

## R4Zoning Review - Comments from New Edinburgh

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SUBJECT: R4 ZONING REVIEW - DISCUSSION PAPER # 3

FROM: Gail McEachern  
Chair, Heritage & Development Committee  
New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA)

New Edinburgh is divided into two parts which together form a unique community:

A) The area of New Edinburgh which is designated as an Historic Conservation District

B) The area of New Edinburgh which lies outside the Historic District

NECA's comments will cover each area separately.

### A) NEW EDINBURGH'S HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NECA does not support the implementation of the R4 Zoning proposal within the boundaries of the HCD as outlined in Discussion Paper #3. The HCD is bordered by Sussex Drive, Dufferin Road, MacKay Street and the Rideau River. It is located adjacent to many significant sites of local and national importance including the founder Thomas MacKay's original estate (now the home of Canada's Governor General), the Prime Minister's Residence at 24 Sussex, and the Minto Bridges, built to provide a ceremonial route between Rideau Hall and the Parliament Buildings.

The New Edinburgh HCD was designated by the City of Ottawa in 2001 through By-Law 2001-44. It's comprehensive Heritage Conservation Plan was adopted in 2015. Backing up the Plan are federal, provincial and municipal policies in place to protect and conserve the integrity of both the built heritage and the cultural heritage landscapes of this HCD.

1) FEDERAL: Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places (adopted by the City of Ottawa in 2008). It states: "Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. DO NOT REMOVE, REPLACE, OR SUBSTANTIALLY ALTER ITS INTACT OR REPAIRABLE CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS."

2) PROVINCIAL: The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) issued under the Planning Act in 2014 states:

a) "Significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved" (Section 2.6.1.)

b) "Planning authorities SHALL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT AND SITE ALTERATION ON ADJACENT LAND TO A PROTECTED HERITAGE PROPERTY, EXCEPT WHERE THE DEVELOPMENT AND SITE ALTERATION HAS BEEN EVALUATED AND IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THE HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES OF THE PROTECTED HERITAGE PROPERTY WILL BE CONSERVED" (SECTION 2.6.3.).

c) In the document 'Heritage Conservation Districts - A Guide to District Designation' is the following statement: "ONCE THE DISTRICT PLAN IS ADOPTED (by the municipality), ITS POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES WILL TAKE PRECEDENCE IN THE EVENT OF A CONFLICT WITH EXISTING MUNICIPAL ZONING (ie; SENIOR R4) AND OTHER BY-LAWS THAT WERE IN PLACE BEFORE THE DESIGNATION OF THE DISTRICT. (P. 28).

3) MUNICIPAL: The City of Ottawa Official Plan- Section 2.5.5 provides direction regarding the protection of cultural heritage resources in the city. “ Individual buildings, structures, sites and cultural landscapes will be designated as properties of cultural heritage value under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. Groups of buildings, cultural landscapes, and areas of the city will be designated as Heritage Conservation Districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act”.

New Edinburgh is a significant example of a small 19th century village located within the urban area of Ottawa. It's street grid was created by Thomas MacKay, a Scottish entrepreneur who was instrumental in the construction of the Rideau Canal and the establishment of an industrial complex of mills at Rideau Falls in the mid-eighteen hundreds. Many of the houses were built by and for the mill workers, on long narrow lots which could be called 'garden lots' which joined a principal street to a lane.

The existing Heritage Conservation Plan is anchored to a number of 'Heritage Attributes' which are highlighted in the section of the Plan entitled ' Objectives for New Development (7.3)' and for 'Landscapes and Streetscapes (7.4)'.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 1) To ensure that any infill or new construction respects and is compatible with the architectural character of the HCD and respects the scale and massing of existing adjacent buildings and the broader streetscape.
- 2) To ensure that any new construction retains existing trees and green spaces.
- 3) To ensure the 19th century pattern of lot development is maintained and respected.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR LANDSCAPE AND STREETSCAPE

- 1) To conserve the rhythm and scale of the streetscapes of the historic village of New Edinburgh including the pattern of buildings separated by side yards.
- 2) To conserve the green character of the narrow laneways of New Edinburgh including River Lane, Avon Lane and School Lane.
- 3) To conserve the village character of the streets in the heritage conservation district with landscaped front yards, low fences, spaces between buildings.
- 4) To retain existing mature trees and green spaces and to promote the planting of new trees to enhance the green character of the HCD.
- 5) To promote appropriate public and private landscaping that will enhance the character of the HCD.

It is NECA's position that applying the proposed R4 Zoning to New Edinburgh's HCD would undermine the basic principles on which the historic district was established 20 years ago, and alter this important built heritage and cultural landscape irreparably. NECA strongly recommends that the New Edinburgh Heritage Conservation District be exempt from this proposal.

#### B) AREA OF NEW EDINBURGH OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

This section is bordered by Dufferin/Rideau Terrace/Springfield/Beechwood and the Rideau River. It is our understanding that is partly zoned R4 and partly R3. Although the proposed zoning changes will only apply to the properties that are currently zoned R4, attention must be given to establishing clear limits on the height and footprint of apartment buildings being considered for this area. This is an established residential neighbourhood composed largely of modest single family homes similar to those found in the adjacent HCD. There exists a balanced rhythm to the streetscapes and it is rich visually with trees and green landscaping which must be respected and not 'picked away at' or destroyed.

Any new zoning by-laws must be tailored to fit not a whole neighbourhood but should be specific to individual streets within that neighbourhood. In New Edinburgh, what may be complimentary and appropriate on one street in terms of

scale and style may be overwhelming on another. We are concerned about the tendency to depend on a 'one size fits all' approach. This proposal opens the door to developers buying up single family homes that are still viable and inserting a multi-unit building in its place. A potentially worse scenario is the consolidation of two adjacent parcels permitting the developer to build a much larger building which would be even more disruptive to the street character. How will this be prevented from happening in New Edinburgh? It would meet the goal of increasing density and offering alternative living options but could result in changing a long established special place for the residents and not necessarily for the better.

## OTHER CONCERNS

### 1) AMENITIES AND LANDSCAPING

NECA echoes the Vanier Community Association's recommendation that the 30% landscaping requirement for low-rise apartment buildings on small lots should be retained. However, the question arises - Who is in charge? Who designs the amenity space? Who sets the rules about usage? Who takes care of it - waters the grass/plants etc.? Could someone just stick down astro-turf to save time and maintenance costs? This issue needs further exploration to set out a workable mandate for managing these spaces.

### 2) AFFORDABLE HOUSING

NECA supports the City's efforts to create more affordable rental units in Ottawa, especially in the urban core. However, we agree with the Vanier Community Association's view that there is not compelling evidence the proposed recommendations will lead to less expensive rental apartments. In New Edinburgh (outside the Historic District) the lots are modest in size and close together which should result in a small building limited to 4 units. In addition, New Edinburgh is a highly sought-after neighbourhood and developers will price their units at the highest level the market will bear. There is no incentive for developers to keep their rents below market rates. Unless the City offers a subsidy in some form, affordable rental housing seems unlikely.