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February 17, 2008

Laura Palmer Thompson
Planning & Development Officer
City of Charlottetown
199 Queen Street
Charlottetown, PE

Dear Ms. Thompson,

My business, Reinvented Inc. is a tenant at 84 Fitzroy Street, and as such I am in receipt of your letter of 4 February 2008 regarding the application for a variance to the property located at 96-100 Fitzroy Street. Please accept this letter as a response to your request for written comments on this application.

I think increased density is generally a good thing for downtown Charlottetown: it attracts residents, increases business diversity, provides a market for a broader range of services, and increases the tax base. The lot in question is an excellent target for development; since we moved our office onto the street it's been a falling-down old building and a muddy parking lot.

That said, the three houses on Fitzroy Street that abut the proposed development, one of which houses my office, are, taken together and individually, an important heritage resource, a resource that's worth preserving, and a resource that demands that we pay careful attention to proposed developments for the surrounding lots.

As a collection these buildings are an important aesthetic bridge between the monolithic and generic modern architecture of the central core and the historic homes of surrounding residential neighbourhoods; individually they are, as is pointed out in the City's *Heritage File* database, each historically important:

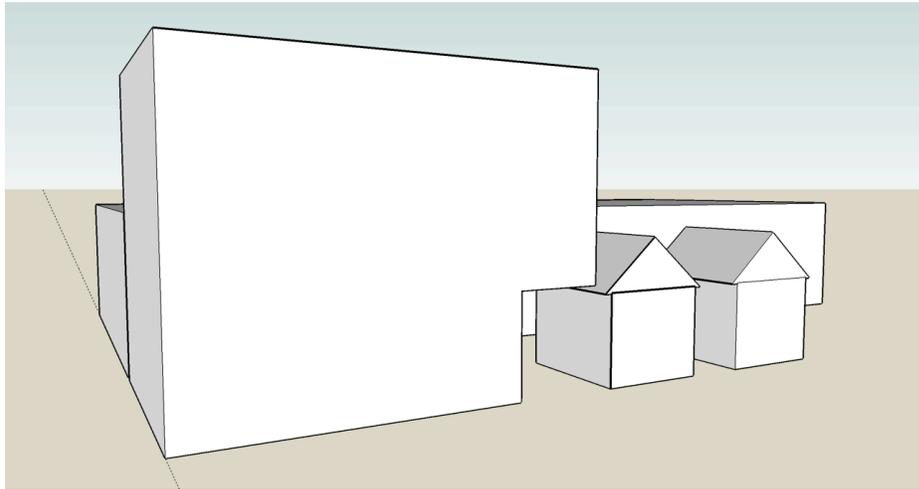
82 Fitzroy Street – Each age produces superior houses and the period from 1900 to 1920 is well represented by this well - designed , well preserved, and attractive dwelling built by John Messervey in 1911. At the time the house was erected, Mr. Messervey was a traveller with Hickey and Nicholson, tobacco manufacturers.

84 Fitzroy Street – Built in 1900, by railway paymaster Mr. G.A.W. Robertson, this home has much decorative detailing. The ornamented two storey bay carries one's eye upward to the two gables vying with each other for attention. The lacy fretwork in the smaller gable, scalloped and decorated board, and pendants almost overshadow the round window and scalloped shingling of the main gable. In addition, the bracketed hoods over the window and a decorated pediment over the door help make this a most attractive building.

86 Fitzroy Street – Built in 1900, by train dispatcher Horace McEwen, this house is a less decorated version of its neighbor at 84 Fitzroy Street. Both houses were built the in the same year for railway men.

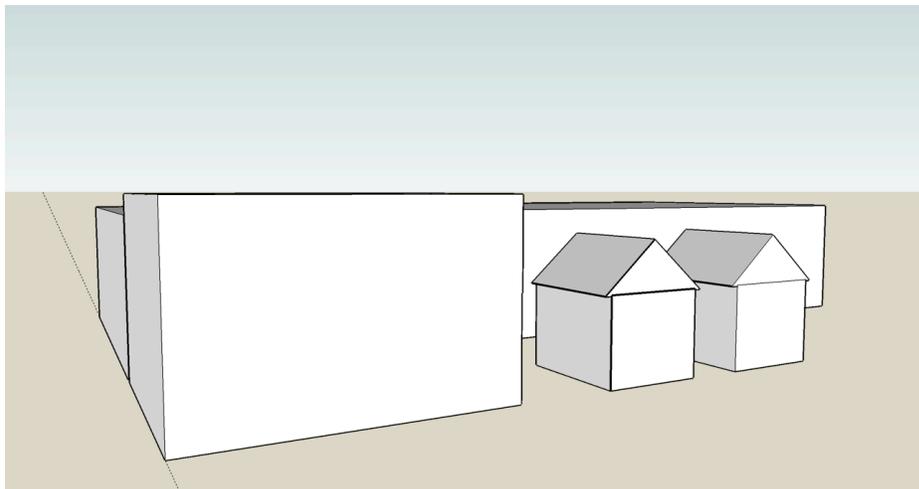
After reviewing the drawings and plot plans for the proposed development, it is clear that if the proposed variances are granted, the new office building will significantly erode the character of this important heritage resource: the scale of the new building, along with its zero setback from the property line, means that it will loom over these houses, and detract significantly from their character.

Witness this three dimensional rendering of the proposed new building, using measurements taken directly from those provided by the developer, as it relates to 84 and 86 Fitzroy Street and the Queen Street Parkade:



The effect is clear: the proposed height of the new building would simply **overwhelm the houses abutting it on Fitzroy Street**. 86 Fitzroy Street in particular, which the proposed new building would run directly up to, would be *completely dwarfed*.

Contrast this to a the same rendering of the proposed building, but **with the 39.4 foot height mandated** by section 4.2.1 of the *Zoning and Development Bylaw* and an appropriate setback from the houses next door:



It is clear that by *following the provisions laid out in the Bylaw*, the resulting building would become a **participant in the neighbourhood** and not a monolith dominating it.

Section 4.2.1 of the City of Charlottetown *Zoning and Development Bylaw* lays out the criteria which Planning Board must use in determining whether an application for variance in height (emphasis mine):

Subject to the specific provisions of the zones set out in this By-law, the maximum Building Height in the City Shall be 12 m (39.4 ft.), and any proposal for Development beyond this threshold Shall be subject to the recommendation of the Planning Board, and upon such terms and conditions as May be determined by the Council after considering Building material, **the architectural harmony of the Building with its surroundings, Streetscape, bulk and scale of the Building in the neighbourhood**, and Parking.

It seems clear that the proposed new building is **not at all** designed with an eye to several of these criteria: it was clearly *not* designed with an eye to “architectural harmony,” and, as evidenced by the fact that it dwarfs even the Queen Street Parkade behind it – itself a significant structure – its bulk and scale is far out of proportion to the neighbourhood it proposes to become a member of.

We moved our office to 84 Fitzroy Street in part to support our landlord in its investment in downtown heritage buildings: we believe strongly in preserving the character of this small corner of downtown Charlottetown, and laud the efforts of our landlord and surrounding property owners who have invested significantly in these houses.

We would welcome a new neighbour on Fitzroy Street if the structure was to be built according to the standard laid out by the City in the *Zoning and Development Bylaw*.

If built as proposed, however, the new building would significantly erode the character of the existing neighbourhood.

As such, I would respectfully ask that you consider **not** granting the variance for this development.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Rukavina
President