

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 8, 2012

PRESENT: Terry Smith-Lamothe, Chair
William Hyde, Vice Chair
Anne Sinclair
Sue Sirrs
Cesar Saleh
Suzanne Saul
Roy McBride
Jeff Pinhey
Mary Black

REGRETS: Kevin Conley
Ramzi Kawar

STAFF: Paul Sampson, HRM Planner
Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on the 3rd Floor, Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 11, 2012

MOVED by Mr. Roy McBride, seconded by Ms. Sue Sirrs, that the Design Review Committee minutes of October 11, 2012 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

MOVED by Ms. Sue Sirrs, seconded by Ms. Anne Sinclair, that the agenda be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - None

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Presentation by Southwest Properties re Proposed Mixed Use Development at 1835 Hollis Street, Halifax

Correspondence dated October 23, 2012 and a submission dated November 1, 2012 from Southwest Properties Ltd. were before the Committee.

A copy of the Southwest Properties Ltd. presentation is on file.

Mr. Paul Sampson, Planner, advised that Southwest Properties has requested an opportunity to present to the Committee their proposal for 1835 Hollis Street and to obtain feedback from the Committee to assist with the preparation of the Site Plan Application. Mr. Sampson introduced representatives of Southwest Properties present: Mr. Jim Spatz, Chairman & CEO; Mr. Gordon Laing, President & COO; Mr. Eric Burchill, VP of Planning and Development; and Mr. Mansoor Kazerouni, Director, IBI Group.

Mr. Jim Spatz thanked the Committee for the opportunity, and discussed the site. He noted the importance of mixed use residential in the downtown, as a key to the revitalization of the downtown. Mr. Spatz explained that Southwest will be looking for a variance with regard to massing, noting that this building does not fit within HRM by Design guidelines, which he believes to be an unintended consequence of the guidelines. He clarified that they are not asking for extra height or size, and that the proposal is smaller than permitted. The building is proposed to be set back from the

property lines to create public space at the base, and has better architecture than the existing building.

Mr. Eric Burchill reviewed the details of the proposal, as outlined in the November 1, 2012 submission. Mr. Burchill reviewed the as-of-right capacity of the site compared with what is proposed.

Mr. Mansoor Kazerouni reviewed details of the ground floor set back along Hollis Street, and loading/parking entrance on Sackville Street.

Mr. Burchill advised that Southwest and the Province have agreed to a mutual set back of 40 feet between the proposed building and the provincially owned building next door.

Mr. Burchill reviewed and discussed the sections of the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (sections 1.3, 3.4.4, and Policy 19), as well as the Design Manual section 3.6.7, which apply to the proposed variance. He reviewed a slide from the Shadow Study, noting that the proposal will have no incremental shadow impact on adjacent streets. Mr. Burchill went on compare renderings of views from Citadel hill, with the as-of-right development and the proposed development.

Mr. Burchill reviewed the prescribed built form capacity of the site compared to the proposed design, which he believes to be a stronger architectural form. He noted several architectural details of the proposed design, including translucent patterned balconies, a curved vertical element topped with a lighted architectural feature, and that the mechanical penthouse would be incorporated into the design of the building, instead of just sitting on top of the building and standing out.

Mr. Burchill and Mr. Spatz responded to questions from the Committee at this time, noting the following:

- The floor at the slope of Hollis Street would be ideal for office space, or two-level retail.
- The area between the proposed building and the provincial parking lot would be a quiet public space. There would be a through block connection from Sackville Street to Lower Water Street.
- 240 parking spaces are proposed.
- As-of-right massing would be 330,000 sq. ft., and they are proposing 292,000 sq. ft.
- They are anticipating a market of young professionals that want to live close to where they work. The development will not have an affordable housing element and the intent is to be rental units.
- The details of the connection at the south-east corner of the property have not yet been worked out. They will be working with the adjacent property owner to upgrade and integrate the existing stairwell, and hope to be able to make it a barrier free connection accessible to wheelchair users.
- Southwest are aiming for LEED Gold certification for the building.
- The existing bronze crest on the side of the Bank of Canada building will be carefully removed and incorporated into the interior design of the new building.

- The anticipated schedule for this development would be to submit the pre-application to HRM before Christmas, and to be under construction by the fall of 2013.

The Committee discussed the curved element of the building, with some members favouring the detail, and others not. Mr. Salah suggested that renderings of the views of the curved element from different vantage points be shown next time, to give a better understanding of what it will look like.

Mr. Pinhey suggested that renderings of the outside public space be more detailed next time, to give a better sense of the space.

Ms. Sinclair suggested that Southwest look into the Living Building Challenge for this development. Ms. Sinclair also suggested that while she understands that the intent is to create an interesting pedestrian streetscape experience, she is concerned with the solid white wall on the ground floor of the lower level of the building. Mr. Burchill explained that although it is hard to tell from the rendering, the wall creates a gap for cars to drive through to the parking area. Ms. Sinclair suggested that the wall be perforated, noting concerns with pedestrian vehicular safety.

A member suggested a public art competition for the public space, which Mr. Spatz indicated they could do.

Mr. Spatz and Mr. Burchill invited members to contact them with any further questions or suggestions, and thanked the Committee for their time.

The Committee briefly discussed difficulties with building set-backs prescribed in the Design Guidelines. Mr. Kazerouni advised that standard national set-backs are between 20-30 metres.

7. REPORTS/DISCUSSION - None

8. ADDED ITEMS - None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE – December 13, 2012

The next Design Review Committee meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. on the 3rd floor, Duke Tower, 5251 Duke Street, Halifax.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant