

Appendix “A”: Planning Rationale
113 Griffin St., Smithville
 Revised: January 2024



T. Johns Consulting Group Ltd. (“T. Johns Consulting”) has prepared the following revised Planning Rationale Report dated November 8, 2023 in support of a revised Minor Variance application for 113 Griffin Street, Smithville in the Town of West Lincoln, Niagara Region. The following rationale shall supersede the rationale dated July 2022 for Minor Variance Application A21/2022WL.

Description of Subject Lands

113 Griffin Street (“subject lands”) is located in the downtown area of Smithville, on the west side of Griffin Street, otherwise known as Regional Road 14 (**Refer to Figure 1 - Site Location**). The subject lands are rectangular in shape with 10.6m of frontage on Griffin Street, a lot depth of 53.43m and an approximate total lot size of 717.4m². The site is an existing lot of record and is occupied by one (1) two-storey brick building that is currently vacant. The building was last used as a Masonic Lodge and day care facility. The rear parking area is accessed via a shared access easement (R0127862) on 107 Griffin Street in favour of 113 Griffin Street (**Refer to submitted Survey Plan**).

The existing building provides the following yards:

<i>Front Yard</i>	<i>5.96m</i>
<i>Side Yard (North)</i>	<i>1.00m</i>
<i>Side Yard (South)</i>	<i>0.76m</i>
<i>Rear Yard</i>	<i>19.38m</i>

Figure 1 - Site Location



Planning Status

The *Niagara Region Official Plan, Schedule A - Regional Structure*, designates the subject lands as a “Built-Up Area” within the Urban Area known as Smithville. Built-Up Areas are areas within the Region that are to be the focus for residential redevelopment and intensification.

The *Township of West Lincoln Consolidated Official Plan, Schedule B-4 - Land Use Smithville*, designates the subject lands as “Core Commercial”. Permitted uses in the Core Commercial designation include but not limited to residential apartments above the first storey, offices and retail stores. Intensification and the adaptive reuse of the Town’s existing building stock is permitted.

The *Township of West Lincoln Zoning By-law No. 2017-70*, zones the subject lands as Core Commercial (C1) Zone. Permitted uses in the C1 zone include apartment dwellings, therefore the proposed re-adaptation for a mixed use commercial and residential building is permitted.

Proposed Development

The development proposes to re-adapt the existing 2-storey brick building for a mixed use commercial and residential building with two (2) commercial units at grade and four (4) dwelling units above with rental tenure. To meet Ontario Building Code requirements, new stairs are proposed at the rear of the building. Surface parking is proposed at the rear of the site which will be accessed by the existing right-of-way. A total of eight (8) parking spaces are proposed including one (1) barrier free space. Four (4) long-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed within a bike shed and a bike rack able to accommodate five (5) bikes is proposed near the principal entrance. A minimum of 40m² of amenity area is proposed within the rear yard.

Nature and Extent of Relief Applied For:

The proposed re-adaptive use of the existing building for a mixed-used development at 113 Griffin Street requires relief from the *Township of West Lincoln Zoning By-law No. 2017-70*, Core Commercial (C1) Zone. Four (4) Minor Variances are being sought from ZBL No. 2017-70 to facilitate the proposed redevelopment.

The requested variances are as follows:

	ZBL No. 2017-70 Section	Purpose
1.	6.3, Table 15 <i>Minimum Amenity Area</i>	To allow a minimum amenity space of 10m ² per dwelling unit whereas, a minimum of 20m ² per dwelling unit is required.
2.	3.12.6 d) <i>Minimum Parking Requirements (Dimensions)</i>	To allow a minimum parking space width of 2.6 metres whereas a minimum width of 2.7 metres is required.
3.	3.12.2 b), Table 3 <i>Minimum and Maximum Width for Driveways</i>	To allow for a double traffic lane for travel in two directions to have a minimum width of 3.13m, whereas a minimum width of 7.5m is required.

4.	<p>3.9.2 <i>Planting Strips</i></p>	<p>To permit no planting strips along the rear lot line whereas a planting strip is required along the rear lot line.</p>
----	---	---

PLANNING RATIONALE TO SUPPORT THE VARIANCES

Overall Conformity to the *Niagara Region Official Plan*

The *Niagara Region Official Plan* ("ROP") identifies the subject lands within the "Built-Up Area" known as Smithville in the Township of West Lincoln. Urban areas designated as such are intended to annually accommodate 40% of the Region’s residential development (Policy 4.C.3.1). The requested variances will facilitate the proposed redevelopment, contributing to the 15% residential intensification target for the Town of West Lincoln as set by the Region (Policy 4.C.4.2).

Overall Conformity to the *Township of West Lincoln Official Plan*

The *Township of West Lincoln Official Plan* designates the subject lands as "Downtown - Commercial Core" (Schedule B-4) which permits mixed use buildings with apartment dwellings above the 1st storey and ground floor commercial to activate the streetscape (Policy 6.7.3 a) i.).

The proposed land use will demonstrate appropriate and gentle intensification within the downtown core. As both the property and building are existing, some of the proposed variances will recognize the existing site conditions ensuring that the adaptive re-use of the property is compatible with existing development patterns and thus enhances and protects the character of the historic Downtown (Policy 6.7.5 c). The requested variances maintain the intent of the Official Plan.

VARIANCE 1. To allow a minimum amenity space of 10m² per dwelling unit whereas 20m² per dwelling unit is required.

Why is it not possible to comply with the provision of the by-law?

As the redevelopment proposes an adaptive re-use of the existing building and site, the site design needs to work within the existing constraints while balancing the on-site parking needs, circulation space and on-site amenity.

PLANNING RATIONALE TO SUPPORT VARIANCE 1:

1. Conformity to the Intent of the Zoning By-law

The intent of the minimum amenity area is to provide the opportunity for passive and programmed recreational space for residents. Amenity areas also support social interactions amongst residents. The amenity space will be landscaped and programmed with outdoor seating areas for tenants and therefore, maintains the intent of the zoning by-law.

2. Is the Variance Minor and Desirable?

The requested variance to permit a minimum amenity space of 10m² per dwelling unit is minor as it will provide a programmed amenity area without impact to the existing site and building. The proposed reduction is desirable as it will efficiently utilize existing urban lands to be used as outdoor space to support the retention of an existing heritage resource to be readapted for residential uses while promoting the use of public infrastructure and investment, including the Smithville Square Parkette within 65m of the subject lands.

VARIANCE 2. To allow a minimum parking space width of 2.6m whereas a minimum parking space width of 2.7 metres is required.

Why is it not possible to comply with the provision of the by-law?

The existing conditions of the property and building are pre-existing with no boundary or exterior changes proposed. To provide an appropriate number of parking spaces, altered sizes are required.

PLANNING RATIONALE TO SUPPORT VARIANCE 2

1. Conformity to the Intent of the Zoning By-law

The intent of the by-law is to ensure adequately sized parking spaces to allow for vehicles to safely and conveniently enter and exit the spaces. The requested variance meets this intent as the proposed spaces are adequately sized with a slight 0.1 metre adjustment in width. The proposed parking stall width maintains the intent of the Zoning By-law.

2. Is the Variance Minor and Desirable?

The proposed reduction in minimum parking space dimensions is minor as the site plan control approval will ensure that the parking area is used safely. The variance will allow for the development to maximize on-site parking to support the end users.

VARIANCE 3. To allow for a double traffic lane for travel in two directions to have a minimum width of 3.13m and a maximum width of 4.46m, whereas a minimum width of 7.5m and a maximum width of 9.0m is required.

Why is it not possible to comply with the provision of the by-law?

The driveway belongs to 107 Griffin Street and access is provided in favour to 113 Griffin Street through an access easement as in RO127862. The existing driveway has historically provided both ingress and egress to the subject lands. The driveway is located directly between the buildings on 111 and 113 Griffin Street, and as such, alterations to the driveway width are not possible without the removal of the existing buildings.

PLANNING RATIONALE TO SUPPORT VARIANCE 3:

1. Conformity to the Intent of the Zoning By-law

The intent of the required driveway width is to ensure the driveway is functional for two lanes of traffic. It is anticipated that there will be low traffic flow into and out of the subject lands. Mitigative measures including reduced traffic speeds and signage as well as convex mirrors may be implemented to improve the visibility and function of the driveway through site plan control. The primary fire route and waste pick-up will be from the Regional right-of-way, therefore, no large vehicles are required to be on site. The recognition of the existing right-of-way width maintains the intent of the zoning by-law.

2. Is the Variance Minor and Desirable?

The variance is minor as it will recognize an existing driveway width. The variance is desirable as it maintains the existing lot boundaries and will not negatively impact the neighbouring buildings.

VARIANCE 4. To permit no planting strip along the interior side lot line and rear lot line for a whereas a planting strip is required along the interior side lot line and rear lot line.

Why is it not possible to comply with the provision of the by-law?

To provide sufficient parking stall lengths and maneuvering space, planting strips cannot be accommodate between the parking stalls and property boundaries.

PLANNING RATIONALE TO SUPPORT VARIANCE 4:

1. Conformity to the Intent of the Zoning By-law

The intent of the planting strip is to provide a visual buffer between parking areas and neighbouring uses. The rear property boundary abuts an existing parking area of a multi-residential building and the southerly side yard abuts a vacant commercial property. The proposed reduction of planting strips will not adversely impact abutting uses. The proposed variance maintains the intent of the Zoning By-law.

2. Is the Variance Minor and Desirable?

The requested variance to permit no planting strip along interior side and rear lot lines is minor and is required to facilitate on-site parking, maneuvering and maintain the existing driveway access. The overall impact of this variance is minor and is further offset by maximizing on-site landscaping where feasible to enhance the existing site condition. The variance is desirable as it allows for the efficient redevelopment and adaptive reuse of urban lands and will maximize the number of on-site parking spaces while maintaining safe circulation and maneuvering.

Conclusion

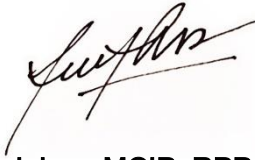
The proposed mixed use building and associated variances on 113 Griffin Street will provide additional commercial and residential dwelling units in the Downtown commercial core area of Smithville while contributing to the retention of existing heritage resources by adaptively reusing the

former Masonic Hall building. The proposed redevelopment will provide a logical and safe site design that is compatible with the existing built form and character of Smithville. The requested variances meet the intent of the Official Plan, Zoning By-law No. 2017-70, are minor, desirable and represent good land use planning.

Respectfully Submitted,
T. Johns Consulting Group Ltd.



Katelyn Gillis, BA
Senior Planner



Terri Johns, MCIP, RPP
President