high-quality living environment."

Design features

The general consensus within the Garrison Woods community is that the design, landscaping and character of the community is admirable. All of the residents thought they had enough, if not more, space than they needed and found the diversity of housing styles and types created a more interesting streetscape.

¹ CMHC, Market Analysis, Prairies, Nunavut and N.W.T. Business Centre.

The density of the site is a noticeable factor with smaller houses on smaller lots mixed closely with apartments and multi-level buildings. On the other hand, space is created with the placement of small and large parks, trails and well-landscaped exteriors, which contribute to the goal of a more livable neighbourhood.

The homeowners were happy with a smaller house with a back yard because they felt it was affordable for young families and couples looking to get started on their own. One apartment owner felt that the sizable patio gave more private outdoor space than expected and a nice view into the building courtyard.



Figure 4: Hundreds of the old houses on the military base were refurbished and relocated at increased densities.

Neighbourhood and transportation

It is extremely convenient—everything is within walking distance, which for me is two blocks. Resident

Although cars are still a staple in the new urban village, most residents live within a five-minute walk of a bus stop, a two-minute walk of a park and have a range of commercial options within walking distance. Local shopping includes corner stores, coffee shops, video rental stores and restaurants, some of which are located on the ground floor of the apartments to allow easy accessibility for residents. A large grocery store is within a 10-minute walk of almost all residences for major shopping needs as well. Garrison's proximity to downtown Calgary also makes driving distances short.

Most residents felt that the convenience and ease with which daily tasks could be accomplished was a deciding factor in their move to Garrison Woods. Currently, the community is still growing and with the addition of new commercial enterprises, accessibility, variety and convenience will be even more noticeable. Of the five residents surveyed, three of the four currently in the workforce drive to work. In comparison, 19 per cent of workers in the Calgary CMA walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.²

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

This was a very collaborative process... We worked closely with the developer to develop the policy plan... [and we] worked with a committee of residents and businesses.

Linda Hackman, senior planner, City of Calgary

For Linda Hackman, senior planner for the City of Calgary, Garrison Woods is a great success story, achieving much more than the City had hoped for. The project accomplished a high density with mixed uses. Through the refurbishment of military housing it provided reasonably priced homeownership for 400 families.

Canada Lands Company approached the planning department to discuss the process for planning the lands. From the beginning, City Council agreed on a collaborative process that would involve the public in a significant way, with community events jointly managed by the City and CLC.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

Initially, the public was extremely apprehensive about the developer's intentions for the site. There was considerable resentment when the Canadian Forces base first closed because of concerns that it would affect local businesses and the community. This concern carried over into early development discussions. As well, concerned citizens were unsure how traffic would be addressed and how increased densities would affect the neighbourhood. However, as a result of the extensive public process, the public came to realize the value of what Canada Lands Company was trying to achieve.

The extensive public process was the largest the City of Calgary has seen, covering a 17-month period of consultation jointly conducted by the City of Calgary and CLC. The open, transparent process allowed meaningful participation through a public advisory committee that included local residents and business owners.

At the end of the day, there was very little opposition to the development proposals. The only opposition related to increased traffic. This was mitigated by the introduction of calming measures and a modified grid pattern to keep speeds down, disperse vehicles and discourage shortcutting.

Within the City, there was a gap in vision between the planners and engineers regarding the proposed customization of infrastructure and services to the development. The developer had a vision for the development that was shared by the planning department, which included alternative standards for road infrastructure. Some of the proposals related to considerably narrower streets and lanes, lower design speeds of 35 km/h, parking on both sides of the street and intersection "bulb-outs" to increase pedestrian safety.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

There is always resistance to new models of planning, as well as the uncertainty of taking the route less-travelled, but in the end decisions have been made that appear to satisfy all parties while still upholding the original vision for Garrison Woods.

Planning objectives

Vision Statement:** To ensure all existing and new development contributes to the enhancement of [Canadian Forces Base] East as a unique and sustainable inner-city neighbourhood within the Altadore community. **CFB East Community Plan, City of Calgary

The City of Calgary co-ordinated the planning and development process with the Canada Lands Company from an early stage. This gave both sides the opportunity to work together on this major development and achieve success from a public and private perspective. The municipal development plan for Calgary encourages intensification in older neighbourhoods, so the urban village angle conformed to the basic development planning of the district. This density was structured by centralizing it around the commercial centre and major bus routes.

The goals of the Community Plan were met by varying the size of the buildings and using a modified grid street pattern to improve pedestrian movement and enable short walking times to public transit. The design also encourages community interaction through short building setbacks and front porches and balconies near the street. The design also met these goals by recognizing the land's military history through street names, memorials, public spaces and retrofitting of hundreds of the old military homes.

The City's planning department recognizes the differences in ideology between the engineers, planners and developers. In this case, the engineers were opposed to the street patterns and road infrastructure and the developer's proposed variances were obtained with persistence, determination and support from City planners. Linda Hackman, Calgary's senior planner was thrilled with the vision and innovation incorporated into Garrison Woods and hopes the City becomes more involved in providing incentives for this type of development. The City is supportive on a strategic level, but not yet on the approval level.

This project was part of a unique and forward-thinking proposal and therefore had substantial policy guidelines to follow. The vision, dedication, and determination to make the project work from the planners and developers, combined with the participation of the homebuilders, businesses and public to follow the guiding principles are the reason Garrison Woods is a successful and respected new-urbanist venture.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

One of the central tenets of the CFB East Community Plan was integrating the new neighbourhood into the larger community. This was achieved by using a more open street pattern that allowed access through and between Garrison Woods and the adjacent neighbourhoods.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the developer's plans was an architectural code that guided and controlled the way the builders constructed the neighbourhood. Architect Dan Jenkins identified four architectural styles—Tudor, Colonial, Craftsman and Victorian—as having stood the test of time in Calgary's history and they were presented as guidelines for character.

The mixing of these styles throughout the streetscape of Garrison has been celebrated as a victory in architectural planning and creates clear connections between Garrison and the older neighbourhoods in Calgary. The Garrison Woods development has prompted new redevelopments in the surrounding neighbourhood to modify and rejuvenate the community.

Regulations and approvals

Because the new-urbanist concept of an integrated and interactive neighbourhood was quite new when the process started five years ago, the approval process was fairly complicated. The City implemented interim zoning regulations to allow for the short-term reuse of the existing military housing within the new Garrison policy plan. The City also attempted to accommodate the CLC's density proposals and housing arrangements through the new policy plan. There was a high level of scrutiny over the land-use bylaw and the adaptations required to allow for design and development standards. This was eventually approved on a block-by-block basis.

Approval from the surrounding neighbourhood and citizens was gained with relative ease. The hardest people to gain approval from were City administrators in the transportation and engineering departments, who were concerned with the new-urbanist principles of the plan such as narrower streets and lanes, intersection bulb-outs, road patterns, custom-made street signage and historical interpretation signage. Having decades of experience building classic suburbs, it was hard for some of those involved to adapt to the customized standards. The major concerns for City departments centred on long-term maintenance cost and performance of these items.

LESSONS LEARNED

There is no question the Garrison Woods redevelopment project is a resounding success but it took several years and tireless effort on the part of the planners and developers to craft this success story. Planner Linda Hackman says, "It's been a real learning curve for Calgary."

The difficulty of addressing and pioneering new ways to create neighbourhoods and communities has been felt by all parties involved in the Garrison project, but in the end the learning process was positive.

The planners were lucky to have a developer with so much interest in working with the City to incorporate the goals of both sides. Canada Lands Company, as a federal Crown corporation, has a more socially responsible mandate than many profit-based developers and therefore, more interest in new forms of community living. The success of a project has a lot to do with the relationship between the public and private sectors (City and developers) and their ability to co-operate to produce creative solutions to complex problems.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from:

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Planning Consultant: Greg Brown, Brown and Associates
Architect: Dan Jenkins, Jenkins & Associates
Landscape Architect: Jim Laidlaw, IBI Group



Figure 5: Site plan for Garrison Woods (CFB East)



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

GOWER GARDENS

Gibsons, B.C.

284–294 Gower Point Road

Developer

Ken's Lucky Dollar Foods

Date completed

September, 1998

Site area

0.21 ha (.5 acres)

Number, type of residential units

11 townhouse condominiums

Floor area

Residential 87 m²–104 m² (940 sq. ft.–1,118 sq. ft.);

commercial and office units 521 m² (5,610 sq. ft.);

grocery store 732 m² (7,875 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

52 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

Fifteen per cent, including landscaped roof areas

Maximum height

Four storeys

Parking

20 under building, 12 surface

Non-residential units

Grocery store at ground level, five commercial units, three office units

Pre-development usage

Grocery store and parking

Selling price

\$135,000 to \$165,000



Figure 1: The commercial units on the ground floor below the residential block

Gower Gardens is a mixed-use development in a small community. The development combined 11 condominium units, new commercial office space and an existing grocery store. The building required some flexibility in height and density from the municipality. There was considerable public debate about preserving views from overlooking properties, which the developer responded to with a plan that gained community support.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: The back lane at Gower Gardens leading to townhouses

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Gower Gardens started as a grocery store and parking lot in the Town of Gibsons on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast. Originating from a desire to maximize the potential of the land without losing the grocery store, developer Ken's Lucky Dollar Foods and architect Kevin Ryan conceived a plan to convert the property into a vibrant, mixed-use project that included residential units, commercial offices and additional retail stores while keeping the 732 m² (7,875 sq. ft.) grocery store.

Gibsons is a small coastal community, 30 minutes by ferry from downtown Vancouver. Historically a fishing and logging town, it is now a popular tourist destination as well as a stopover for visitors travelling up the scenic Sunshine Coast. The four-storey Gower Gardens building was the first in recent times to be developed in Gibsons' downtown revitalization area and was required to conform to prescribed urban design guidelines developed by architects for the municipality.

Reusing 100 per cent of the existing grocery store and continuing to operate the store during construction presented a number of challenges to the development team. These were overcome through careful construction and project phasing.

Ultimately, the project suffered financially as a weak real estate market deflated prices around the time of completion. In addition, a new, larger grocery store opened up and provided stiff competition for the grocery store. The project's residents are happy with their homes in this rare example of a recent, mixed-use development in a small town.

PROJECT SUCCESS: ARCHITECT'S PERSPECTIVE

Note: The developer was not available to be interviewed. Architect Kevin Ryan kindly agreed to provide information.

*The Municipality was very supportive of the project, although conformance with many of the regulations was difficult. Due to the relative impact of the project, there was considerable public debate. **Kevin Ryan, architect, Coast Architecture Group***

Costs and financing

The total cost of the project was \$3.2 million. The project was financed through bank and private financing.

Marketability and profitability

It took two years for all the project units to sell, mainly because the local real estate market was very flat when the project was completed. The difficulty working around the existing building and time delays due to public concerns about views increased costs by 18 per cent, which resulted in a poor overall financial performance for the project.

A local real estate agent marketed the development. It was geared to local residents and Vancouverites, specifically singles and couples buying their first home or downsizing.

Obstacles

The Town of Gibsons was very supportive but it was difficult to conform to the array of guidelines and regulations that applied to the project. There are eight areas of requirement under the Gibsons Landing Development Permit Area: 1) building scale and massing 2) terracing 3) pedestrian streetscape 4) integration with the waterfront 5) facades 6) roof design 7) landscaping and 8) parking areas. Because Gibsons Landing is the historical centre of the Town of Gibsons, the standards may be more stringent than elsewhere in the town.

There was considerable public debate about the project, as it was a major development for a small town and quite unlike anything that had been approved before. Neighbours whose homes overlooked the project were very concerned about preserving their fabulous ocean views and several design modifications were made to allay their concerns.

Lessons learned

The architect learned that persistence is vital in developing this kind of project. He believes it would help tremendously if the Town had a single point of contact for the project, someone who could really get to know it and help facilitate a process that moved along quickly.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

*It is a character building: by the sea shore, small town, clever architectural features create a charming liveable environment, conducive to relaxation. **Resident***

Affordability

The townhouse condominiums available at Gower Gardens are located in Gibsons Landing, the heart of the historical centre of Gibsons. Still within walking distance of the downtown core, this residential site is surrounded by quaint seaside shopping, commercial activity and residential living. At selling prices between \$135,000 and \$165,000, all of the residents surveyed felt they were getting a great deal with their purchase. Strata (condominium) fees are also relatively low, at about \$100 a month.

All of the residents surveyed were very satisfied with their purchases at Gower Gardens, notably because of the development's central location, scenic views and convenience.



Figure 3: Public access walkway through the site connects the upper levels of Gower Gardens to Gower Point Road.

Design characteristics, size, character

Most of the units are two-bedroom and are generous in size, ranging from 87 m² (940 sq. ft.) to 107 m² (1,118 sq. ft.). This does not include balconies of various sizes, some as large as 70 m² (750 sq. ft.). The townhouses are accessed from the rear by a back lane and parking is not a problem, with one spot allocated to each unit and plenty of room for visitors.

All of the residents surveyed spoke enthusiastically of the wonderful views. Some of the units have partially blocked views, but all units have splendid vistas of Howe Sound, the small islands dotting the coast and the North Shore mountains. The development faces southeast and with the large windows, all units get their fair share of natural light. Some of the residents suggested the installation of skylights to gain more afternoon light.

As one resident puts it, "Gower Gardens blends well and helps to define the seaside-village character of Gibsons Landing." Another resident adds, "It lends itself to the setting." The cedar siding, large overhangs, balconies and terraced look make for an ideal residence on a seaside slope while the integration with commercial activity adds to the dynamic and vibrant town centre feel.

Amenities and transportation

A good portion of the residents living at Gower Gardens are near retirement and have downsized to a condominium, or work within walking distance of the project. Even residents working in Vancouver are only a five-minute drive from the ferry, making for an easy commute.

Public transit is one block from the site and bike paths are also close by. The site's former use, a grocery store, has been incorporated into the development and supplies residents living next door easy access to all food shopping needs. All this means that Gower Gardens residents can easily meet their daily travel needs on foot and do not have to rely on their cars or compete with traffic. Of the five residents surveyed, one of the three currently working drives to work. This compares to 17 per cent of workers in the Town of Gibsons who walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.¹

A wide variety of amenities and shopping is available to residents within walking distance, such as restaurants, cafes, a theatre, a library, playgrounds, schools and a yacht club. One resident sums it up quite nicely: "Being able to live in a small town environment and yet to have large city services close by makes this a very desirable project."

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The Gower Gardens project was not an instant success as it was built during tough economic times. The original owner went bankrupt and had a hard time selling the units. I believe it is all sold now and the commercial spaces are all leased now as well... The businesses have added a positive mix to the retail and services in the downtown. **Chris Marshall, director of planning, Town of Gibsons**

The Town of Gibsons Official Community Plan proposes increased densities in the Gibsons Landing area. Revitalization of commercial activities is a major focus. The Town planners were pleased with the Gower Gardens development proposal as it met many of their objectives as well as retaining an important grocery store and increasing retail choices in the area.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census



Figure 4: A street-level view of Gower Gardens, showing commercial ventures at street level and housing above

Neighbourhood opposition or support

A number of letters from the public were received in the planning phase of this project with both positive and negative comments. The negative comments concerned proposed height variances, overall scale of the development and the lack of opportunity for the public to review and provide input.

As a result, the developer and associates met with the public in meetings to describe the project in finer detail. These forums provided more constructive criticism, which produced a redesigned development proposal, which included lowering part of a building and eliminating one storey. This communication with the public allowed the developers to move forward while gaining the support of the community.

Planning objectives

Gower Gardens is located in the heart of the historical downtown of Gibsons Landing, near the marina and seaside boardwalk. The Revitalization Concept Plan and the Official Community Plan (OCP), encourage commercial and residential development to support and improve the vibrancy and heritage of the neighbourhood, which will continue to attract tourists and provide residents with a variety of housing choices.

The Town of Gibsons OCP clearly states as objectives for Gibsons Landing:

- To maintain and enhance the image of a small-scale waterfront town, with a work and recreation oriented harbour, and an active mix of commercial and residential land uses.
- To encourage the commercial revitalization of Gibsons Landing, through increased residential densities, and support for a wide range of commercial uses.

- Provide some flexibility in design and development standards to recognize existing lots, buildings and roadways which may not meet current standards.

The Town felt that Gower Gardens met the objectives by adding residential units to the property while maintaining, renovating and increasing the original commercial use and enhancing its viability.

A few of the design details of the project were created to adhere to the development and zoning guidelines for the district. The measures taken were:

- stepping and variation of roof lines and façade details
- terracing of upper floors
- use of exterior materials common to the community
- a professional landscape plan.

A public walkway (Figure 3) was included in the project to connect the upper levels of the project with the main road. This adhered to the pedestrian movement guideline, but was not a requirement from the Town.

Regulations and approvals

Resident and neighbourhood approval was gained through public meetings and alterations in design details. Approvals regarding zoning and development bylaws were obtained with little difficulty.

The project proposal conformed to all of the zoning bylaws, with the exception of impervious area coverage (buildings, structures, parking and driveways) and parking requirements.

The coverage was designated at a maximum of 80 per cent while the proposal was for 89.2 per cent. The parking requirements called for 40 spaces but only 35 were proposed. The coverage issue was granted though the understanding that the historical development pattern of this site made it difficult to meet the standards, while the parking issue was resolved through a cash payment (\$3,000 per spot) in lieu of the five spaces not provided.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project, although initially unsuccessful, is now a positive example of a mixed-use, higher-density development in a small town. Gower Gardens is proof that a development of this kind can contribute to the revitalization of small towns like Gibsons, but it is also an example of how fluctuations in the local real estate market can severely affect the profitability of development objectives.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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 Town of Gibsons
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Landscape architect: Judith Reeves
 Susan Stratis, municipal planner at time of approval,
 Town of Gibsons

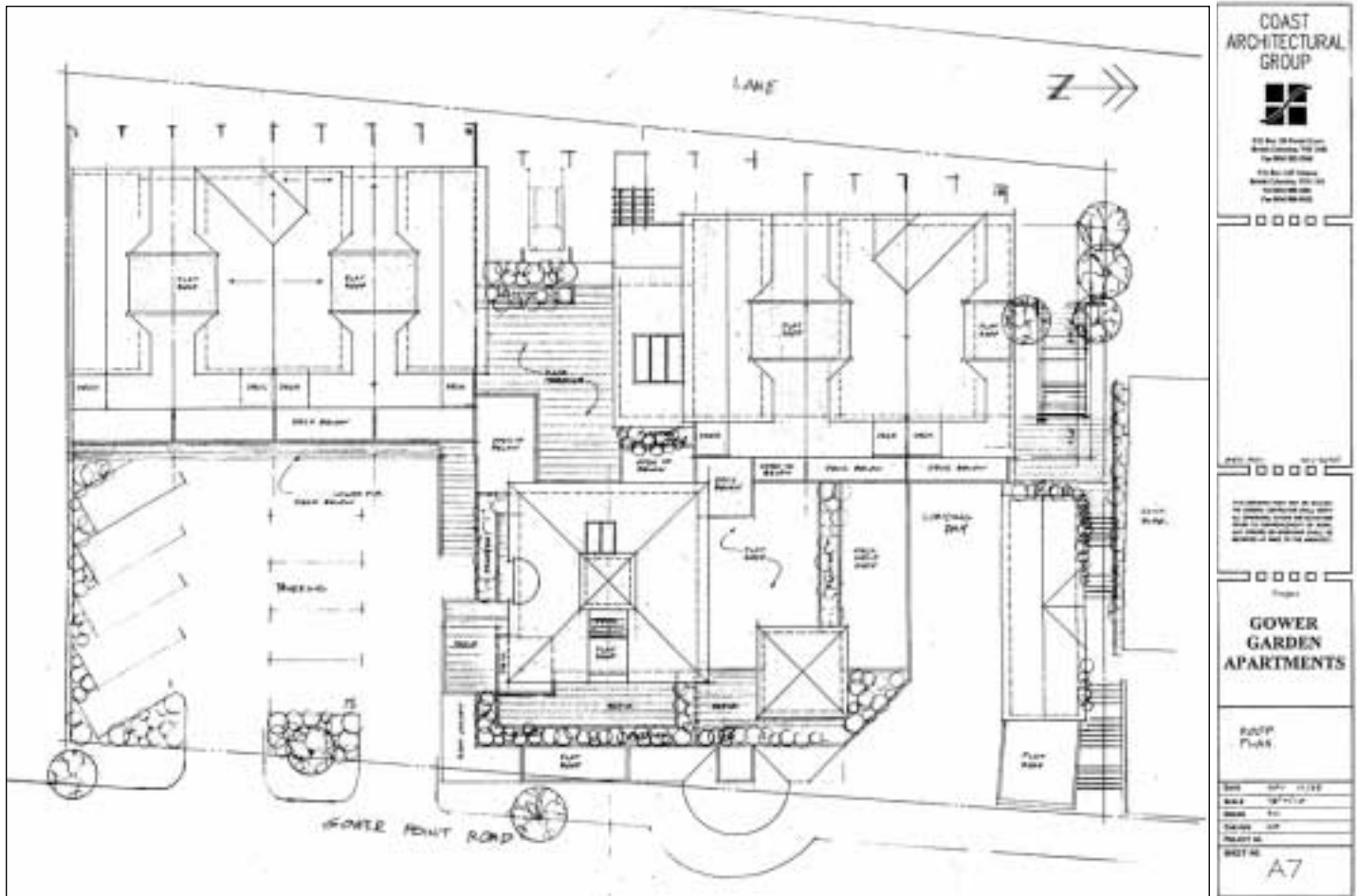


Figure 5: Roof plan of Gower Gardens.



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

HARMONY

Toronto, Ont.

Sheppard Avenue/Meadowvale Road

Developer

Rockport Group

Date completed

1999

Site area

4.8 ha (12 acres)

Number and type of residential units

242 condominium townhouse units

Floor area

91 m²–130 m² (980–1,400 sq. ft.) per unit

Gross residential density

50 units per hectare (uph)

Landscaped open space

25 per cent: 1.2 ha (3 acres) semi-private open space and small front and back yards at each unit

Maximum height

Four storeys

Parking

All units have garages, either detached in the lane (1.5 spaces) or attached to house (two spaces)

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Vacant wasteland parcel, bounded by hydro lines and busy arterials

Selling price

\$115,900 to \$172,900

(average approximately \$150,000)



Figure 1: Harmony from Sheppard Avenue showing the streetscape with street-fronting homes free of garages and driveways

Harmony is a 242-unit, suburban, condominium townhouse development on a vacant site with significant challenges, including adjacent hydro towers. The design is based on neo-traditional development principles with a pedestrian-friendly street frontage and garages located in rear lanes. The units are narrow—4 m (13 ft, 2 in.)—which allowed a very high density for a townhouse development (50 uph gross density).



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: Triangular-shaped park in centre of project with hydro line in background

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project was developed on a 4.8 ha (12 acre) triangular-shaped vacant plot, bounded on two sides by Meadowvale Road and Sheppard Avenue, both busy arterial streets and on the third side by high-voltage transmission lines and a transformer. The lines and transformer presented significant noise issues. Careful site layout and defensive acoustic design were necessary to ease noise concerns.

The project achieved a high level of urban design quality and features extra-pitched roofs, attention to architectural detailing, brick veneer, window detailing and wrought-iron fixtures.

A park in the centre of the project makes use of land that was difficult to develop because of the shape of the site. The developer made efforts to ensure the landscape had good-quality plant material that looks attractive throughout most of the year and residents consider this a valuable asset. There is a total of 1.2 ha (3 acres) of semi-private open space.

The previous owner went through a lengthy process to get an official plan amendment allowing residential development on the site. The decision was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), an independent

tribunal that hears appeals to municipal zoning and land-use decisions, and the owner eventually won the right to develop in 1994. The land was sold to Rockport Group, which redesigned the proposal, especially the parking plans, to make it work for the site.

The three- and four-storey townhouse units range in size from 91 to 130 m² (980 to 1,400 sq. ft.). The project features rear lanes (in the neo-traditional style) with detached garages accessed from the lane. This allows attractive, street-facing units not broken up by garages and private driveways.

Two forms of townhouse were developed. The first is a townhouse with a rear lane, where there is a detached garage, on a 26.5 m (87 ft.) deep lot. The second is a townhouse with an attached garage, with open space integrated into the unit in the form of a deck over the garage. The detached-garage townhouses feature 1.5 parking spaces per unit; the attached-garage townhouses feature two spaces per unit.

Unlike many condominium projects, Harmony is accessible to the public with internal roads and sidewalk treatments that invite public access. Front yard and boulevard landscapes provide a transitional buffer between the street and houses and enhance the pedestrian environment. The units were laid

out to relate to each other with "front-to-front" or "back-to-back" relationships. As a result, the project presents a friendly public face and is an important addition to neighbourhood character.

The project is a five-minute drive from the Rouge Valley Park conservation area. Amenities within walking distance include a convenience store, pizza restaurant, gas station and theatre. A larger shopping centre, three miles away, satisfies all other shopping needs. There is a bus stop very close to the project but poorer access to bike trails. There is a school two blocks away.

To reduce the impact of noise, some units were designed without doors and windows on the sides facing the transformer. This has affected views and light penetration for some units. However, most units have reasonable views both internally and externally to the site (although no vistas) and sunlight penetration is generally good.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*[to some people] intensification is antithetical to the idea of 'neighbourhood,' which thrives on stability and is averse to change. Therefore, infill and redevelopment is very challenging for developers. **Jack Winburg, Rockport Group.***

In spite of a difficult, constrained site that presented considerable risk, and some initial opposition from neighbours, Harmony ended up as a successful project for developer Jack Winburg of the Rockport Group. The units sold fast and resulted in a healthy profit.

Costs and financing

Cost data is not available. The project was financed using conventional bank financing. There was no government financial assistance or in-kind support.

Marketability and profitability

The project proved to be very successful and all units were sold within 21/2 years—March 1997 to October 1999. Targeting mainly families, 156 units were sold in 1998 alone.

The project was divided into phases of 99 units and 144 units. In addition to standard marketing approaches, an incentives-based referrals approach paid existing owners and new owners \$1,000 each if a referral resulted in a sale.

Obstacles

This was a very difficult project for a number of reasons. Noise, esthetics, phasing issues, shape of site, arterial roads and objections from neighbours played a part in adding complexity.

Noise issues resulted from the high-voltage transmission lines and transformer on the site. Units had to be located—and some designed—to ensure that noise levels were below Ontario Ministry of Environment thresholds for residential development. In some cases this meant that there would be no windows or doors facing the hydro lines or transformer. The developer installed extra panes of glass in other units, and included warning clauses about noise in purchase and sale agreements.

The noise made selling some units difficult and the developer decided to change the original phasing plan, which made sense from a physical layout and access point of view, but would not work from a marketing point of view (that is, difficult to sell the most unattractive lots first.)

An original design proposed underground parking, but market research quickly showed that it wouldn't work on this site. In addition, the water table was too high to make this option feasible. The project was redesigned with rear lanes and private, at-grade garages. This revision required going back to the City for a zoning bylaw amendment.

An adjacent owner of a dog kennel objected to the project on the basis that residents would complain about the noise of dogs barking.

Municipal support

Several City policies encouraged the project, including energy conservation, urban design and family housing policies. Working with Toronto City officials, the developer was able to craft a proposal that was eventually accepted by City Council.

Lessons learned

The unique problems of infill development seem to require a developer who is less risk-averse than those who concentrate on greenfield development. The success of infill projects really does come down to careful planning and the developer's expertise at presenting a good design to the community and pointing out its merits.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The project has a pedestrian scale to it...a feeling of a more urban style...and a child-friendly environment.

Resident

Affordability

Harmony has a range of unit styles and sizes. Selling prices ranged from \$115,900 for the smallest townhouses (91 m²–980 sq. ft.) to \$172,900 for 130 m² (1,400 sq. ft.) townhouses. Condo fees are about \$100 month for a 91 m² unit. The average selling price for resale townhouses in the former municipality of Scarborough in 1999 was \$172,521.¹

Those residents surveyed consider the units good value for money.

Design features: Unit size, character, open space, etc.

We are very happy with the character of the place and the architectural detailing. When buying the place, the artist's rendering was bang on...it is visually pleasing to drive by. **Resident**

Residents surveyed were happy with the size of the units and especially liked the character of the neo-traditional style buildings.

While the private yards are small, residents are generally pleased with the amount of open space and they like the sense of openness created by the park in the centre of the project.

The views are considered reasonable considering the urban location and sunlight penetration is good as a result of window placement and orientation of the units.

The neighbourhood and transportation

The project is 40 km from Toronto's downtown core, which is a 30- to 60-minute drive by car or a 90-minute public transit ride. A bus stop is less than a block away.

The project is not close to amenities although there is a shopping centre 3 km away. Entertainment (restaurants and movie theatres) is further away. Consequently, residents report travelling by car for almost all trips.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

Harmony was successful in meeting urban design objectives—defining and enhancing public streets at an appropriate scale... [and] produced a high-quality living environment for the residents.

Katrien Darling, Planner, City of Toronto

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The project was generally well received and viewed as successful from the municipality's perspective. One of the most notable aspects is the public face it presents to the community. The project has an enhanced street presence, achieved in part by locating buildings close to public space and placing garages in the rear lane.

There was some early opposition before the official plan designations were approved. Once Phase I was completed, however, there was strong support from most stakeholders. The main concerns were density, increased traffic on already congested streets, parking in the neighbourhood, snow removal and safety issues.

Most of the original concerns seem to have been addressed during the approvals process, although the condominium corporation continues to work on addressing minor issues internal to the project.

Parking standards had to be met even though this was problematic for the developer because of the narrowness of the units. Street lighting design for the project was approved in consultation with urban design staff.

Planning objectives

The project meets family housing policies that encourage a mix of unit types and sizes, on site amenities, quality streetscapes and good transit access. All residents have easy access to the bus system located within a short walk of their doorsteps. It also meets City of Toronto objectives for residential intensification.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project provides a pedestrian-oriented streetscape through the use of street-fronting townhouses, free of garages and driveways along the street, which incorporate traditional residential elements such as sloped and gabled roofs and high-quality architectural detailing.

¹ CMHC, Ontario Market Analysis Centre

Parking was placed internally on the site in an effort to reduce street impact. The townhouses were designed to reduce the amount of front yard parking by concentrating parking in garages in the lane.

Both the public boulevard and private property were landscaped, resulting in an enhanced pedestrian environment.

Regulations and approvals

The overall approvals process was quite lengthy and involved an Official Plan Amendment to allow this use on the site. This amendment was appealed to the OMB and the former owner did not receive approval until May 1994. Public opposition focused on Phase 1 of the project.

A zoning bylaw amendment required for Phase 2 of the project submitted in October 1998 was not appealed to the OMB and was approved by Council two months later.

LESSONS LEARNED

Harmony shows that despite a difficult site and early public opposition, a medium-density project designed on new urbanism principles can be successful in a suburban location. Success required thoughtful planning and project phasing and the creation of attractive landscapes and streetscapes. Careful site layout and the use of acoustical barriers were necessary to solve a difficult noise problem.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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Municipality: Ed Watkins, P. Eng. MCIP, RPP
Manager of Community Planning
Urban Development Services Dept.
City of Toronto
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Architect, initial design: Rick Merrill, (Page and Steele)

Architect, final design: Bob Forrest, L'Image Design

Landscape architect: Alexander Budreviks

Municipal Planner: Anna Czajkowski, City of Toronto

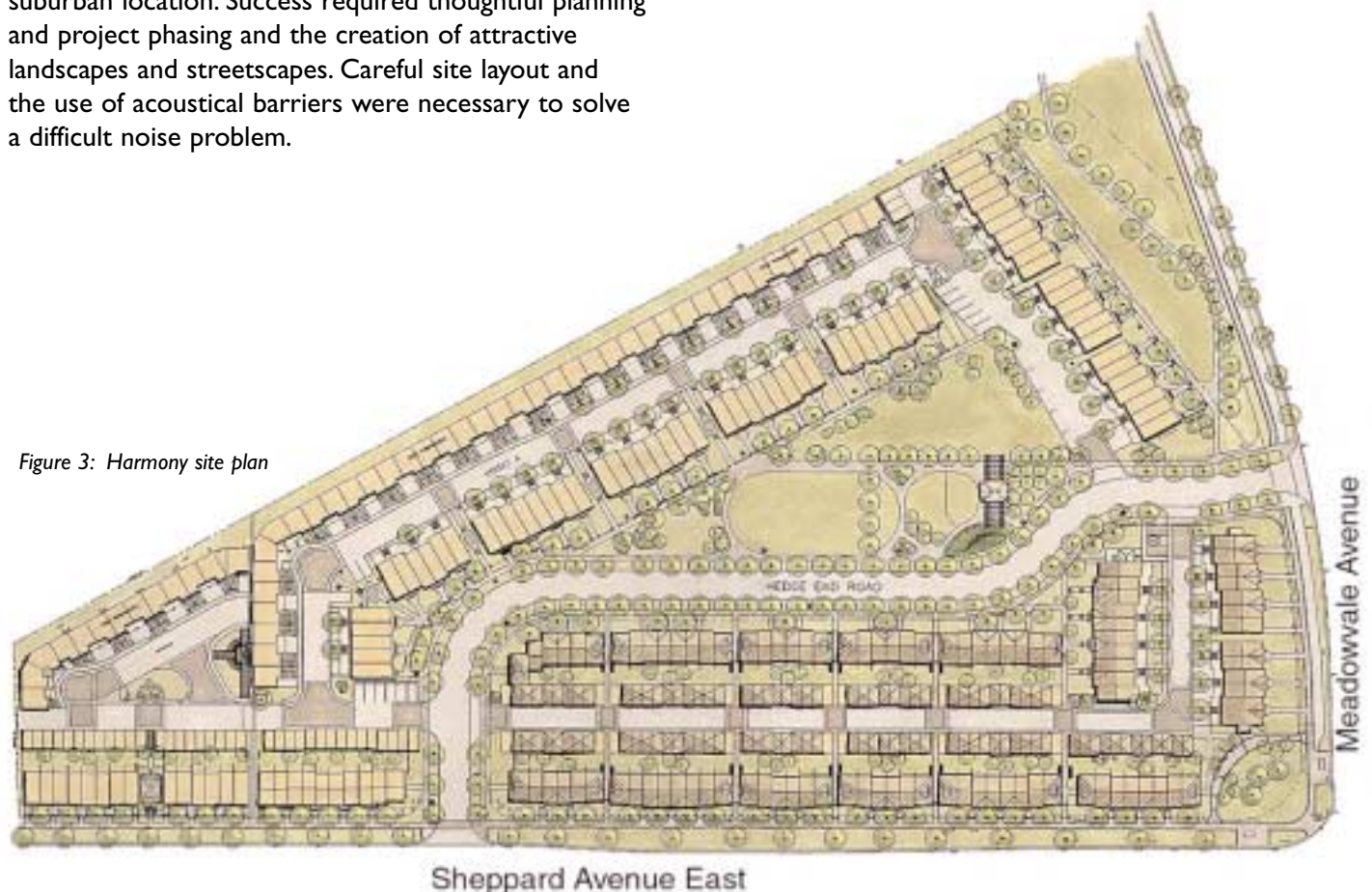


Figure 3: Harmony site plan



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

KOO'S CORNER

Vancouver, B.C.

560-598 Hawks Ave.

Developer

Chesterman Property Group Inc. (Robert Brown)

Date completed

September, 2002

Site area

567 m² (6,100 sq. ft.)

Number and type of residential units

Six condominium townhouses: one is two storeys; two are loft style and three are 2 1/2 storeys

Floor area

67–109 m² (720–1,170 sq. ft.)

Average 86 m² (925 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

106 uph (units per hectare)

Site coverage

64 per cent

Maximum height

2 1/2 storeys

Parking

Five—one integral garage for each of the five larger units.

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Car repair shop and parking

Selling price

\$185,000 to \$280,000 (GST extra)



Figure 1: Koo's Corner from Hawks Avenue.

Koo's Corner is a six-unit townhouse project in the historic neighbourhood of Strathcona. The project combines retention and conversion of an existing commercial building with thoughtful new construction, while acknowledging the local context. It achieved a high density for ground-oriented housing (106 uph) while maintaining a very livable feel that complements the existing neighbourhood. The result resonated well with residents, neighbours and City planners.



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Canada



Figure 2: Koo's Corner

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Koo's Corner originated from a discussion between architect Bruce Haden and developer Robert Brown, both with interest and experience in "green building." At the time, Koo's Garage was still operated by long-time owner-operator Gordie Koo, who lived next door and, reaching retirement, wanted to sell the site for an appropriate use. Mr. Haden, who has previously lived in the neighbourhood, and Mr. Brown saw the site as just the right challenge for their innovative ideas.

Strathcona is a mix of single-family and multi-family housing, including some unusual row housing forms that are not common in Vancouver. This older neighbourhood is home to a community of artists and other creative people, willing to live with a certain amount of "grittiness" in exchange for the proximity to Chinatown, downtown Vancouver and Strathcona Park, home of the City's oldest, and arguably best, community gardens. The area appears to be enjoying a revival as housing prices in the region have soared.

The site consisted of a single, 1940s building without great historic value. But it had become a neighbourhood institution. Surrounding the building was a parking area. The site overlooks a park and is surrounded by older, single-family houses, unique row houses and small apartment buildings.

Mr. Brown's company, Chesterman, has become well known in the region recently for well-executed, small-scale projects that feature green construction principles. Koo's continues in this vein by including a number of innovative green building features including:

- HRVs (heat recovery ventilators),
- Solar preheating of hot water,
- Greywater heat recovery,
- Extensive use of reclaimed materials,
- Reduced use of finishing materials, and
- Low VOC (volatile organic compound) finishes and adhesives

The building covers 64 per cent of the site, leaving only small amounts of open space at ground level, but there are small yards supplemented by usable roof decks. The very narrow front yards are used more than the larger rear yards, which are less popular because there is too much shade.

The project faced a number of challenges including site contamination; a high level of input from the neighbourhood; a tight site; and, detailed design requirements from the City.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*It was a very tight site and we were right up against the maximum allowable density. We managed to dodge a couple of bullets that almost sank the project...but the City's planner was very knowledgeable and supportive and this made a big difference. **Robert Brown, Principal and Founder, Chesterman Property Group Inc.***

The project proved to be a moderate financial success for Chesterman Properties, the developer. However, costs were higher than anticipated because of site contamination and the constraints of a very tight building site that required an extended approvals process and very detailed design.



Figure 3: Koo's Garage before redevelopment. The original building was retained and converted.

Costs and financing

Development costs	
Land	\$70/buildable sq. ft.
Building construction	\$140/sq. ft.
Soft costs (e.g., taxes, development charges, consultants)	\$40/sq. ft.
Total	\$1.4 million

Total cost of the project was \$1,400,000. The project was conventionally financed without government assistance.

Marketability and profitability

The project achieved unusually high pre-sale levels (five of six homes sold) shortly after construction started. The project was marketed using word of mouth among an existing network of potential buyers, many of who were already familiar with the quality that Chesterman can deliver. The healthy and sustainable features incorporated in the project attracted many of the buyers.

Despite the simple, effective marketing approach the project didn't turn as large a profit as Mr. Brown had hoped. Costs proved higher than expected as a result of the extended approvals process and very detailed design required by the constrained site.

Obstacles

The project stalled for a few months while Mr. Brown and Mr. Koo negotiated and eventually reached an amicable deal to clean up the remaining contamination.

The Strathcona Resident's Association is a powerful voice for the community and Mr. Brown understood that City approvals largely depend on the support of the local residents. Rather than making a formal application to the City at this stage, a process that triggers an immediate public notification and sometimes a negative reaction, Mr. Brown first delivered plans to all the immediate neighbours. As a result, he received three letters with various concerns and tried hard to address these concerns. Mr. Brown also sought out the chair of the association, who happened to be one of the project's immediate neighbours, to discuss his plans.

One concern was how to deal with the side of the proposed building facing Keefer Street. The original lot had fronted on Keefer and was adjacent to several single-family houses that still face in that direction. Mr. Brown ended up including a tall bay window on this southern flank, which allows lots of light into the end unit and adds visual interest to the street.

Neighbours were also concerned about the garages for the three units facing onto Hawks Avenue, a street that is largely free of the pavement cuts that are typical of a suburban street. Parking, however, was a real challenge on this tight site and the zoning required at least one space per unit. A compromise was reached, exempting the smallest unit from requiring a parking space and giving each of the three row houses a half-buried garage. Residents gain access using only two pavement cuts. The grass along the sidewalk edge continues over the cuts to give a continuous green strip. (see Figure 2). Residents gain access to the other two parking spots from the rear lane.

The design of the garage doors was an important consideration. Architect Bruce Haden used French doors that have some transparency. He used pavers rather than asphalt as a driveway surface.

The project fits in the heritage neighbourhood without resorting to what the architect refers to as "fake heritage." The architect and developer achieved this by paying attention to the human features of the project rather than trying to mimic architectural details, as is typical of many conventional attempts at reproducing a heritage feel. They studied the massing of the surrounding neighbourhood and found that the typical module size making up most units is 4.3–4.9 m (14–16 ft.) wide, so they used this dimension in the new townhouses. They studied the colour of surrounding buildings and picked a colour that was missing from the surroundings. They also studied the outdoor spaces of porches and front yards, which are very important in the neighbourhood. Rather than mimic the existing qualities of the surroundings the project manages to put a subtle twist on many of them. This approach is best illustrated by the asymmetrical roofline, which still respects the roof pitch angle of the surrounding neighbourhood while also reflecting the commercial history of the site.

City support

The City was very supportive and the design sensibility and ideas of Scot Hein, a Vancouver City planner, were certainly a factor in the success of the project.

Vancouver, which operates under the authority of the Vancouver Charter rather than the Local Government Act that governs planning in the rest of B.C., has two parts to its zoning ordinances—"by right" zoning and a "performance-based" element that can be earned.

In this case, the existing RT-3 zoning allowed 0.75 FSR (floor space ratio, a measure of density calculated by dividing the total area of the building on all floors by the area of the site) for additions to a multi-family dwelling and 0.95 FSR for infill projects. This project was part infill, part addition, but Mr. Brown needed the higher density to make the designs he had in mind work effectively and to make the project profitable. Mr. Brown was dangerously close to exceeding even this higher density limit. Going over it would have forced a rezoning, costly delays and possibly the end of the project.

The City allowed the higher density and Mr. Hein also provided valuable insights and suggestions that allowed the project to succeed in a constrained situation.

Lessons learned

The developer suggests that early, open neighbourhood consultation is vital with unusual projects like this and that a developer has to be ready to listen to the local residents and make concessions where necessary. In this case, neighbours also appreciated Chesterman's efforts to develop a green building and this helped gain approvals. Mr. Brown acknowledges the support and skill of the municipal planner who helped navigate the complex urban design standards of the City.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

It feels like a house...there are lots of amenities and green building features, and we really like the esthetic.

Resident

Affordability

Koo's Corner is reasonably priced relative to the overheated Vancouver housing market, where high demand has raised housing prices to the highest in Canada. Selling prices ranged from \$180,000 for the smallest, one-bedroom townhouse, to \$283,000 for the largest townhouse. Condo fees range from \$65 to \$90 per month. In 2002, the average selling price for new townhouses in Vancouver was \$259,316.¹

All residents surveyed consider their unit good value for money and many mentioned the high quality of construction and careful design, as well as the green building and interesting esthetic of the building.



Figure 4: View of the rear of property

Design features: Unit size, character, open space, etc.

The units at Koo's are modest in size (the largest is 109 m² [1,170 sq. ft.]) and at the moment this fits the budgets and lifestyles of most residents. The tall ceilings make the units feel bigger. One resident noted that although more room would be nice, the space was well laid out and anything bigger was out of resident's affordability range. Many residents appreciated the need for compactness in a growing city. Some residents suggested there is space to expand the units to create an extra room.

There were universally positive comments about the character of the project, which was felt to fit extremely well into the neighbourhood by giving a modern twist to the existing older commercial building while respecting the heritage, row-house form that is common in the neighbourhood. Many residents appreciated the adaptive reuse of an older building that has been skilfully incorporated into the project. Finally there is a great feeling of community and neighbourliness among the residents of the six units and they all felt that others would be there to help them if they needed it.

¹ CMHC, B.C. and Yukon Market Analysis Centre

The amount of open space is quite limited and some residents did say that they would prefer more. However, they also noted that the open space has been extremely well used and that the roof decks provide useful, secluded places to entertain and relax.

The very narrow front yards are well used as they face the park and are often in sunshine, but the slightly larger backyards are often in shade.

There are views of the mountains on the North Shore from the roof decks. Window views include the adjacent park, which is quite active, neighbouring buildings and backyards (in themselves quite interesting) and the attractive street.

The daylight coming into most units is excellent because of very large windows at the front of the building and skylights in some units. The developer and architect made an extra effort to ensure a high quality of natural lighting.

The single parking space per unit (except for the smallest unit, which has no space) is more than adequate for all the residents. They often prefer to park on the street, using the garage space for storage or workshops.

The neighbourhood and transportation

All residents enjoy the quality of the neighbourhood, which is unique in Vancouver. Many surrounding neighbours take great pride in their gardens, which, in combination with the attractive heritage character of many of the houses, creates a visually interesting streetscape. Many of those interviewed said that the project's proximity to amenities, especially downtown, were major benefits of the location. Residents enthused about the artistic and cultural elements of the neighbourhood.

There is a bus stop within two minutes walk and two of the four residents interviewed bike to work. This compares to 23 per cent of Vancouver CMA workers who generally use alternatives to the car to get to work.² At least two residents find the location convenient enough that they are able to do without a car.

Most residents surveyed stated that they generally walk to local shopping or local entertainment. Half the residents do almost all their travel by foot or bicycle. The other half uses a car for larger shopping trips and more distant leisure activities.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The project creates a good precedent for a slightly different housing form and type that is sympathetic to the historical neighbourhood.

**Scot Hein, Development Planner/
Urban Design, City of Vancouver**

Neighbourhood opposition or support

Through a carefully executed public process the developer addressed most of the neighbours' concerns. The developer made an extra effort, beyond the standard notification requirements, to consult with neighbours and key community representatives, find out their concerns and make efforts to address them. Neighbours were less concerned about the proposed density than they were about the character and design of the project, which is at a prominent intersection opposite a park. The developer then folded these solutions into the application for the development permit.

Planning objectives

The project meets the City of Vancouver's objectives of increasing residential densities while retaining neighbourhood character and livability.

It is located within the City's RT-3 (residential two family) zoning district, which encourages retention of neighbourhood and streetscape character, through the retention, renovation and restoration of existing character buildings.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project provides a pedestrian-oriented streetscape and a form that is both sympathetic to the historical neighbourhood and at the same time echoes the commercial feel of the retained building, which itself has intrinsic local value.

Three of the four new units reflect the older row housing in the neighbourhood with the smaller "transition" unit helping to blend the row-housing form with the retained building while creating a clear distinction between the two forms. The developer and architect paid close attention to the details of the project with great results.

Overall the project has enhanced the neighbourhood and likely increased property values in the vicinity.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Regulations and approvals

The approvals process was fairly complex because of the tightly constrained site and developer's requests to exceed some of the standard zoning thresholds.

Many of Vancouver's zones have clauses for both "outright approval" and "conditional approval" uses that may be approved with certain conditions. The higher density sought by the developer required a conditional approval, which requires authorization by the City's director of planning. The project was very close to the limits of the zone and almost faltered on technical interpretations of density, site coverage and setback requirements.

In addition, Vancouver has detailed urban-design guidelines for each zone, which although more flexible than the zoning requirements, must be addressed by developers to the satisfaction of the planning department to get development permit approval.

The request for increased density, relaxed parking restrictions, reduced setback requirements, increased height and reduced open space all made the approvals process somewhat more complex than is usual. A Board of Variance addressed relaxation of bylaw and design guidelines, specifically setback requirements and the elimination of one parking space. Ultimately, the developer was able to meet the intent of this zoning and get approval.

LESSONS LEARNED

Koo's Corner is an excellent example of a project that combines thoughtful, adaptive reuse with infill. The project is successful because of the attention to detail of the physical design and a carefully orchestrated, respectful public process. The developer sought local input, in addition to and well in advance of the usual public input process. The value of a skilled, knowledgeable urban planner with urban design expertise and the flexibility built into Vancouver's zoning schedules were also important.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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Architect: Bruce Haden, currently of Hotson, Bakker, Boniface, Haden Architects
Green Building Consultant: Heather Tremain, Resource Rethinking Building Inc
Landscape: Wave Design and Claire Kennedy

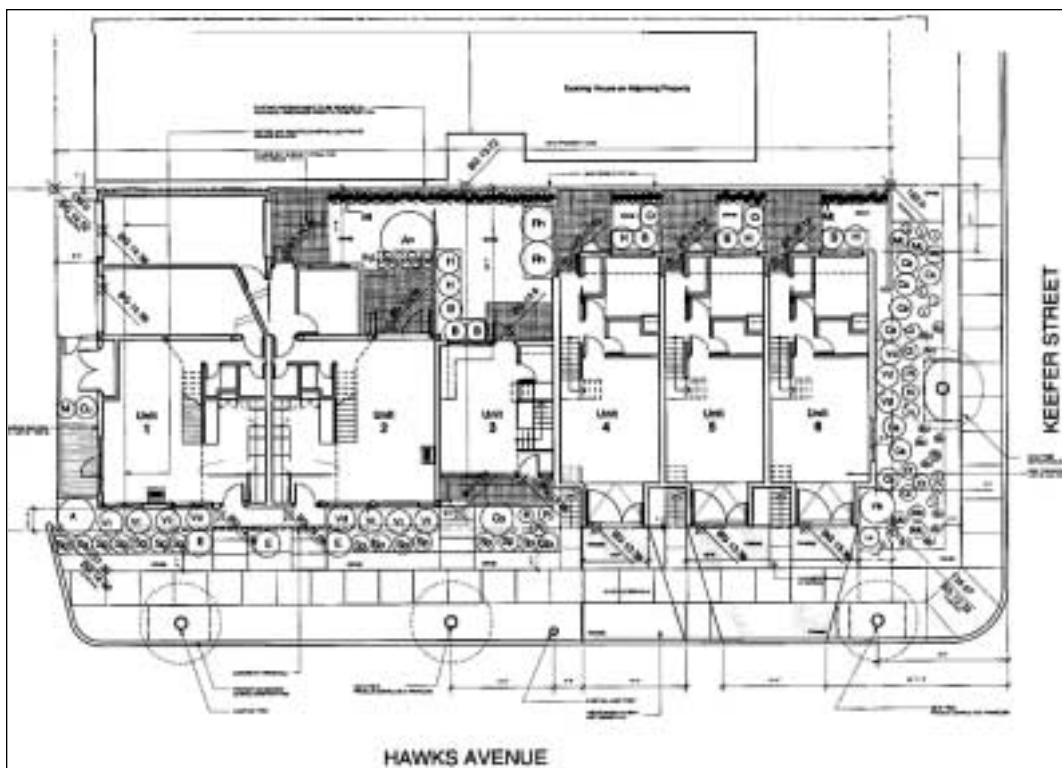


Fig. 5: Koo's Corner site plan



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

LES LOFTS DU PONT

Montréal, Que.

1821–1833 Lalonde Ave.

Developer

Les Développements Mas Inc.

Date completed

2002

Site area

0.06 ha (1.4 acres)

Number and type of residential units

Seven townhouse condominiums

Floor area

115 m²–147 m² (1,236–1,581 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

117 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

43 per cent (shared rear courtyard, rooftop patios)

Maximum height

Three storeys

Parking

Four enclosed garage spaces

—one for each of four units

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Vacant lot

Selling price

\$139,000 to \$159,000



Figure 1: Les Lofts du Pont, a townhouse project fronting onto a lane

Les Lofts du Pont is a seven-unit townhouse project near downtown Montréal, which was constructed to face onto a laneway. Les Lofts provides each resident with a yard and three floors of living space. The top floors are designed in a loft-style, with large southwest-facing windows to take full advantage of natural light. Les Lofts du Pont is part of the redevelopment and rebuilding of the south-centre district of Montréal.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: The modern kitchen in the open-plan concept

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Along the laneways of downtown Montréal sat a small, neglected lot that had fallen prey to illegal activity at night. To architect Jocelyn Duff however, this plot was an opportunity to move forward with his idea to develop a townhouse condominium facing onto a lane instead of a proper street.

The site is very close to city parks, restaurants, entertainment and other amenities, which makes it perfect for the downtown pedestrian lifestyle. The average unit size is 125 m² (1,350 sq. ft.), which is plenty of space compared to other dwellings in the area. The development is very compact though, as each of the seven units is three levels.

The project was designed for individuals and couples wishing to purchase an inexpensive but centrally located residence. Through pre-construction marketing, buyers were encouraged to assist with the planning of their unit. Parking garages and workshops were options, but could easily be converted into offices or storage rooms.

It was not difficult to gain neighbourhood and City approval, as the lot and location were not controversial. Although the City was reluctant at first to approve a building fronting on a lane, it was not completely opposed to the plan. The City was happy to have a developer willing to answer neighbours' calls to utilize the land. The residents in the neighbourhood were concerned about late-night loiterers and saw the project as a way of cleaning up the area.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

This project can be reproduced in any downtown area of Canadian cities. [To achieve success, the key elements are] good and innovative design, severe cost control, and [ensuring] residents' satisfaction.

Jocelyn Duff, Les Développements Mas Inc.

Les Lofts du Pont was the vision of architect Jocelyn Duff of Les Développements Mas Inc. and his team. Mr. Duff and his team started the venture because of his interest in laneway projects. Funded by CMHC's Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) program,¹ Mr. Duff had studied the barriers to and options for houses that face onto alleys in Montréal. As part of the project, he searched for a suitable lot and came across the Lalonde Avenue site, which seemed to offer good development potential.

Because of its corner location, a small portion of the parcel fronted onto a municipal street. This allowed the developer to meet the municipal requirement that a building front onto a "real" street, not a lane. The downtown location, combined with City and neighbourhood interest in redevelopment, resulted in approval of the project.

The land on which the units sit has always been one lot, with the short side facing onto Lalonde Avenue and the long side running parallel to the lane, behind existing housing. One unit faces onto Lalonde Avenue, while the other six units face onto the lane. The property has one building with separate entrances for each unit, but because the street address is Lalonde Avenue and there is at least one entrance on Lalonde Avenue, it is just like having an apartment building with one address and many units, which avoids the lane-fronting dilemma. The two-metre (six-foot) setback along the lane means residents have the ability to access Lalonde Avenue on private land, not the lane.

A City bylaw allowed car access from the lane. However, the bylaw limits the minimum distance between two private driveways to 7.5 meters (25 feet). This is the main reason why only three of the development's four garages are on the lane and one is on Lalonde Avenue.

¹ More information on the ACT program is available at www.actprogram.com.

Costs and financing

The total cost of the project was \$850,000. The costs were kept low through lack of site-clearing costs (vacant land), no infrastructure costs (alley already serviced), no deep excavation for basements and low land cost. The developer was careful with site planning and the selection of construction materials and was able to build each unit at a cost of between \$70 and \$75 a square foot.

The development was fully financed privately through the Desjardins Credit Union and received no financial assistance from the government.



Figure 3: The vacant lot before development

Development Costs	
Land	\$9,286/unit
Building construction	\$100,000/unit
Soft costs/other	\$11,286/unit
Infrastructure	\$0
Total	\$843,650
Total per unit	\$120,500 (approximate)

Marketability and profitability

The seven townhouses were marketed by showing customers unit plans and 3-D models. The developer's goal was to sell the units before construction to allow the buyers to custom fit their units. The developer succeeded and the seven units were sold before a shovel broke ground.

The developer relied on the location of the site and its proximity to downtown entertainment, amenities and the central business district when targeting one-or two-person households working downtown or wishing to own an inexpensive townhouse rather than an apartment. The product being offered, while unusual, proved to be desirable, combining low price with careful interior design. The combination of advance sales (low hidden costs) and careful cost control resulted in Les Lofts du Pont being especially profitable for the developer.

Obstacles

Project costs were low partly because there were very few objections to the development proposal from the City or the neighbourhood residents. There were no public consultations because:

- there was no rezoning required;
- the few objections received from the public about the distance from existing housing to the backs of the new townhouses were alleviated by separating them with backyards; and
- the vacant lot had been frequented by drug users and prostitutes so neighbours welcomed improvements.

The main obstacle to development was municipal access bylaws. The bylaw did not permit housing fronting onto lanes so the project had to be redesigned to conform to the prescribed guidelines. The short side of the lot facing Lalonde Avenue was made into the principal address by adding a seventh townhouse that had its front door facing the street and by creating a six-foot building setback from the lane, which is technically the footpath access to the laneway units. More details are provided above.

In addition, the number of garage doors along the laneway facade had to be reduced to three from six to conform to another bylaw requiring a minimum distance between driveways. This allowed the developer to offer an additional room for some owners that could be used as flexible space. There was little soil contamination on the site, which cost \$16,000 to clean up.

Municipal support

The City of Montréal played a minor role in the development of Les Lofts du Pont and required little convincing to allow the laneway project to move forward. No rezoning was required as the project technically fronted onto the street and the City approved the construction permit without difficulty.

Lessons learned

In this case, the interest and will of one individual was enough to get the ball rolling on an interesting and unique development. The combination of smart site selection, innovative design, thorough cost control and residents' satisfaction were the elements that made this project a success and satisfied the developer financially.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The units are very private and have a very interesting design. I am happy with the private access outside through the yard and the patio, the large windows and the location. The neighbourhood is being redeveloped and it will take another few years to become nicer, but I am satisfied that the neighbourhood is improving.

Resident

Affordability

Les Lofts du Pont townhouses range in size from 115 m² to 147 m² (1,236 to 1,581 sq. ft.) on three levels. The top two levels are loft-style and the bottom level is a custom area that can be used as a garage, an office, storage space or whatever the resident needs. At modest prices—between \$139,000 and \$159,000—these townhouses are well-designed and provide ample living space.

All of the five residents surveyed felt they had received good value for their money and were happy with their purchases. Condominium fees are \$200-400 per year. Overall, the residents were glad to have the opportunity to live near downtown in a townhouse close to amenities, work and entertainment.



Figure 4: All townhouse units are loft-style.

Design features

All of the residents surveyed mentioned the many large windows and the availability of natural light. The lower level gets the least amount of sunlight but the upper loft levels have windows at both front and back that permit generous amounts of sunlight to penetrate the interior.

The residents were also satisfied with the amount of private and semi-private space, in the form of rooftop patios and a shared courtyard in the back. Although well designed, the developer minimally landscaped the rear courtyard and grassy areas at the front, leaving landscape improvements to the residents. The residents have not changed the landscaping.

The exterior design is relatively simple, with a flat facade using a mixture of red and grey siding. The interior design features include large windows, hardwood flooring, modern kitchens and an open living room with high ceiling as a result of the 3rd floor loft. Some of the residents also favoured the option of being able to customize the ground floor and the interior fittings.

Neighbourhood and transportation

In keeping with the developer's marketing approach, many of the residents at Les Lofts du Pont are within close proximity of their workplace. Only one of the five residents surveyed commutes to work in a car while the others walk or take transit. This compares to 27 per cent of Montréal CMA workers who walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.² This is quite a testament to the attractiveness of a home near downtown and the workplace.



Figure 5: Large windows provide ample natural light

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Les Lofts du Pont is one element of the changing southeast district of downtown Montréal so patience is needed while new development and renovations occur. In the meantime, there are many excellent amenities, such as parks and trails, shopping, entertainment and restaurants a short walk away.

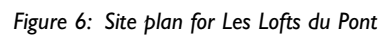
Information was not available.

Further information can be obtained from:

Mr. Jocelyn Duff

Phone: (514) 596-1492

Web: www.developpementsmas.com



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ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

LES LOFTS LALIBERTÉ

Québec, Que.

570 boulevard Charest Est

Developer

Laliberté

Date completed

June 1999

Site area

0.38 ha (0.9 acres)

Number and type of residential units

51 rental apartment units

Floor area

35m²–75 m² (376–807 sq. ft.) per unit

Gross residential density

134 units per hectare (uph)

Site coverage

100 per cent

Open space

465 m² (5,000 sq. ft.) landscaped roof terrace

Maximum height

6 storeys

Parking spaces

None

Non-residential units

Retail department store, 2,970 m² (32,000 sq. ft.) on ground floor and basement and six office units, 1,860 m² (20,000 sq. ft.) on three floors

Pre-development usage

Whole building was previously occupied by Laliberté store.

Rental price

\$395–\$700 per month



Figure 1: Les Lofts Laliberté from boulevard Charest Est

Les Lofts Laliberté is a 51-unit rental apartment project resulting from a partnership between the owners of Laliberté store and Québec City. These partners have managed to salvage a much-loved heritage building by converting part of a well-established store to offices and loft apartments while retaining the primary function of the site as a department store. The project reflects the desire of the City and the developer (who is also the store owner) to revitalize the St. Roch area of the city, an old retail district where Laliberté has operated a store since 1867. The project is a thoughtful combination of uses that brings the graceful character of the building back to life.



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Figure 2: Part of the renovated Laliberté storefront

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 1995 Laliberté, a long-established store in Québec, reduced the size of operations, which left part of this historic building unused and some windows boarded up. Earlier renovations that included heavy metal cladding and plastic signage had ruined the character of the original three buildings that form the complex. More recent boarding-up of many of the windows had added insult to injury.

The conversion of part of the building to residential and office uses has made it possible to bring the building and the St. Roch area to life again, putting windows in the building, people back on the streets and providing a number of jobs in the area.

This project was part of, and meshed nicely, with a larger initiative in the area to remove a roof that covered a large part of the downtown mall. A total of 19 properties were renovated in the area as part of the initiative.

The building has no parking of its own and residents park in several adjacent parking lots. While this seems to be a satisfactory solution, it can be a little expensive for some residents.

The building itself occupies the entire lot so there is no at-grade open space, but the developer has provided an attractive 465 m² (5,000 sq. ft.) roof deck and terrace as semi-private, open space for residents. This deck is well-landscaped and provides users with good views of the surrounding area.

The project is conveniently located in Québec City's central area and there is a full range of amenities close by, including grocery and other stores, pharmacies, coffee shops, schools and the charms of Old Québec. In addition, bus stops are located right outside the building and it is a short walk to the train station.

Most units have large, full-length windows, which makes the quality of natural light very good.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*Our architect, Mr. Pierre Mercier, was very sensitive to the authenticity of the building. Each part of the building reflects its period exactly. **Lucie Morisset, general director, Laliberté***

Laliberté's owners reorganized the operations of their long-established store in 1995, which left a considerable proportion of the building unused. The conversion to loft apartments and offices with financial assistance from the City has proved to be very successful for them.

Costs and financing

The project cost just under \$3.8 million to develop.

Financing:	
Subsidy from City	\$2,000,000
Mortgage	\$1,200,000
Private investment	\$ 600,000
Total	\$3.8 million

As the first business to agree to reinvest in the neighbourhood, the project proponents benefited from a generous public subsidy (\$2 million) from the City of Québec, which wanted to see the St. Roch heritage district restored. This was supplemented with a mortgage of \$1.2 million. The balance came from private investment. (For a detailed description of the City of Québec's Development and Revitalization Fund, refer to the CMHC study *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*.)

Marketability and profitability

The project proved to be very successful and met the developer's profit expectations. All units were rented within one year of project completion. If lofts become available they generally rent out again within a week.

The project was marketed using an agent. Personnel from the store were used for administration and customer service for potential renters.

In addition, the developer advertised in newspaper classified sections and made use of press conferences and several newspaper articles to promote the project.

Obstacles

The project did not suffer from any significant obstacles. There was no site contamination and both the City and local neighbours were very supportive of the project.

The only real challenge was the lack of parking for the building. While the City approved the project with no dedicated parking, this has proved to be a challenge for some residents. However, there are a number of parking lots in the immediate vicinity and residents can purchase monthly parking passes for these.

City support

City support, both financial and regulatory, was crucial to the project's success. The City wanted the area restored and this project was a key part of the improvement of the district.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The district is alive and the project is integrated very well with the [surrounding] architecture. **Resident**

Affordability

Les Lofts Laliberté units range from 35m² to 75 m² (376 to 807 sq. ft.). Rents range from \$395 for the smallest lofts to \$700 a month for apartments with mezzanines. The rent does not include parking. Average rents in 2002 for this neighbourhood were from \$411 for one-bedroom units to \$570 for units with three or more bedrooms.¹

All residents surveyed consider their units good value for money.

Design features: Unit size, character, open space, etc.

The people who live here [downtown] ...are creating a dynamic atmosphere. Despite the bias, downtown is not as noisy a place as people think. The traffic is reasonable outside of office hours. **Resident**



Figure 3: The landscaped terrace

All residents were happy with the size of their home and felt the space had been well-used. Many mentioned the interesting heritage character of their units and the building as a whole, noting especially such features as the large windows and high ceilings.

Residents were satisfied with the amount of open space, even though the project only provides a roof garden. In part, this is because there is plenty of park space in the neighbourhood and the roof deck is pleasant, well-landscaped and provides good views. One resident however, noted that the roof deck can be a little noisy at times as air-conditioning units are located in this space.

Many of the units have large, floor-to-ceiling windows and the amount of sunlight coming into the building is therefore very good. Residents report rarely having to use artificial lights during daylight.

There are good views of interesting parts of old Québec City from many of the units and some residents mentioned that there is great interest in casually observing the street life in the neighbourhood. Some units, however, have only average views.

The neighbourhood and transportation

All residents interviewed said that the project is located conveniently, with amenities such as parks, coffee shops, schools, grocery stores and restaurants within easy walking distance.

A bus stop is located immediately adjacent to the building and a train station is within walking distance. Bicycle paths along the St. Charles River are also convenient and make for pleasant commuting and recreation.

¹ CMHC, Quebec Market Analysis Centre

Despite the convenient location of the project, only two of the five residents interviewed do not generally use a car to get to work. In the Québec CMA, 18 per cent of workers walk, cycle or take public transit to work.²

All five residents do their grocery shopping on foot and all travel to at least some local entertainment by bus or foot, but prefer their cars for more distant destinations. Most residents stated that trips are generally pleasant, but one noted that it depends on the timing of the trip because traffic can be very dense during peak hours.

The building has no parking spaces, but most residents were satisfied with leasing a parking space by the month in nearby parking lots or parking on the street. One resident noted that snow removal can cause some inconvenience for street parking.



Figure 4: Restored heritage building, part of the project on the corner of rue St. Joseph and rue St. Chapelle

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The project is a success on several levels. This complex was partly vacant and spurred other significant building projects in the area. The reuse of the complex made it possible to give life again to unused parts of the building, to bring back residents and workers.

Renée Désormeaux, commissaire à l'entreprise, Québec

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The municipality views the project as very successful because it has contributed to the revitalization of a historic district and rehabilitated a heritage building that had been neglected over the years.

Many people in the community spoke in favour of the project and the City supported the project by providing a substantial grant. There were no negative concerns raised by the public during the process.

The project was instrumental in initiating the restoration and redevelopment of the Rue St. Joseph in this area. Nineteen of 21 properties in the immediate vicinity have been or are being renovated.

Planning objectives

The project was supported by the City because it was successful in a call for proposals for a City grant. Proposals were judged on their conformity to City planning objectives for the district including heritage retention and the revitalization of the St. Roch district.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The heritage building (actually several adjoining buildings) fits well into the historic neighbourhood. The project's many windows, which had been boarded up, face onto the street. The mix of uses provides an interesting diversity of function to the building and assists in enlivening the neighbourhood.

Regulations and approvals

The project was approved within the framework of a larger initiative to remove a roof over a downtown mall area that had been in place many years. This is part of a 12-year old strategy, under which the City provides grants for heritage revitalization to breath new life into the St. Roch district. The City awards the grants through a Call for Proposals process.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

The project did not require rezoning and met all municipal regulations. Nevertheless, a committee monitored redevelopment of Rue St. Joseph, one of the streets the building faces.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project is a great success for both the developer (store owner) and the City, which provided a substantial grant as part of a larger community revitalization initiative. It demonstrates the successful result of a partnership between a municipality and a private developer to restore and adapt a large heritage property.

The restoration of the heritage building has enlivened the streetscape and created practical, reasonably priced rental housing while allowing the store to continue operating on the lower floors.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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Architect: Pierre Mercier, Bernard Mercier Rheault
Municipal Planners: Alain Desmeules, Carole Bélanger, City of Québec

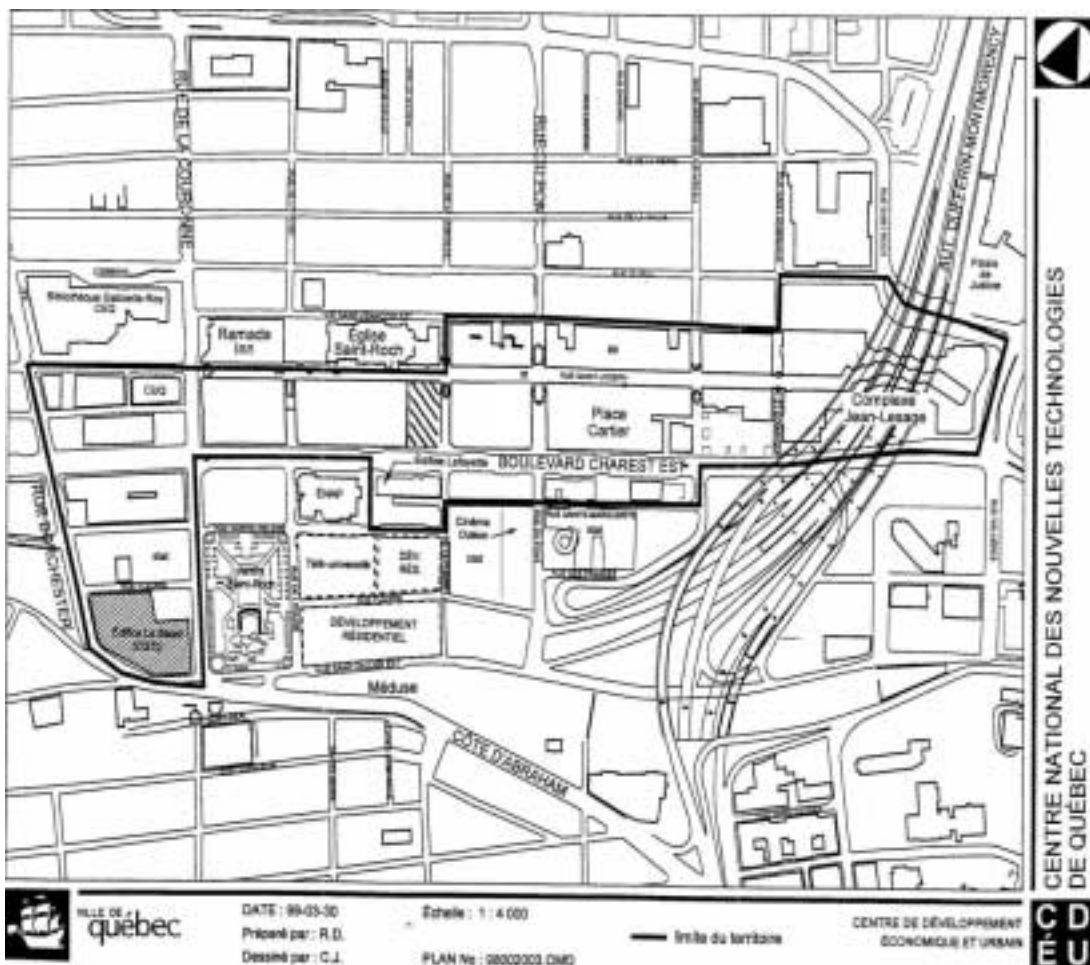


Figure 5: Location plan—the site is the hatched rectangle in the middle of the map

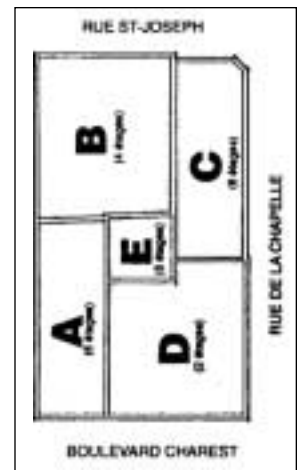


Figure 6: Simplified site plan



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

LONDON LANE

Guelph, Ont.

240 London Road West

Developer

Reid Heritage Homes

Date completed

2000–2001

Site area

3.2 ha (7.8 acres)

Number and type of residential units

105 condominium townhouses and
22 semi-detached units

Floor area

111–121 m² (1,200–1,300 sq. ft.) per unit,
plus finished basement

Gross residential density

40 units per hectare (uph) for townhouses

Site coverage

24 per cent for townhouses,
32 per cent for semi-detached units

Landscaped open space

49 per cent for townhouses: 1.5 ha (3.7 acres)
open space, both private and common areas

Maximum height

Two storeys

Parking spaces

One per unit on individual driveways, plus a garage
in 28 units; 70 visitor spaces for townhouses,
22 for semi-detached units

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Industrial (brownfield), Pirelli Cable storage

Selling price

\$134,000–\$146,500 for townhouses
\$150,000–\$160,000 for semi-detached units



Figure 1: Typical Townhouses at London Lane

London Lane is a 105-unit townhouse project in an old suburban area of Guelph that also includes 22 semi-detached homes. The project was developed on a brownfield industrial site, formerly operated by Pirelli Cable, and required significant site remediation before construction.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: Two-bedroom townhouse with surface parking space

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project is in an older, established single-family residential neighbourhood fairly close to downtown Guelph and steps from Exhibition Park. The site is bounded on two sides by a collector road and a local road; on a third side by another residential development and on the fourth side by a CN rail line, which presented noise issues.

The site was a brownfield site, having been previously occupied by Pirelli Cable. There was contamination, mainly from copper. Significant site remediation was required and many tons of soil had to be removed by the previous owner before construction.

The townhouses were developed as rent-to-own units. The developer was very pleased that more than half the renters purchased their units when the project was converted to condominiums.

The project consists of rows of five to eight townhouses and features brick combined with vinyl siding. The buildings are fairly uniform in style, although there are six different layouts, one with two bedrooms and surface parking, and the remainder with three bedrooms

and a garage. Each townhouse has a single parking spot at the unit, but the developer has made allowance for owners to buy an additional space if required. There are also 70 visitor parking spots at grade level. There is 1.5 ha (3.7 acres) of open space in the form of private backyards and grassed common areas.

London Lane is a 15-minute walk from most amenities and shopping, which seems to be a little too far for most residents to walk.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*We tried to build a strong sense of community and affordability into the project. The 105 units rented out within six months to a year...[our] retention rate from rental to ownership was about 50 per cent, which we think indicates that the residents were extremely happy with the place. From our perspective it was extremely successful and profitable. **John Sennema, Reid Heritage Homes***

Costs and financing

The developer estimates that the project cost about five per cent more than a comparable greenfield project because of the costs of decommissioning the brownfield site and extra time involved in gaining approvals. Further cost information is not available.

The project was financed through conventional bank financing. There was no government financial assistance.

Marketability and profitability

London Lane was a very successful and profitable project for the developer, Reid Heritage Homes. It was developed as a condominium project but ownership was initially retained by the developer and units rented under a rent-to-own program. This program allowed renters to use from 30 to 50 per cent of their rent as a down payment. The 105 units rented out within six months. A year after completion, renters were given the option to purchase their homes. More than half the renters converted to ownership, a high rate for this type of program. The semi-detached units were not part of this program and were sold directly.

The project was marketed using site signage, newspaper advertisements and a sales office. Site models were used to walk clients through the project, and Reid's maintained a strong company presence throughout rather than contracting out the sales work.

Obstacles

The site decommissioning was the major hurdle and it both delayed the project and added cost. The project could not proceed until a firm cost and timeline for decommissioning were established. However, environmental liability can never be fully removed and this remains a barrier to developing these types of sites. Although the previous owner paid for remediation, the delays added to the overall approvals period, which added costs for the developer.

Neighbours were generally very supportive of the project. Neighbourhood opposition was not an obstacle in this case.

The railway line next to the project was a minor obstacle, as there is a safety setback and noise attenuation requirements for residential development next to railway lines. Noise attenuation usually involves an acoustic barrier of wood or concrete, which can be expensive.

City support

Recognizing the difficulty of the site, the municipality allowed some increased density. In addition, the site was located within an existing Development Charge Reduction Zone, which offset the costs of decommissioning to some extent.

Lessons learned

In spite of the success of this project, the developer warns that the unknowns involved with contaminated sites—or even perceived contamination—are a hurdle to the successful redevelopment of brownfield sites. Despite the best efforts of site remediation companies, the environmental risk can never be fully eliminated and the developer is pleased that Ontario is introducing legislation to limit continuing liability of developers for these types of sites.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The level of amenities is good...we are ten minutes [drive] from downtown, everything is there. Resident

Affordability

London Lane is mostly a three-bedroom townhouse development, but the developer also offered a two-bedroom unit. Selling prices ranged from \$134,000

to \$146,500 and unit sizes from 111 m² (1,200 sq. ft.) to 121 m² (1,300 sq. ft.). Condo fees range from \$130–\$150 per month. The average price for new three-bedroom townhouses in Guelph in 2001 was \$162,900.¹

Unit selling prices (2001)

Two-bedroom, no garage	\$134,000
Three-bedroom, with garage	\$134,000–\$146,500

All residents surveyed consider their units good value because of the central location, good quality construction and character.

Design features, unit size, character, open space, etc.

All residents surveyed are happy with the size of their homes and feel that they fit their needs very well.

Although most residents feel that the single parking space is adequate, others would like more visitor parking and would prefer covered parking or a garage. Parking is a problem despite 70 visitor parking spaces and additional resident parking spaces for sale.

All residents said that they really like the feel of the project, some using terms like "cute," "cozy" and "well organized." The units satisfy most residents' concerns for privacy, although one noted that she feels her unit is so close to the opposite unit that she needs a curtain on the front door.

Overall, the developer seems to have found a reasonable balance between density, privacy and maintaining a sense of openness.

There are no impressive vistas from the site as the land is fairly flat. While not everyone is happy with the views because some windows face blank walls of other buildings, most views of the site were considered to be good because of the high quality landscaping. There were very positive comments about the amount of sunlight. One person even referred to the sun as "blaring" through the windows at times. The developer put fairly large windows in master bedrooms, which no doubt contributes to this sense of good light.

¹ CMHC, Ontario Market Analysis Centre

The neighbourhood and transportation

All residents interviewed said that the project's closeness to amenities was one of the major benefits of the location. The project is less than a 10-minute drive from downtown, but it seems to be beyond easy walking distance for most residents, especially seniors. There is a nearby park, which is popular with the neighbourhood and visitors alike. The neighbourhood is diverse, with both older, established buildings as well as some new construction. This was seen in a positive light by residents, who like the variety of the area of which they are the newest part.

The project has a number of retired people but those still working (three out of four surveyed) travel by car to work, compared to 86 per cent of workers in the Guelph CMA that travel to work by car.² Residents also generally travel by car for most shopping and recreation trips.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

*The developer consulted early on with the public by holding an informal public information meeting. Neighbourhood issues were tabled, recorded and acted upon. No appeals were received on any of the planning approvals. **Scott Hannah, Manager of Development Planning, City of Guelph.***

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The project is viewed as very successful from the municipality's perspective and neighbourhood concerns seem to have been addressed very effectively through a spirit of openness and a commitment to following-through on promises. Initial concerns focused on cleanup of the contaminated site, density and traffic impact. The developer consulted early on with the public by holding an informal public information meeting and the issues raised were acted on.

Planning objectives

The project meets the City of Guelph's Official Plan objectives for reuse of redundant industrial lands, residential infill and intensification and cleanup of contaminated sites.

The City's *Development Charges Bylaw* includes a reduction for the older, built-up areas. This is an attempt to encourage residential infill and redevelopment in older areas with full municipal services. This is consistent with infill policies in the official plan.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The site is considered well designed and presents an attractive streetscape along the two roads bordering the site. The developer also dedicated a small passive park to the City as part of the project.

Regulations and approvals

The municipality is open to and encourages infill and intensification projects.

The approvals process, however, was very complicated and required both official plan and zoning bylaw amendments. The City granted the developer a number of exceptions to zoning standards. The cluster, townhouse component of the project also required site-plan approval and condominium approval. The semi-detached lots were created by a plan of subdivision and then further subdivided by "part-lot control" exemption.

*A large part of the success of the project, in my mind, was the reputation of the developer. Reid's have done many projects in the city and they follow through on what they promise. **Scott Hannah***

LESSONS LEARNED

All participants interviewed regard London Lane as a successful development. The developer made a reasonable profit, the residents seem to enjoy almost all aspects of their new homes and the municipality achieved several important planning objectives.

It is interesting to note however, that in spite of a municipality that actively encourages infill projects, the approvals process was very cumbersome and may dissuade less-adventurous developers. The developer's reputation and attention to the issues raised by the neighbourhood meant that opposition to the project was minimal despite the fairly high density and traffic generated.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Alf Artinger, Reid's Heritage Homes
Phone: (519) 658-6656
E-mail: aarteringer@HeritageHomes.com

Municipality: R. Scott Hannah, Manager
of Development Planning, City of Guelph.
Phone: (519) 837-5616, ext. 2359
E-mail: shannah@city.guelph.on.ca

Architect: David Parrish
Landscape: David Parrish; Davan Landscaping



Figure 3: Site plan, London Lane (note the semi-detached units on the east side)

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ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

PARKSIDE MEWS

Ottawa, Ont.

Rideau Street/Cobourg Street

Developer

Domicile Developments Inc.

Date completed

1998

Site area

0.45 ha (1.1 acres)

Number, type, tenure of residential units

31 freehold townhouses, six condo apartments,
eight commercial units

Floor area

5,190 m² (55,849 sq. ft.) total, unit sizes from
107–146 m² (1,151–1,568 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

83 units per hectare (uph)

Landscaped open space

27 per cent: 1,200 m² (12,900 sq. ft.)
or 39 m² (420 sq. ft.) per unit

Maximum height

Three storeys

Number, type of parking spaces

31 private garage spaces at townhouses, nine
for commercial units, three for condo apartments

Non-residential units

Eight commercial units, 496 m² (5,340 sq. ft.)
gross floor area

Pre-development usage

Florist and 17 units in four, semi-occupied
residential buildings

Selling price

\$141,900 to \$177,900



Figure 1: Rideau Street retail frontage, left, with townhouses in background

Parkside Mews is a residential infill project of 31 freehold townhouse units, six condo apartments and eight small commercial units with residential units behind them. The commercial units are specifically designed for specialty shopkeepers to own and live behind. The developer successfully addressed a number of planning goals, including heritage restoration, mixed-use, mixed housing types and revitalizing a main street. Consequently, the neighbourhood supported the project and residents enjoy the character of the development.



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Figure 2: Townhouses on an internal street at Parkside Mews

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Previously, a commercial florist occupied the site. There were rundown greenhouses and four residential buildings with 17 dwelling units, only 10 of which were occupied. The developer was able to retain the commercial building and retain and convert a heritage residence to six condominium apartments. The demolition of other buildings required approval under Ontario's *Rental Housing Protection Act*, which also makes conversion to condominiums difficult. As a result, the site was developed for freehold units but with an agreement on title for maintenance of a shared private road.

The project succeeds in maintaining and improving the pattern of commercial frontage at-grade along Rideau Street by creating small retail spaces designed for specialty businesses. It has made a very positive contribution to the revitalization of this main street.

The scale of the buildings and traditional detailing reflect the character of the primarily low-rise neighbourhood around it and is one of the primary reasons that residents enjoy the project's character. Brick facades, mullions and roof pitches similar to surrounding buildings tie in to existing buildings. These are classic, three-storey urban townhouses, ranging from 107 to 146 m² (1,151 to 1,568 sq. ft.). Each townhouse has a private garage and there are an additional 12 outside parking spaces, with nine dedicated to the commercial units and three to the condo apartments. Some existing trees on Cobourg Street were kept.

The neighbourhood's desire for retail frontage was addressed, despite the developer's initial skepticism that stores would be financially feasible. The developer built support through sensitive design, a good reputation, enthusiasm for the project and good outreach.

All the townhouses have small private gardens and there is a usable roof deck that was not counted in calculating open space. Therefore, the project had only 27 per cent at-grade open space, just short of the 30 per cent municipal zoning requirement. Domicile Developments needed a minor variance to meet the difference.

Most units have primary windows facing south for sunlight. Views are generally limited to those internal to the site, but the units facing Cobourg Street look across a neighbouring park.

Parkside Mews is close to shopping and other amenities and residents say they can get to shopping and local entertainment on foot, by bicycle or by public transit. They prefer their cars for grocery shopping outside the neighbourhood. The project is within a minute's walk of a major grocery store, local food stores, restaurants, a movie theatre and other amenities. Key urban centres, such as the Byward Market, are in walking distance. There is a bus stop on a major route very near the building.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*There was a willingness on the part of the City to help us deal with the "moving target" of the zoning performance standards. They also appreciated the range of planning principles that the project was fulfilling—heritage preservation; affordable accommodation; retail at-grade adding animation to a "worn-out" retail strip... **Jane Ironside, planning consultant for Domicile.***

Costs and financing

The total cost of the project was \$5,835,000, including the commercial and rental condo apartments. The costs for the townhouses are in the table below.

Townhouse development costs		
Feature	Total cost	Cost per unit
Land	\$ 403,899	\$13,029
Construction	\$2,723,474	\$87,854
Infrastructure	\$ 867,783	\$27,993
Total	\$3.99 million	\$128,896

A first mortgage from a bank financed the project. There was no government assistance.

Marketability

Sales were geared to singles and mature couples. The project is probably not well suited for families with children as there is limited open space for play. The project proved to be very successful and all units were sold within 12 months.

The project benefited from its prominent position on a busy street and many sales resulted from the site signage. The small number of units and unique design of the project also helped secure strong sales. Perhaps surprisingly, the small retail units were also popular and the novel approach of offering small residences behind shops has proved to be a successful model that has been copied in other parts of Ottawa.

Profitability

Despite good opening sales and a strong market, the project did not meet profit expectations. This is attributed to the project's complexity and the lengthy negotiations for municipal approvals.

Obstacles

Domicile originally wanted to develop a solely residential project. Developer John Doran felt that retail was unlikely to succeed and retail rents were very low at the time in the neighbourhood (\$4/sq. ft.). However, the local Sandy Hill neighbourhood wanted to see retail frontage continued along Rideau Street and a compromise solution featured small retail units fronting on Rideau with residential units behind.

Despite eventual neighbourhood support (see "Project success: Municipal planner's perspective" on page 4 for details) and an uncontaminated site, there were complications caused by municipal regulations and standards and provincial requirements.

While two buildings were retained, three others had to be demolished, which required approval under Ontario's *Rental Housing Protection Act*.

An initial requirement for a road widening on Rideau Street made little sense, given the location of the adjacent development, and the City eventually dropped the requirement when the developer proposed retaining the heritage building on site.

The developer wanted to replace parking that was part of the existing commercial building with residential development. A *cash-in-lieu of parking* application was required before the parking could be removed.

One of the zoning problems was that existing site zoning resulted from an application from a previous owner who wanted to build a high-rise apartment with ground-floor commercial—and that was the only use permitted. Domicile needed rezoning for the townhouses.

While the City ultimately supported the project, the extensive negotiations and requests for zoning adjustments added considerably to the cost and time of approvals and resulted in disappointing financial performance.



Figure 3: This heritage house was converted to six condo apartments

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Almost everything that one could possibly need is available within walking distance. Resident

Affordability

Parkside Mews has three unit styles and sizes ranging from 107 m² (1,151 sq. ft.) to 146 m² (1,568 sq. ft.). In 1997–1998 selling prices ranged from \$141,900 for the smallest, one-bedroom-and-den unit to \$177,900 for the largest, three-bedroom-and-den townhouse. Maintenance fees, through an agreement on title (not [condominium] strata fees) average about \$45 per unit per month. The average price for a resale freehold townhouse unit in Ottawa in 1998 was \$129,391.¹

¹ CMHC, Ottawa branch, Market Analysis

Townhouse prices— 1997–1998

One bedroom and den	\$141,900–\$143,900
Two bedroom and den	\$153,000–\$166,900
Three bedroom	\$163,900–\$177,900
Commercial units	\$ 78,000–\$ 90,000

All residents surveyed considered the unit good value for money, especially as the value of real estate has risen considerably since the purchase date.

Design features: Unit size, character, open space, etc.

The units satisfy most residents' concerns for space, with many expressing a preference for a smaller, more manageable home and simple lifestyle. Many residents are single and were looking for an affordable, compact unit.

Those surveyed are very positive about the character of the development and its heritage look. Many noted the careful attention to detail.

Although there is less open space than normally required in this zone, residents feel the usefulness of the open space is very good. The usable balconies and a roof deck are considered important assets.

Views either look over the project or adjacent streets, but residents were not unhappy with their views, which reflect good site layout, attention to unit orientation and large windows.

The residents are pleased with the amount of sunlight, noting that the developer has included large windows and many units have southern exposure.

The single parking space included with each unit is generally adequate for residents, but they complained about the lack of visitor parking and the difficulty of parking on the street.

Amenities and transportation

Local shopping, schools, library and entertainment are within a few minutes walk and residents cite the closeness of amenities as a major reason for their purchase. All residents surveyed own a car but seemed to use their cars infrequently, except for larger grocery shopping trips and in winter, not as a general rule. Most report making most of their local trips on foot. The project is close to Ottawa's numerous bike trails. Several of the residents surveyed use the bus system.

There is a stop on a major bus route conveniently located close to the project.

Three out of five (60 per cent) residents surveyed get to work mainly by using public transit, bicycling or walking, compared to 27 per cent for workers in the Ottawa-Hull CMA.²

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

*The project is sensitive to existing heritage buildings... as well as displaying sensitivity to the streetfront and surrounding residential density and character. The project has become a catalyst for redevelopment of the area and has enhanced a portion of Rideau Street that was marginal. **Patrick Legault, Planner, City of Ottawa***

The project is viewed as very successful from the municipality's perspective. The project managed to retain a number of heritage elements and existing trees on Cobourg Street. In addition, there is sensitivity to the streetfront and surrounding neighbourhood. The project was designed to be open and friendly with a walkway into the project allowing people to come and go on foot. A public sculpture also enhances visual interest for passersby.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The local Sandy Hill community wanted to see viable retail frontage retained and the developer made special efforts to develop retail units despite difficulty in making this part of the project work. In part, local support resulted from dislike of the previous owner's proposal for office towers. The Parkside Mews proposal was considered far more in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

Typical neighbourhood concerns related to adequate setbacks and landscaping and were voiced in the rezoning and site plan control processes. Further community comments were considered at the committee of adjustment. The Ottawa planning and engineering departments negotiated setbacks for snow clearing and garbage pickup.

The proposal was seen as innovative for the City and there was initial concern about the viability of the small retail units. The model of shop owners living above commercial units was largely untested in Ottawa at the time.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

PORTLAND PARK VILLAGE

Toronto, Ont.

Front Street West and Portland Street

Developer

Cityscape Development Corporation

Date completed

March, 2001

Site area

Approximately 0.8 ha (2 acres)

Number, type of residential units

193 units 74 stacked townhouses,

119 condominium apartments

Unit sizes

42–186 m² (450–2,000 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

241 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

30 per cent, common areas and private yards

Height

Four-storey townhouses,

nine-storey apartment building

Parking

164 underground parking spaces

for condominium, garages for townhouses

Non-residential units

364 m² (3,920 sq. ft.) commercial space

on ground floor facing Front Street

Pre-development usage

City-owned parking lot

Selling price

\$89,000 to \$400,000, average \$250,000



Figure 1: Portland Park Village includes townhouses and a large apartment condominium.

Portland Park Village is a residential infill project in downtown Toronto, just outside the current Waterfront revitalization area. A combination of stacked townhouses and a large apartment condominium, Portland Park adds 193 housing units to a site previously used as a parking lot. While the project is only blocks from the SkyDome and a host of downtown amenities, the development creates relief from the bustle of urban living with an attractive courtyard, patios for the townhouses and balconies and terraces in the condominium.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: The nine-storey condominium with retail space at grade-level facing Front Street.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Located in the heart of downtown Toronto, Cityscape's development on Front Street is part of a more general move towards reinvestment in the Front and Spadina neighbourhood. The City is trying to introduce new residential units to create a more mixed-use area in this previously industrial and commercial zone by encouraging redevelopment and infill projects.

Previously a City-owned parking lot, the land that Portland Park Village now occupies was slated for redevelopment for years, being traded between a number of development companies on conditional contracts. None of the development proposals were deemed appropriate by the City until Cityscape Development Corporation made the bid for a high density apartment building mixed with medium-density, stacked townhouses.

The townhouse component was important to the developer because it was an attractive feature for both purchasers and lenders. The courtyard and well-landscaped areas created the effect of a lower-density community that the City felt fit well into the urban fabric.

The project faced little opposition from the City of Toronto or the neighbourhood, as there was little residential development at that time in the area. Aside from remediation of site contamination, the project was able to move ahead with few obstacles.

Although located in a developing part of the city, Portland Park Village offers the excitement of downtown living and the convenience of a pedestrian lifestyle.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

The north sides of buildings are typically viewed as being dark; however, in this case the north side overlooks a low-rise townhouse development, which is visually appealing, with landscaped roof terraces. The townhouses are low-rise to help allow the maximum amount of light onto the north side of the building. **David Jackson, partner, Cityscape Development Corporation**

Costs and financing

The project cost approximately \$35 million and was financed through MCAP Financial and Royal Bank. The site was bought directly from the City of Toronto under a conditional development contract.

The developer had to wrestle with the extra cost of sound separation in the townhouses, because they are stacked one above the other. Accessibility problems around the tight, two-acre site created some additional costs during construction. The predevelopment remediation of contamination from a nearby scrapyard cost nearly \$100,000.

Marketability and profitability

The developer made the townhouses a catalyst for marketing because they were the development's most attractive feature. As such, considerable time was put into the design of the townhouses in order to find buyers for them as quickly as possible.

The marketing strategy was to have the townhouses occupied first to form a community around the larger condominium apartment building. This would make the condo apartment units more attractive to buyers. This tactic met with reasonable success and resulted in the entire development selling out within three years. Unfortunately, Cityscape thought that the phased development would create higher demand for the apartment units and boost apartment sale prices, but the market was not as rewarding as anticipated and profits were moderate.

The commercial units on the ground floor facing Front Street have been extremely difficult to lease. The last of the units has just recently been leased, a process that has taken three years. The difficulty leasing retail space is attributed to the fact that the area's resident

population is not yet large enough to support small businesses. Front Street is not a contiguous retail corridor, which also deters pedestrian shoppers. While traffic along Front Street is high, the commercial ventures will need more residents and more commercial neighbours to increase their feasibility.

Obstacles

Site contamination was the primary obstacle faced by the developer. Leaching of contaminants occurred from a neighbouring scrap yard, which had to be cleaned up and remediated. In addition, a contaminant-retaining wall with a membrane had to be installed to protect the site from further soil pollution. Remediation cost less than \$100,000.

Over the years, several proposals had been made to the City and rejected because the density was too high for the location. Cityscape struggled with this issue but finally arrived at the apartment-townhouse combination, which allows a fairly high density but creates a medium-density feel through the juxtaposition of different scales.

When development began, the neighbourhood was mostly commercial and industrial and lacked a real residential core. As such, there were no formal public consultations about Portland Park and there were few complaints or concerns from the public.



Figure 3: The Portland Park townhouses and courtyard area

Lessons learned

The developer was happy with the decision to reduce density by building townhouses instead of additional multi-storey apartment buildings. This decision was an important factor in gaining the City's approval for the development. The townhouses sold very quickly and helped with apartment sales. Townhouses are not common in this urban setting and were a very attractive aspect of the development.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The location is the best thing about the place. Overall we like it, especially the architecture, the simplicity of design, and that it's not all glass like the rest of Toronto. We also like the fact that it's smaller, with only nine storeys. **Apartment Resident**

Affordability

Portland Park Village consists of a nine-storey apartment building and four, stacked townhouse blocks. The 119 condominium apartments and 74 townhouses vary in size from 42 to 186 m² (450 to 2,000 sq. ft.) and average 102 m² (1,100 sq. ft.). The larger condominiums are desirable and combined with the prime downtown-core location, made pre-development selling prices very attractive to purchasers. Prices ranged from \$89,000 to \$400,000, with an average of \$250,000. All of the residents thought they were getting a good deal. Even those paying higher prices felt they were getting a good deal, considering the size and location.

Condominium maintenance-strata fees have risen steadily over the past three years. Townhouse owners, feeling that they shouldn't be paying for things like elevator maintenance, contested the decision to make apartment and townhouse fees the same. However, the fees are still reasonable and reflect the needs of the development. Parking spaces are available at additional cost. Residents were disappointed with the parking arrangements, as the ground floor of the apartment building is public pay-and-display parking, which limits the number of spaces for residents, and some townhouse parking spaces are not next to their units.

Design features

The most positive response to questions about home satisfaction was the size of the units. Many of the townhouse and apartment units have large patios or terraces, some as large as 28 m² (300 sq. ft.). Bay windows and sliding doors open up some of the units and customizing by residents has created homes with individuality.

The townhouse owners were more satisfied with the character and esthetics than the apartment owners, most likely because of the differences in architectural detailing. The townhouses are all similar, but have unique design arrangements and features. One apartment resident liked the fact that the project was generally simple in architecture and design but was disappointed with the commercial units on the ground floor, some of which were only recently leased after three years of vacancy.

As a medium- to high-density project, the landscaping was minimal, yet a pleasant courtyard area was created between the townhouses and the apartment. A neighbourhood park across the street from the development satisfies residents who need open space for pets, recreational activities, or just some fresh air.

Neighbourhood and transportation

Portland Park Village is located downtown, about a 20-minute walk from Yonge Street, the central shopping and entertainment district in Toronto. It is even closer to the city's financial district. It is also a 10-minute walk from the shores of Lake Ontario where there are bike trails and waterfront park areas.

The residents surveyed were extremely happy with their neighbourhood, describing it as safe, clean, young, modern and even quaint for an urban community. Portland Park Village is near the King-Spadina district and is consequently portrayed as trendy.

There is no shortage of entertainment, as bars, restaurants, clubs and theatres line the streets of the neighbourhood. The small park across the street is well used and larger parks in the area are easily accessible. Of the five residents surveyed, only one of the three who works drives to work. This compares to 26 per cent of workers in the Toronto CMA who walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.¹

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The development fits reasonably well within the built context of the existing area and rebuilds a missing piece of the city fabric. The development of a residential building in this location has served to provide 24-hour life to the area and will better utilize community facilities already existing within the area.

Angus Cranston, acting manager, waterfront section, south district community planning, City of Toronto

The Portland Park Village project came about just before the City adopted the 2002 Toronto Plan (Official Plan). The Plan outlines many new planning objectives and development guidelines for the City and sets the tone for the vision of the city's future. Though Portland Park Village was completed before the Plan was published, planners still had an idea of their objectives for the King-Spadina neighbourhood and consequently encouraged the developer to aim for a certain type of project.

City planners wanted to bring residential development to the neighbourhood and the higher density Portland Park Village was in keeping with the urban lifestyle and the downtown landscape.



Figure 4: Some of the townhouses face onto Victoria Square Park across Niagara Street.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The King-Spadina neighbourhood was mostly a commercial and industrial district when development for Portland Park Village started. City planner Angus Cranston estimates that less than 20 per cent of the land in the neighbourhood was residential at the time.

As a result, there were few comments supporting or opposing the development application and site plan. There were no formal public consultations and no registered statements were received from neighbourhood residents. Cityscape independently spoke to some of the neighbours to explain the plans and ask for opinions, but this resulted in little input. Therefore, the developer was only required to make adjustments based on City recommendations.

Planning objectives

Before 2002, when the Toronto Plan was released, there was an interest among City planners in transforming the King-Spadina neighbourhood into a more livable, integrated, vibrant district, which would require a larger residential population.

Portland Park Village was in keeping with what would become the City's neighbourhood plan for King-Spadina. A few of the major objectives of the King-Spadina Secondary Plan within the 2002 Toronto Plan are:

- New investment is to be attracted to the area.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

- The area will provide for a mixture of compatible land uses with the flexibility to evolve as the neighbourhood matures.
- Commercial activity, including the retail service industry, which supports the changing demands of the area will be provided for, to ensure the necessary services for the new residents and businesses of the area.

Portland Park Village was part of this new investment and supplied a number of residents to the area to use the available commercial, retail and public services.

The townhouse portion of the development is also in keeping with the Plan, which states: “New buildings adjacent to parks or open spaces will be located and organized to define and face into the parks or open spaces, to animate the edges, and to increase surveillance opportunities.” The townhouses on Niagara Street face across to Victoria Square Park and are a friendly face at pedestrian level and an opportunity for residents to keep an informal “eye on the park.”

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The development is part of the renewal and transformation of the neighbourhood so Portland Park Village will become more and more integrated with the community with each passing year. Many redevelopment projects have followed Portland Park, creating new residential and commercial space from under-used buildings. Mr. Cranston notes that the project is of a much higher density than the surrounding industrial buildings, but feels it fits well into the urban fabric.

Underground parking removes vehicles from front yards, increases pedestrian safety and makes room for other features that add visual appeal. This is important in an urban neighbourhood that merges residential and commercial activity because it creates a more livable streetscape and friendlier public face.

Regulations and approvals

The zoning and development process was quite straightforward. The zoning for the neighbourhood was altered before the development to allow for residential projects and an endorsement to redevelop underutilized sites for residential or commercial purposes was already in place.

The Committee of Adjustment had to approve some minor exceptions to the zoning guidelines, but these were more a formality than an examination.

LESSONS LEARNED

Portland Park Village was developed on a site that had been the topic of much debate and interest over several years. The development application that was finally approved by the City was the one that fit the objectives the planners had established for the community.

Now that the new Toronto Plan has been completed, developers have a much clearer idea of what developments are envisioned and can tailor their proposals to contribute to the proposed goals. Having a clear plan not only helps the City focus on what it is trying to achieve but also helps developers propose innovative and high-quality products within the defined context.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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Web: www.toronto.ca

Architects: townhouses: Mike Spazzani Architects; condominium: Reich and Petch
Landscape architect: EDA Collaborative

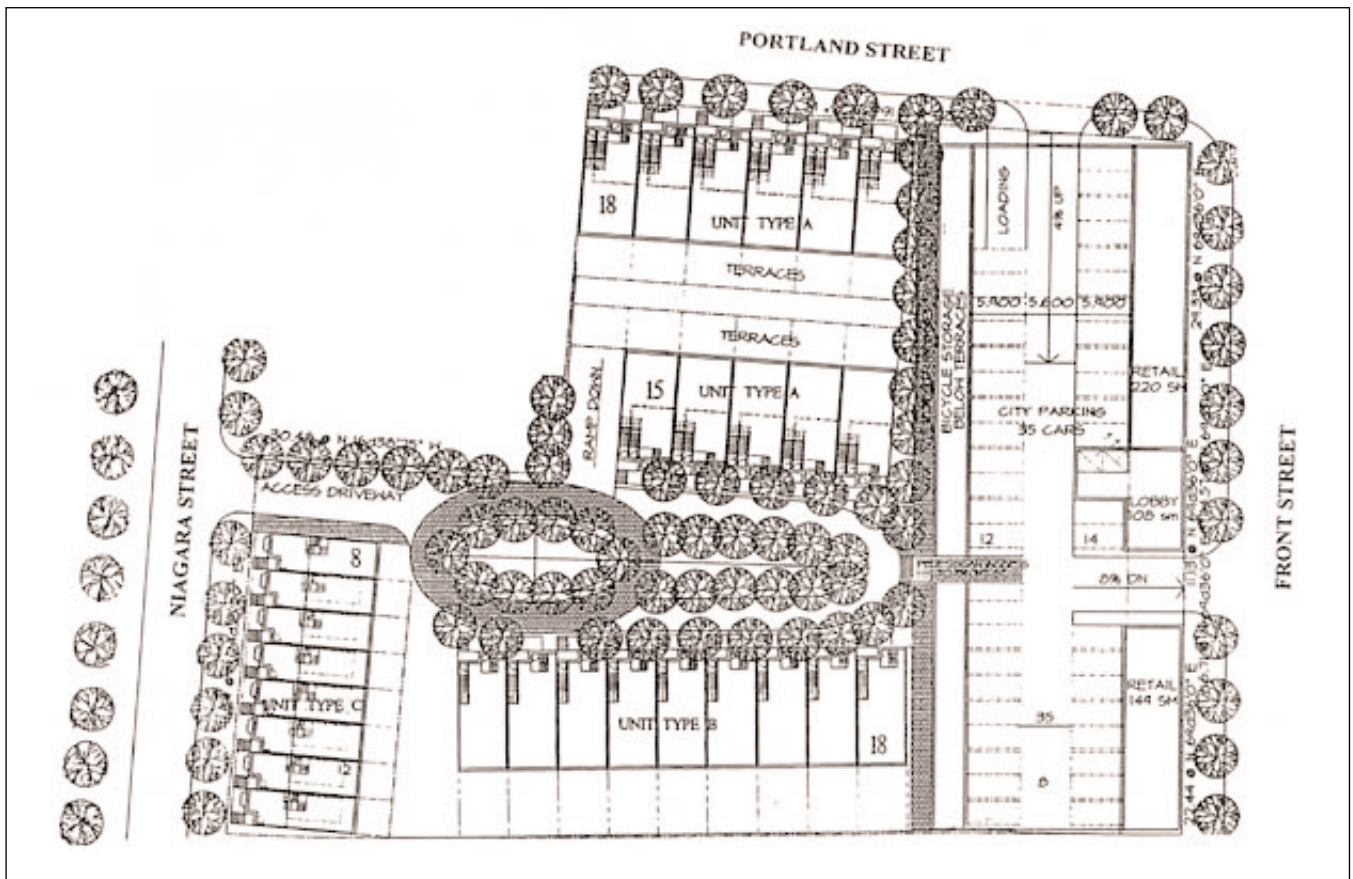


Figure 5: Site plan for Portland Park Village showing, left, the four townhouse complexes, and right, the condominium apartment building

R

ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

SALSBURY HEIGHTS

Vancouver, B.C.

1803-1823 Napier and 1086-1098 Salsbury

Developer

VHL Group Inc.

Date completed

2001

Site area

0.19 ha (0.5 acres)

Number and type of residential units

Six apartments, two single-detached houses, eight new townhouses

Floor area

77 to 181 m² (825 to 1,948 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

84 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

60 per cent hard and soft landscaping (small yards, balconies, patios)

Height

35 ft.

Parking

17 underground spaces

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Heritage house containing a private hospital

Selling price

\$205,000 to \$340,000



Figure 1: Salsbury Heights includes a restored heritage house, centre, containing apartments and single-detached infill housing, at left.

Salsbury Heights is a heritage revitalization and infill project that includes six apartments in an existing, municipally designated heritage house, two new single-detached infill houses and eight new infill townhouses, four of which front onto a lane. The project was approved by the City of Vancouver through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement that allowed the developer additional density in return for saving the heritage building and features. Objections from neighbours caused time delays, and the exacting, heritage retention and restoration work was more time-consuming and expensive than anticipated. However, the project has proved to be a valuable addition to the neighbourhood.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: Infill townhouses increased the density on the lot.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Built in 1908, the Queen Anne-style house is located in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood, an area where the city's wealthy built mansions on corner lots at the turn of the century. Much later, the large house became the site of Glen Hospital, a seniors care centre. After closing in the mid-90s, the site sat vacant for four years before being purchased by the VHL Group, which was eager to redevelop the 90-year-old mansion.

City of Vancouver staff was keen to save the 687 m² (7,400 sq. ft.) heritage property and made concessions so the developer could achieve that goal. The surrounding neighbourhood has an RT-5 zoning designation—single-family and duplex housing—which, on the five-lot site allowed a maximum of ten units. To make the project worthwhile for the developer, 16 units were proposed within the existing heritage house and in new single-detached homes and townhouses. This considerable increase in site density was higher than usual for the community but was a compromise the City chose to save the heritage building.

The new buildings were designed with the original heritage home as a guide, creating a complementary esthetic. Seventeen underground parking spaces were incorporated in the site to accommodate the increased density and allow more landscaped open space on ground level for the residents.

The redevelopment is close to Commercial Drive, a thriving business area with restaurants, coffee shops, stores, a public library and many more amenities. An elementary and high school are within a ten-minute walk and two neighbourhood parks are within three blocks.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

The heritage process takes quite a bit longer than normal. I would have made more money tearing it down but we fell in love with the building. **Lucas Kai, VHL Group**

Costs and financing

The total cost of the project was \$4.34 million, including land, soft costs, marketing, financing, sales, etc. VHL Group owned the land outright and VanCity Credit Union financed construction.

The initial investment was fairly small, as it was a relatively small site, which had been vacant for several years. The higher costs came during redevelopment, most noticeably as a result of the heritage requirements, such as having to restore instead of rebuild a distinctive retaining wall and having to remake a mould to replicate the heritage blocks used to construct the wall. These unforeseen costs were partly responsible for the poor profitability of the project.

Marketability and profitability

The project was considered a success by the developer, but not financially. Unfortunately, the real estate market was in a lull and the majority of the units sold significantly below asking price. They have since substantially increased in value.

Marketing was conducted through two display suites, a marketing centre in the premises, realtors, newspapers and brochures.

Obstacles

The obstacles in the Salsbury Heights project were numerous and detrimental to the financial success of the redevelopment. The main barrier was the high degree of retention and restoration work required for heritage approval. All costs associated with the development are eligible for inclusion in an economic pro-forma, the bottom line of which can influence the amount of floor space that the City will consider. Some of these costs are difficult to predict in advance, however.

The actual process of redeveloping heritage properties usually takes longer than non-heritage projects and several delays had to be dealt with in order to move forward. A few of the residents in the surrounding

neighbourhood were very unhappy with the density of the proposed development and their opposition caused some time delays. Because of the extended timeline of heritage redevelopments and the delays, construction went into the rainy season, requiring expensive heating to dry the building.



Figure 3: The infill townhouses emulate the character and style of the heritage house, including the fine exterior detailing.

Lessons learned

The main lesson for the developer was the difficulty of moving through the heritage approval process, which can increase costs and delays. It seems the developer was not prepared for the strict and exacting nature of the process and therefore was unable to accurately predict a profitable timeline and development program. It is therefore advisable to be fully in tune with the heritage process before embarking on a project of such importance to the municipality.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

[The character is] unique. The heritage building was done nicely to bring it back to originality. It's different from the other apartments you see. Resident

Affordability

The 16 units in the Salsbury Heights project range from 77 to 181 m² (825 to 1,948 sq. ft.) with most around 111 m² (1,200 sq. ft.). The space is spread across two or three floors in most cases and gives the tenants an interesting layout with plenty of space for couples and singles. The average selling prices were \$335,000 for the infill single-detached houses, \$269,900 for the townhouses and \$235,250 for the apartments. The average selling price in Vancouver in 2001 was \$563,131 for new single-detached homes, \$364,775 for townhouse condominiums and \$315,689 for apartment condominiums.¹

One resident claims his unit is larger and more spacious than what is available in other areas of Vancouver for the price, plus Salsbury Heights is unique because of its heritage value. All of the residents surveyed felt they got good value for money in their purchase and mentioned space, location and increased land value favourably.

Design features

The original heritage home's facade was retained and restored, while the inside was completely redesigned to accommodate six units. The additional single-family homes and townhouses were modelled after the heritage house and include fine details that connect well with the original structure. All of the residents surveyed were thrilled with their place on a heritage site and those living in the new infill buildings felt the character fit very well with the heritage house and the surrounding neighbourhood.

The inclusion of large windows and skylights helps natural light penetrate the building. Units with angles favourable to direct sun have been given larger and more numerous windows, while those units with little direct natural light have skylights that brighten the second and third floors.

The site doesn't have a lot of shared, green, open space. Most residents have a small, private balcony, patio or yard. This is one of the compromises the residents have made in return for prime location and proximity to amenities. On the other hand, neighbourhood parks are very close by.

Neighbourhood and transportation

The Commercial Drive neighbourhood, where Salsbury Heights is located, is a thriving hot spot of culture and entertainment. Residents describe their neighbourhood as funky, eclectic, vibrant, multi-cultural and unique,

¹ CMHC, Market Analysis, B.C. and Yukon Regional Business Centre

while most residents surveyed also felt the social and economic diversity of their neighbours positively influenced their decision to move to the area.

Amenities such as restaurants, theatres, video stores, grocery stores and other businesses needed for daily and weekly needs are all available within a short walk. One resident felt she didn't really need to drive anywhere, except when work required her to do so. An elementary school, a high school, and daycare are all close by, as well as adult education facilities.

This proximity to Commercial Drive also has transportation advantages. Buses run frequently along Commercial and a 10–15 minute walk gets residents to Broadway where express buses and rapid transit stops are located. Those choosing to get some exercise by cycling (one resident cycles to work) are in luck, with a cross-city greenway a short cycle away. Of the five residents surveyed, two drive to work. This compares to 23 per cent of Vancouver CMA workers who walk, cycle or take public transit to work.²

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The City's goal is to offer incentives for Heritage preservation that compensate the developer for the additional costs involved in retaining and restoring a property. Calculations [of density] are made on the basis of residual land value (i.e., what you could get if you built a new building.) **Bob Adair, planner and facilitator, City of Vancouver Enquiry Centre**

The municipality was happy with the Salsbury Heights redevelopment and thought the project was generally very successful. The City permitted the developer to build with higher-than-usual density in exchange for preserving the heritage building. The City was willing to compromise on density to create a useful space out of the previously vacant heritage building.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

There was a fair amount of opposition and unease with the prospect of increased density. Some neighbours felt that the density bonus was not warranted because only the facade was being retained, not the interior of the building.

At the outset, the City sought resident response about the proposed redevelopment and more than 80 per cent of the response was negative. The developer noted that one individual in particular was reluctant to let the project go through and caused some time delays. The developer held a public open house to outline the details of the redevelopment and provide the information that the neighbours were looking for. After this, most people were supportive and happy to see the heritage building saved.

The surrounding neighbourhood is predominantly single-family homes, comprising a range of styles and sizes, ranging from ranch houses on small lots to mansions on multiple lots. The presence of large houses with considerable green space may have been a factor in the residents' disapproval, as they had been used to seeing the old house on a sizable estate with mature vegetation.

Planning objectives

The Salsbury Heights heritage home had a "Class A" listing and was a priority preservation for City staff and the Planning Department. As part of the project approval, the owner agreed to "designate" the building, which, under the City of Vancouver Heritage Bylaw, means no further alterations may be made without a Heritage Alteration Permit.

The zoning in the area is RT-5, which allows single-family and duplex housing. In Vancouver, strict development rights have been scaled back in favour of a more conditional approach that controls development using detailed design guidelines and rewards developers who provide additional amenities with increased density. The Zoning and Development Bylaw describes the broad objectives:

"The intent is to encourage the retention of existing residential structures and to encourage and maintain a family emphasis in the...district. Emphasis is placed on external design of all new buildings and additions being compatible with the historical character of the area and on being neighbourly in scale and placement."

These objectives were met by:

- retaining the heritage building facade
- adhering to the maximum, three-storey height of the additional buildings, and
- matching the exterior of the new buildings with the exterior of the heritage building in many respects.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census



Figure 4: The design of the townhouses, right, matches the pitched roof and front porch of the heritage home, left.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The City planner feels the Salsbury Heights development is perhaps a little too dense for the surrounding neighbourhood, although the townhouses and infill houses were designed and built to match the character of the heritage home and the houses along the street. Visually, the development does fit well into its surroundings, even though it represents a dramatic increase in density compared to the surrounding neighbourhood. As a compromise, it is probably the best scenario that could have emerged, given the preservation of the heritage building.

Regulations and approvals

The redevelopment was in compliance with the principals of the Zoning and Development Bylaw and received approval from the City of Vancouver Heritage Commission. The redevelopment was managed under the *Salsbury Heights Heritage Revitalization Agreement*, which was negotiated between VHL Group and the City.

LESSONS LEARNED

The City of Vancouver was in a situation where a heritage building was unused, unusable and falling into disrepair. The City's Heritage Plan seeks to keep heritage buildings in use yet preserved in their original state. In this case, the City was willing to interpret zoning and revitalization requirements flexibly to protect the heritage building. The City and the developer were extremely happy with the final product, despite poor returns for the developer due to a slack market. This is a sign that density bonusing is working to protect the city's heritage while providing economic and financial viability to developers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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Architect: Stuart Howard Architects

Landscape architect: Fred Louie

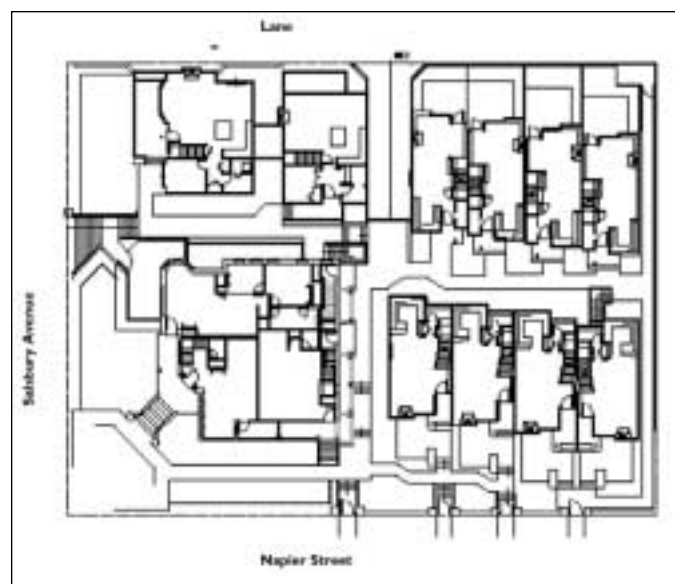


Figure 5: Site plan, adapted from a drawing provided by Stuart Howard Architects, shows the original heritage house, bottom left, two single-detached houses, top left, and eight townhouses, right.

R

ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

SEAGRAM LOFTS

Waterloo, Ont.

3 and 5 Father David Bauer Dr.

Developer

Barrel Works Group Ltd.
(Terra View Homes, with Kiwi Newton Construction)

Date completed

2001

Site area

1.09 ha (2.7 acres)

Number, type of residential units

103 loft-style condominium units;

40 in a seven-storey building,

63 in a 10-storey building.

Floor area

87 to 232 m² (935 to 2,500 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

95 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

465 m² (5,000 sq. ft.) rooftop garden on each building

Maximum height

10-storey building 33.5 m (110 ft.)

Parking

153 total: 100 enclosed at grade,

53 open. Average 1.5 per unit.

Non-residential units

Live-work designation for entire site. Five units zoned commercial. Games room, gym, meeting space.

Pre-development usage

Distillery warehouses used to age up to 17,000 barrels of whisky.

Selling price

Starting at \$150,000, average \$216,377



Figure 1: Seagram Lofts, the redevelopment of two, former whisky-barrel warehouses in downtown Waterloo

Seagram Lofts is adaptive reuse of a brownfield site, which created residential property in the heart of Waterloo's downtown core from two, heritage, whisky-barrel warehouses. As part of downtown Waterloo's revitalization, the project was the subject of much public interest. The project created 103 loft-style condominium units with high ceilings and large windows. Complementing these features are original brick walls and barrel-wood, evoking the old warehouse feel.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: The Seagram Distillers sign shows and commemorates the site's history.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Seagram Lofts is situated on a portion of the former Seagram Lands, a parcel of more than 4.5 ha (11 acres). The Lands were originally developed in 1857 as a distillery. In the mid-20th century, Seagram added two huge warehouses for whisky barrels. The warehouses were the last structures left standing after a devastating fire in 1993. The 150-year history of the site and its connection to the growth of Waterloo were key factors in the City's decision to save the heritage buildings.

City of Waterloo staff worked closely with the developers to give the site new life while preserving the site's heritage. They offered incentives, such as waiving development charges, free road and utility infrastructure and assistance with environmental concerns.

Seagram Lofts is on a site slightly larger than one hectare. The site was given a major overhaul. The land was cleared and the warehouses gutted, leaving only the original brick end-walls. The developer's goal was to preserve the heritage exterior while creating an interior that mixed modern styles with the feel of the original warehouses. This was achieved by re-milling wood from whisky barrels and using it for doors, stairs, window casings and baseboards.

The area around the site is largely retail and residential and the buildings are only one block from King Street, the central downtown business district. The project is just blocks from a large recreation centre, a major park and a trail network. The convenience of being located within 10-minute walk of shopping and amenities is a big draw for many Seagram Lofts residents, many of whom prefer to walk whenever possible.

There is both enclosed and open parking, which provides residents with an average of 1.5 spaces per unit.

A 465 m² (5,000 sq. ft.) rooftop garden on each building is accessible to all residents. Each garden offers prime views of the downtown and region.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

We built the parking garages from the original timbers. We had 750 cubic metres of barrel timber so we milled it. We made our own doors, stairs, window casings and baseboards.
Andrew Lambden, Barrel Works Group Ltd.

The Seagram Lofts project was a challenge that was welcomed by the developers. Transforming old warehouses of this scale into attractive residential units is a monumental task, especially when trying to save only portions of the existing structure. The developer made great efforts to reuse much of the original brick and barrel-wood salvaged during selective demolition. This allowed the developer to retain the look and feel of the warehouses while actually creating almost brand-new buildings. The loft approach was utilized to enhance the warehouse atmosphere while also providing residents with the option of using their units as live-work studios.

Costs and financing

The project, financed entirely by the Royal Bank, cost \$25 million. This was lower than it could have been due, in part, to measurable assistance and co-operation from the City of Waterloo. The site, purchased from the City, cost \$1.1 million. The City agreed to treat \$1 million of the purchase price as a vendor take-back mortgage at an interest rate of zero per cent. Under the terms of the vendor take-back mortgage, actual payment was deferred and the developer made periodic repayments to the City. The low purchase price, the vendor take-back mortgage, along with the absence of development charges and infrastructure costs, helped make the project feasible.

Development Costs	
Land and buildings	\$ 1.1 million
Building construction	\$ 21.6 million
Soft costs (e.g., taxes, DCCs, consultants)	\$ 2.3 million
Infrastructure	\$ 0 (paid by City of Waterloo)
Total	\$25 million

Marketability and profitability

The downtown location and relatively higher purchase prices attracted mostly young professionals, but also included first-time buyers and older couples. This demographic was targeted using media such as newspapers, signage, the Internet and general community outreach. Salespeople with experience in the downtown market and buyer incentives were also instrumental in attracting prospective owners to Seagram Lofts.

Both buildings were 95 per cent sold-out within three years, which is considered a marketing success for such a large project. Some delays and additional costs involved in retaining heritage components resulted in slightly lower profit than expected. However, the exposure the developer gained from this high-profile project opened some doors and resulted in a few awards, such as Best Project of the Year (2000) from the Waterloo Region Home Builders' Association.

Obstacles

The major challenge to the development came not only with reconstructing the warehouses and selling the new units, but also with the initial risk and financial investment involved in a project of such scale. In this case, the financial risk was immense.

Heritage redevelopments are often extremely time-consuming, with many unexpected situations that result in additional costs. Seagram Lofts was hampered with unexpected costs connected with saving the warehouse facades.

The developers were fortunate that there were no significant public objections, because they can often cost time and money. The neighbourhood was able to comment through open houses and community consultations and endorsed the plan.



Figure 3: The enclosed parking garages (in front) incorporate timbers from the old warehouses.

Municipal support

As mentioned, the City of Waterloo council was unanimously in favour of the project and redevelopment.

With a project such as Seagram Lofts, with high upfront costs and profitability that is more difficult to achieve, the support of the municipality is fundamental to success. The developer said: "Waterloo has invested in the downtown area. There is a lot of political will and staff support...and the City readily provided assistance that was absolutely necessary for this type of project."

Lessons learned

When embarking on a project of this size and stature, the political and economic environment has to be suitable to achieve success. Shared visions and goals between the developer and the municipality are also key elements in a necessary partnership. Unique projects like Seagram Lofts are financially risky, but also personally rewarding and reputation-building. Developers, therefore, need to have the dedication and interest to succeed.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

They've done a nice job. The buildings were brought back to life; units incorporate original brick and the old wooden racking from the whisky barrels. I picked [Seagram Lofts] because of the character and style.

Resident

Affordability

Seagram Lofts suites range in size from 87 m² (935 sq. ft.) to penthouses as large as 232 m² (2,500 sq. ft.) Residents say that the costs were not high, considering the prime downtown Waterloo location, accessibility to almost every need, esthetic appeal and general convenience. The units initially started at \$150,000 and averaged \$216,777, although resident-approved upgrades and design features were incorporated at additional cost.

All of the residents surveyed were happy to pay what they did for their units and were impressed with the options and flexibility available to personalize the space. The zoning of ground floor units as commercial-residential allows for even greater opportunities to create a vibrant area.

Design features

The resounding success of the Seagram Lofts redevelopment project is clearly evident in the residents' knowledge of and pride in their homes. All of the residents interviewed were aware of the history of the Seagram whisky distillery and could explain how the bricks and barrel wood were preserved and reused in the project. Residents enjoy the old warehouse look in the hallways and the additional sunlight the enormous south-facing windows allow.

The views are described as excellent by most of the residents, especially those from the penthouses and upper floors. The loft ceilings and large windows allow for a wider perspective, thus enhancing these already enjoyable vistas. For lower-level residents without prime vantage points, there is access to the rooftop gardens.



Figure 4: The huge windows offer grand views and allow maximum sunlight.

Neighbourhood and transportation

Aside from design and character, the prime reason residents are pleased with Seagram Lofts is convenience.

A large grocery store is across the street and restaurants and theatres are nearby. A huge park with pedestrian–cycling trails is a short stroll away. The transit system is convenient, with various routes available within blocks. Despite this, of the five residents interviewed, the three who are currently employed drive to work. In the Waterloo Regional Municipality nine per cent of workers walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.¹

With a relatively large amount of housing for a downtown neighbourhood, residents describe the surrounding streets as being busy day and night. The diversity of residents within the Seagram Lofts properties ranges from young, single professionals to retired couples, creating a dynamic mix.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The City of Waterloo purchased the entire Seagram's Lands, totalling 4.65 ha (11.5 acres), because Seagram had shut down its operations and been unsuccessful finding developers. The City and staff had a vested interest in preserving the barrel warehouses and requested development proposals that would fulfil such a demand. The opportunity to bring new residential and commercial units to Uptown Waterloo while holding onto the heritage of the site was of primary concern.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The Seagram Lands had been cleared, save for the two historic barrel warehouses, and the City of Waterloo was eager to bring some vitality to the area adjacent to the city centre. This sentiment seemed to be shared by the residents and neighbourhood. Pre-development community consultations were held without controversy and were very encouraging of the proposal.

Planning objectives

The City of Waterloo purchased the former Seagram property in 1997, but the zoning had already been changed to accommodate new development early in 1994 when Seagram had tried to sell the land to developers. This new zoning allowed for office–commercial or residential.

The City was enthusiastic about the project and was willing to compromise on some of the zoning bylaws to allow the Barrel Works Group to move forward. Some areas of leniency were density, height, required landscaped open space and the option for all units to have a live-work designation.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

For example, height restrictions were extended from 25 to 28.8 m (82 to 94.5 ft.) and landscaped open-space was reduced from 30 per cent to 27 per cent. These exemptions were not drastic but were enough to make the project feasible for the developer.

The vision for the Seagram Lands is to "create a mixed-use development which would compliment the existing Uptown by unifying the surrounding Waterloo Park, Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, and Waterloo Square."² The City enabled mixed use by introducing a live-work designation on the site. This is an increasingly popular way to assist individuals with private businesses and is becoming a trend in downtown cores throughout the country. The home professions permitted in the residential areas are: "office, artist studio, hairdresser, barber, beautician, [and] seamstress/tailor."

The City proposes a large public space, Millennium Square, on the Seagram Lands. This is another contribution the City intends to make to the vitality of the area.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The development is a unique preservation project and it was meant to stand out and be celebrated. Even so, the downtown surroundings complement the renovated Seagram buildings and their taller, larger block design. The remaining few acres on the Seagram site have yet to be developed but will more than likely be modelled along the same lines as the barrel warehouses and create a specific character for the area. The addition of the possible Millennium Square concept may bring a public centre to the new neighbourhood.

Regulations and approvals

The zoning had been changed before the City bought the Seagram Lands and some public consultation had taken place at that time. The developer needed several minor variances, which were granted with no controversy. Examples of the minor variances are: shorter setbacks, a smaller amenity area, building heights over 25 metres, less landscaped open space and an allowance for live-work units. The approvals were easily obtained because the bylaw relief was still in keeping with the Official Plan and appropriate for the development, no objections were made from neighbouring properties and the changes were considered minor.

LESSONS LEARNED

Seagram Lofts is a resounding success story in several respects. The partnership forged between the City of Waterloo and the Barrel Works Group was constructive. Both parties had something to gain and because they showed flexibility they were rewarded for their efforts. The restoration of the warehouses keeps some memory of the past alive while locating housing units near the city centre. By creating such a quality development in the initial phase of the larger site, the future developments have a high standard to meet and a unique character to build on.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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Web: www.city.waterloo.on.ca

Architect: L. Alan Grinham Architects Inc.

Landscape architect: Wendy Shearer Landscape Architect Ltd.

² City of Waterloo, *The Seagram Barrel Warehouses: A Call for Expressions of Interest for the Adaptive Re-use of the Historic Barrel Warehouses*

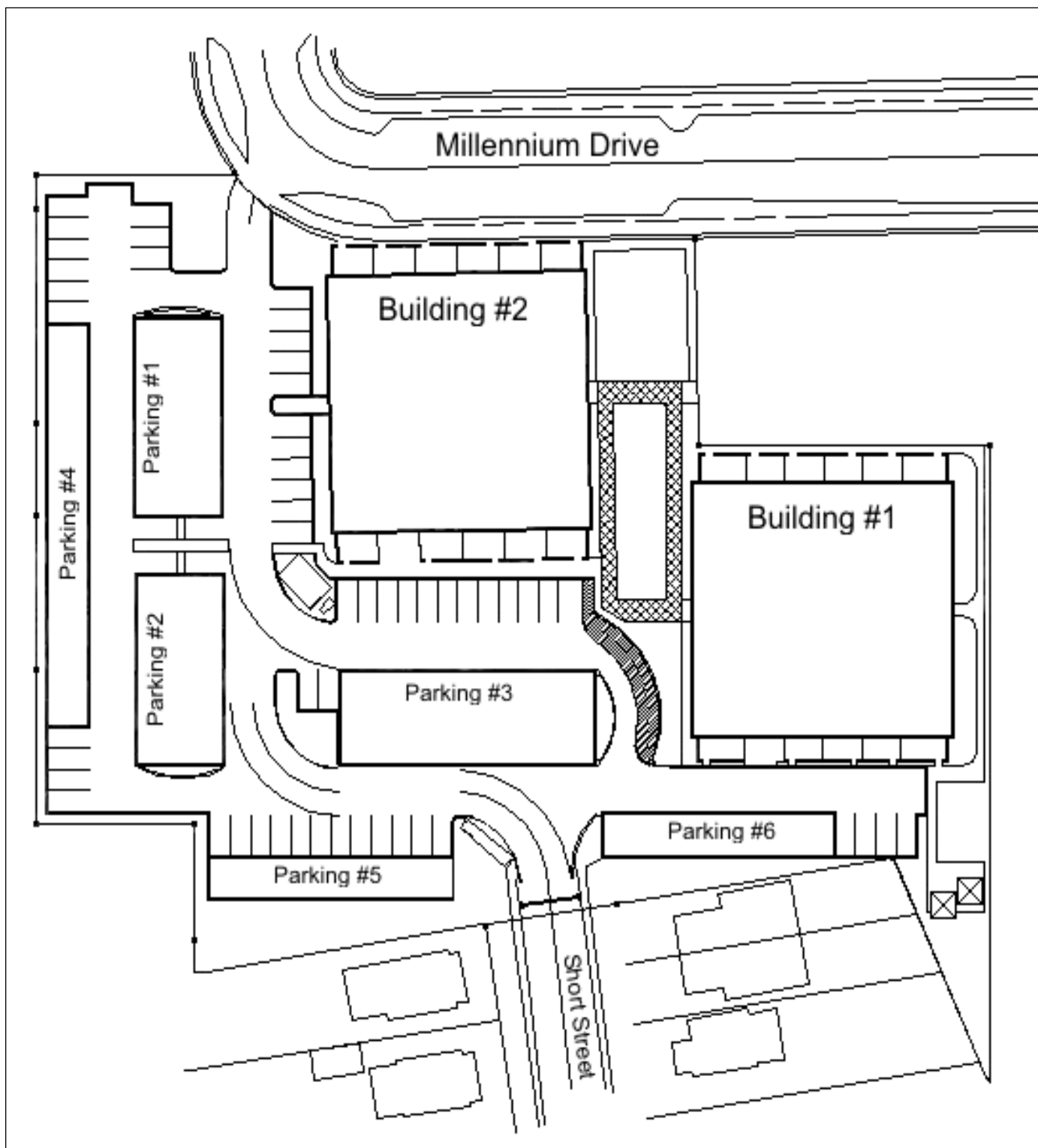


Figure 5: Site plan of Seagram Lofts including the two residential buildings, and the six parking garages (adapted from a drawing provided by L. Alan Grinham Architects)

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ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

STERLING PLACE

London, Ont.

330 Clarence St.

Developer

Spriet Investments Inc.

Date completed

August, 1999

Site area

400 m² (4,310 sq. ft.)

Number and type of residential units

32 rental apartments

Floor area

22–66 m² (240–710 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

800 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

None

Maximum height

5½ storeys

Parking

None; monthly-pay parking garages next door

Non-residential units

None

Pre-development usage

Vacant heritage commercial building

Rental price

\$495–\$860 a month



Figure 1: Sterling Place, a commercial building converted to modestly priced rental lofts in downtown London.

Sterling Place is a heritage, adaptive reuse project in downtown London, Ont. It transformed an old vacant shoe factory and warehouse, built in 1901, into high-density rental housing with studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. The 32 units range from 22 to 66 m² (240 to 710 sq. ft.) Every apartment has vaulted ceilings and exposed ventilation ducts, which recreate the warehouse feel of the building's past. The developer received financial assistance from the City of London through restoration grant and loan programs, which helped revitalize the deteriorating heritage building and add new housing to London's core district.



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Figure 2: The restored front entrance to Sterling Place.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Sterling Place is a 5½-storey building in downtown London, built in 1901. The red-brick building had been used as a shoe factory and warehouse for Sterling Brothers Boot and Shoe Company and Siegel Shoe Stores Ltd. In recent years, the heritage commercial building was vacant and steadily deteriorating.

The City of London has been trying to attract more residential development to the downtown core to promote a rebirth of the core area as a residential and commercial centre. The City offers incentives through its Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Grant Program and Façade Restoration Loan Program, to encourage developers to invest in London’s central business district while preserving heritage structures. Spriet Associates, the developer for Sterling Place, took advantage of the City’s programs to change the Clarence Street building from a neglected warehouse into modestly priced rental apartments.

The developer completely gutted and rebuilt the interior of the building to conform to current residential building codes. In the process, they added new windows, vaulted ceilings, a new concrete stairwell, a new sprinkler system, and reused the original maple hardwood flooring.

The project is surrounded by commercial buildings and is one of the only residential buildings in the neighbourhood. The building’s 32 rental units are ideal for singles or couples who work downtown or who want to be close to entertainment and amenities in the core.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER’S PERSPECTIVE

*There is definitely a push for downtown living. The City has determined that we need downtown housing to revitalize the core area. All development for housing had historically been in the suburbs. **Nicole Spriet, Spriet Investments Inc.***

The developer was motivated to develop the project by the compensation granted by the City for redevelopment projects, the close fit with the Official Plan downtown strategy and the chance to revitalize a heritage building. The project also created work for the company’s construction and engineering divisions and this made the project more attractive for the company as a whole.

The developer successfully applied for a zoning bylaw amendment to allow ground-level residential units. This increased the maximum permitted density for the property to 800 uph from 350 uph.

There were few residential rental units in the downtown core, which helped make the project attractive to many prospective tenants. This, in addition to the property’s prime location, created a foundation for the marketability and subsequent success of the project.

Costs and financing

The total cost of Sterling Place was nearly \$2.1 million. The developer was assisted by an interest- free loan of \$30,000 from the London Façade Restoration Loan Program and a property tax rebate of \$103,760 over 10 years from the London Downtown Rehabilitation/ Restoration Grant Program.

Development Costs	
Land and buildings	\$9,375/unit
Building construction	\$44,700/unit
Soft costs (such as taxes, DCCs, consultants)	\$9,358.75/unit
Infrastructure	\$1,160/unit
Total per unit	\$55,235
Total	\$2,067,000

The project was financed through internal assets at first, and later, a mortgage. Most of the cost is attributed to the redevelopment of the interior of the building. The property has seen a dramatic increase in value as a result of the renovation.

Marketability and profitability

Many citizens of the city who were excited about living a more urban lifestyle were interested in this development, as it is located in the centre of the London core with access to amenities. Though a sizeable city at 335,000 in 2001,¹ there are few residential opportunities in downtown London, so location was the most important factor in attracting tenants. The fact that the project contained smaller units at reasonable rents drew interest from young singles and couples and a number of university students.

The developer was fortunate to have had a considerable amount of free publicity in local newspapers and magazines. The unique features of the project, such as the loft-style vaulted ceilings, the hardwood flooring and exposed ductwork, were advertised as features uncommon within the London area. As such, the 32 units were occupied after just one month on the market. Although more expensive than originally anticipated, the success of the project was never in doubt and the developer is happy with the final product.

Obstacles

The most difficult aspect of the project was the selective demolition of the warehouse interior and the residential retrofit. With the conversion from commercial to residential, many new building code standards had to be met, such as installing a fire sprinkler system, a solid concrete stairwell, sound and thermal insulation and ventilation equipment.

These building code conditions were not fully anticipated, which caused a few problems and resulted in some unforeseen costs. Asbestos removal was a minor issue and cost \$3,500 for Ontario Ministry of Labour inspection and removal.

Municipal support

The City of London was very supportive of this project as it conformed to the Official Plan guidelines for increasing downtown residential space and preserving heritage buildings.

In addition to the financial assistance already mentioned, the City allowed a substantial increase in density. With a previous zoning maximum of 350 uph, Sterling Place required a zoning bylaw amendment to increase the density to 800 uph. Along with additional density, the City allowed residential units on the ground floor, usually reserved for commercial enterprises in this area.

Lessons learned

The developer advises others to make sure all approvals for building permits and building codes are pre-screened with City staff as part of the process to determine the feasibility of the project. The developer explains: "Many building code requirements can greatly change the cost of the construction and the concept."

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

We like the character of the building immensely; the fact that it's a heritage building that they basically modernized. It has that older feel, but it's a good blend of new and old. It's the reason we stay here. Resident

Affordability

The Clarence Street building consists of 32 rental apartments, mostly one and two bedrooms. Sizes range from 22 to 66 m² (240 to 710 sq. ft.). Rents average \$495 for studios, \$609 for one-bedroom and \$860 for two-bedroom apartments. These prices are all-inclusive except for parking, which costs extra. Average rents for the City of London range from \$474 for studios to \$934 for three-bedroom units.²

Although rents are in fact roughly average for London, most residents thought the rents were slightly higher than other similar units around the city. With that said, many felt their money was well-spent considering the convenience of the location.

Design features

In converting the vacant commercial building the developer respected the building's historical significance. The façade was fully restored, the interior was repaired and brought up to current building standards and the building was given a heritage designation. The most common statement from the residents was: "The high ceilings are great!" One resident living in a smaller unit found the vaulted ceilings make a big difference in making the place seem larger.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

² CMHC, National Market Analysis

Along with the higher ceilings, the windows are also quite tall, allowing more sunlight to enter and a more open atmosphere in each apartment. The downtown location and the fact the building is a rental property have made it a very attractive residence for young couples and students. Many of the younger tenants feel lucky to be living in a convenient and modernized heritage building.



Figure 3: The original red bricks from the turn of the 20th century were cleaned and repaired with the help of a London Façade Restoration Loan.

The loft feel, combined with exposed piping near the ceiling adds a character evoking the building's former commercial life.

Neighbourhood and transportation

As a result of recent City-initiated development projects (a new market and arena) and progressive revitalization policies, London's downtown is gradually regaining some of the life it had lost as commercial activity moved to suburban malls from downtown. Located a block from the "main street" the project is quite convenient and has reasonable access to amenities. There are a variety of restaurants, pubs, movie theatres, coffee shops and retail stores in the immediate vicinity and many more options within a ten-minute walk.

Many of the tenants in the building do not own vehicles but still find it easy to get around. Of the five residents surveyed, the four who are employed walk to work. This compares to 12 per cent of workers in the London CMA who walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.³

A number of bus routes have stops within two blocks and cycling and walking are pleasant. Those owning vehicles were slightly inconvenienced because the

building doesn't have its own parking lot. One lot adjacent to the building and another across the street offer monthly parking and the building owners contribute a portion to make the costs reasonable.

Only four blocks away from Sterling Place there is an extensive cycling-walking trail along the banks of the Thames River, which winds its way through London. The river has large portions of parkland along its banks and is used extensively for recreation. Not far in the other direction, residents can enjoy Victoria Park, where the summer festival circuit makes a stop.

Other recreation options are a fitness gym and a community centre, both a five-minute walk away.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

*This project is an excellent example of the type of residential conversion redevelopment that the City's core area incentives program was designed to encourage. [The success of the project from the City's perspective resulted from] the introduction of 32 new residential units to the downtown core, rehabilitation of a heritage building and reuse of a vacant commercial building. **Tanya Mitchner, planner II, City of London***

Neighbourhood opposition or support

Located in the downtown core where residential uses are still rare, Sterling Place is somewhat isolated in relation to other residential buildings. The City held public consultations about the amendment to the zoning bylaw to increase residential density, but no responses were recorded. This was likely because there were few residents in the area who would be affected by the zoning change.

Planning objectives

Sterling Place is within the designated downtown area and thus falls under the guidelines and objectives for this district under the Official Plan. According to Tanya Mitchner, the project meets the following Official Plan objectives for the Downtown Area:

- Encourages growth in the resident population of the downtown through the renovation/ conversion of existing buildings;
- Preserves and retains a heritage building; and
- Uses land and buildings efficiently through the redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized buildings.

³ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

The financial incentives provided by the City supported these planning objectives.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project is on a prominent corner and occupies a valuable spot in the old downtown warehouse district. Before Spriet Investments Inc. bought the building in 1999, Sterling Place was designated a heritage building under the Ontario Heritage Act to ensure the retention of character along the Clarence Street and York Street corridors.

The fact that the building is now strictly residential has added a new dimension to the previously commercial neighbourhood that will likely be part of a more mixed community as London pushes for more downtown living.

Regulations and approvals

The only significant planning approval the developer required from the City was the density increase. At first, the situation was treated as a minor variance to increase the density from 350 uph to 525 uph, but once the developer applied to provide residential units on the ground floor, the density rose to 800 uph and a zoning bylaw amendment had to be submitted. This was approved by City Council on the basis that the property was not functionally part of the pedestrian-oriented shopping district and would not disrupt any ground-level commercial nature of the streetscape.

LESSONS LEARNED

The City was successful in this case in using financial incentives to attract a developer to convert a heritage property. London's Official Plan creates clear goals and objectives for the downtown area and allows the City to create programs to help it save heritage buildings. This has revived unused buildings and started to bring a new residential population to the core, adding new life and prosperity to what was a declining central business district. In turn, the developer has produced a successful, niche product for the city that offers modestly priced rental accommodation for residents attracted to a more urban lifestyle.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Nicole Spriet, Spriet Investments Inc.
Phone: (519) 672-4630
E-mail: nspriet@sprietinvestments.com
Web: www.spriet.on.ca

Municipality: John Fleming, manager of land use policy,
City of London
Phone: (519) 661-4980
Web: www.london.ca

Architect: Spriet Associates

Construction: David Tomlinson, ADT Construction



Figure 4: Aerial view of Sterling Place (330 Clarence St.). Source: City of London website.



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

THE CARLINGS AT ARBUTUS WALK

Vancouver, B.C.

2161 & 2181 West 12th Ave.

Developer

Concert Properties Ltd., David R. Podmore,
president and CEO

Date completed

The Carlings: 1997

Site area

The Carlings, 0.4 ha (1 acre); Arbutus Walk,
2.4 ha (6 acres)

Number, type of residential units

The Carlings, 100 condominium apartments; Arbutus
Walk, 654 units in six low- and mid-rise buildings

Floor area

The Carlings, 54–116 m² (584–1,248 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

Arbutus Walk, 271 units per hectare (uph)

Landscaped open space

Arbutus Walk, about 30 per cent

Height

The Carlings, four storeys; Arbutus Walk,
four to eight storeys

Parking

The Carlings, 158 underground; Arbutus Walk, 858

Non-residential units

The Carlings, none; Arbutus Walk, 994 m² (10,700 sq. ft.)
retail space and a City greenway

Pre-development usage

Brewery

Selling price

The Carlings, \$158,000 to \$346,000



Figure 1: The Carlings

The Carlings was the first of six projects to be finished within Concert's Arbutus Walk neighbourhood, which itself is part of the larger Arbutus Lands Industrial Area. The 2.4 ha (6 acre) site is in Vancouver's desirable Kitsilano neighbourhood, close to the downtown business core, UBC, local beaches, cafés and shopping. Built partly on the former industrial site of a Carling O'Keefe (later Molson) brewery, Arbutus Walk is now a vibrant residential neighbourhood. The Carlings consists of two, four-storey, multi-family buildings designed with an urban, brownstone look.



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Figure 2: Aerial view of Arbutus Walk

PROJECT OVERVIEW

With Arbutus Walk, Concert Properties took on a project with a long history. In 1989, the City of Vancouver started a process to rezone industrial lands for housing. Vancouver City Council adopted the Arbutus Neighbourhood Policy Plan in 1992, after an extensive public planning process.

The policy plan includes targets for land use, building massing, height and form, public amenity contributions by the developer, image and character and vehicle and pedestrian movement. Guided by the plan, the urban design of the projects has been well executed and this has given rise to a very livable, human-scale feel to the neighbourhood in spite of the high density of 271 uph.

The surrounding urban area is a mixed bag. Arbutus Walk is part of a larger industrial area to the east, which has also been rezoned. To the south and west are moderate density, one- and two-family dwelling neighbourhoods. It is perhaps not surprising that there was considerable opposition to the project's proposed density. The immediately adjacent land uses include a school, mixed office-retail-residential, a park and duplex housing.

The Carlings has only a small amount of semi-private open space. However, Arbutus Walk as a whole is well endowed with imaginatively designed public and semi-private spaces, including the greenway and playground area. Walking around the Arbutus Lands, it is often difficult to distinguish the semi-private from the public space and this gives a refreshing sense of integration between public and private.

As part of the redevelopment of the Arbutus Lands, the City closed West 11th Avenue and turned it into a public greenway, part of a larger program to develop

a system of greenways in the City. There is also a major public park next to the Arbutus Lands.

The developer, the City and various architects have together successfully created a varied urban form which has given the project immense visual interest and character. For example, the Carlings is a four-storey building with the top floor set back from the street to reflect the low-rise character of the neighbourhood. Also, rather than one monolithic entrance, the streetscape is punctuated with many individual doorways to the units through gateways and gardens, integrating the building with the street.

Heritage features echoing some of the surrounding neighbourhood characteristics were included in some of the buildings, such as brick and stone facades, mullioned windows and iron trellises and gates.

The project won three Silver Georgie (B.C.'s housing industry) awards and the 1998 UDI (Urban Design Institute) Award for Special Achievement for Contribution to Neighbourhood.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

We inherited zoning from the previous owners.

There were very detailed design guidelines and the neighbourhood was very involved and quite skeptical at first...the City was very supportive in allowing us the flexibility to adapt the designs and make the units work...once we had finished the first two buildings the local residents became very supportive because trust had been established and they could finally see the quality of the neighbourhood we were building.

Maurice Pez, vice-president of Development, Concert Properties Ltd.

Costs and financing

The Arbutus Lands project cost about \$160 million to develop and has been very successful for the developer. Conventional bank financing was used for the project. There was no government financial assistance.

Marketability and profitability

Marketing started in 1996 and units sold at an average rate of six a month. Later projects at Arbutus Walk sold 21 units a month as homebuyers recognized the added value of concrete buildings after Vancouver's "leaky condos" undermined consumer confidence in low-rise apartment buildings.

Concert targeted a range of buyers, including young families and first-time buyers, but the units have been sold mainly to young (20–40 years), single professionals and childless couples.

High-quality temporary fences around the construction site, site signage, the Internet, an on-site sales centre, knowledgeable staff and mailings were used to market the project.

Obstacles

The site was contaminated from former industrial activity but this did not pose a big obstacle, as the previous owner was required to pay for cleanup. Contaminated soil was removed at the same time underground parking and foundations were excavated. There was a long history of neighbourhood opposition to the project and Concert inherited a fair amount of animosity when it purchased the site. Planning for the area had been going on for several years. Local residents were very involved and had many concerns—and expectations—about traffic, density, height and the scale of change in a well-established neighbourhood.

Concert spent a great deal of time putting together high-quality plans for open space (especially the greenway) and worked closely with the neighbourhood association through an extensive public process to ensure that the interests of the local residents were properly addressed. While initially this took far longer than the developer had anticipated, it did result in a very livable neighbourhood and later approvals were more rapid as trust developed.

The planning for the Arbutus Industrial Area resulted in a Neighbourhood Policy Plan that contained fairly prescriptive guidelines about form, height and other elements. Residents wanted, for example, to see a European-style streetscape with front doors on the street. Because Concert had not been involved in the rezoning of the site, it had no input into the guidelines and it was a struggle to make them work. This was especially true of the high density of 2.2 FSR¹ with a height limitation of four storeys. It was difficult to accommodate this much building area within this height restriction. It took a year to position the buildings and design the units so every unit had adequate daylight penetration. The year spent in this challenging design work resulted in a very good product that buyers liked.

Once the first building was developed, local residents began to see the results of the promises and a level of trust built up that meant that subsequent proposals were readily approved.

There was also a challenge in the size of the site and the costs of holding so much undeveloped land over a long time to ride out market ups and downs. This was certainly a big risk and developers need to try to bring the product to market very quickly in these types of situations. The significant delays in the early stages of designing the site did cause a lot of concern for the developer, but fortunately the rapid approvals and sales of later projects made up for these early difficulties.

City support

The City was very supportive of the project and allowed the developer considerable flexibility in interpreting the design guidelines that were part of the zoning for the area. This was important because the density (2.2 FSR) with maximum height of four storeys meant that the units were difficult to design.

Lessons learned

The developer's advice to others in similar projects is to be involved in the rezoning process if at all possible. While consultants and the municipal officials may have a very good overall feel for neighbourhood quality and planning, only by digging into the details of the building design and floor plans can you truly know if the site layouts and restrictions are going to work.

In this case, it was an advantage for one developer to be responsible for the whole project because this meant that a level of trust could be established with local residents that made later approvals much simpler.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Nothing is missing. Kitsilano Beach is a 20-minute walk, Stanley Park is a 45-minute walk. Granville Market is a 30-minute walk. Shopping and restaurants are also very convenient. **Resident**

Affordability

The Carlings has a range of unit styles and sizes to fit a variety of budgets. Selling prices ranged from \$158,000 for the smallest, one-bedroom apartment

¹ FSR=Floor Space Ratio, a measure of density calculated by dividing the total area of the building on all floors by the area of the site. A three-storey building covering an entire site would, for instance, have an FSR of 3.

(54 m² [584 sq. ft.]) to \$346,000 for a three-bedroom, 116 m² (1,248 sq. ft.) unit. Condo fees are about \$200 per month for an 88 m² (944 sq. ft.) unit and \$340 for a 124 m² (1,330 sq. ft.) unit. The average price for a new condo apartment in Vancouver in 1997 was \$216,162.²

Unit selling price (1997)	
One bedroom	\$158,000 to \$199,000
One bedroom and den	\$186,000 to \$228,000
Two bedroom	\$209,000 to \$299,000
Three bedroom	\$330,000 to \$346,000

All residents surveyed consider their units good value for money considering prices in the surrounding neighbourhood and convenient location.

Design features

Residents are happy with the design of the units and feel the building's European-looking exterior is very attractive, blending well with the surroundings. The buildings are finished with brick and stone facades, mullioned windows, planters and decorative railings. The size of the units was considered generous, except for minor complaints about the amount of storage space.

Views are considered good from the 3rd and 4th storeys with residents able to see the mountains to the north. The amount of sunlight coming into the building is considered excellent for Vancouver's climate.

The amount of parking allocated to the units (in underground spaces) is considered adequate, although on-street parking is sometimes a problem for visitors.

The open space is considered well-designed and private space is well used. "Large usable deck space, good for entertaining or just relaxing in the sun," says one resident. There is a major public park next to the project that seems to be well used by residents.

The neighbourhood and transportation

Residents interviewed said that the project is very well located and there is access to all the amenities one could want. The shopping is very accessible (two-blocks walk to the Broadway Commercial Corridor) and includes a liquor store, four grocery stores, a plaza, theatres, schools, boutiques and restaurants.

The project is felt to blend well with the surrounding neighbourhood (both existing and new) and residents appreciate the modest height of the new neighbourhood, which along with a good demographic mix and safe, walkable streets, makes it feel very livable.

The project is half a block from a major bus route that includes a rapid bus route and a slower, frequent-stop trolley bus route.

Two out of five residents (40 per cent) surveyed take public transit, walk or bicycle to work. The other three drive. This compares to 23 per cent of Vancouver CMA workers who generally take public transit, walk or cycle to work.³

Four out of five residents walk, bus or cycle to grocery shopping; one, with children, walks, buses or cycles to the child's school or daycare; and four walk, bus or cycle to entertainment.

Most residents consider trips to be very pleasant, reflecting the overall quality of the surrounding neighbourhood. One complained, however, "traffic is rude and unpleasantly aggressive."

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The Arbutus Industrial Lands [project] was a significant component of an initiative of Vancouver City Council to reuse marginal industrial lands for housing. The former Molson's brewery site (previously owned by Carling's) is now a vibrant residential component of the Kitsilano area. Rob Whitlock, senior housing planner, City of Vancouver

Neighbourhood opposition or support

This project is viewed as very successful from the municipality's perspective. There was, however, fierce public opposition to the project in the early stages of planning, particularly because of the density and height of the project, which some considered to be too high for the area. This issue was most notable to the south, an area zoned for two-family dwellings.

A neighbourhood traffic-calming program was introduced in the area south of the site and it seems to have alleviated traffic-related concerns of some area residents.

² CMHC, B.C. and Yukon Market Analysis Centre

³ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Neighbours were given many opportunities to participate in the planning process and many took full advantage of this by getting involved in the design process.

*At one point, where there was no agreement between residents and the proponents, [City] staff convened a design charrette meeting with four or five leading architects. The resulting adjustments to the plan gained more support than previously experienced. The compromise utilized building heights of the existing brewery development. **Rob Whitlock***

Planning objectives

Residential intensification has been a City objective dating back to the mid-1980s. City Council has worked with the GVRD (Greater Vancouver Regional District) on many initiatives aimed at directing suburban growth and reducing reliance on private automobiles. For example, the City has supported suburban town centres, placed maximum limits on downtown parking provisions and extended the regional SkyTrain system. Redevelopment of a prime inner-city area is very consistent with objectives related to environment, access and affordability.

How does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project has been well integrated into the surrounding community by applying design guidelines that ensure appropriate scale, building setbacks and public open-space standards. A greenway was created and, combined with the closing of two streets, it has kept traffic to the main streets while creating a pleasant pedestrian access within and through the site.

Regulations and approvals

The development of a schematic plan for the Arbutus Industrial area occurred at the same time as completion of a local area plan for Kitsilano and the City's industrial lands review. A working group of residents and business owners had been established and met throughout the process. While the community was vocally involved and unsupportive of the final plan, the working group continued to meet and work harmoniously. The public hearing process was very much a standard approach, but the involvement of the community meant that the hearing focused on substantive issues about density and height and much less about process.

The City took two different approaches to rezoning the area. Smaller parcels were rezoned using a district schedule—a standard zoning approach—with development levies charged to the developer to pay for public benefits, while larger parcels underwent a comprehensive development (CD) zoning approach that allows complex, site-specific zoning and can include negotiated agreements for community amenity contributions as well as specific design guidelines.

The City approved a neighbourhood policy plan in 1992 intended to provide a broad framework to guide future rezoning in the area. While some flexibility was intended and built into this plan, there are a number of guidelines pertaining to urban form and character, setbacks, and so on.



Figure 3: Arbutus Walk from the air (solid outline) with the Carlings (dashed outlined) illustrating the greenway and adjacent neighbourhoods

LESSONS LEARNED

The Carlings specifically and the Arbutus Walk neighbourhood in general is an excellent example of a thoughtfully planned and designed neighbourhood that manages to squeeze very high density into a former industrial site while keeping building height low and blending in with the scale and features of the neighbourhood.

Despite early opposition to density and height, numerous creative public process events allowed a vocal neighbourhood to voice its concerns and see these concerns integrated into final designs. By all accounts, Arbutus Walk has enjoyed enormous success from all perspectives and allayed the fears of its critics.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Maurice Pez, Vice-President of Development
Concert Properties Ltd.

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E-mail: maurice@concertproperties.com

Web address: <http://www.concertproperties.com>

Municipality: Rob Whitlock, senior housing planner,
City of Vancouver

Phone: (604) 873-7432

E-mail: rob_whitlock@city.vancouver.bc.ca

Web address:

www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/guidelines/A005.pdf

Architect: David Thom, IBI Group

Landscape architect: Durante Kruek Ltd.

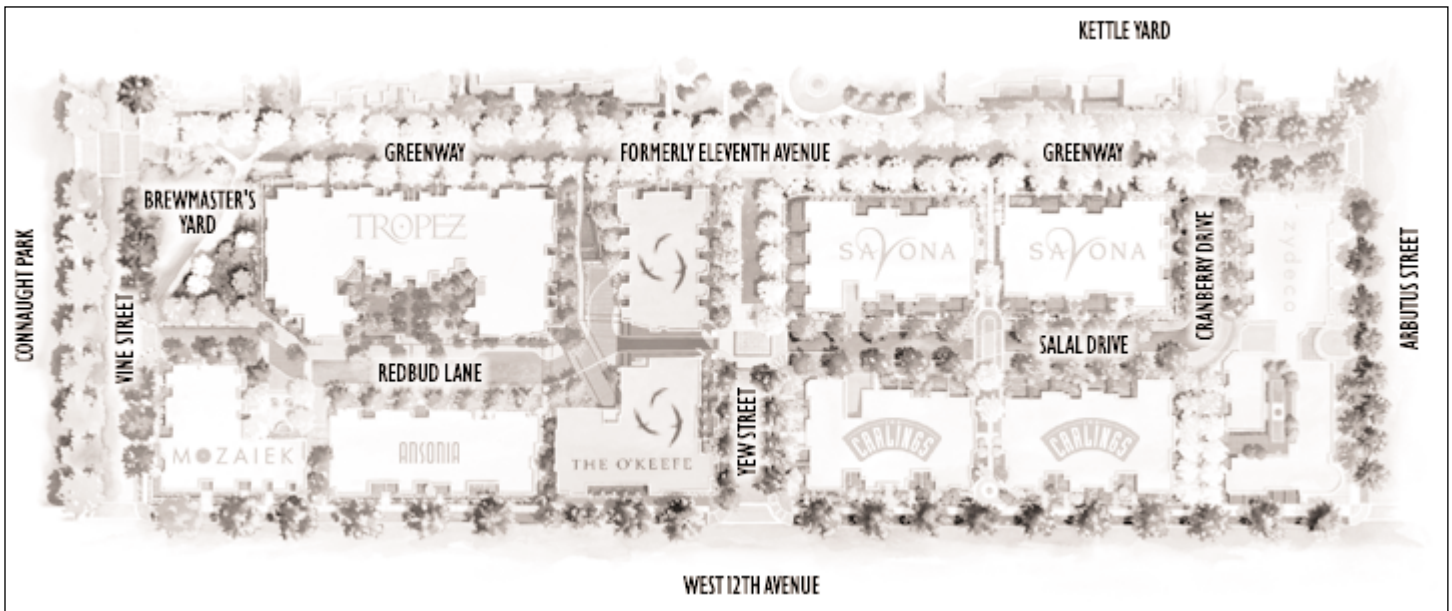


Figure 4: Site Plan



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

THE PRINCE EDWARD

Moncton, N.B.

100 West St.

Developer
Prince Edward Developments Ltd.

Date completed
July 2000

Site area
0.29 ha (.7 acres)

Number and type of residential units
18 rental apartments

Unit size
30–126 m² (311–1,359 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density
62 uph (units per hectare)

Site coverage
23 per cent

Landscaped open space
54 per cent (all common space)

Height
Three storeys—9.1 m (30 ft.)

Parking
24 surface spaces (one per unit, six for visitors)

Non-residential units
None

Pre-development usage
Unused school

Rental price
\$425–\$1,130 per month, average \$900



Figure 1: The Prince Edward, a redeveloped former school

Formerly the Prince Edward School, this 1920s landmark building has been transformed into 18, one- and two-bedroom rental apartments. The developer retained the original heritage features of the building, including many interior features like hardwood floors, exposed brick and 12-foot ceilings.



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Figure 2: The building has been restored to its original beauty.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Starting life as an eight-classroom school building with an auditorium and principal's office, the school became surplus to the district's school board requirements in 1980 and lay idle and neglected until 1996, when the province of New Brunswick decided the building was surplus to its needs as well. Developer Joe Tippett, who had developed a number of townhouses and condominiums in the area, purchased it from the province in 1997.

The Prince Edward is centrally located in Moncton's Old West End, one of the most desirable living areas within the city and only a five-minute walk to Moncton's downtown core.

Surrounded on three sides by residential uses and industrial uses to the north, the project's exterior facade was retained virtually unchanged, emphasizing and showing the site's historical value. The developer replicated the original doors and frames and replaced modern windows with wood windows similar to the originals. In addition, an effort was made to soften the landscape in order to make the front and side entrances more appealing.

The project has 1,580 m² (17,000 sq. ft.) of landscaped open space, making good use of the former school playground.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*It was unique in the local market, mainly due to maintaining wide hallways and the interior design of the individual suites. The concept was light, bright and open. **Joe Tippett, Prince Edward Developments Ltd.***

There was one precedent in the city for a project of this type. Another school conversion 10 years earlier had been reasonably successful. This, along with the fact that developer Joe Tippett's mother had taught in the school at the beginning of the Second World War, was enough to convince him that the project was worthwhile. He negotiated a price of \$78,000 for the building and land, which was ultimately accepted.

A key consideration for the developer was the Prince Edward's location relative to the surrounding neighbourhood, which is within walking distance of downtown. Also, the architectural features of the original building allowed for the creation of suites with a style unique to the area.

Costs and financing

Development Costs	
Building, land (+carrying costs)	\$109,773
Building construction	\$947, 832
Developer infrastructure costs	\$0
Soft costs, such as taxes, DCCs, consultants	\$292,395
Total	\$1,350,000

The project was financed with a loan insured by CMHC and private investment loans as equity. The developer approached Revenue Canada with an innovative concept. Second mortgages placed on the building were approved as acceptable investments for RRSP purposes. The investors then went to brokerage firms and set up self-administered mortgages, through their RRSPs, to the company. The investors were very happy with this arrangement and the return on their investment.

Marketability and profitability

The developer was pleased with the outcome of the project, although development costs were higher than anticipated. This was attributable to:

- the decision to install a boiler rather than electric baseboard heating, which would have been too expensive for the residents to operate;
- the decision to spend a little more on the quality of finishes, kitchen details, etc.; and
- unanticipated costs of working with an old building and trying to save heritage features.

The project was marketed using newspaper advertisements and a website. A number of newspaper articles also raised the profile of the project considerably.

Obstacles

The developer had hoped to buy the entire parcel of land for Prince Edward Lofts. The City wanted to split the parcel and buy the playground portion for a public park. The provincial government, which previously owned the property, agreed to split it into two parcels before selling it. The City bought the playground portion for \$1, and it is now a City of Moncton public park.

Local residents were very supportive of the project. Their main concern was that the building not be demolished and that it be maintained, as it had fallen into disrepair.

Municipal support

The City and District Planning Commission supported the project, which required a rezoning application. Murray Godfrey of the Moncton Planning Commission explains: "The property required rezoning from Park and Institutional Zone to Residential 3 Zone. The process went smoothly with no objections from the neighbourhood."

Lessons learned

The developer advises others not to be sidetracked or discouraged by the short-term disrepair of an existing building, but look forward 10 years and be satisfied that the envisioned finished product will stand the test of time and change.

He also advises others doing similar projects to add up to 25 per cent to the estimated construction budget to cover unanticipated costs.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

*It's a unique building, a special place to be. **Resident***

Affordability

The Prince Edward has a wide range of unit sizes, from 30 to 126 m² (311 to 1,359 sq. ft.). Monthly rent ranges from \$425 for the smallest apartment to \$1,130 for the largest. Rents average \$900. The average monthly rent in Moncton is \$553.¹

All residents surveyed agree that the units are good value for the price, especially when compared to other locations in Moncton for similar rent. One resident suggested that neighbourhood improvements have added value to this project.

Design features

The residents are very happy with the spacious and open layouts of the units, partly attributable to 12-foot high ceilings.

All residents surveyed praised the unique character of this converted school, with much of the original architecture and flooring retained.



Figure 3: The Prince Edward preserves the nearly floor-to-ceiling windows of the former school.

¹ CMHC, Market Analysis, Atlantic Business Centre

For some residents, the adjacent park and proximity to the downtown more than compensate for the lack of private open space. All surveyed expressed satisfaction with the common green space and gardens that border the project on several sides.

Overall, the residents surveyed were not dissatisfied with the view of the nearby park, industry, and streetscape and view did not seem to be a critical factor in choosing to rent these vintage units.

All were pleased with the amount of sunlight that penetrates through nearly floor-to-ceiling windows, and which varies with the unit orientation.

The single parking space included with each unit is generally adequate for residents. The developer originally planned to have 20 parking spots—one for each unit and two visitor spots. During construction another four spots were added to give the project six parking spots for visitors. There is also parking on the street for visitors.

Neighbourhood and transportation

Location was promoted as a significant attribute of this project. Local shopping and grocery stores, schools and restaurants are all within walking distance of the Prince Edward. Other nearby amenities mentioned by residents include a library, a beach and parks, in addition to the downtown core. Bike paths and bus stops are also conveniently located near the project. Despite this, four of five residents surveyed drive to frequent destinations, with the exception of restaurants.

Of the five residents surveyed, three of the four who work drive to work. This compares to 10 per cent of workers in the Moncton CMA who walk, bicycle or take public transit to work.²

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

"The project rescued an older, dilapidated former school property...and converted it into a newly renovated attractive building that is an asset to the neighbourhood, while helping to add affordable housing stock to the downtown area." Murray Godfrey, Moncton Planning Commission

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The local neighbourhood was supportive of the project and was interested in seeing this landmark building retained and rehabilitated. No objections were received from the public when the City circulated the rezoning notice. To date, there have been no complaints from neighbours.

Planning objectives

City planning staff strongly supported the project, as it helped implement the Municipal Plan strategy of encouraging redevelopment and infill in underutilized lands, as well as saving a building that has historical value to the neighbourhood. In addition, the Municipal Plan encourages the concept of maintaining a healthy downtown population as well as encouraging reasonably-priced housing to be expanded where possible.

The City bought the playground portion of the lot for park space because it was a popular open space area for local residents. The City wanted to retain some park space in the neighbourhood and this site was a good opportunity.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The developer extensively renovated the building and the grounds to make the project attractive and functional for its proposed new use.

It is a brick building in good structural condition that fits the architectural style of the neighbourhood and serves as an integral part of the community's past.

Regulations and approvals

The project required rezoning from Park and Institutional Zone to Residential 3 Zone. The process was relatively straightforward and took about four months. There was very little input and no objections from the public.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project is a good example of the adaptive reuse of a surplus institutional building. The creative financing, heritage preservation and attention to detail paid off for the developer, although costs were higher than anticipated.

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

FURTHER INFORMATION

Municipality: Chris Reddy, executive director,
Greater Moncton Planning District
Phone: (506) 853-3333

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Joe Tippett,
Prince Edward Developments Ltd.
Phone: (506) 853-0997
E-mail: jtippett@nbnet.nb.ca
Web: www.theprinceedward.ca

Architect: Pierre Gallant (concept only)

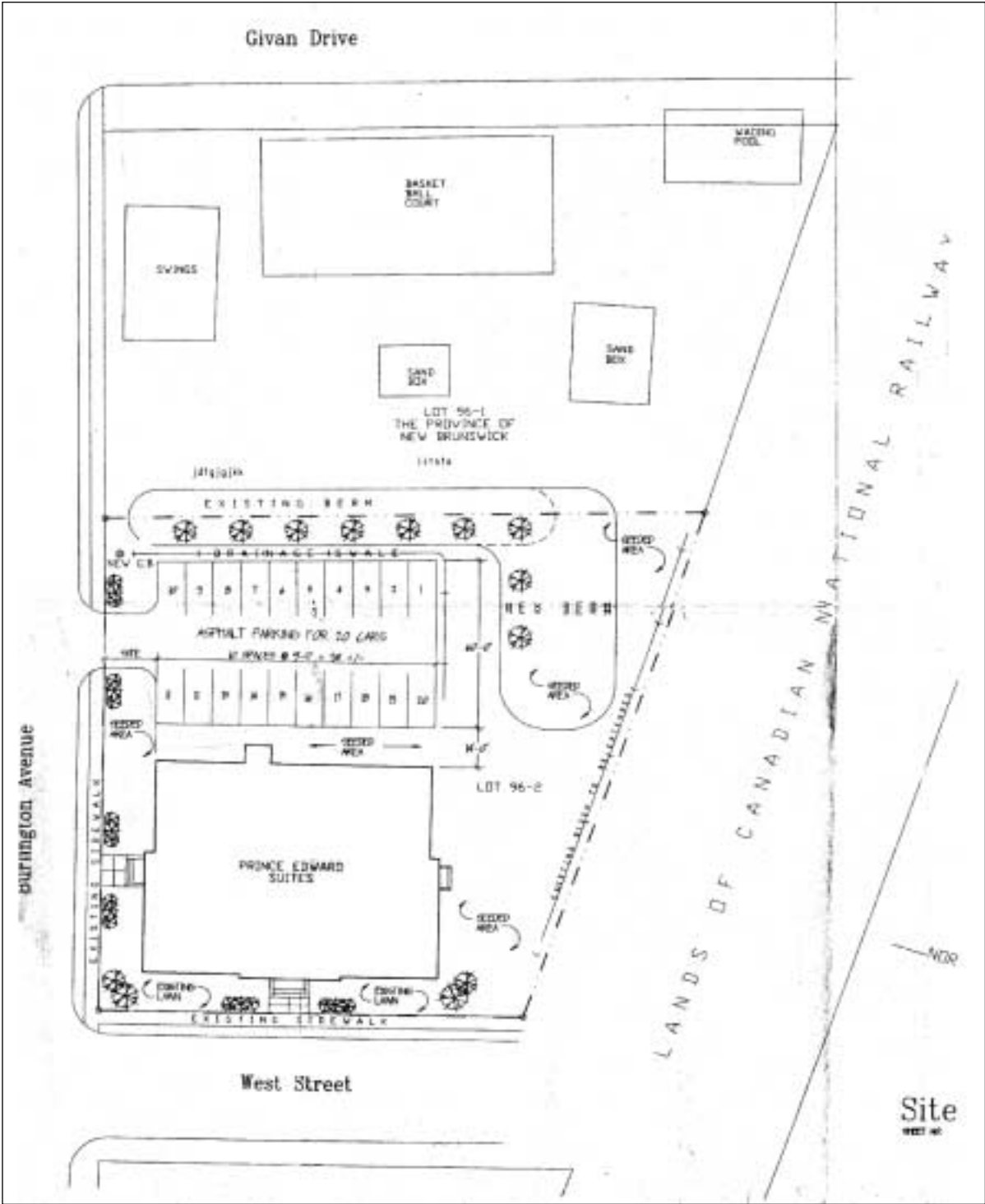


Figure 4: Site plan for the Prince Edward. Four parking spots were added during construction.



RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

THE RENAISSANCE AT NORTH HILL

Calgary, Alta.

1718–14th Ave. NW

Developer

The Apex Corporation

Date completed

2002

Site area

1 ha (2.5 acres)

Number, type of residential units

176 condominium units in two, 10-storey towers

Floor area

80–283 m² (858–3,044 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

176 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

4,130 m² (44,500 sq. ft.) in roof and ground-level gardens

Maximum height

10 storeys

Number, type of parking spaces

196 total. One space per unit, plus 20 for sale, in above-ground garage.

Non-residential units

1,580 m² (17,000 sq. ft.) office space;

1,110 m² (12,000 sq. ft.) amenity centre containing library, meeting rooms, games room, exercise facility, home theatre

Pre-development usage

North Hill Shopping Centre parking lot

Selling price

Start at \$164,900. Average \$336,500



Figure 1: The Renaissance at North Hill

The Renaissance at North Hill is a 176-unit project in two, 10-storey towers. Developed on the former parking lot of the North Hill Shopping Centre, the project boasts excellent access to shopping and other surrounding amenities.



HOME TO CANADIANS
Canada



Figure 2: The Renaissance, showing landscaped terrace

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project was developed on the site of the former parking lot for the North Hill Shopping Centre, which continues to operate with underground parking. The Renaissance is an example of shopping centre intensification or "greyfield" redevelopment. In addition to the 176 units that range considerably in both size and price, the project includes 1,580 m² (17,000 sq. ft.) of office space and a generously sized (1,110 m² [12,000 sq. ft.]) amenity centre that includes a library, meeting rooms and games rooms.

The surrounding urban area beyond the shopping centre includes a park, low-density residential neighbourhoods, a rapid transit line and a number of highways. The buildings are of a high architectural standard and there is good attention to the esthetics of the project. The project features a range of unit sizes and is geared to adults without children.

Each unit has a single parking space assigned in an above-ground parking garage. With an additional 20 spaces for sale, there is a total of 196 parking spaces.

The project has secure elevator access to the North Hill shopping centre. Calgary's Advanced Light Rapid Transit (ALRT) line, which is powered by wind-generated electricity, is within easy walking distance. For the more energetic there is good access to Calgary's on-street bicycle route network. The project is located just outside the City's downtown.

From a landscape perspective, the Renaissance features private rooftop gardens as well as shared gardens at ground level. There is 4,130 m² (44,500 sq. ft.) of private open space, of which 2,880 m² (31,000 sq. ft.) is on a landscaped podium and the balance is at grade.

Many units have excellent views of the City skyline, Rocky Mountains and panoramic views of the Bow River Valley.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

The project was very well received. There were no problems with either the City or surrounding neighbourhood. **Bill Lefebvre, vice president, The Apex Corporation.**

Costs and financing

The project cost \$45 million to develop.

The project has been very successful for the developer, with an average of five units sold per month since it opened in 2002. Phase one (the first tower) is now 95 per cent sold with phase two (still under construction in late 2003) already 60 per cent pre-sold.

The project was financed through bank lending and corporate equity. There was no government financial assistance.

Marketability and profitability

The developer built a \$500,000 sales centre on site as part of a comprehensive marketing strategy. The strong sales have led to the project meeting profit expectations.

Obstacles

Unlike many residential intensification projects, The Renaissance encountered very few obstacles, which is one reason why it has been so successful for the developer. The project had the support of both the local alderman (councillor) and the City Planning Commission. The developer attributes the acceptance of the project by the neighbourhood to good communication throughout the development process.



Figure 3: The Renaissance is an integral part of the North Hill Shopping Centre.

The shopping centre owners lost a lot of surface parking space during construction but accepted the temporary inconvenience because they were involved in the project and because they saw the potential for new customers from the completed project.

The site was a little tighter to build on than a comparable greenfield project but this was not considered a major obstacle.

City support

The local alderman, mayor, planning commission, and planning department all supported the project. Several public open houses ensured that the local residents were always well informed about the project and its progress.

Lessons learned

The developer's advice to others doing similar projects is to be upfront, honest and communicate effectively with all partners.



Figure 4: Streetscape showing The Renaissance

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Briar Hill and Houndsfield Heights are beautiful, established neighbourhoods. Kensington shops are only a 20-minute walk away. An excellent public library branch is a five-minute walk.

Resident

Affordability

The Renaissance at North Hill has a range of unit styles and sizes that fit a range of budgets. Selling prices ranged from \$164,900 for the smallest unit (80 m² [858 sq. ft.]) to \$1,050,000 for a 283 m² (3,044 sq. ft.) penthouse, and averaged \$336,500. Condominium fees generally fall within a range of \$230 to \$520 per month. Condo fees for a \$336,000 unit are about \$460 per month. The average selling price for new condos in Calgary in 2002 was \$162,884.¹

All residents surveyed consider their units good value for money, especially in light of rising real estate values.

Design features, unit size and character

Residents are happy with the design of the units and consider the building's exterior to be very attractive, blending well with surroundings. The size of the units is considered generous although some residents would prefer more storage space.

The amenity area is very well equipped and designed to allow lots of natural light to illuminate work areas. There are good views from all of the upper units and the quality of the light penetrating the building was felt to be a very positive aspect.

The neighbourhood and transportation

Shopping, the library, and transit are all within one block. I rarely use my car. **Resident**

The two residents interviewed said that the project's excellent location was one of its most important features. The shopping is immediately accessible (part of the same complex) and therefore residents do not need to use a car, even for grocery shopping.

A community hall, auditorium, golf course, community and neighbourhood shopping centres, a university, technical college and several restaurants are within walking distance.

A bus stop is located across the street and a light rail transit stop is immediately adjacent.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

There was a lot of involvement from the public through a number of meetings organized by the developer.

¹ CMHC, Market Analysis, Prairies, Nunavut and N.W.T. Centre.

The surrounding community was relatively supportive despite the height of the project, which can often cause problems. Ian Cope, lead planner, City of Calgary.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

Although the second phase of the project is not complete, The Renaissance project is considered to be successful so far from the City's perspective.

There were very few neighbourhood concerns before construction partly because the project is not immediately adjacent to low-rise neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood community association was heavily involved through a number of public forums and was relatively supportive of the project despite the height. The only complaints were from more-distant neighbours who felt that the project altered their view.

Planning objectives

The project meets a number of Calgary's planning objectives including:

- increased densities in established neighbourhoods
- increased densities around ALRT line stations.



Figure 5: The rapid transit line adjacent to the project

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project fits very well with the existing shopping centre (Calgary's first shopping mall) and indeed has improved the centre considerably by creating a mixed-use neighbourhood and a high standard of architecture.

Low-density residential uses to the South and west were not negatively affected by the project because they are far enough away that the towers do not block their sunlight.

The rest of the site is bordered by existing commercial uses, highways and a park.

Regulations and approvals

There was no need for an amendment to the official plan, but rezoning was required. The biggest hurdle was a technical issue. An adjacent site was contaminated from a previous use and development of The Renaissance was delayed for two to three months while it was established that the contamination did not threaten the site.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Renaissance at North Hill illustrates that redevelopment of large shopping centre parking lots to provide residential units can reap benefits for both the mall owners and developers. The developer considers good communications with surrounding neighbours, as well as building good relationships with the City, to be key factors in the success of this relatively problem-free project.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Bill Lefebvre,
The Apex Corporation
Phone: (403) 716-2242
E-mail: blefebvre@apex.com

Municipality: Ian Cope, lead planner,
City of Calgary
Phone: (403) 268-5483
E-mail: ian.cope@gov.calgary.ab.ca

Architect: Peter Burgener, BKDI Architects
Landscape architect: BKDI Architects

R

RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

WATERFORD SUITES

Halifax, N.S.

1343 Hollis St.

Developer

Ollive Properties

Date completed

2000

Site area

0.2 ha (0.4 acres)

Number and type of residential units

10 stacked townhouses, 67 apartment units.

All rental.

Floor area

56 m²-186 m² (600–2,000 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

377 units per hectare (uph)

Landscaped open space

93 m² (1,000 sq. ft.) roof deck and 557 m² (6,000 sq. ft.) at grade

Maximum height

8 storeys

Parking spaces

83 spaces in two underground levels

Non-residential units

One office unit

Pre-development usage

Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation store, warehouse, parking lot

Rental price

\$1,050 a month average;
range from \$700 to \$2,100



Figure 1: Waterford Suites on Hollis Street

Waterford Suites is a 77-unit rental project with 10 street-fronting, stacked townhouse units and 67 apartments. The project is centrally located near the historic downtown core of Halifax and is close to an active waterfront and a wide range of amenities.



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Canada



Figure 2: Waterford Suites

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Waterford Suites was developed on a 0.2-ha (0.4-acre) parcel of land formerly occupied by a Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation store, warehouse and parking lot. The project steps up from four-storey townhouses at the street edge, which match the height and setback of surrounding buildings, to eight storeys of apartments in the centre of the project. This preserves the height and scale of existing buildings on Hollis Street while allowing considerable density (377 uph) across the whole site.

The developer had a strong desire to ensure that the character of the building integrated well with the surrounding residential community. This has been achieved through architectural detailing, such as a mansard roof with arched dormers, wrought iron railings, brick for the body of the structure, distressed concrete that simulates sandstone and black trim.

There are 83 parking spaces in two underground levels. Entry is from a recessed entrance on Bishop Street between the two townhouse blocks.

The project is close to all the amenities of downtown, including a wide range of shopping facilities, cinemas and theatres, pubs and recreational facilities. Major grocery stores are a 10- to 15-minute walk away, as are pharmacies, flower shops, bakeries and restaurants. A general hospital and major universities are close by. There is a major bus route just outside the building that links conveniently to the entire region.

The units range in size from 56 m² (600 sq. ft.) to 186 m² (2,000 sq. ft.). Townhouse units average 139 m² (1,500 sq. ft.). The apartment units are a little smaller, averaging 102 m² (1,100 sq. ft.).

Large bay windows and balconies provide excellent views of Halifax Harbour from the fifth floor and higher. The view from lower floors is restricted to the street, which is reasonable for a heritage area. Sunlight penetration is reported to be good by those residents surveyed.

While there is little usable open space at grade, the developer has provided a large roof deck (19 m² [200 sq. ft.] per unit) for residents.

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*There are a number of obstacles to intensification projects (especially building on a tight site like this) compared with greenfield sites where it is much easier...we ended up parking on the street and getting tickets every day...one day we had to block off Hollis Street, a major truck route for the port. **Louis Lawen, Ollive Properties.***

In spite of the difficulties infill projects face, this project has proved to be very successful for the developer, Louis Lawen, and his company. He succeeded in his desire to see the project "fit in" to the neighbourhood and this has been one reason for the popularity of the project.

Costs and financing

Development costs	
Land	\$13,000/unit
Building construction	\$110,000/unit
Total	\$8.5 million

The project was financed by a bank. CMHC provided mortgage insurance. There was no municipal or provincial government financial assistance.

Marketability and profitability

The \$8.5 million project rented completely within six months and was marketed with property signage and on the Internet. The developer expects the project to meet profit expectations.

Obstacles

There were a number of obstacles presented by building on 100 per cent of a relatively small site, constrained on all sides by existing development. Construction crew parking, noise bylaw restrictions, site storage, waste-handling issues and traffic management all played a part in making this a challenging project.

Development occurred on the full site area, which meant that there was no parking for construction workers on the site. The surrounding streets have strict parking restrictions and many workers received parking tickets on a daily basis because there were simply no parking options in the immediate vicinity.

In built-up areas with existing residential units, the municipal noise bylaw restricts the use of construction equipment to working hours. Enforcement of the bylaw and complaints about noise made it difficult to complete some concrete work on time.

The site is next to a busy, one-way street that carries truck traffic to the waterfront. There were times during construction when traffic had to be stopped to allow construction traffic to enter the site.

While none of the challenges was insurmountable, they added to the complexity and difficulty of the project compared to greenfield projects.

Municipal support

The municipality provided support by allowing a slight density increase, reducing setbacks and relaxing open-space requirements.



Figure 3: Arched dormer windows and brickwork

Lessons learned

This project demonstrates again that infill projects pose difficulties that can put off more risk-averse developers. The municipality was supportive of the project as were local residents, but the constraints of a tight site, inflexible parking and other regulations created a few complications for the developer.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The building really fits in with the downtown. It is great architecturally—a brick building with townhouses at the front...it is excellent for our needs. Resident

Affordability

Suites at the Waterford rent for an average of \$1,500 a month. Rent ranges from \$700 for the smallest apartment to \$2,100 for the largest. Additional parking spaces are \$75 a month. The average rent in downtown Halifax in 2002 was \$709 for one-bedroom units to \$1,378 for three bedrooms.¹

All residents surveyed considered their unit good value for money because of its excellent location (easy access to the waterfront was mentioned several times) and good architectural design both inside and out.

Design features

Residents were very happy with the design of their units. One resident noted that "the layout is the best I've seen in an apartment building...it doesn't feel like an apartment." Most residents were looking for a more compact space downtown with minimal maintenance requirements and the project suits their needs well.

Those residents on the higher floors were very happy with views of Halifax Harbour. The views of those below the fifth floor are obscured by neighbouring buildings but they acknowledge the developer has "done the best they can" considering the urban location. Residents were happy that the large, opening windows let in plenty of sunlight.

Parking was generally considered to be more than adequate, even though most residents have only one space. There is plenty of parking on the street after office hours.

¹ CMHC, Atlantic Market Analysis Centre, Halifax, N.S.

Some residents noted that the neighbourhood could be a little noisy from traffic but all were willing to put up with this as an inevitable part of urban living and felt that the other benefits more than compensate for the noise.

The neighbourhood and transportation

There is a minor trade-off between street noise and the incredible convenience and variety of the city. It is great not to have to own a car... **Resident**

The residents enthused about the convenient location of the project, great access to amenities and vibrant character of the neighbourhood. The immediate neighbourhood is primarily residential and has a variety of housing forms, including single-family heritage dwellings and newer apartment buildings. The Brewery Market and Lieutenant-Governor's Residence are significant land uses to the north of the subject site. Several properties in the immediate vicinity are registered heritage buildings, including one property next to the Waterford Suites.

Downtown Halifax has a growing residential population and with this growth there is increasing vibrancy, especially in the summer when residents join many tourists on the streets. There is a growing number of young professionals and seniors moving into the area, and both groups enjoy the proximity to amenities. Amenities within easy walking distance include the Harbour waterfront, a recreation centre, two major grocery stores, cinemas and a theatre, art galleries, library, restaurants and the commercial office core.

The project has convenient access to bus routes and the ferry terminal for ferries to Dartmouth, on the other side of the Harbour.

All of the four working residents surveyed reported walking to work as well as to most local shopping and entertainment. This compares to 22 per cent of Halifax CMA workers who use public transit, walk or cycle to work.²

Residents generally found the trips pleasant, especially compared with other places that they had lived. One resident manages without a car at all.

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

The municipality granted concessions on angle controls (building envelope), setbacks and density—we wanted something that is very urban to fit with the surrounding context. **Gary Porter, Planner, Halifax Regional Municipality**

Neighbourhood opposition or support

The municipality was very pleased with the result of the project and has had a number of positive comments from the public since the project was completed. The City organized an early information meeting for comments from the public. This meeting was not well attended and only minor comments were made about parking and access (which at the time was proposed for a busy one-way street). This is attributed to the fact that the site had been unused for some time and had started to collect graffiti. Neighbours were therefore keen to see a high-quality project on the site.

Most of the original concerns seem to have been addressed during the development-agreement process. Subsequently, the developer acquired an adjacent piece of property and was able to provide access to the underground parking from a less-busy street (Bishop).

Because there is a heritage dwelling next door, the Waterford Suites proposal was referred to the heritage advisory committee. The committee gave advice on appropriate colour choices. The developer incorporated appropriate trim colours and wrought-iron railings for balcony areas, which helped the project fit with the surrounding architecture.

Recognizing that urban dwellers generally own fewer cars, Halifax has parking standards of one space per unit in the downtown area. The developer met this requirement with two levels of underground parking.

Planning objectives

The project is consistent with municipal planning objectives, including the overall objective of the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (1978), which is:

"The enhancement of the physical, social and economic well-being of the citizenry of Halifax through the preservation, creation and maintenance of an interesting, livable City, developed at a scale and density which preserve and enhance the quality of life."

² Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

In addition, the project is consistent with other municipal planning strategy policies, such as providing diverse, high-quality housing, and encouraging infill housing, and residential growth on the Halifax Peninsula. The population on the peninsula has been decreasing since about the 1960s, so the City supports projects that bring people back to living in the downtown area. The project meets the objective of ensuring that the integrity of existing residential neighbourhoods is maintained by requiring that new development be related to the characteristics of the neighbourhood.

Does it fit into the neighbourhood?

The project meshes well with the surrounding, diverse uses and the developer paid special attention to ensuring that the design was compatible with an abutting heritage property and other surrounding buildings.

Regulations and approvals

Approvals took about a year and were achieved through a development-agreement process, which involved fairly lengthy negotiations but also allowed the flexibility the developer required.

LESSONS LEARNED

Waterford Suites is a good example of a project that has overcome the difficulties of building on a tightly constrained site in a heritage area. By creating a building that is sensitive

to the scale and architecture of the surrounding area, the developer won support from both the local community and the municipality for a project of considerably higher density than much of the surrounding area.

The project underscores the fact that while municipal planning departments may be very supportive of a project, it is important that this support be co-ordinated with other municipal departments, especially those dealing with bylaw enforcement. Municipalities can help similar projects by being flexible about parking restrictions for construction crews and interpretation of noise bylaws.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

Developer: Louie Lawen, Paramount Management
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Phone: (902) 490-4403
E-mail: porterg@region.halifax.ns.ca

Architect: Tony Gillis, Mike Napier, Geoff Keddy

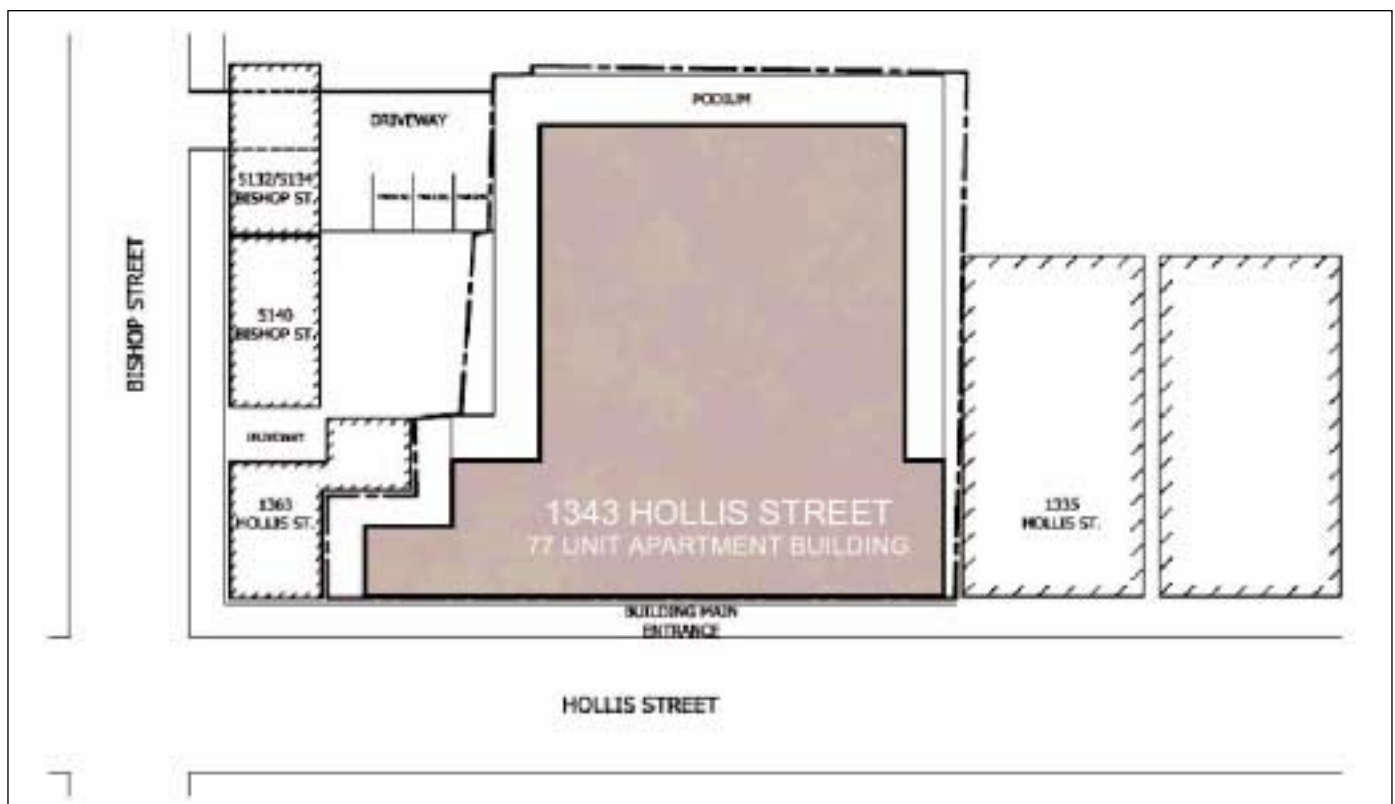


Figure 4: Site plan and adjacent buildings

R

ESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION CASE STUDIES

Built Projects

WESTERN ELEVATOR LOFTS

Winnipeg, Man.

123 Princess St.

Developer

Exchange Lofts Inc.

Date completed

Fall 2002

Site area

280 m² (3,010 sq. ft.)

Number, type of residential units

Six condominium lofts, and a penthouse now under construction

Floor area

132 m² (1,420 sq. ft.) per unit.

Penthouse will be 204 m² (2,200 sq. ft.)

Gross residential density

215 uph (units per hectare)

Landscaped open space

130 m² (1,400 sq. ft.) shared roof patio

Height

Four storeys now, soon to be five

Parking

None

Non-residential units

Main floor and basement commercial units, each 279 m² (3,000 sq. ft.)

Pre-development usage

Unused commercial building

Selling price

\$122,000 to \$140,000 for the six completed units



Figure 1: Princess Street view of the Western Elevator Lofts in Winnipeg

Western Elevator Lofts is a six-unit, loft style conversion of an historic warehouse building in a formerly industrial-commercial district of Winnipeg. Commercial units of 279 m² (3,000 sq. ft.) on the main floor and basement will be retained. The project received substantial support in the form of a heritage grant from the City, as well as a heritage tax credit and gap financing from the City's development corporation, CentreVenture. The project is one of the first of its kind in Winnipeg and filled an unexplored niche in the Winnipeg housing market. It proved very popular, selling out within three months.



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Figure 2: Western Elevator Lofts. The commercial unit on the main floor was still being developed when this picture was taken.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Western Elevator Lofts stands in the heart of Winnipeg's Exchange District, a 20-block area containing over 100 fine old commercial and industrial buildings. At the beginning of the 20th century, this area was a financial centre that housed banks and grain traders. Commercial activity decreased significantly in recent decades as financial centres moved elsewhere.

The building was converted from a 100-year old commercial warehouse. There was a woodworking shop on one storey. The rest of the space was used for storage and an occasional band practice area.

Located in the warehouse district, the project is now surrounded by a variety of commercial uses including offices, a bank, a nightclub, a pub and an antique store, as well as an institutional use, a community college.

First-time developer Pat Hitchcock, a relative newcomer to Winnipeg, saw an opportunity to complete a project that was rare in the city at the time. He paid close attention to the unique details and historical elements of the project. All of the units were customized to the needs of buyers who were invited to become involved in the design process. Although there is no open space at grade, residents have access to a shared roof patio of 130 m² (1,400 sq. ft.)

The building's facade was retained. Many of the original timbers were exposed and the original plank floors were refinished. This is fitting for a building situated in an area designated by the federal government as a National Historic Site.

The project was supported by a heritage grant from the City and by the Downtown Heritage Tax Credit, which is administered by CentreVenture, Winnipeg's Development Corporation in co-operation with the City of Winnipeg. CentreVenture also provided gap financing for the project.

(For more information on the CentreVenture Development Corporation, refer to CMHC's report *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives*.)

PROJECT SUCCESS: DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

*There was a lot of demand for a project like this because there had been no other projects [in the area] for years... The City was supportive, but sometimes slow and cumbersome to deal with. **Patrick Hitchcock, president, Exchange Lofts Inc.***

Costs and financing

The total cost of the project was \$1.4 million. Details are in the following table.

Development costs	
Land	Less than \$10/sq. ft.
Building construction, infrastructure	More than \$70/sq. ft.
Soft costs/other	Not known
Total	\$1.4 million

The project was financed from a combination of sources including down payments from the owners, a municipal heritage grant of \$175,000 from the City, a Downtown Heritage Tax Credit of \$175,000 and gap financing of \$200,000 from CentreVenture.

The Heritage Tax Credit is an incentive program for downtown heritage revitalization. Taxes, up to a maximum of \$250,000, for eligible buildings are generally repaid to the owner over 10 years. However, in this case, CentreVenture arranged for the future tax credit to be made available immediately to help make up the shortfall in project financing.

Marketability and profitability

Unit sales have been swift with all of the units selling within three months of completion. This has resulted in the project meeting the developer's profit expectations. Marketing was geared to young professionals, using a show suite, open houses and newspaper advertisements. This was supplemented by a number of newspaper articles about the project.

Obstacles

The City was supportive but according to Hitchcock, sometimes slow and cumbersome to deal with. The developer attributes this to the fact that it was a new kind of project for the City and the City had to learn how to deal with several issues that hadn't come up before, such as fire code equivalencies for heritage buildings. Several staff members from different departments participated in the planning, which created a tendency to get too many people involved.

There was no site contamination to deal with and neighbours were supportive.

Municipal support

Downtown Winnipeg has a large number of old, heritage warehouses and the City was happy to take this opportunity to retain and redevelop one for residential purposes. Winnipeg, like many other cities in North America, is trying to revitalize its downtown core by introducing more residential housing. The problem faced by the City is whether to try to save heritage buildings or let developers demolish them. In this case, the City was willing to work closely with the developer to save the building while supporting a profitable venture.

Lessons learned

The developer learned that persistence is vital to this kind of project. He believes it would help tremendously if the City had a single point of contact for the project, someone who could really get to know the project and help facilitate a process that moves along quickly. The City and CentreVenture provided great financial support, without which the project would not have been possible.

PROJECT SUCCESS: RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

[The project is] owner designed; [it is] an opportunity to be part of the rebirth of a neglected neighbourhood.
Resident

Affordability

Each of the six units at Western Elevator Lofts is a single-storey, two-bedroom, loft-style condominium totalling 132 m² (1,420 sq. ft.) The penthouse (currently being developed) will be 204 m² (2,200 sq. ft.) on two storeys. Selling prices ranged from \$122,000 to \$140,000. Condominium fees are approximately \$120 per month.

All residents surveyed considered the unit good value for a custom-built condominium in a heritage building in Winnipeg. Many expected the value of the units to increase as future neighbourhood development occurs.

Design features

All surveyed agreed that the units are generous in terms of square footage and feel spacious, noting the tall ceilings and open concept of the living area.

The fact that the original brick walls, fir floors and beams were retained stood out for many as an attraction. As one resident put it, "the exterior fits well into the heritage expressed in the surrounding neighbourhood." The owner-designed units are a major attraction for the residents surveyed and well worth the extra time required to complete the development.

Only one out of the four residents surveyed has a private balcony, although all of the residents expressed enthusiastic satisfaction with the shared rooftop deck and swimming pool.

While 'view' did not seem to be a critical factor to the residents surveyed, all were reasonably satisfied with the views of adjacent and nearby old buildings. One resident remarked that the rooftop offers great views, as do the units on the upper floors. Depending on the orientation, the units receive more than adequate amounts of sunlight through the many large windows in each unit.

The lack of parking is a real problem for all residents surveyed and seems to encourage driving to work, because both residents and visitors must pay for parking that has to be found every day in lots near the project.

Neighbourhood and transportation

The project is located downtown, with plenty of restaurants and entertainment close by. Many expressed frustration with the lack of day-to-day amenities, such

as grocery shopping, and suggested this is due to the project location in a former industrial area that has yet to see amenities for the growing residential population.

One resident said that the current state of development probably wouldn't be appropriate for families with children.

All of the four residents surveyed drive to the grocery store. Despite bus stops within walking distance, three of the four residents surveyed drive to work only because there is no parking at the project and they would end up paying to leave their cars at home. In the Winnipeg CMA, 20 per cent of workers walk, bicycle or take public transit to get to work.¹

PROJECT SUCCESS: MUNICIPAL PLANNER'S PERSPECTIVE

*The planning department was very supportive of the project...The neighbours, principally commercial businesses, were also supportive, as was the Exchange District Business Improvement Zone board and members. **John McNairnay, co-ordinator, Downtown Branch, City of Winnipeg Planning Department***

The municipality was very supportive of this project and hopes it will stimulate further warehouse conversions in the old industrial district.

Neighbourhood opposition or support

All stakeholders, including the project's commercial neighbours, business improvement zone members, and City planners, were supportive of the project and no real concerns were expressed. This has been borne out subsequent to development as no complaints about the project have been received so far.

Planning objectives

The project is consistent with municipal policy objectives (Plan Winnipeg 2020) to convert warehouses to residential uses as a way of saving heritage structures and increasing the size of the downtown residential population. Plan Winnipeg states that:

"The City shall commit to heritage conservation by: i) promoting the long-term conservation of heritage assets through the use of incentives, protective designation, and enforcement of regulations [and]

The City shall promote the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings by: i) ensuring that vacant heritage buildings are protected from destruction through neglect"

Regulations and Approvals

The City of Winnipeg Board of Adjustment granted the developer a variance to reduce the front and rear yard setbacks required for residential uses in this zone to zero from 20 feet. As the building was already on the site, the only way to conform to the setbacks would have been to demolish the building and construct new housing. Clearly, the Historic Buildings Committee would not support such a move.

There were also building and fire code issues. As a heritage building and a former warehouse, heavy timbers in the building framework were not addressed in the residential building code. To conform to the fire code, the City had to develop some code equivalencies to ensure the safety of the building. Without this, residential units could not have been developed in this market.

LESSONS LEARNED

Western Elevator Lofts is the result of a developer's vision and determination to develop a unique niche project that was untested in the Winnipeg housing market. The City provided solid financial support to make the project feasible and the role of CentreVenture Development Corporation appears to have been crucial in facilitating the flow of finances from the City.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

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¹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

