

Charlottetown seeks new development balance

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Beginning of Story Content



There have been many complaints about the design of the new Holman Grand Hotel in Charlottetown. CBC

Consultants from a Toronto urban planning firm held a public forum with 40 Charlottetown residents Tuesday night to discuss a new, more sensitive approach to development in the downtown.

The Planning Partnership has been hired by city officials to come up with a fresh approach to planning and development in the city.

People who attended the session complained about new hotel and condo developments in the city, and Harold Madi, a partner with the urban planning firm, acknowledged those complaints.

"The new developments are upsetting for people because they aren't the outcomes people would expect in the downtown," said Madi.

"They're not reflective of the character or they're not responsive and more sensitive to some of the uniqueness of the area."

Madi's group presented what they call a new approach to the rules governing city development. The new ideas are specifically for the downtown core, also known as the historic 500 lot area. Madi recommends shifting the focus of a handful of city bylaws towards ensuring new developments have the look and the architecture similar to the historic nature of the area.

Resident Georgina Bassett is concerned planning in the city might become too restrictive.

"I fear that if we govern with a heritage heavy hand that we're going to limit the people and the potential to fix up the places," said Barrett.