



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Heritage Markham Committee

**FROM:** Peter Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner

**DATE:** November 9, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Mixed Use Development  
160, 162, 166, 170, 174, 182 and 186 Main Street Unionville  
Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment applications  
PLAN 22 253770

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**Property/Building Descriptions:** Historic and Non-Historic buildings

**Use:** Commercial

**Heritage Status:** Designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act  
Class A – 162, 166, 174, 182  
Class B – 170 and 186  
Heritage Easement Agreements – 160 and 170

### **Application Proposal**

- The applicant proposes to construct a mixed use development in behind commercial properties that front Main Street Unionville (See Appendix 'A'-Location Map);
- The proposal includes:
  - the demolition or relocation of the barn located at 160 Main St. and its replacement with a new four storey, 10 unit stand-alone residential building,
  - new additions to the rear of buildings at 174 and 182 Main St (removal of the existing addition at 174 Main St).,
  - the demolition of the existing building at 186 Main St. and its replacement with a new three storey stand-alone building, and
  - the construction of a new four storey, 40 unit residential building in behind 174 and 182 Main St.;
- 13 more residential units would be created in the existing buildings and additions to 174 and 182 Main St. and in the proposed new building at 186 Main St. (See Appendix C- Proposed Site Plan and Appendix D- Perspective Views).
- At this time, only Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments have been submitted. Site Plan Control Applications will be required.

## **Background**

- **Location**

The site is separated into north and south development parcels by a City owned right-of-way immediately to the north of 158 and 160 Main St. that provides vehicular and pedestrian access to the existing surface parking located in behind the buildings that front Main St. This access is not considered to be a public road (See Appendix B- Aerial View 2021). Therefore, the applicant has submitted separate Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments for both the north and the south development parcels (See Appendix 'A'-Location Map);

- **South Development Parcel**

The proposed development of the southern parcel of land requires amendments to the City's Official Plan to permit a building height of 4 storeys, and a residential-only building not having frontage on a public street, and amendments to the Zoning By-law to permit apartment dwellings, site specific development standards including a 4 storey building height, and reduced amounts of parking;

- **North Development Parcel**

The proposed development of the northern parcel of land requires amendments to the City's Official Plan to permit a building height of 4 storeys, and residential units in stand-alone buildings, and within mixed use buildings fronting Main Street above or behind non-residential uses. The amendments required to the Zoning By-law for the northern parcel are to permit site specific development standards including a building height of 4 storeys, and no parking standards for some of the proposed residential units;

- **Guidance Documents**

The appropriateness of the proposed amendments to the City's Official Plan and applicable Zoning By-laws should be considered keeping in mind the intent and purpose of these documents, as well as the following Unionville specific documents:

- the policies and guidelines of the **Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan** (the "Heritage Plan");
- the direction provided by the **Main Street Unionville Community Vision Plan** (Feb 2015) undertaken between 2013-2015 (the "Vision Plan"), and
- the **Unionville Commercial Core Pattern Book – Village Design and Architectural Guidelines** (June 2018) (the "Pattern Book") which was one of the recommendations of the Vision Plan to help guide new multi-unit, multi-storey new forms of development in the core area.

## **Staff Comment**

- **Official Plan**

- The City's Official Plan (Chapter 9 –Area and Site Specific Policies) contains Land Use Objectives for the "Unionville Heritage Centre" which apply to the subject property designed to recognize, preserve and enhance the distinct character of heritage buildings and landscapes of the Unionville Heritage Conservation District by ensuring that new development enhances the District's character and complements the village like, human scale of development. To help achieve this objective, the maximum building height permitted is 2 storeys;

- Zoning By-law
  - Similarly, the applicable Zoning By-law permits a maximum building height of 10.7m (35 ft.) which generally reflects the maximum heights of existing Main St. heritage buildings which are predominantly 1 ½ to 2 storeys;
- Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan
  - The Heritage District Plan provides guidance for the conservation of cultural heritage resources as well as providing direction for alterations and new developments. It encourages **compatible infill construction** that enhances the District character, complements the **village's human scale** and guides the design of new development to be **sympathetic and compatible** with the **heritage character** while providing for **contemporary needs**.
  - The Plan recommends that new buildings should be compatible with the **traditional height pattern** of the District which is **mostly 1 ½ and 2 storeys** and have regard for the heights of adjoining buildings on the street. **It is acknowledged that the Pattern Book (2018) was prepared to allow buildings in the District's commercial core area of a greater height.**
  - Design Approach - "New buildings should complement the immediate physical context and streetscape by: being generally the same height, width and orientation of adjacent buildings; being of similar setback; being of like materials and colours; and using similarly proportioned windows, doors and roof shapes" (section 4.3.1 – New Buildings-Design Approach)
  - Overall Scale – "Where a building is proposed that is substantially larger than the typical buildings found on the street, the scale of the structure can be reduced by breaking up the façade and overall building mass into elements that proportionately reflect the adjacent building forms" (section 9.2.2)
- Vision Plan
  - The Vision Plan (prepared over 2 years with extensive consultation) was created to guide new development and changes in both the public and private sector, and to foster new development with the intent of enlarging and enhancing existing land uses to support a more robust village life.
  - A key aim was to find the appropriate balance between protecting the unique heritage environment while ensuring the area's economic vitality and prosperity.
  - The Vision Plan notes that where new buildings appear, their specific **placement, shape, size, height and architecture** will be fundamentally important to preserving and enhancing the existing character of the village....the scale and character of existing buildings and open space are essential to the identity and ongoing viability of the village.
  - The vision for the West Side North (and applicable to the West Side South) included a concept design that:
    - "proposes the addition of infill buildings behind the existing buildings fronting Main Street Unionville. The proportions, or 'massing', of these buildings, and the style of their architecture will be compatible with the heritage character of Main Street Unionville. Individual buildings are conceived to be sympathetic to the existing buildings and are sited in a

manner that creates an intimate urban pedestrian space that becomes a ‘natural’ extension of the village.” See the image in Appendix “E”

- A key recommendation of the Vision Plan was the future adoption of a Pattern Book with a regulating plan to guide future architectural development, and direct the design of infill development, especially that of larger format, multi-unit residential development greater than two storeys in height. A strict regulatory framework would allow for predictable development (form, scale and architecture) to create a unified vision for the village and consistent with the Vision Plan.
- Pattern Book
  - The document most relevant to the proposed development is the 2018 Pattern Book which prescribes the massing and heights of new buildings in order to ensure they are compatible with the existing village character yet allow for the intensification of existing uses to create a more robust and viable Main St.;
  - It also proposed traditional architectural styles common to Unionville and illustrates how they can be utilized in a larger format structure.
  - According to the Pattern Book as endorsed by Council, **“each proposed new development shall be guided by the general direction of the Vision Plan, and be designed and reviewed for consistency and compatibility with the guidelines of this document, including appropriate architectural character established in the Architectural Guidelines”**.
- Current Proposal

The proposed development, in particular the proposed new stand-alone residential buildings on the north and southern parcels, significantly deviates from the guidelines of the “Pattern Book” in the following ways:

**Massing**

  - The “Pattern Book” recommends that the maximum footprint of 3 storey buildings be no more than 3,750 ft<sup>2</sup> in order to more closely replicate the massing of the existing buildings fronting Main St. The proposed 3 and 4 storey residential building on the southern development parcel has a footprint of 6,458 ft<sup>2</sup> which represents a 72% increase to what is recommended. The proposed 4 story building on the northern development parcel has a footprint of 17,556 ft<sup>2</sup> representing a 368% increase to what is recommended (See Appendix D- Rendering of Building Massing intended for the Subject Property contained in the Pattern Book).
  - It indicates that two or more three storey portions of a building can be linked together by a shorter building mass to better reflect existing smaller, independent building footprints.
  - Further guidance from the Pattern Book is provided in Appendix “F” and “G”

**Building Height**

- The Pattern Book contains three different zones moving back from the edge of the street specifying maximum building heights in order to minimise the impact of height from new buildings and to preserve the existing village character.
  - Zone 1 which covers the subject property 20m back from the street specifies a 2 storey maximum building height. The applicant proposes a new 3 storey mansard roof building at 186 Main Street in this zone representing an increase of 50% to what is recommended;
  - Zone 2 which runs between 20 and 40 metres back from the street edge specifies a maximum building height of 2-1/2 storeys. Zone 3 which spans 40m from the street to the western boundary of the property specifies a maximum building height of 3.5 storeys, whereas the applicant proposes to construct 4 storey mansard roofed stand-alone residential buildings, which represents a 16% increase to the maximum building height recommended (See Appendix F- Maximum Building Heights recommended by Pattern Book).
  - This increase in building height is exacerbated by the proposed mansard roof form which has a greater visual impact than the predominant gabled roof forms of historic buildings on Main Street. This is reflected in the Pattern Book's recommendation that if a Mansard roof building is to be used, the height to the eaves should not exceed two storeys. This special provision for mansard roof buildings is intended to mitigate the visual weight of the top storey enclosed by the mansard roof. The applicant proposes stand- alone mansard roof buildings behind Main Street that are 3 storeys at the eaves, or a 50% increase to what is recommended for mansard roofed buildings.
- The guidelines indicate that overall, the maximum height of a building should be 3 storeys – however, an occupied roof is permitted above the third floor to an area equal to 75% of the floor area below (that would basically be a 3 ½ storey building with the ½ storey in the roof structure)

### **Architectural Style**

- The proposed development proposes 3 stand-alone buildings and two rear additions to existing historic buildings that front Main St.. All three of the proposed new stand-alone buildings are proposed to have mansard roofs, which the Pattern Book identifies as an architectural style that is not preferred due to the fact that there are only two historic mansard roofed building in the commercial core of Main Street. These proposed mansard roof buildings, along with recently constructed mansard roofed buildings at 157 and 208 Main St. (prior to the City's adoption of the 2018 Pattern Book) would appear to fundamentally alter the existing architectural character of the street, which is in part derived from the dominance of gabled roofed buildings.
- **Removal of the Barn Structure**
  - The development of the southern parcel requires the removal (demolition or relocation) of the existing barn structure which is protected through a Heritage Easement Agreement (see Appendix H)

- Although Heritage Staff would prefer retention of this historic building on its original location, staff acknowledges the difficulty in incorporating such a structure into the type of development anticipated for the land and is willing to explore relocation of the building to the City owned Stiver Mill complex;
- In April of 2018 Heritage Markham was supportive of the applicant engaging with City staff regarding the potential relocation of the barn and requested that the Committee review any proposal regarding its incorporation into the Stiver Mill complex.
- The issue to the barn should be addressed at this stage to provide appropriate guidance to the applicant.

- Conclusion

- Without the benefit of a Site Plan Control Application at this time, the proposal is considered a design concept which could be later modified. However, as part of the review of the submitted Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, issues such as land use, height, massing, building footprint and other development standards are being considered as they will be included in the amendment documents.
- It is recommended that the applicant work with staff to explore opportunities for a more traditional 3 ½ storey approach that does not utilize a mansard roof or does not exclusively use the mansard roof approach throughout all the buildings. Also, the building at 186 Main Street would benefit from the introduction of a gabled roof approach which is the traditional roof form found throughout the district including the commercial core. Section 9.2.1.4 of the District Plan notes that “the clarity found in historic commercial buildings should be reflected in the construction of new storefronts” and that “new storefronts should reflect traditional forms in the historical district”.
- As to building massing, Staff do acknowledge that the application does attempt to break up the overall building through massing approaches and design features, but suggest that more could be done to give the appearance of independent building components (more similar in design to the original vision document). Staff would like to work with the applicant to explore design options and concepts that are mutually beneficial to both the project and the City’s vision for this area.
- Staff has no objection to the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments components seeking permission for residential uses in new buildings only at the rear of the existing Main Street properties. It is acknowledged that commercial uses that do not possess a Main Street frontage are challenging from a retail perspective
- Given the above deviations from the “Pattern Book” which was specifically created to guide this type of intensification, Heritage Section staff are not in a position at this time to recommend support for the proposed amendments to the

Official Plan and Zoning By-law's development standards required to support the conceptual development, from a heritage perspective.

### **Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham**

THAT Heritage Markham recommends that that applicant work with Heritage Section staff to explore opportunities to further refine the proposed massing and height components of the buildings to be more reflective of the guidance provided in the Unionville Pattern Book;

THAT Heritage Markham has no objection to the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendment components seeking permission for residential uses within the new buildings at the rear of the existing Main Street properties;

AND THAT Heritage Markham recommends that the Barn Structure be retained and incorporated into the development.

Or

AND THAT Heritage Markham has no objection to the relocation of the Barn Structure to another local site preferably within the Unionville village area

Or

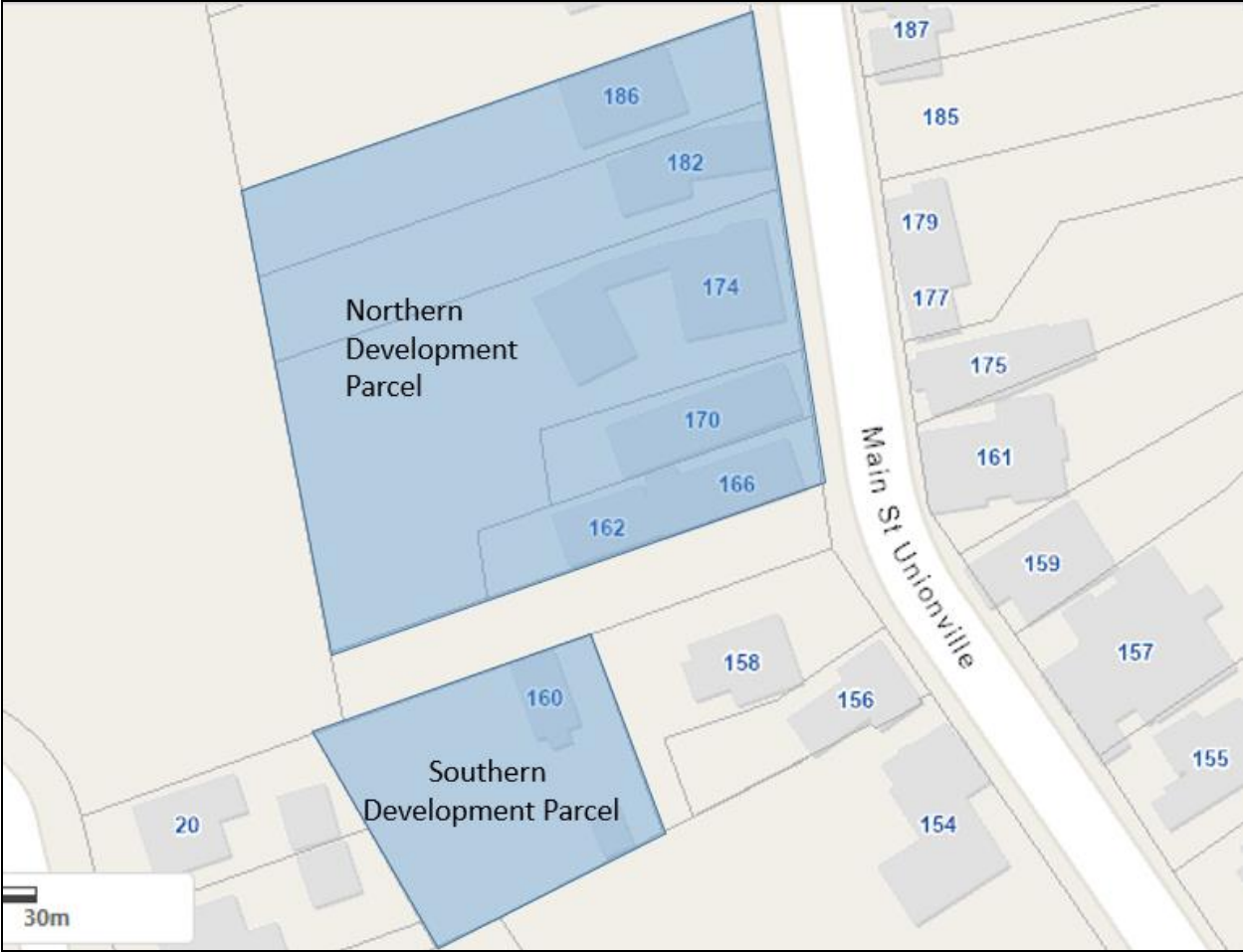
AND THAT Heritage Markham has no objection to the demolition of the Barn Structure subject to advertising its availability for salvage or relocation

File: 160 Main Street

#### **Attachments**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Appendix A | Location Map   |
| Appendix B | Aerial View 2021   |
| Appendix C | Site Plan Showing Proposed Development   |
| Appendix D | Perspective Views  |
| Appendix E | Rendering of Building Massing Recommended for Subject Property in Pattern Book |
| Appendix F | Maximum Building Heights Recommended by Pattern Book                           |
| Appendix G | Extract from the Pattern Book – Building Massing and Design Treatment          |
| Appendix H | Barn Structure   |

#### **APPENDIX A- LOCATION MAP**





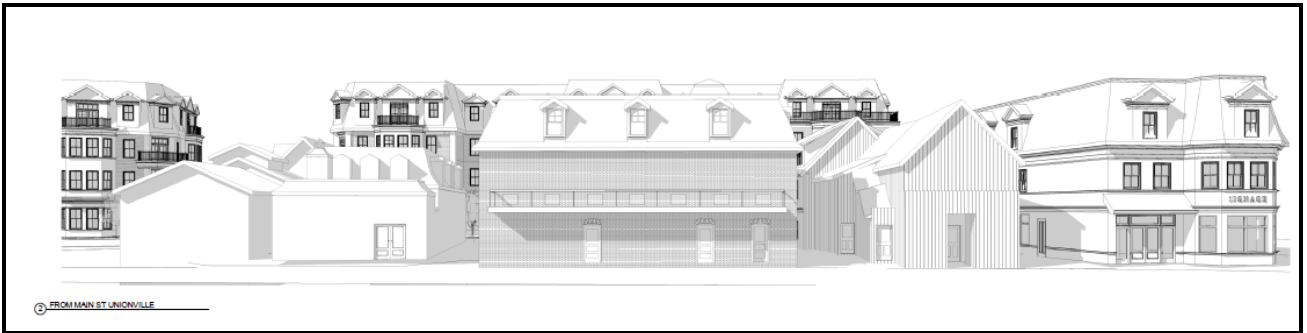
## APPENDIX B- AERIAL MAP 2021



APPENDIX C- SITE PLAN SHOWING PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX D- PERSPECTIVE VIEWS



View looking west down City owned right-of-way



View looking north at additions proposed to the rear of 174 and 182 Main St.

**VIEW LOOKING SOUTH DOWN MAIN STREET**







## **APPENDIX E**

**Rendering of Building Massing contained in the Vision Plan and Pattern Book  
(West Side North) and (West Side South)**



Vision Plan – West Side North

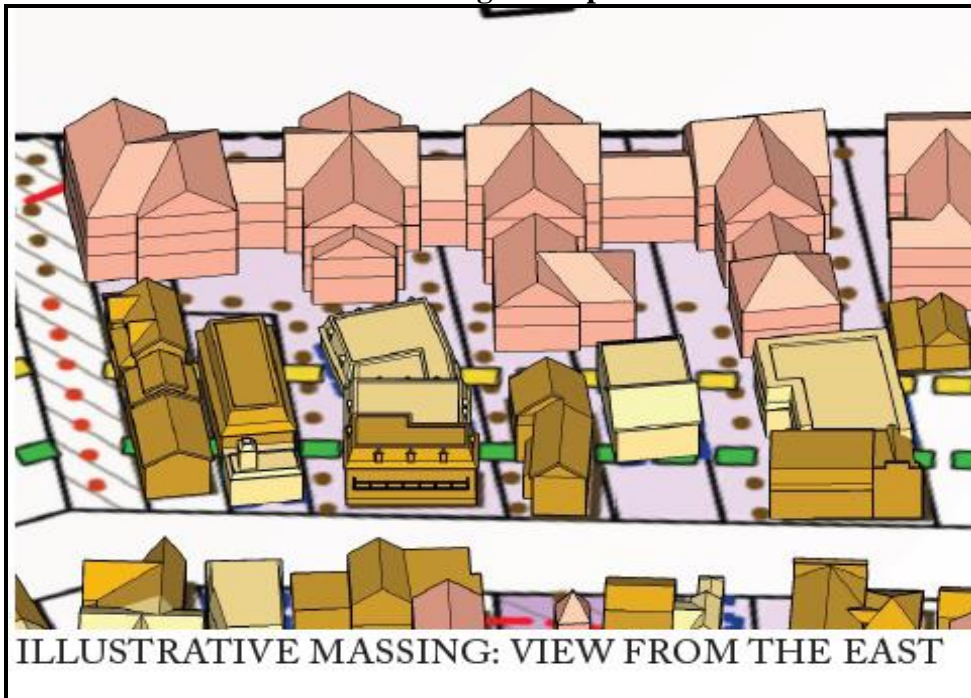


West Side South





## Pattern Book – Illustrative Massing Concepts



Above- Pattern Book Illustration of Massing- independent 3- 3 ½ storey buildings with 2 storey connector linkages- West Side North



Above - Pattern Book Illustration of Massing- retention of Barn Structure (gold) - West Side South



## APPENDIX F

### MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHTS RECOMMENDED BY PATTERN BOOK



#### 2.4.2 Building Heights

Traditional building heights are one to two storeys in this area. Enhanced building heights for new multi-unit development are supported, but setback from the existing streetscapes of the Core Area. Building heights are regulated in three specific zones by Building Height Restriction Lines (BHRL) which should provide a transition in the building height down to lower-scale neighbours.

1. Zone 1 permits up to 2 storeys and is from the street right-of-way line to the green BHRL (20m).
2. Zone 2 permits up to 2 ½ storeys and is between the green BHRL and the yellow BHRL (40m from the street).
3. Zone 3 permits up to 3 ½ storeys behind the yellow BHRL.

## APPENDIX G - Extract from the Pattern Book – Building Massing and Design Treatment

### BUILDING MASSING AND DESIGN TREATMENT

The intent of the Massing Guidelines is to guide new development to be appropriate in size and scale to the existing buildings in the Core Area of Main Street. The guidelines are based on the Vision Plan, further refining its recommendation for a maximum building height of 3.5 storeys. The guidelines provide guidelines for compatible new building forms that will enhance the village's historic character.

#### Encouraged:

- The design of new multi-unit development should be residential in character, scale, and proportion, and provide complementary roof lines or slopes to existing architecture.
- Simple yet varied massing that includes a primary building mass with attached minor wings, conceived of as additions, and subordinate to the primary building mass. These taller primary masses 'step down' with the shorter building masses attached to them.
- Building forms with multiple building masses tied together with "hyphens" between the primary masses. The addition of porches, limited applied balconies, and roof terraces will further articulate building forms. Special features such as bay windows, entry doors/verandas/porches or window groupings should be utilized to terminate long views and provide picturesque moments.
- All facades should have consistent and cohesive design elements. Facades are articulated with a limited vocabulary of window and door types, and simple material palettes.
- Building ensembles made up of smaller buildings each with its own shared entrance and stair/elevator core.
- Larger buildings broken up with multiple 'identities', either by style, material, or massing.
- Materials that are high-quality, durable and wear well with age. Materials such as wood, wood-like materials

and brick can be used effectively in traditional designs and are complementary to the surrounding area.

- Side and rear building elevations with high public exposure and visibility to public spaces such as streets, walkways, parks and school sites should be highly articulated and consistent with the front elevation in terms of materials, fenestration and detailing.

#### Discouraged:

- Formal massing with long unbroken façade lengths and overly repetitive motifs as well as flat, unarticulated blank walls visible from public spaces.
- Large scale elements such as vertically ganged windows or extensive areas of glazing.
- Overly complicated massing without a hierarchy of forms, or complex material palettes.
- Tall, 3 ½ storey building massing without stepping down.
- Corridor buildings with single entrances and single cores.
- Excessive use of projecting balconies, which are not a common design element for historic Unionville, as well as highly visible outdoor/rooftop terraces, especially where they may be seen from Main Street.

## MASSING GUIDELINES

### Building Height

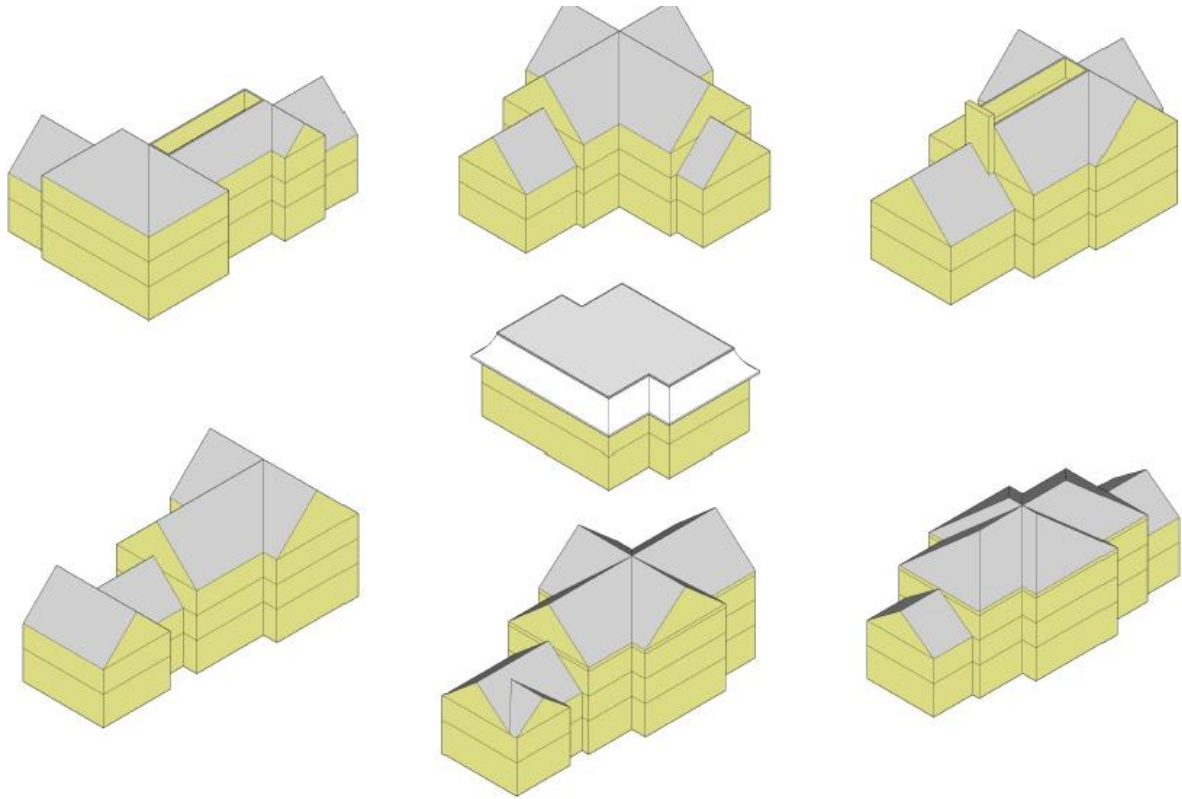
1. The maximum height of a building is three storeys. Building Height should be measured to the roof eave from the ground in front of each building entrance. An occupied roof is permitted above the 3rd floor to an area equal to 75% of the floor area below the roof.
2. The maximum height of the ground floor (as measured to the finished floor above) is 4.2 metres (14 ft).
3. The maximum floor to floor height of the levels above the ground floor is 3.2 metres (10.5 ft).
4. See the Regulating Plan (Section 2.4) for additional guidelines governing building height and massing.

### Building Size

1. The maximum footprint of a three storey portion of a building is 348 sqm (3,750 sq ft). Two or more three storey portions of a building can be linked together by a shorter building mass either two storeys to the eave or one storey to the eave.
2. The maximum occupied space that may be located in the roof is equal to 75% of the floor area below the roof, when consistent with the appropriate roof slope associated with the Architectural Style as described in the Architectural Guidelines.
3. Although a mansard style roof is not one of the preferred architectural styles, if a mansard roof is proposed, the maximum height to the roof eave of a building is two storeys, and the mansard roof design must possess the form and proportion of a 19th century roof based on local examples.

### Facade Treatment

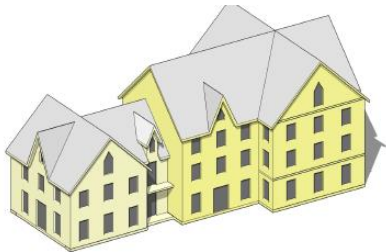
1. Building facades should be articulated every 12 metres (40 ft), with a change in façade plane a minimum of 2 metres (6.5 ft), or a change in eave height of a minimum of one storey.



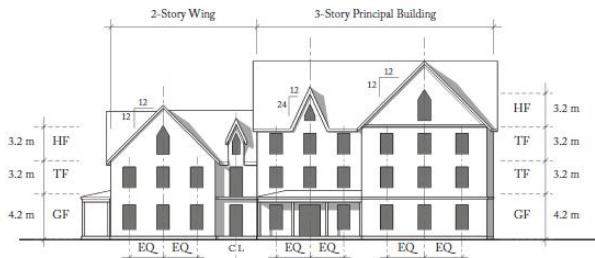
ILLUSTRATIVE BUILDING MASSING: CONFIGURATION AND ROOF-FORMS MAY VARY BY STYLE



# Example of Architectural Guidelines – Vernacular/Gothic Revival Inspired New Infill



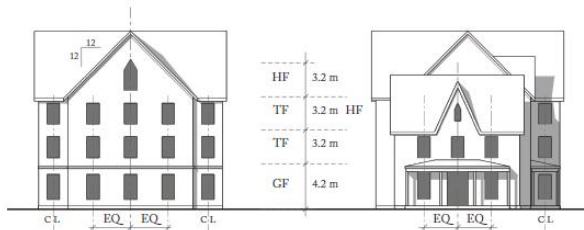
BASIC MASSING AND FENESTRATION PATTERN



PRINCIPAL ELEVATION: COMPOSITION PROPORTIONS



ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION



SYMMETRICAL SIDE COMPOSITION

ASYMMETRICAL SIDE COMPOSITION

## 3.2 VERNACULAR | GOTHIC REVIVAL SAMPLE DETAILS AND MATERIALS



DOORS



WINDOWS



DORMERS



MILLWORK



CLADDING



## APPENDIX H – Barn Structure

This town barn or stable was likely constructed during the period 1900 - 1910 on the property of Brown family that owned a general store and bakery at 156 Main Street. The properties at 156, 158 and 160 Main Street were once a single lot before being divided by severance in 1999. This barn probably served as a stable or drive shed for the Brown's bakery delivery wagon and the horses that pulled it. It was originally clad in pressed metal panels. In more recent times, the building has been renovated, clad in board and batten siding, and used as commercial space.



2018