

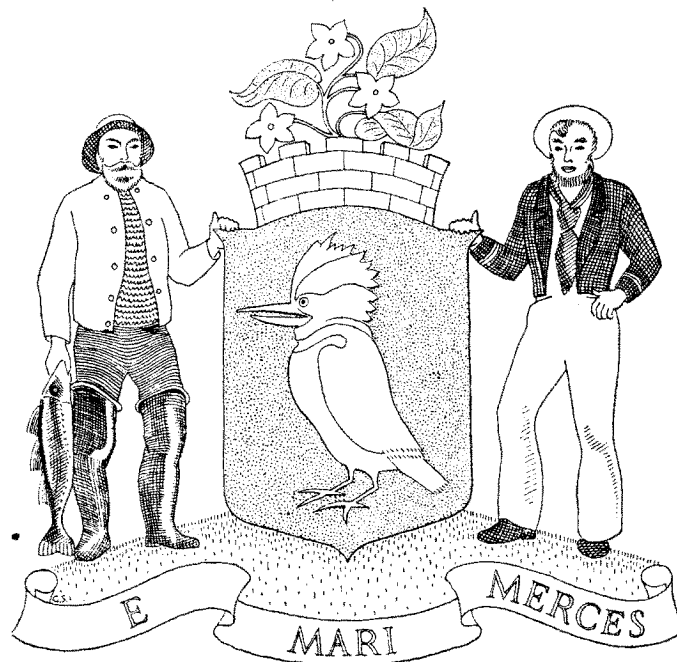
A REDEVELOPMENT STUDY OF HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

PREPARED FOR THE CITY COUNCIL

by

GORDON STEPHENSON, M.T.P.I.C.

Professor of Town and Regional Planning
University of Toronto



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The Study has confirmed the findings of previous committees and reports concerned with housing in Halifax. For the past sixty years they have shed light on the problems and have made recommendations. In that period the condition of dwellings in the Study Area must have worsened in general terms, and there has been no concerted scheme for clearance and rehousing.

The main planning has been through a zoning by-law. A glance at the zoning map is sufficient to show that the by-law must have a bad effect on housing in the "old northern suburb" and the Spring Garden Road area. It allows the entry of non-residential uses in such a way that there are only bits and pieces left for housing. No sensible redeveloper, whether governmental or private, would want to take action if a housing redevelopment scheme is to be surrounded by scattered non-residential fragments. A first step in redevelopment is a revision of the use districts to which the zoning by-law applies. In regard to blocks designated for residential use there should be protection as rigorous as that applied in the western parts of the City. Although it is far from ideal, as it takes into account existing scattered uses, Map 13 suggests a modified and better arrangement of use districts.

The second great need in the Study Area is the forthright application of Ordinance 50. Belated and inadequate as it is, Ordinance 50 should ensure some improvement in conditions and prevent further deterioration of domestic life for thousands of families. There are no good reasons why Ordinance 50 should not be applied. Even the worst housing in the Study Area is highly profitable real estate.

The third important requirement is that land should be cleared in an organised way for commercial expansion and non-residential improvements which will benefit the economy of the City. In the prevailing hit or miss method of expansion, developers either seek to jump away from the City Centre, as witness the recent demands for land on the Commons by the Board of Trade and the County Council, or they find sites in places which may not be entirely suitable, often to the further detriment of housing in the vicinity. Proposals 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 involve the clearing of land for non-residential use. Each is designed to improve the efficiency and attractiveness of the City. Each would involve a loss of housing accommodation. The implication is that alternative accommodation must be made available on other sites.

Within the Study Area redevelopment is proposed in seven major schemes which should be initiated by the City. The general concept is that they would stimulate further redevelopment, initiated by private developers, in other parts of the Study Area. The preceding sections show that the worst parts of the City are on the fringe of the Central Area, along Barrington and Upper Water Streets, and in the vicinity of the Gottingen Street and Spring Garden Road Shopping Centres. In general terms, and relative only to the Study Area, better conditions prevail in the north-western part.

The schemes are not conceived simply as slum clearance projects. They embrace a series of planning ideas, including the improvement of the physical and economic efficiency of the City. Barrington Street, for example, is an all-important connection from the new bridge to the City Centre, and it is proposed that it should be improved along its length through an area in which buildings and conditions are generally bad. Moreover, there are pressures for changes of use through redevelopment in this area. With remodelling of the bridgehead approach, north- and south-bound bridge traffic would use Barrington Street.

There are three proposals for the City Centre. The first involves sweeping away the worst housing in the City, which is in the vicinity of Jacob and Market Streets. This would provide excellently placed commercial sites, and a much needed road improvement by connecting Cogswell Street to Water Street on a new alignment. The other two aim at the improvement of the George Street axis. At the upper end, an organised start could stimulate rebuilding along Brunswick and Market Streets. Map 7 shows how underbuilt this area is. At the lower end, the proposal involves the clearing of decrepit waterfront property, in order to complete the fine governmental and financial centre by a fitting and multi-purpose terminal development overlooking the Harbour.

There are proposals for the Gottingen Street and Spring Garden Road Shopping Centres. Both are shown in more detail in Section 14. At the northern end of the Gottingen Street Shopping Centre it is suggested that part of the School for the Deaf site should be acquired for a small park and playground, containing a branch library at the corner of Uniacke Street. It was assumed that the lower part of the extensive School for the Deaf site could be used for housing families displaced in the process of carrying out other schemes.

In this concluding section there are drawings illustrating proposals for the upper and lower ends of George Street, the Cogswell Street extension, and the shopping centres on Gottingen and Brunswick Streets. The table relates the twelve schemes and, broadly, shows the effect they would have in terms of population redistribution and the changes in the use of land. Map 15 shows the site of each scheme in the City.

No attempt has been made to draw up a financial statement, nor has a period of time for carrying out the schemes been suggested. There are many unforeseeable factors which could affect the cost and the scheduling of any programme. For example, it is too early to predict what effects the application of Ordinance 50 might have on building values. It could bring about reductions in some areas and increases in others. There may also be changes in regional housing policies to stimulate low cost and low rental house-building on new land within the region, and this would tend to reduce pressures in the Study Area. Finally, time will bring changes. The prediction in the Report is that there will be steady growth in the metropolitan region, with the population rising from 160,000 to 300,000 in some twenty-five years. There will be considerable industrial development in the region, but most of it should be outside the civic boundary. Various major policy decisions will have to be made by the City Council as growth takes place. In the long term it may be far wiser to encourage in every way the growth of the City Centre and harbour ancillaries rather than attempt to introduce industry into what are now residential areas.

That is one reason why the most important short-term proposals relate to the expansion of the central area, and other proposals are concerned with growth near the Naval Dockyard and Bedford Basin.

It might be said that the various schemes, if adopted as part of a comprehensive programme, could be carried through in a twenty-year period. But the programme would be speeded up if the City were to concentrate on redevelopment, and commercial interests were anxious to be established in or near the City Centre and harbour facilities. The limiting factor might prove to be the lack of land, within the City's jurisdiction, which is essential to the provision of alternative and new housing accommodation. Schemes 1, 3 and 5 are very necessary elements in the redevelopment process. If the three sites are developed at fairly high densities they would accommodate about

COMPARATIVE DATA: 12 SCHEMES
IN THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

Scheme	Predominant Land Use	Proposed Land Use	Acres	Present Population	Proposed Population
1.	Vacant (Federal)	Residential	15.4	nil	1,200
2.	Vacant and Africville	Industrial and Harbour	150.0	300	nil
3.	Vacant (City)	Residential	26.3	nil	2,100
4.	Mostly vacant (Federal)	Residential	11.6	170	1,200
5.	Temporary Housing	Industrial and Stadium	19.3	500	nil
6.	Mainly School for Deaf Grounds	Residential, Library, Open Space	5.8	40	600
7. East	Residential	Commercial Industrial	10.6	1,420	nil
7. West	Residential	Residential Commercial	11.2	1,050	1,100
8.	Residential	Commercial	7.1	660	nil
9.	Residential	Commercial	8.8	1,620	nil
10.	Residential Commercial	Commercial	1.4	170	nil
11.	Residential Commercial	Commercial	2.0	100	nil
12.	Residential	Commercial	3.3	450	nil

NOTES.—Schemes 1 to 5 are outside the Study Area. They include three sites (in schemes 1, 3, and 5) on which housing should be built in order to facilitate redevelopment in the Study Area. Scheme 2 is being studied in the City Planning Office. It will require considerable work and the further co-operation of various agencies of government before details are precisely established. In the immediate future, some of the land, by a decision of Council, will be prepared for industrial development. Within scheme 2, Barrington Street should be built at an early stage as a major through (and level) route from the northwestern boundary to the City Centre. Scheme 5 is a proposal for the future use of the Exhibition Grounds. It includes some land for industrial buildings, and some for a major sports centre adjacent to the existing grandstand. The geographical location is excellent for a sports centre. Being in an industrial area traffic and parking would not create a disturbance.

All the figures in the table are approximate. A density of 80 persons to the acre is recommended for Scheme 1; 80-100 persons to the acre for Scheme 3; and 100-120 persons to the acre for Scheme 4. The density standards include land for childrens' playgrounds, roads and parking. In each scheme accommodation should be provided for a cross section of the population.

Further studies will be required before the development of any scheme. They will be particularly necessary in regard to cost, financing and physical design. Three levels of government will be involved. In general terms, the cost of the land for schemes 1, 3, and 4, could be established at relatively low figures, as the sites are held by the Dominion Government and the City Council.

4,500 persons. But it is suggested that there should be a considerable subtraction of housing from some redevelopment areas, with a consequent displacement of people. There would be some 4,750 persons to be rehoused on other sites from schemes 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

In addition about 1,000 of the Study Area total of some 2,000 overcrowded persons should be taken into account (the other 1,000 are in the areas covered by proposed redevelopment schemes). There is also a considerable number of families temporarily housed in barracks on the Exhibition Grounds, the Manning Pool site, and near the Citadel. A new use for the latter site has already been determined, and proposals are made for the other two in schemes 4 and 5. When those temporarily housed in barracks are brought into the calculation, the total to be rehoused in other places approaches 7,000, and schemes 1, 3 and 4 can accommodate, at most, 4,500. This is a serious difference, but it will be found that some families and persons will obtain accommodation on their own initiative either within or without the City. It is, however, evident that the three schemes to be developed on new land are barely adequate.

There should be no rehousing on the eastern side of Barrington Street, and that part of scheme 7 which lies on the western side could be at a density higher than that at present prevailing. But the remodelling of the bridge approach and the setting aside of land for commercial use at the bridgehead will reduce the land available, and there could be only a small gain in population through redevelopment. The only part of the Study Area which could show a substantial gain is in scheme 6, and if the School for the Deaf is not to be relocated elsewhere, the lower part of the site it now occupies may not become available.¹

The Council should encourage private investors to redevelop some of the blocks above Gottingen Street, under the limited dividend provisions of the National Housing Act. In the geographical sense, this is one of the most attractive areas in the growing City, and it is believed the Gottingen Street merchants would be ready to invest in new housing schemes related to the remodelling of the Shopping Centre. If they made a start others would the more readily be persuaded to take part in redevelopment.

¹The land at the corner of Uniacke and Gottingen Streets should be acquired as a playground and library site.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The boundaries of permitted use districts in the map accompanying the Zoning By-Law should be revised in the Study Area. Map 13 provides a basis for the revision.

2. Ordinance No. 50, and subsequently ordinances demanding higher minimum standards, should be vigorously applied. The Building and Health Inspectorates should be strengthened.

3. The worst housing area in the City is delimited in Scheme 9. It contains about 8.8 acres in blocks 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87, 88, 91^{1/2} and 92^{1/2}. It should be acquired as a whole, and in conjunction with small parcels of land to allow the improvement of Jacob Street to Water Street.¹ There are more than 1,600 persons living in the Scheme 9 area. Families should be offered alternative accommodation in Scheme 4.

4. As a first stage in redevelopment, the Manning Pool Site (Scheme 4) should be developed as a project to contain about 330 units in apartments and row houses. This should provide accommodation for 1,200-1,300 persons, and be carried out under a Federal-Provincial-City partnership agreement to build low rental housing. As the housing will be built for sixty years or more, and primarily be for families with children, it should include units in the following proportions: 33 with 4 bedrooms; 200 with 3 bedrooms; 66 with 2 bedrooms; 33 with one bedroom (or combined living and bedrooms for old persons).

5. About 15 acres of land held by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, adjacent to the Bayers Road Housing Development, should be used for the provision of apartments and row house units to be rented to families from the Study Area. The rents should be relatively low and this Scheme, No. 1, might best be developed by a limited dividend company sponsored by the City.

6. The City land adjacent to the City Prison and the Isolation Hospital should be used for housing and educational purposes related to redevelopment (Scheme 3). About 26 acres could be made available for housing and the balance, 6 acres, for a primary school. It is suggested that the school, and housing under the limited dividend provisions of the N.H.A. should be on the western side of the site. Low rental housing under a Federal-Provincial-City partnership agreement should be built on the lower

¹There are one or two substantial buildings which need not be acquired, as they would fit into a revised layout.