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January 10, 2024

## New Brunswick Museum - Re-zoning, Municipal Plan Amendment & Heritage De-designation Request

Dear Jennifer,

We have been working with the Board of the New Brunswick Museum on the preliminary planning and design for the exciting new museum project to be located at the original Douglas Ave. site.

Please find below an outline of the purpose and rationale for this re-zoning, municipal plan amendment and heritage de-designation application. The outline includes project summary, proposed zoning, municipal plan amendment and heritage de-designation, site selection summary, design intent and community consultation strategy.

Please find attached the following supporting documents and drawings:

- List of properties forming application
- Council Application
- General Application
- Consent letters from property owners
- Request for heritage property de-designation
- Parking Recommendations Report for the New Brunswick Museum
- Traffic Impact Statement
- Conceptual Sanitary & Water Demand
- Site Plan
- Site Plan – Demolished
- Shadow Studies
- Building Elevations\*
- Massing perspective\*

\*Preliminary conceptual massing perspectives and elevations are included to indicate the general size, shape, and siting of the new museum. The design is being further developed and will integrate suggestions received during the Community Consultations sessions. Updated elevations and renderings will be provided as the design becomes more detailed.

### Project Summary

The purpose of this planning application is to secure required re-zoning and Municipal Plan amendments for six (6) contiguous residential properties along Douglas Ave. Four (4) of the properties in question have reached an agreement for the transfer of ownership as part of a strategic acquisition of lands that will facilitate revitalization of the “Provincial Museum” building for the New Brunswick Museum (NBM). The other two (2) properties included in this application were previously acquired by The Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI). In addition to the rezoning and Municipal Plan amendments, this application also requests the removal of 241 Douglas Avenue from the Douglas Avenue Heritage Conservation Area. The properties included in this application will be consolidated with that of the Museum building (owned by the Province of New Brunswick) to form a single property and facilitate construction of the proposed addition to the existing Museum building. The design intent of the proposed addition will be presented in the following sections of this application to demonstrate alignment with the City of Saint John’s growth and development goals and the Municipal Plan amendment process.

The Museum’s history in Saint John can be traced to the 1840’s and is Canada’s longest continuing museum facility. However, in 2022, the Market Square exhibition space (home of the NBM since 1996) was closed and there is presently no exhibits in operation until construction of the new facility has been completed. In January of last year, the NBM released a request for proposals for the design of a new facility to securely preserve and showcase New Brunswick’s natural and cultural history. In early April 2023, it was announced Diamond Schmitt Architects (DSA) was selected to design the new facility. Since that time, the consultant team (DSA and EXP) has been diligently working toward breaking ground on the project; currently expected to begin in Spring 2024.

The Archives & Research Library, Humanities & Natural History collection storage which has continued to operate from the Douglas Avenue “Provincial Museum” building has begun the process of relocating to a new off-site facility as the NBM prepares the building for the proposed renovation and addition. This significant project will not only stabilize the existing c.1930 building but return the museum to their original home as well. In doing so, securing the New Brunswick Museum’s legacy for the next 100 years.

### Proposed Zoning and Municipal Plan Amendment

The properties affected by this application are as follows:

- 241 Douglas Ave. (PID 00379230)
- 247 Douglas Ave. (PID 55172860)
- 249 Douglas Ave. (PID 00379255)
- 261 Douglas Ave. (PID 00377945)
- 263 Douglas Ave. (PID 00358481)
- 255 Douglas Ave. (PID 55222012)

### Rezoning

This application requests rezoning the six (6) properties (noted above) from Mid-Rise Residential (RM) to Major Community Facility (CFM). Rezoning will facilitate land consolidation required to build a state-of-the-art addition on the existing “Provincial Museum” building. Please refer to supporting materials for additional information on the proposed design.

Comparison of the existing zoning to the proposed is demonstrated in the chart below.

	Mid-Rise Residential (RM)	Major Community Facility (CFM)
FRONT YARD	6M	5M
REAR YARD	6M	7.5M
SIDE YARD	1.5-2.5M (DEPENDING ON RESIDENTIAL TYPOLOGY)	7.5M
FLANKAGE YARD	3.5M	7.5M
MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT	11M	24M

The development scale associated with the CFM zone is not unprecedented along Douglas Avenue. Similar land use and scale of building have existed previously along the corridor (ie. King George School and the Observatory, St. Peters Church). The neighbouring “Provincial Museum” museum property is already zoned CFM, as is Harbourview High School.

### Municipal Plan Amendment

In addition to the proposed rezoning, this application also requires a Municipal Plan amendment; reassigning the residential lands (six properties previously identified) to Major Community Facility use. This request is supported by several policies under the Plan.

#### Context

Per the Municipal Plan (the Plan), Douglas Avenue is a “character corridor,” identified as a place for ongoing investment in quality streetscaping and urban design, character corridors strengthen the quality of place in significant areas of the city. This investment along Douglas Avenue intends to maintain quality of the public realm (as it relates to the heritage context), as well as attract high quality development in the adjacent intensification areas.

In addition to being along an important character corridor, the properties affected by this application are also part of a stable

residential area that adjoins a large natural area to the west and heavy industrial to the east. The residential land use along Douglas Avenue is punctuated by two (2) historic institutional uses (The NB Museum and Harbourview High School), also designated Major Community Facilities under the Municipal Plan.

#### Supported Rationale

As noted by the Plan, stable Areas are intended to grow and evolve through minor change. The proposed renovation and addition to the “Provincial Museum” building is simply expanding the existing land use along Douglas Avenue thus reinstating the New Brunswick Museum to its historic home.

Per the requirements of the CFM land use, key development/urban design goals and policies of the Plan, the proposed design intends to:

- Contribute positively to the neighbourhood through high quality development and design excellence.
- Use landscape design strategies that will enhance the site/ public realm and buffer the proposed addition from neighbouring residences.
- Provide a universally accessible facility with an enhanced pedestrian arrival experience as well as better connection to the broader public realm along Douglas Avenue a new street facing entrance.
- Leverage the existing transit corridor along Douglas Avenue, as well as active recreation (bike lanes) and connection to the South-Central Peninsula via Harbour Passage offered by the choice of site.
- Demonstrate respect for the existing “Provincial Museum” building via setbacks, street wall, architectural massing, and materiality.
- Leveraging existing topography to minimize changes to the existing context (ie. natural drainage patterns, existing areas of conservation and natural areas).
- Contribute to the NBM’s commitment to the cultural heritage of New Brunswick by rehabilitating the existing “Provincial Museum” building.
- Providing a dedicated bus/ delivery areas at the interior of the site to minimize visual and traffic impacts to the neighbourhood.

#### Economic Prosperity

Tourism is a vitally important driver of the local and regional economy. As a key cultural asset, the New Brunswick Museum is an attractive destination for visitors, and residents alike. Furthermore, not only do schools and children benefit from the educational programming available, but museum spaces are popular event spaces (for weddings, conferences, etc.). Investment in the new facility ensures the NBM is retained in Saint John while also enabling its continued growth and operational success.

Major community facilities such as The New Brunswick Museum, contribute significantly to the quality of life, cultivating a strong sense of place and connection to history and our natural world. Moreover, a modern museum is more than space for a collection of objects, it provides a home for social engagement, education, culture, innovation, technology and more. Purpose built along Douglas Avenue almost 100 years ago, the residents of Saint John have never known the City without The New Brunswick Museum.

The NBM site was strategically positioned at the top of Bentley Street, creating a view corridor between the site and Uptown. This project honors that 100 year old strategic decision, reinstalling the facility in its historic home.

### Request for De-designation – 241 Douglas Avenue

Douglas Avenue is a broad tree lined street well known for the grand heritage homes that line it. They range in architectural style, however Italianate, Second Empire and Queen Anne are most prevalent. Constructed c.1881, the residence at 241 Douglas Avenue is an example of the vernacular Italianate style.

The house is two storeys' tall and features a prominent entry tower massing with a pavilion style hipped roof at the top. Ornamentation on the street facing façade is generally consistent with the Italianate style, while other ornamentation– is of a simplified character consistent with a vernacular interpretation of the Italianate style.

The Italianate style was hugely popular during the late 19th century in Canada. The style today is ubiquitous to the Douglas Avenue heritage conservation area, as well as the City's other heritage areas . By comparison, the existing "Provincial Museum," is a late example of Beaux-Arts style designed by H. Claire Mott (son of preeminent Saint John-based architect H.H. Mott). The Museum building is unquestionably his most notable project.

Defining heritage value of a building is not solely based upon architectural analysis. It is a holistic exercise informed by place (context), condition, evolution over time, and most importantly to this case - past and current importance to its community.

The public importance of a purpose-built museum building (that is also of substantive architectural value) cannot be understated. 241 Douglas Avenue is a good candidate for de-designation from the Douglas Avenue heritage conservation area when its heritage value is weighed against that of the Provincial Museum building, and the future public benefit having the NBM reinstated in its former home considered. Through a trade-off, the broader value (heritage and beyond) provided to the community by revitalizing the Provincial Museum building provides a sound argument for de-designation.

### Site Selection Process

A Site Selection process was completed in the summer of 2023 and resulted in the selection of the historic Douglas Avenue site.

Over the past 180 years, the Museum has acted as a custodian of the natural and human history of New Brunswick and its surrounding regions. By revitalizing the existing building and preserving its unique character, the Museum stays true to its ethos while also enriching the new museum experience and preserving a piece of history for the Saint John and New Brunswick community.

The selection of the new museum site on Douglas Ave was a result of a thorough analysis and consideration of fundamental criteria that were weighted to ensure the success of the museum. The criteria considered included urban design connectivity, community benefits, economic considerations, site servicing, municipal planning objectives, site capacity, archaeological sites etc. Ultimately, the Douglas Ave. site was chosen as its merits relating to funding, operational and architectural criteria superseded any other possible sites.

The Douglas Ave. site allows for seamless integration of the site design with adjacent parks and urban reserves, offering a significant benefit to the community. Additionally, the site provides excellent connectivity to Uptown Saint John through existing transit, cycle, and pedestrian routes, including the Harbour Passage, aligning perfectly with the planning goals of the City of Saint John.

One notable feature of the Douglas Ave site is the breathtaking views it offers. To the west, there are stunning views of the Saint John River, while to the east, views of uptown Saint John, the Saint John Harbour, and beyond to the Bay of Fundy. The selection of the Douglas Ave site ensures that these remarkable views will once again be accessible to the entire community.

### New Brunswick Museum Design Intent

The new design of the New Brunswick Museum will not only serve as a home for the museum but also as a destination venue for all New Brunswickers. The Facility will be the home of the NBM for the next century and beyond. The new Museum will play a crucial role in providing a safe and secure location for provincial collections and museological functions while also providing vibrant new exhibitions and public spaces. The new museum will be a first-choice destination for both the community and visitors, it will not only benefit tourism but will also serve as an inspiration for all age groups, igniting their creativity and curiosity.

Through the selection of the Douglas Ave location, the existing museum building will be revitalised, and its re-use will be prioritized to enhance its existing qualities. The original museum building built in 1934 will be restored and principally maintained, as well as the south façade of the King George Hall. The presence of the existing front steps will be retained and enhanced as a public benefit, while the placement of a new entrance will reveal the

inherent architectural qualities of the existing building. The design approach will embrace the heritage of the original museum building while providing a contemporary addition that will meet the current and future needs of the museum.

The integration of the facility into the landscape will be done sensitively, ensuring a harmonious relationship between the exterior elements of the site and the interior public space. The design will also prioritize the creation of inviting and accessible places and streetscapes. Safety, comfort, and enjoyment of the public realm will be enhanced, allowing for year-round interaction and enjoyment. The views, both at grade and from the rooftop terrace will offer visitors an experience, showcasing the Saint John River and harbor views.

The new museum will respect and reinforce the existing and planned context in which it is located. This will be achieved through appropriate setbacks, landscaping, building entrance, massing, architectural style, and building materials. By doing so, the design will seamlessly integrate into the surrounding neighborhood and enhance the physical character of the area. The new addition to the Douglas Ave building will be sited to avoid any identified archaeological sites and it will avoid any encroachment on the Victoria Square Park. The new frontage will be articulated and setback from the street with consideration for the existing streetscape proportions and rhythm. Site services, loading and large group arrivals will be done seamlessly and discreetly on the north side of the museum, screened to mitigate disruption to Douglas Avenue streetscape.

The new museum building will seek to embrace its existing context while offering a contemporary perspective. Through an inviting design, commitment to sustainability, and integration with the public realm, the museum will be an inspiring landmark that enhances the public experience and fosters a sense of community and connection.

## Community Consultations

The community consultation strategy aims to foster local and Province-wide interest and enthusiasm for the new facility.

The first round of community consultation sessions took place between September 9th and 28th, 2023. The Board of Directors of the New Brunswick Museum and the project design team engaged in sessions that took place in locations across the province and on Zoom, ensuring accessibility for as many individuals as possible. The locations included Saint John, Fredericton, Edmundston, Campbellton, Bathurst, Caraquet, Miramichi, Moncton, Province-wide Zoom. The goal was to provide an opportunity for citizens across New Brunswick to voice their opinions and contribute to the future of the NBM.

The consultation sessions provided an opportunity for individuals to share their perspectives and contribute to the decision-making process. During the sessions participants engaged in interactive discussions, shared their ideas, and learned more about the project's overall mission and preliminary design concepts for the revitalized museum. The discussions were centered

around crucial aspects such as the history and key characteristics of the site, urban design, community building elements, the relationship of museum interior spaces to the landscape and views, feature elements, materials, as well as public art.

A community consultation summary report is being prepared and will be provided to the City, to accompany this planning application.





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March 13, 2024

FRE-23004019-A0

Heritage Development Board of Saint John  
C/O Rodrigo Mendes Campos, Heritage Analyst  
Growth & Community Services  
City of Saint John

**RE: Request for Removal – 241 Douglas Avenue R5**

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To the Heritage Development Board:

Please accept this letter requesting removal of 241 Douglas Avenue from the Douglas Avenue Heritage Conservation Area. The residential property is currently undergoing a transfer of ownership as part of the strategic acquisition of lands that will facilitate revitalization of the “Provincial Museum” building for the New Brunswick Museum.

Of the six (6) adjacent properties acquired by the Museum, 241 Douglas Avenue is the sole heritage designated property. The properties will be consolidated with that of the Museum building to form a single property. De-designation of 241 Douglas Avenue (in conjunction with rezoning process, etc.) is necessary to enable consolidation, and facilitate expansion of building footprint.

The Museum’s history in Saint John can be traced to the 1840’s and is Canada’s longest continuing museum facility. The Douglas Avenue facility officially opened in 1934, coinciding with the sesquicentennial of the founding of New Brunswick in 1784.

The New Brunswick Museum (NBM) operated out of the Douglas Avenue until 1996 at which time its exhibitions moved to Market Square. Since then, the Douglas Avenue building has been home to The Collections Centre, the Archives and Research Library, and the Museums’ head office. Operations at the facility are now winding down as NBM prepares the building for a major renovation and addition designed by Diamond Schmitt Architects. This significant project will not only stabilize the existing c.1930 building but return the exhibitions to their original home as well. In doing so, securing the New Brunswick Museum’s legacy for the next 100 years in Saint John.

#### The Existing Residence

Constructed c.1881, the residence at 241 Douglas Avenue is an example of the vernacular Italianate style. The house is two storeys’ tall and features an expressed entry tower massing with a pavilion style hipped roof at the top. Ornamentation on the street facing façade is of a simplified

character consistent with a vernacular interpretation of the Italianate style. A one storey ell located at the rear of the building is also present, likely added sometime in the first 60 years of the original building construction.

Archival research available is notably limited for this property, with no records found in the Historic Register, nor the New Brunswick Provincial Archives. One brief record on the existing building via the City of Saint John was retrieved by the consultant team. This record was used to validate the consultant teams own architectural analysis of the existing residence.

### Heritage Context

Douglas Avenue is a long-established avenue connecting the historic towns of Portland and Lancaster. The broad, tree lined street is largely a residential corridor punctuated by several public institutions including The New Brunswick Museum, Harbour View High School, as well as places of worship. Douglas Avenue has also seen the loss of several notable landmarks over the years including King George School, the Observatory building, and most recently St. Peter's Church. Other structures have evolved and/ or found new life – such as the conversion of the Butter-Nut Bread Bakery into a multi-unit residential building and additions to The New Brunswick Museum building.

The historic residences of Douglas Avenue (typically) are distinctly grand, sitting on large, landscaped parcels of land (compared to the South-Central Peninsula). They range in architectural style, however Italianate, Second Empire and Queen Anne are most prevalent. A few notable examples of the Greek Revival style remain as well. Most buildings are three (3) stories in height and are set back from the street some distance, though this varies substantially building to building.

The Douglas Avenue Heritage Conservation Area is non-contiguous. As the Board will know, challenges with non-contiguous conservation areas have contributed to other successful de-designation and/ or demolition requests along Douglas Avenue in recent years. Where the subject site is not located in the middle of a contiguous block of designated properties, rather at the end of designated block, de-designation of 241 Douglas Avenue does not interfere with the comprehensive integrity of the Douglas Avenue Conservation Area as a whole. The nearest heritage designated property (with a building present) along the western street wall of Douglas Avenue is approximately 300 meters away.

### Heritage Value

The Italianate style was hugely popular during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Canada. The flurry of construction in the years after the Great Fire of 1877 provided Saint John with dozens of notable examples and interpretations of the style, in both wood and masonry. The style today is ubiquitous to the heritage conservation areas; a survey of the Douglas Avenue Heritage Conservation Area reveals (of 42 heritage designated properties) 28% are Italianate in style. A cursory review of the south-central peninsula conservation areas indicates an even higher percentage of Italianate style buildings. Most Italianate style buildings in the conservation areas can also be classified as vernacular interpretations due to their wood construction, simplified use of ornamentation, as well as use of borrowed elements from other architectural styles of the time.

Therefore, the building at 241 Douglas Avenue is of average architecture value; being neither exemplary nor unique.

### Public Benefit

Per the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, understanding heritage value is not based on architectural value alone. To understand a historic place requires a holistic review of place (context), condition, evolution over time, as well as past and current importance to its community, an essential step of good conservation practice.

The New Brunswick Museum has been a cultural cornerstone in New Brunswick for over 180 years offering the public access to its rich and varied collections of natural and human history. The Museum has also played a significant role in the preservation and promotion of the region's cultural and natural heritage, identity, as well as in the education and engagement of generations of visitors and residents. While the "Provincial Museum" building itself is a rarefied example of the Beaux-Arts style, the revitalization project ensures the continued importance of the institution within the community.

### Conclusion

The building located at 241 Douglas Avenue is a good candidate for de-designation when the public benefit of having the NBM reinstated in its former home considered. None the less, the proposed loss of a heritage building is not to be taken lightly. When preparing a building for de-designation and ultimately its demolition, an architectural recording can safeguard the heritage of a place from being lost to history.

The New Brunswick Museum, as proponents of this project, are committed to completing heritage recordings of each residence – heritage designated or not – prior to their removal. The NBM is proposing to undertake the following steps out of respect of the historical contribution of the building to the urban fabric of Saint John -

- Complete a 3D scan of each residential building – both inside and outside.
- Conduct an architectural recording of character defining elements at each building – both inside and outside.
- Summarize any known history (people or events of significance) associated with the residences (if applicable).

The NBM is committed to providing public access to historical records. As such, the data collected from affected properties will be made available to the public as part of the NBM's Archives and Research Library at a future date. In doing so, the heritage value of these private homes will become public for the first time.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

On behalf of Diamond Schmitt Architects Inc. and The New Brunswick Museum,



Melissa Wakefield, AANB, OAA  
Discipline Manager Architecture - Saint John | Architect

EXP Architects Inc.