

# HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDENDUM H GREYSTONE FORECOURT TOWNHOMES



*View towards Block29 looking from the Forecourt*

PREPARED FOR: Regional Group

PREPARED BY: Commonwealth Historic Resource Management

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## AUTHORS QUALIFICATIONS

Commonwealth Historic Resource Management is a consulting firm that offers a range of professional services related to conservation, planning, and interpretation for historical and cultural resources. A key focus of the practice is planning and assessment of heritage resources as part of the development process.

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Stewart is a founding member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals. He has served as the Canadian representative of the Historic Landscapes and Gardens Committee of ICOMOS and the International Federation of Landscape Architects. Stewart is a panel member with the Ottawa Urban design Review Panel and a board member of Algonquin College Heritage Trades Program.

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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been requested by the City of Ottawa to evaluate the proposed Greystone Forecourt Townhomes as part of a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) and Site Plan Control (SPC) application for the proposed condominium properties at 295-355 Deschâtelet Avenue. The proposed development fronts onto the forecourt of the Deschâtelet Building, both of which are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). The development is set adjacent to the designated landscape that includes the Forecourt Park and portions of the Grand Allée. Both are protected cultural landscapes that are itemized in Annex A to the designation By-law.

The proponents are The Regional Group, the architect is Hobin Architecture, and the builder EQ Homes. The proposed development of the forecourt townhomes was approved in the 2015 plan of subdivision for Blocks 28 and 29. The form and number of townhomes planned in the forecourt has changed substantively; in the approved plan of subdivision, forty-two (42) back-to-back townhomes/rowhouses were proposed forming two semicircular arcs bisected by the Grand Allée. The current proposal is for thirty (30) townhomes aggregated generally in blocks of two and four units set side-by-side separated by shared parking courts leading to enclosed garages (Figure 16).

The HIA, prepared by Commonwealth Historic Resource Management, is one in a series of HIAs discussing the impact of new developments at Greystone village. Identified as addendum H, the report focuses on the impact of the proposed townhomes overlooking the Deschâtelet forecourt in a manner that is consistent with the City of Ottawa Official Plan Section 4.5.2, the Secondary Plan Policy Area 3, and the designation bylaw.

## 1.2 OP Section 4.5.2 Applicable

### Excerpts:

- 1) When reviewing development applications affecting lands and properties on, or adjacent to a designated property, the City will ensure that the proposal is compatible by respecting and conserving the cultural heritage value and attributes of the heritage property, streetscape, or Heritage Conservation District as defined by the associated designation bylaw or Heritage Conservation District Plan and having regard for the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.
- 3) Heritage designation is, in part, intended to ensure contextually appropriate development and is not intended to discourage intensification or limit housing choice. Elements of the built form, including height, scale, and massing, of such development shall ensure that the defined cultural heritage value and attributes of the property or HCD will be conserved, while balancing the intensification objectives outlined throughout this plan.

### Secondary Plan Policy Area 3 Applicable Excerpts:

*Policy 18) c) Encourage a complementary architectural treatment of buildings, including finish, colour, and materials, together with a consistent design treatment of common elements on the property, such as fencing, landscaping, gateway features, street lighting and signage.*

*Policy 20.c) Conserve the allée and forecourt of the Deschâtelet building as cultural heritage landscape, which are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, included in the City's Heritage Register, and as shown on — Schedule A — Designation Plan, as Provincially Designated Heritage Landscape.*

*Policy 21) a) Integrate existing trees in the development to the extent possible.*

The current HIA submission, Addendum H: Greystone Forecourt Townhomes addresses the proposed Greystone Forecourt Townhouses arrayed around Deschâtelet Avenue – the proposal requires a ZBA and a SPC Application for the freehold townhomes at 295-355 Deschâtelet Avenue

Pre-consultation Comments Phase 1 September 19, 2023. File No.: PC2023-0209.

Planning General Relevant Excerpts

5. Separate approaches from Deschâtelet Avenue are a change from the approved Landscape Plan (subdivision) and interfere with the previously proposed trees to be planted along Deschâtelet Avenue and their approved locations. **An updated Landscape Plan is required to be provided and should include the following revisions:**
  - Proposed private approaches/driveways and revised locations for trees in Deschâtelet Avenue ROW as otherwise subdivision securities would not be returned for trees.
  - Additionally, there is a small discrepancy in the legend for landscape plan as part of the plan of subdivision approval, where the trees on the blocks 28 and 29 are marked the same way as the trees that are actually proposed for retention in Forecourt Park.

Urban Design Comments related to design:

#### **16. Challenges:**

**d. The previous curved forms illustrated in the comprehensive plan have now been lost.** We recommend additional design features along the curved park edge to further reinforce the intention of a curved inner built form using low walls, architectural features, or other 3-dimensional elements.

#### **Heritage Comments:**

18. The subject land is adjacent to property designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. A heritage permit will not be required for this project. However, **the proposal should be respectful of the adjacent heritage attributes in terms of materials, design, and siting.** Like seen elsewhere within the Greystone Village development, natural materials are preferred to better relate to the high-quality construction of the Deschâtelet Building.
19. An Heritage Impact Statement is required (HIA). **The HIA should look at impacts on both the Deschâtelet Building, and also the associated landscape.**
  - **Tree-lined allée leading from Main Street to the open forecourt. (Alterations to this attribute will not include regular maintenance of the trees, interventions at the ground plane such as paving, parking, laneways, sidewalks, landscaping and street furnishings, or development on the undesignated lands on either side of it)**
  - **Semicircular, tree-lined forecourt located to the west of the front door. This space is defined by the trees running in a semicircle from Oblate Avenue to Oblate Avenue.**

- **Remnant of the “Allée des Ormes” planted by the Oblates in the 19th century, located south and west of the Deschâtelet Building**

#### **Community comments**

- 55. the Community needs to know how the proposal evolved and what drove the reduction in units compared with the initial proposal during the subdivision process.**
- 56. Comments regarding the appearance. Please consider the compatibility of the roofline with Grand Allée and Deschâtelet Building. Fenestration will be important as well.**

### **1.3 Owner and Contact**

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## **2.0 HERITAGE CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Designation Bylaw:**

Statement of Significance

The following Statement of Cultural Heritage Value identifies the primary cultural heritage values and heritage attributes of the Oblate property landscape and the Deschâtelet Building.

**Construction Dates: 1885, 1925, & 1950.**

#### **Description of Property**

Deschâtelet Building, 175 Main Street, Ottawa

Known as the Deschâtelet Building since interior renovations in 1967-68, constructed as Scolasticate St.-Joseph, the building is a large stone structure, located on Main Street, in the Ottawa East neighbourhood.

#### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

The Deschâtelet Building was initially constructed in 1885 as a scholasticate for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Oblate order was founded in France in 1826 by Archbishop Eugene de Mazenod. The Oblates arrived in Longueuil, Quebec in 1841, moving to Bytown in 1848, By the 1880s they had outgrown the wing of the building in Lowertown where they had lived since their arrival and construction of a new seminary began on a farm in Archville that had been purchased in 1869. They moved into the building in 1885. The Oblates were a missionary order, sending priests and lay brothers across Canada to teach, and their facility was altered and enlarged in 1925 and 1950 as the order grew. Dramatically different from its original architectural style after these extensive alterations, the Deschâtelet Building represents the role that the Oblates have played in the community since their arrival in Ottawa in 1844 and the evolution of Roman Catholic institutional architecture since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Deschâtelet building was initially designed by M. Meynard and altered through the addition of two wings in the Beaux Arts style by the Quebec firm of Donat-Arthur Gascon and Louis Parant in 1926. In 1950, the building was further altered to the plans of Montreal architect Louis-J Lapierre that added another storey, and a new Chapel. Today, the building is a large, four storey, classically inspired stone building setback from Main Street.

The setting of the Deschâtelet Building, at the terminus of a wide tree — lined allée that leads to a forecourt from Main Street, contributes to its cultural heritage value. Historical photos reveal that it was planted after the completion of the 1950s alterations to the building. The allée is a well-known landmark and character defining feature of the property.

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key attributes that embody the heritage value of the Deschâtelet Building as an excellent example of a Roman Catholic institutional building include its:

- Stone construction;
- Classically inspired design with a central frontispiece, topped by a pediment with a crest, with a dentilled secondary cornice;
- Two flanking pavilions flanking the frontispiece also with pediments and secondary cornices;
- Regularly spaced windows, predominantly paired, with shaped stone surrounds;
- The front door, its pediment, architrave, and flanking piers; and,
- Key attributes that embody the heritage value of the landscape associated with the Deschâtelet Building includes;
  - Tree-lined allée leading from Main Street to the open forecourt. (Alterations to this attribute will not include regular maintenance of the trees, interventions at the ground plane such as paving, parking, laneways, sidewalks, landscaping and street furnishings, or development on the undesignated lands on either side of it);
  - A semicircular tree-lined forecourt located to the west of the front door. This space is defined by the trees running in a semicircle from Oblate Avenue to Oblate Avenue; and,
  - Remnant of the Allée des Ormes planted by the Oblates in the 19th century, located south and west of the Deschâtelet Building.



The gymnasium, archives to the south of the building, the one-storey addition to the north and east of the Chapel, the structure to the north of the Chapel, and the small structure to the north and east of the Deschâtelet Building itself are not included in this designation. The interior of the building is not included in the designation.



Figure 1: Overview of the site prior to construction, with the area designated portion outlined in red. Note the elongated shape of the walkway in front of the Deschâtelet Building, City of Ottawa, 2016.



## 3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL — FORECOURT TOWNHOMES

### 3.1 Planning Background – Evolved Design

The plan of subdivision for Blocks 28 and 29 was approved in 2015. The form and design of the townhomes fronting onto the forecourt of the Deschâtelet Building has changed substantively, initially conceived as a series of back-to-back and side-by-side townhomes/rowhouses. In the approved plan of subdivision, forty-two (42) adjacent townhomes/rowhouses were proposed, forming two semicircular arcs bisected by the Grand Allée. The current proposal is for thirty (30) townhomes aggregated generally in blocks of two and four units set side-by-side separated by shared parking courts providing access to enclosed garages.



*Figures 2 and 3: 2015 Plan view of an earlier version of the back-to-back townhomes/rowhouses forming the edge of the semicircular Forecourt to the Deschâtelet Building. Perspective view of the proposed townhomes. Credit: Regional Group Inc. 2015.*

The development Blocks 28 and 29 are located on the western edge of the designated landscape associated with the Deschâtelet Building. The development blocks 28 and 29 are bisected into two approximately equal parts by the Grand Allée and bordered by the semicircular forecourt to the east and Deschâtelet Avenue to the west.

### 3.2 Current Design Proposal

The Forecourt Towns will occupy the crescent shaped site in the heart of the Greystone Village neighbourhood, where the pedestrian promenade “Grande Allée” and the Deschâtelet Forecourt meet.

The new townhomes, together with the heritage Deschâtelet building, will form a strong urban gesture at the perimeter of the reinvented Forecourt Park.

While these townhomes were originally conceptualized as two continuous curving blocks of back-to-back row homes, the design has been amended into a collection of 2-4 door townhouse blocks that provide more openness and connectivity through the site.



Figure 4 & 5: Site/Block plan of the proposed townhomes. Source Hobin Architecture August 1 2024.



**Key design principles are:**

- Houses front on all sides of the development. The site is designed so that no backs of houses or garage doors face a street.
- Gaps between houses allow for discrete “car court” parking access between buildings. These gaps also provide lines of site through the development for a more connected and open feel.
- The geometry of the site’s crescent shape will be reinforced through strategic design principles related to, building orientation, facade composition, exterior material pallet and landscape design.
  - Each Forecourt house is oriented to form a segment in the larger curve of the sites’ frontage.
  - A unified approach to façade composition is employed so that the collection of houses read together as part of a larger whole. Prominent, wide masonry arches line the inner and outer curving frontages and define the threshold between sidewalk and private porch space.



- Materiality is a combination of large format masonry and brick, both in light grey. Wood siding, metal panel and generous glazing will accentuate the composition.
- Landscape design is vital to the interface between the townhomes and the Forecourt. A continuous walkway and planting edge and urban trees traces the property boundary.
- House footprints are designed to accommodate the existing heritage trees at the end of the Grande Allée



Figures 6: View illustrating the positioning of the townhomes and the introduction of widened terraces, which reinforce the crescent form of the forecourt Hobin August 2024.

**Previous Neighbourhood Design Principals from “Slideshow for Planning Convention, 190725”**

**Grande Allée**

- Preserve the existing Allée corridor as the **formal gateway** to the development\
- Re-purpose this corridor as a **linear park** with a broad pedestrian promenade
- Restore and enhance the **formal landscape**
- **Increase access to amenities** by flanking the outer edges of the Grande Allée with grade-level cafés, restaurants, and other community services
- **Prioritize the pedestrian** by restricting vehicular

**Forecourt Plaza**

- Preserve the existing **semicircular forecourt** to the Deschâtelet Building
- Re-purpose this formal open space as a **public outdoor living room** by dedicating it as a park
- Restore and enhance the **formal landscape**
- Design and program the space to host **special events** such as the Main Farmer’s Market, concerts, and community fairs
- **Celebrate the public space** by restricting vehicular access to emergency vehicles serving the Deschâtelet and adjacent townhomes
- Re-purpose the Deschâtelet Building while **respecting its heritage** designation
- Flank the plaza with new sustainable buildings designed to **harmonize** with the architecture of the Deschâtelet, while reinforcing the **sense of distinction**

The property lines within the development sites extend to the outer edge of the sidewalks fronting onto the forecourt and the Allée that bisects the two blocks. The landscape treatment separating the forecourt from the development site includes a low metal fence with shrubs set at the edge of the sidewalk that defines the public and private realms. The landscape treatment extends around the two blocks to enclose the two most easterly units fronting onto the Allée and then transitions into units set at the sidewalk where the separation of the public and private realms becomes less clear.

### 3.3 Rendered Perspective Views of the Current Design Proposal

The images are arranged in the following order based on designated frontages (See Site Plan Figure 4 & 5.

#### **Axial views to and from the Deschâtelet Building and Main Street**



Figure 7: Axial view to the Deschâtelet Building from the Grand Allée. Source: Hobin Architecture, February 29, 2024





Figure 8: A view from within the forecourt, emphasizing the crescent form. Hobin August 2025.

Figure 9: View from the Forecourt to Units A3. Source: Hobin Architecture, August 2024



Figure 10: Views from Forecourt Park to Units A2 and A3. Hobin April 2024





**GREYSTONE FORECOURT**

FRONT VIEW OF TOWNHOME BLOCK LOOKING NORTH FROM GRAND ALLEE

AUGUST 14th, 2024

Figure 11: Front View looking north. Source: Hobin Architecture, August 2024

Figure 12: View from Oblates Avenue to Units C. Source: Hobin Architecture, August 2024



**GREYSTONE FORECOURT**

ANGLED VIEW OF TOWNHOME BLOCK LOOKING NORTH FROM GRAND ALLEE

AUGUST 14th, 2024

Figure 13: View looking north from Grand Allee. Source: Hobin Architecture, August 2024





**GREYSTONE FORECOURT**

VIEW TOWARDS TYPICAL CARCOURT ENTRY FROM  
DESCHATELETS LOOKING EAST

AUGUST 14th, 2024

Figure 14 & 15: Views from Oblates Avenue to Units C and the car court. Source: Hobin Architecture, August 2024



**GREYSTONE FORECOURT**

VIEW INTO TYPICAL CAR COURT FROM  
DESCHATELETS LOOKING EAST

AUGUST 14th, 2024

## 4.0 IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Impact of the proposed development are assessed using the OP Section 4.5.2, the Secondary Plan Policy Area 3, and the designation bylaw.

### 4.1 Impact Assessment

The cultural heritage values and character defining features associated with the designated Deschâtelet Building and the designated landscape — forecourt and Allée – are respected and there are no impacts from the proposed development on Blocks 28 and 29.

OP Section 4.5 Applicable Excerpts:

- 2) When reviewing development applications affecting lands and properties on, or adjacent to a designated property, the City will ensure that the proposal is compatible by respecting and conserving the cultural heritage value and attributes of the heritage property, streetscape, or Heritage Conservation District as defined by the associated designation bylaw or Heritage Conservation District Plan and having regard for the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.
- 4) Heritage designation is, in part, intended to ensure contextually appropriate development and is not intended to discourage intensification or limit housing choice. Elements of the built form, including height, scale, and massing, of such development shall ensure that the defined cultural heritage value and attributes of the property or HCD will be conserved, while balancing the intensification objectives outlined throughout this plan.

#### OP Section 4.5.2 Assessment

Impacts on the heritage attributes of the Deschâtelet Building identified in the designation bylaw are assessed in the table below:

Deschâtelet Building Impact Assessment		
Heritage Attribute	Impacts Y or N	Comments
Stone construction;	N	The materials — manufactured stone, brick, and cement board used on the facades fronting onto the forecourt and allée are of a high quality and compatible in colour and texture to the limestone on the Deschâtelet Building.
Classically inspired design.	N	The paired entrances to the units fronting onto the forecourt and Allée are classically inspired. The projecting entrance bays in form, proportion, and in the use of materials - coursed stone - are compatible with the classically inspired design of the Deschâtelet Building. The use of a black cement board finish at the third-floor level conceptually mimics the banding formed by the secondary cornices in the upper two floors of the Deschâtelet Building. The low hip roof form when viewed from a distance, conceptually without being literal, mimics the triangular pediment above the frontispiece of the Deschâtelet Building.

Two pavilions flanking the frontispiece also with pediments and secondary cornices;	N	Conceptually, in form and use of materials – black cement board – the flanking pavilions extend the full height of the units and mimic without being literal the flanking pavilions of the Deschâtelet Building.
Regularly spaced windows, predominantly paired, with shaped stone surrounds	N	The fenestration pattern in the units is regularly spaced, and distinguishable from the fenestration pattern of the Deschâtelet Building.
The front door, its pediment, architrave, and flanking piers	N	The paired entrances to the units fronting onto the forecourt and Allée are classically inspired. The projecting entrance bays in form, proportion, and in the use of materials - coursed stone - are compatible with the classically inspired design of the Deschâtelet Building.

<b>Landscape – Forecourt and Grand Allée Impact Assessment</b>		
Heritage Attribute	Impacts Y or N	Comments
Tree-lined allée leading from Main Street to the open forecourt.	N	The limits of the Grand Allée as defined in the designation bylaw are respected. The sidewalks fronting onto the forecourt and Allée are within the condominium property boundaries of the two blocks 28 and 29. The footprint of two A3 units at the eastern limit of the Allée have been reduced to accommodate the tree canopies to ensure development within the root zone does not have a negative impact on their viability. To ensure the viability of new trees planted in line with the two existing trees, consideration should be given to limiting the footprints of three B1 and B2 Units to the west, fronting onto the Allée. The landscape treatment – shrubs and metal fencing - encircling the frontage onto the forecourt should extend along the frontage onto the Allée to better define the public and private realms.
A semicircular tree-lined forecourt located to the west of the front door.	N	The frontage of the two development blocks on Oblate Avenue are being planted with trees and, when mature, will form a tree canopy. The viability of the trees and the extent of the tree canopies will be limited by the extent of hard surfacing – sidewalk and access driveways.
Remnant of the Allée des Ormes planted by the Oblates in the 19th century, located south and west of the Deschâtelet Building.	N	The attribute has been removed from the designation bylaw.

**OP Section 4.5 Applicable Excerpts:**

- 4) Heritage designation is, in part, intended to ensure contextually appropriate development and is not intended to discourage intensification or limit housing choice. Elements of the built form, including height, scale, and massing, of such development shall ensure that the defined cultural heritage value and attributes of the property or HCD will be conserved, while balancing the intensification objectives outlined throughout this plan.

<b>Official Plan Section 4.5.4 Impact Assessment Elements of the Built Form</b>		
Criteria	Impacts Y N	Comments
Height, Scale	N	The side-by-side townhomes (Units A2 and C) are three stories in height aggregated in blocks of two and have a residential scale typical of the type. The scale of the side-by-side townhomes (Units A3, B1, B2) are three stories in height and aggregated in blocks of four units typical of a row-house configuration. The height and scale of the townhouses are appropriate and respect the height and scale of the Deschâtelet Building, and the forecourt and Allée.
Massing	N	The massing of the side-by-side townhomes (Units A2, and C) are arranged/aligned radially from the centre point of the arc defined by the limits of the forecourt. The end blocks of side-by-side townhomes (Units A3, B1, and B2) are generally arranged/aligned with the limits of Grand Allée and forecourt as defined in the designation bylaw.

**4.2 Impacts on the Heritage Character of the Oblate Lands**

Positive and adverse impacts on the heritage character of the Oblate Lands include:

**Positive impacts** of the development on the Heritage Character of the Oblate Lands include, but are not limited to:

The development is visually compatible with, yet distinguishable, from the surrounding area. A reasonable balance has been struck between mere imitation of the existing form and pointed contrast, thus complimenting, and respecting the heritage character of the area. This has been accomplished at street level in the three-storey scale, massing and material arrangement and colour palette proposed for the development.

The design of the development draws a distinction between what is historic and what is new, while respecting the heritage character of the area and the designated building and associated landscape features. This has been accomplished with the introduction of residential scale features including fencing, and soft landscape adjacent encircling the two development blocks 28 and 29. The development is compatible in terms of the streetscape, exterior form of the townhomes, their setting, and integration with the character of the area.

As the proposal evolved, there was a significant reduction in units compared with the initial proposal during the subdivision process. This was a practical decision responding to parking concerns and

overbuilding. The new development in its arrangement and massing allows filtered views to the Deschâtelet Building and the forecourt from Main Street, as well as filtered views to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Building on the northern edge of the Oblate Lands.

**Adverse impacts** of the development proposal include, but are not limited to:

The definition between the public – forecourt and the Allée - and private realms could be improved with the insertion of metal gates at the proposed sidewalks extending from the car courts to the forecourt.

The property lines within the development sites extend to the outer edge of the sidewalks fronting onto the forecourt and the Allée that bisects the two blocks. The landscape treatment separating the forecourt from the development site includes a low metal fence with shrubs set at the edge of the sidewalk that defines the public and private realms. The landscape treatment extends around the two blocks to enclose the two most easterly units fronting onto the Allée and then transitions into units set at the sidewalk where the separation of the public and private realms becomes less clear.

The extent of hard surfacing in the car courts.

## 5.0 ALTERNATIVES, MITIGATION MEASURES, CONCLUSIONS

### **Alternatives include:**

Originally conceptualized as two continuous curving blocks of back-to-back row homes, the design has been amended into a collection of 2-4 door townhouse blocks that provide more openness and connectivity through the site.

Reduce the ground floor footprint of Units B1 and B2 fronting onto the Allée and introduce shrubs and fencing to better define the public and private realms.

Reference historic images and plans to re-establish the landscape plan as part of the forecourt park. (See Figure 1.)

### **Mitigation Measures:**

Install a distinct pattern in the pavement in line with the proposed fencing leading to the forecourt in order to delineate the public and private realms. Incorporating a colour palette that captures the Deschâtelet Building in tone.

### **Conclusion**

The proposed townhomes respect both the Deschâtelet Building and associate landscape as features of an Evolving Cultural Heritage Landscape. The Oblate Lands are an Evolving Cultural Heritage Landscape that has been modified significantly since its construction and should continue to evolve. The city should consider revisions to the Part IV designation based on the updated site plan and the demolition of the chapel.

The townhomes' scale, massing and siting were evaluated using applicable Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines. It is the author's opinion that the proposed undertaking meets the Standards and Guidelines as the overall cultural heritage value of the Deschâtelet Building is conserved while the



townhomes create a strong foreground with focused views. The work proposed is in accordance with Standards and Guidelines, balancing conservation with the City's goals for intensification.