





Buildings in the Exchange District National Historic Site are substantial in scale and materials.



Pedestrians take priority along Waterfront Drive where buildings offer a dynamic street edge.

Quality infill development relates to neighbouring properties in height, materials, scale, and pattern of mass to void.



Introduction and Intent

This statement of expectations for development describes the type and shape of development that the City of Winnipeg anticipates for the west side of Waterfront Drive, from Lombard Avenue to Higgins Avenue. Developers and their design teams will use this brief to guide their proposals. The City will use this brief to evaluate development proposals.

Every development will be considered from the perspective of the broader setting, which it must respect, the development of the site, and the character of the building.

Area Description

This document applies to new development along the west side of Waterfront Drive as seen in the cover map. The map illustrates the development region and how it overlaps with the Exchange District National Historic Site indicated as the area within the blue line.

Red areas on the map represent the surplus parcels that will be available for sale immediately adjacent to the Drive noted in yellow.

The Vision

To encourage the development of a thriving, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use residential neighborhood that conserves and strengthens the unique identity of this historic warehouse precinct. Valued features include: the picturesque river edge, rare views of the downtown skyline, massive stone and brick warehouses, and narrow, angled streets and covered alleys that recall the time when this area was the commercial centre of Winnipeg.

Development Criteria

New developments are expected to meet these criteria as well as applicable zoning regulations. If an application for new development respects the development criteria outlined in this brief the design review process will be straightforward. Development criteria include the following:

The Setting

■ Built form

Acknowledge the scale of the existing buildings and the established pattern of streets and alleys

■ Heritage

Maintain a respectful relationship to the Exchange District National Historic Site, between Lombard Avenue and James Avenue

■ Mixed uses

Build upon the existing mix of uses to create the critical mass necessary for around the clock activity

■ Riverbank edge

Maintain existing and create new connections between the river and the streets and buildings of the warehouse precinct

■ Views and vistas

Respect and enhance views and vistas

The Site

■ Building orientation

New construction should relate to both Waterfront Drive and, where applicable, historic streets. New buildings on corner lots should have two primary building facades

■ Building placement

Maintain the continuous building edge on historic streets. Buildings on Waterfront Drive may be setback from the property line to provide amenity space for pedestrians

■ Pedestrian first

Place the pedestrian before the vehicle; limit curb cuts on Waterfront Drive

■ Service areas

Parking, loading, garbage containers, and hydro transformers should be located internally or at the rear of buildings



Streetscapes in the Exchange District National Historic Site are created by building up to property lines, the scale of the buildings, and active storefronts.



Additions to historic buildings are successful when they are sympathetic in scale, massing, geometry, details, and materials.

Larger scale buildings are appropriate when the elevations read as smaller buildings with multiple points of entry. Semi-private spaces at grade enhance residential developments.





New development on large parcels will take cues from neighbouring historic properties when determining mass, height, and scale.



At street level, buildings will have dynamic faces where public entries are clearly defined.

Quality materials expertly arranged in compositions that reflect the materiality of the area as well as forms of typical buildings provide a richer urban environment.



The Building

■ Building height

2 storey to 6 storey-building heights are encouraged

■ Building massing

Should appear substantial (scale, height, silhouette, relationship to the ground). Where the parcels are large, new construction should have the appearance of a series of several buildings

■ Building composition

Respect the composition of existing buildings (proportion, geometry, mass versus void relationship, texture)

■ Building materials and construction methods

Construction materials and craftsmanship must be at least of quality comparable to those found in the National Historic Site

■ Building transparency

Buildings will have transparent and active storefronts through the use of glass and entrances. Inviting connections between the inside and outside of the building increase feelings of security and comfort on the street

■ Signage

Should be oriented to the pedestrian level and integrated into the building's architecture. Develop a sign plan for buildings with multiple occupants.

■ Public entries

Buildings should have clearly defined and inviting multiple entries. Private and semi-private areas should be clearly demarcated at grade by changes of level, low planting or setbacks

■ Mechanical units

Rooftop equipment should be inconspicuous

Development Appraisal

The following questions will help developers and their designers evaluate their proposals and prepare for review by the City's downtown design review process.

The Setting

- Does the development form a harmonious group or composition with existing buildings?
- What contributions does the proposal make to the character of the Exchange District National Historic Site and Waterfront Drive?
- Does it demonstrate a vertically integrated mix of uses contributing to day/evening, year-round activity (e.g. combinations of retail/restaurant/entertainment on main floor, with dwellings/office/retail above)?
- Does it link pedestrian routes and destinations to each other and to the river edge?
- Does it preserve or enhance important views and vistas?

The Site

- Has the established building setback been respected?
- Have the needs of the pedestrian been considered first? Is the pedestrian environment safe and comfortable? Are entry points clear and convenient? Are existing pedestrian routes respected?
- Are service areas visible from the public sidewalk?

The Building

- Does building massing, height, and scale fit the surrounding context?
- What materials are used? How do they relate to those of the surrounding buildings? Is the quality as high? Are there any interesting comparisons or contrasts in the use of materials? How will the colours work together? Does the detailing of the materials show signs of careful thought or originality in the way the building is put together?
- Does the building design encourage street animation? Are there multiple points of entry and transparency at grade level?
- Are mechanical units conspicuous?
- Does signage reflect and enhance district character? Is it well integrated into the building design?



A study of the area's historic warehouses will lead to suitable contemporary interpretations of this common building type.



Strict design criteria in other communities allow creative and sympathetic additions in historic areas.

New buildings in historic districts can be contemporary as long as there is a respect for traditional building types and forms (scale, detail, and similar expression of the structural system).



- Step 1.** CentreVenture accepts site development proposal.
- Step 2.** Proponent and consultant meet with Planning, Property and Development Department staff.
- Step 3.** Proponent submits application for permits.
- Step 4.** Planning, Property and Development Department staff schedule Design Review (and other approvals).
- Step 5.** Design Review Committee recommends approval (or not).
- Step 6.** Planning, Property and Development Department Director approval, followed by permit issuance.



Waterfront Drive must encourage an intimate scale of development.



Design and Development Review Process

The design and development review process illustrated here is intended to identify key steps in a proposal's evolution from concept to final design. Of course there are a number of more modest or incremental aspects that have not been included. Planning, Property and Development Department staff will endeavour to ensure all review process steps are identified and dealt with in a timely and transparent manner.

Commitments

This document does not depart from previous policy direction and commitments made in documents such as:

- Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision
- CentrePlan: Development Framework and Vision and Strategies
- The Exchange District National Historic Site of Canada Commemorative Integrity Statement
- Historical Buildings By-law
- Preliminary East Exchange Management Strategy
- Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law

References

Applicants are encouraged to also refer to the following:

- Exchange District Strategic Action Plan
- Architectural Guidelines for Waterfront Drive (draft)
- Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

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