Martindale Planning Services

Urban Planning, Heritage & Development Consultants

April 13, 2020

Shawn Legere
Senior Planner
RFA Planning Consultant Inc.
211 Dundas St. E., Ste. 202
Belleville, ON K8N 1E2

Dear Shawn:

Re: Letter of Opinion
Proposed Severance Application
105 Havelock St., Cobourg

I am a land use planner, certified by the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Ontario Professional Planning Institute, with a specialty in heritage planning. As a member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Planners, I have been qualified to give evidence as a heritage planner by the Ontario Municipal Board (now Local Planning Appeal Board) on several occasions.

On April 2 I was retained by Gordon Rees, owner of the above-noted lot located at the southeast corner of Havelock St. and Spring St., to provide a heritage letter of opinion with respect to the proposed 1.6 m side yards resulting from the intended severance. I understand that this letter was requested by the Town of Cobourg in view of the fact that the property is located within the George Street Heritage Conservation District.

For the purposes of this assignment, I inspected the subject property and the surrounding lots on April 8 and reviewed the applicable provisions of the District Plan. My observations are as follows:

(a) Description of Neighbourhood

The District is located several blocks north of downtown Cobourg, west of Division Street, as outlined on the attached map. It illustrates the incremental growth of residential development in Cobourg from the 1830's onwards from south to north. This settlement pattern results in a varied character which includes several architectural styles, including Neoclassical, Regency, Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Ontario Cottage Vernacular, Queen Anne Revival, Arts and Crafts, Edwardian Classical, Georgian Revival, Dutch Colonial and Tudor Revival.

Quoting from the District Plan (p. 10), *"Despite the variety in architectural styles, materials and lot sizes, the predominant residential character results in a sense of visual coherence …*

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Generally consistent setbacks from the street and a lack of front yard fencing provide consistency in streetscape that links the residential buildings to the street grid patterns that were part of the original plans of subdivision."

The George Street District is predominantly residential, although it has contained other uses over time. The prevailing character of the neighbourhood consists of one to two ½ storey residential buildings with typical gable and hip roof types, featuring predominantly red brick cladding, typical patterns of two and three bay facades and varied setbacks from the street.

(b) Applicable District Plan provisions

There are four conservation goals set out in the District Plan, all aimed at protecting and enhancing the existing 19th century residential character of the District by allowing only changes that are compatible with the built form and are consistent with the cultural heritage value of the District.

In this regard, dwellings in the neighbourhood generally have ample yards which reflect the generous lots on which they are placed. However, it should be noted that the subject property is at the edge of the District and the homes in its immediate environs are typically more modest than those further to the east. A separation of 3.2 m between the existing structure and the proposed one would not, in our opinion, detract from the character of the District. The design of the new dwelling and its setback from Havelock Street would be more important influences in this regard. While the porch of the existing home encroaches slightly into the road allowance and the front wall is set back only 0.5 m, the new dwelling could be set back further and possibly have an indentation towards the rear, thereby minimizing any adverse effect of the proposed side yards.

There are 11 conservation objectives outlined in the District Plan, building on the general goals and providing more detailed direction for implementing the Plan. One of these, in section 2.4.2 of the Plan, states as follows:

"f) to accommodate new development only where it respects or otherwise complements the prevailing low profile (one to two and one-half storey) and heritage character of existing buildings and structures within the District and does not adversely affect the cultural heritage character of the District."

As stated above, the intended separation between the existing and proposed dwellings is only one of many criteria that would define compatibility, and is not considered a major factor in this discussion. It is suggested that the design, massing and materiality of the new home are more significant criteria for evaluating impact. In this respect, we are not privy to the footprint, height, bulk or building materials proposed for the new house.

Finally, section 7.0 of the Plan provides seven specific design guidelines for infill development projects. Policy a) states that *"new freestanding construction will be required to be compatible with the heritage character and attributes of adjacent heritage properties and the cultural heritage value of the District."* The remaining guidelines elaborate on this policy by listing specific architectural features that will be required for infill construction, including heights, massing, setback, building scale, roof pitches, exterior materials, facades, roof forms, windows and entrance doors and views. In

addition, policy b) states that *"new construction shall be a product of its time and not pretend to be historic by incorporating historic detail that is inappropriate in contemporary construction".*

It is noted that setbacks are mentioned as only one consideration in a long list of design attributes that new construction should incorporate. Notwithstanding that the intended side yards are no doubt less than the average in the District, the compatibility of the new dwelling can be ensured by paying close attention to the rest of the factors outlined above.

c) Conclusion

In the absence of a proposed site plan and elevations for the new dwelling, I have reviewed the proposed side yards resulting from the severance in light of the character of the immediately surrounding neighbourhood (most of which is located outside the Heritage District) and the relevant provisions of the George Street Heritage Conservation District Plan. It is my conclusion that the proposed 3.2 m separation between dwellings will not detract from the heritage attributes of the District or violate any of the goals, objectives or design guidelines contained in the Plan. Through careful attention to design details such as height, massing, bulk and materiality, any adverse impacts can be avoided so that the new dwelling fits in well with its surroundings.

Yours very truly,

MARTINDALE PLANNING SERVICES
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Robert A. Martindale, MCIP, RPP, CAHP
Principal

Town of Cobourg
Heritage Conservation Districts

(George Street HCD shown in yellow,
subject property indicated with blue arrow)