To: Mayor Grace and Members of Council
Andrea Fisher, Clerk
From: Victor Kloeze, Planner
Date: February 12th, 2020
Re: Zoning By-law Amendment for Downtown 6 Storey Condominium Proposal
File: GOD Z01-20 Address: 37 Hamilton Street
Applicant: Talin Properties

This report is submitted to Council for their consideration at their February 18th, 2020 meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, and conforms to the Huron County Official Plan and the Town of Goderich Official Plan.

It is recommended that Town of Goderich Council approve the proposed Zoning By-law amendment with the recommended Holding Zone, and, if there are no further public comments, pass a motion stating that they concur with the planning report regarding the effect of public and agency comments on the decision.

PURPOSE

The applicant proposes the development of a six storey, 60 to 70 unit condominium building on the lands municipally known as 37 Hamilton Street in Goderich. The subject lands are approximately 3,294 square metres (approximately 0.81 acres) in area, and front on Hamilton and St Andrew Street. They are designated Core Commercial Area in the Town’s Official Plan, and zoned C5 in Zoning By-law 124-2013.

The Zoning By-law amendment application proposes to amend the zoning requirements for the proposed building, with an increased maximum front and exterior sideyard setback of 1.5 metres; and an increased height of 24 metres or six storeys plus a rooftop utility penthouse. There would be a maximum of 70 residential units on the subject lands. The amendment proposes to eliminate the automobile parking requirement for units above 60, proposing bicycle, mobility scooter, or motorcycle parking spaces for those units; to reduce the parking space depth requirement to 5.2 metres; and to reduce the parking access aisle width requirement to 7 metres.

Development of the subject lands will not be permitted until such time as certain criteria including a final design approved by the Town’s Municipal and Marine Heritage Committee through a heritage permit, a demonstration of meeting the Environmental Site Assessment requirements, and a complete site plan control application package are completed to the satisfaction of the Town of Goderich.

PLANNING AND HERITAGE ISSUES

Amendments to the Town’s Zoning By-law must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, and conform to the Huron County and Town of Goderich Official Plans. In this case, the property falls
within the Town of Goderich ‘Outer Square’ Heritage Conservation District, the subject area for the Town’s Downtown Core Masterplan, and within the Town’s Downtown Core Commercial policies in the Official Plan.

**Housing Supply and Density**

Housing supply has been identified as a key issue, with broad support for new housing creation from the level of Provincial Policy down through the County and to the Town’s Official Plan for intensification in existing built up areas. The Town’s Official Plan identifies the Downtown Core as a critical area for new, more intensive housing development, to support year round commercial activity, promote walkability, and provide for a range and mix of housing forms and options. The County’s Economic Development Department has identified a lack of housing options and supply as critical issues negatively impacting businesses in the County. A motion of support has been received from the Downtown Goderich B.I.A. for the proposed development.

A new, condominium-ownership, building in the Downtown Core with underground parking would be a unique housing option for Goderich. While the current proposal does not include any publicly funded affordable housing units, the applicant has indicated they are intending to provide a range in unit sizes and configurations to provide varied options and costs within the building.

The proposed development conforms to the direction of the County and Town Official Plans encouraging increased density and variety of housing options, particularly in proximity to the Downtown Core.

**Height, Design and Massing**

The critical policy which triggers the Zoning By-law amendment is Downtown Core policy 5 in the Official Plan; which states that ‘Establishment of buildings up to six stories in height may be permitted within the Downtown Core by rezoning, accompanied by a supportive heritage impact assessment and an approved design that exhibits sensitivity to the area’. To this end, the applicant has submitted conceptual plans and renderings of the building, along with the ‘Abbreviated Heritage Impact Assessment’ from Jason Morgan at Allan Avis Architects. The issue of heritage compatibility has also been raised by comments from the public.

Development of taller buildings in the Downtown, including ones up to six stories, have been anticipated and planned for since the development of the 2009 Official Plan; with the caveat that buildings be designed to be compatible with the traditional downtown commercial design of largely 2-3 storey buildings built to the lot line. With the Heritage Conservation District Plan and the Downtown Core Master Plan, the Town has developed clearer policy direction on how to integrate new development and taller buildings into the existing built form of the Downtown.

The proposed concept design includes many elements that address the policies of the Master Plan and the Heritage Conservation District Plan. The base of the building is segmented and scaled to be comfortable to pedestrians, using more traditional materials and designed to emulate traditional commercial buildings. The design minimizes the potential for negative impacts of such a significant building length along Hamilton and St. Andrew Streets. The raised focal point at the intersection of the two streets is another best practice shown in the concept.
Stepping back upper floors, and using more modern elements in those areas, helps to minimize the impact of the bulk of the building on the pedestrian realm, and reinforce the traditional low-rise commercial realm. The parking access on the north side of the property helps to set back the building from the existing abutting single detached dwelling, mitigating potential impacts, although some impacts on daylighting and privacy are to be expected. The specifics of the design of the east side of the property, including how the parking access is graded and designed; and what buffering will be provided along the north property line, will be the subject of further discussions with the developer through the site plan control and detailed design processes.

Figure 1: Current site condition, looking north from across Hamilton Street

![Figure 1: Current site condition, looking north from across Hamilton Street](image1)

Figure 2: Render of concept for proposed building, looking north from across Hamilton Street

![Figure 2: Render of concept for proposed building, looking north from across Hamilton Street](image2)

There are some areas for further discussion and refinement from the concept. One critical element will be the design for the ground floor unit windows and balconies and their relationship to the public realm, and how to improve privacy for those units without negatively impacting the pedestrian realm. This discussion will also need to include the road allowance, street parking, and sidewalk along Hamilton and St. Andrew, and what updates and improvements will need to occur. The proposed slight increase in maximum permitted setback from Hamilton and St. Andrew Streets appears appropriate to assist with buffering residential space from public areas.
The concept also shows blank side walls on upper floors that would be visible from the Downtown Core. Further refinement to activate these with windows or other design elements, will be required. The applicant has indicating that in the detailed designs they do not intend to have blank side or rear walls.

In discussions with the Municipal and Marine Heritage Committee, they have indicated that a primary outstanding concern is the appearance of the building from North Street, for those looking at the Lakeshore United Church at 56 North Street. The applicant has indicated that they will have renders of the view of the building from North Street for their Heritage Permit and Site Plan Control applications. The Municipal and Marine Heritage Committee passed a motion supporting the proposed Zoning By-law amendment at their February 6th meeting.

**Figure 3: Proposed site plan, subject to further review through the site plan process**

*Condominium Development, Goderich*

St. Andrew Street 1871.00

Goderich, Ontario

As the proposed zoning amendment is subject to a holding zone for further information to be provided, and the Town’s Municipal and Marine Heritage Committee was generally satisfied with the conceptual designs presented by the applicant, I am sufficiently satisfied with the conceptual information submitted that a design for the subject property can be six stories in height and remain compatible with the heritage and design features of the downtown core, and that the increased maximum setback does not negatively impact the Downtown Core.

**Parking Reduction and Dimension Changes**

Along with the increased height, the applicants are requesting a reduction in parking for the building. In the downtown core, the Town has implemented a reduced requirement for parking of one space per residential unit. Apartments elsewhere in Goderich, which may not be on streets with street parking or in
a walkable distance to amenities, have a standard minimum parking requirement of 1.5 spaces per residential unit.

The applicants are requesting that if their building exceeds sixty units, that instead of an automobile parking space they could provide bicycle, motorcycle, or mobility parking spaces for each of the additional units. At a maximum build out of 70 residential units, this would result in a maximum of 10 automobile parking spaces replaced by alternative spaces, with 60 traditional automobile parking spaces being provided. Automobile parking would still represent at least 86% of the parking requirement.

Figure 4: Development site highlighted in blue, with 400 metre / five minute walk radius in blue solid line and 800 metre radius / ten minute walk in orange dashed line

In discussing the proposed parking reduction with the applicants, they have highlighted the accessibility from this property to amenities including restaurants, shops, parks, and cultural facilities. They have also referred to other residential buildings in the downtown which regularly do not have full parking areas, with less than one parking space occupied per residential unit. The challenge in assessing the proposed development against existing building stock downtown is that the intention of the applicants is to sell the units as individual condominium apartments, while most of the existing buildings are rental. It is unclear whether not having a parking space for each unit will impact the potential market for the condominium units, which will be an issue for the applicants to consider further in the detailed design of the proposal. However, the Town’s Official Plan and Downtown Core Masterplan do clearly articulate the intention to reduce minimum parking requirements in the Downtown to help support intensification and a vibrant,
walkable community; while the current standard of one space per unit is a reduction, further reductions such as what has been proposed for this development may be appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

In considering the limited amount of the proposed parking requirement reduction, the proposed alternate supply of mobility scooter, motorcycle or bicycle parking; the central location within the Downtown Core and the many amenities and services within a ten minute walk; and the clear policy direction from the Provincial Policy Statement, the Huron County Official Plan and the Town’s Official Plan to encourage active transportation, intensification of existing built up areas, and specifically encouraging the development of Downtown as a ‘people-place’ with a critical mass of pedestrians to support vibrant restaurants and retail stores, I am supportive of the proposed parking requirement reduction.

It is noted that the applicants have indicated they would like to discuss a change from parallel to angled parking along part or all of St. Andrew Street along with other streetscape improvements. This change would result in a significant increase in the local on-street parking supply. Discussions would occur during the site plan review process, and will need to include Town staff, particularly the Director of Operations, as well as the Municipal Engineer.

The applicants have also requested a reduction in the minimum aisle widths and parking space depths for the required parking spaces. As part of their application package, they provided example dimensions from urban municipalities (Waterloo and Mississauga) which were consistent with the dimensions they’ve requested. If the developers design the parking lot to the absolute minimums permitted in the proposed site specific special zone, turning around and parking in the proposed garage will be more difficult than in other new developments in Town. As the parking would be primarily used by residents and guests of residents in the building, and would not be a public parking lot for a commercial facility, I have less concerns about these changes. Accessibility standards will still be required to be met for required accessible parking spaces.

Given the planning policy direction from the PPS and County Official Plan through to the Town’s Official Plan and Downtown Core Masterplan to encourage intensification and active transportation, and the high cost to construct underground parking, insisting on ease of access and convenience for the proposed parking spaces at the potential loss of units or increased costs for units does not appear to be the best planning recommendation. As such, I am supportive of the proposed reduction in parking aisle depth and parking space depth. The design of the underground parking area will be requested as part of the complete site plan control package for review, in hopes that some longer spaces and / or turning areas could be accommodated in the design.

**Holding Zone**
The proposed zoning amendment is subject to a holding zone provision. The purpose of this holding zone provision is to prevent development of the subject lands until certain criteria have been met to the satisfaction of the Town of Goderich. Key issues include:

- a demonstration of meeting Provincial Environmental Site Assessment requirements, most likely through a registered Record of Site Condition with the Ministry; this requirement is due to the potential for past contamination of the soil on site and the proposed use as a residential building;

- a final design approved by the Town’s Municipal and Marine Heritage Committee through a heritage permit; this requirement is due to the fact that the proposed design is a conceptual
design which the applicant indicates may need to be modified based on the final internal design
of the building and unit counts;

- and a complete site plan control application package, to ensure that issues regarding servicing,
  traffic flow, the design of Hamilton and St. Andrew Streets, and the final design of the building,
  site and underground parking area have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Town of
  Goderich’s site plan review group.

Consistency with PPS and Conformity with Official Plans
The proposed amendment is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, and conforms to the Huron
County and Town of Goderich Official Plans.

COMMENTS RECEIVED
At the time of writing this report, agency comments have been received from the Municipal and Marine
Heritage Committee, who passed a motion supporting the proposed rezoning, and the Downtown
Goderich BIA Board of Management, who passed a motion to support the development. Specific
concerns of the heritage committee, to be addressed through the more detailed site plan control and
heritage permit process, have been addressed earlier in this report.

Public comments have been received with concerns about the heritage design and parking impacts of the
building. These issues have been considered throughout the planning report.

Public and Agency comments were thoroughly considered and the issues raised have been addressed in
this report.

Additional comments may be received before or during the public meeting.

EFFECT OF PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS
Agency comments supporting the proposed application and public comments with concerns about the
heritage design and parking impacts of the proposed application have been received at the time of
preparing the planning report. These concerns were thoroughly considered, and my recommendation is
that Council approve the application.

Notices of decisions are required to include a statement about the effect of public and agency comments
on their decision. I recommend that if Council agrees with my recommendation and review of the
comments received, that Council should pass a motion stating that they concur with the planning report
regarding the effect of public and agency comments on their decision.

Sincerely,

Victor Kloeze, Planner, MCIP RPP
Date of Site Inspection: January 15th, 2020

OTHERS CONSULTED:
- Janice Hallahan, CAO
- Andrea Fisher, Clerk / Planning Coordinator
- Chip Wilson, Director of Operations
- Jason Dykstrra, Chief Building Official