



**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 9, 2015**

PRESENT: Kourosh Rad, Chair  
Steve Murphy, Vice Chair  
Rick Buhr  
Kevin Conley  
Catherine Courtney  
Jared Dalziel  
Andy Fillmore  
Louis Lemoine  
Rob LeBlanc  
Anna Sampson

REGRETS: Malcolm Pinto  
Noel Fowler

STAFF: Mitch Dickey, Planner  
Paul Sampson, Planner  
Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Clerk  
Cailin MacDonald, Legislative Support

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.*

*The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/drc/150709DRC-agenda.php>*

*The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. and adjourned at 5:50 p.m.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 11, 2015**

Mr. Fillmore noted a change to the June 11, 2015 minutes on page 8. He clarified that “nuanced” should be “without nuance.”

**MOVED by Mr. Fillmore, seconded by Mr. Lemoine that the minutes of June 11, 2015 be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

The agenda was accepted as distributed.

There was a round table of introductions for the benefit of new Design Review Committee members.

**4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

**5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS**

**6.1 Correspondence**

**6.2 Petitions – None**

**6.3 Presentation – None**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 STAFF**

**7.1.1 Preliminary Presentation: Case #19756: Site Plan Pre-Application for St. David’s Church Hall, 1537 Brunswick Street.**

The following was before the Committee:

- Downtown Halifax Site Plan Approval Pre-Application Design Rationale, Studio Works International Inc.

Mr. Bill Greenwood provided the Committee with a brief project overview and introduced Mr. Ronald Smith.

Mr. Smith cited that the existing site has frontage on Brunswick Street and Grafton Street, and that it includes St. David’s church and hall. He continued that the intent of the project was to develop a portion of the property, retained by the church, into a sustainable mixed-use building. He stated that the church will remain on the property and that it will be subdivided; both properties will be retained by the church, leased by the developer, and the funds will go back to the church.

Mr. Smith shared that part of the design intent was not to overtake the image of the church when viewed from Grafton Street, and he noted that the façade and the sides of the church are maintained.

Mr. Smith continued by describing the proposed materiality of the new building. He cited that while the appearance of the building is modern, the use of historic materials, such as ironstone, stucco and brick, as well as a colour palette sympathetic to the existing church, will link the new and old visually.

Mr. Smith provided an overview of the ground floor plan which includes the commercial and church hall areas. He described the streetwall setback variance requested for the western corner of the streetwall and cited that due to the curved streetline, the western corner of the streetwall is setback 8.4 feet instead of 5 feet. He shared that the entrance would be relocated to off of Blowers Street, that the thoroughfare would be maintained and that the entrance to the underground parking would be at grade with an interior ramp.

Mr. Dalziel joined meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Mr. Smith described the Brunswick Street elevation and the rationale for the requested variance. He shared that Brunswick Street is sloped enough at the site that an entire storey would be lost in stepping the building up to the street, and that the lowest portion of commercial would be a floor to floor height of +/- 25 feet. He continued that because of the steep slope of grade, a portion of the commercial floor will be below grade, but the corner closest to Spring Garden road will be at grade. He stated that the floor to floor height of 13 feet is sufficient for commercial uses.

Mr. Smith went on to describe an additional requested variance wherein the height of the streetwall would measure 19.4 metres instead of 18.5 metres.

Mr. Smith shared how the intended design would impose layers within the site, including the commercial, church and hall areas. He went on to describe the south elevation and commented that there would be a clear view of the streetwall profile as well as a south pedestrian entrance and drop-off for church related functions and that the heritage of the graveyard would be retained. As well, he shared that the current walk and roadway by easement between Brunswick and Grafton Streets would be maintained.

Mr. Smith commented on the aerial view of the development and the treatment of the roof which is still in an exploratory stage. He shared that the project may not lend itself to a true green roof; however a patterned roof, or something of the like, was being considered.

Mr. Smith thanked the Committee for their time and opened the floor to questions.

A copy of the presentation is on file.

Mr. Buhr inquired whether the elevator would obstruct the view plane. Mr. Smith responded by stating that the top floor units are occupied by two level units and therefore the overrun of the elevator will align with the two stories. Mr. Buhr continued by noting that in the floorplans, there did not appear to be any windows in the stairwell and he inquired whether that was intentional or an oversight. Mr. Smith clarified that it was indeed an oversight.

Mr. Fillmore noted that the briefing document shows differences in the depiction of the Brunswick Street elevation perspectives, particularly its southwest corner perspective. Mr. Smith clarified which drawing depicted the elevation perspectives accurately.

Mr. Fillmore commented that in the perspective drawing, it seemed like the development proposed nice transparency while the elevation drawing did not depict this. Mr. Smith clarified that the intent is to have a transparent retail corner. Additionally, Mr. Fillmore commented that it appeared that there was approximately 6000 square feet of usable space and asked whether this space was intended to be divided for use by multiple retail tenants. Mr. Smith responded that a single client was being sought as the

grade level changes would make it difficult to accommodate multiple tenants and he shared that he recognized that overall it would not be a large leasehold.

Mr. Fillmore asked for clarification on what the orange area represented on the ground level floor plan provided in the presentation. Mr. Smith responded that the space would be for caretaker suites.

Mr. Lemoine asked for clarification on the extent of the glazing depicted on the stairwell and shared his concerns. Mr. Smith noted Mr. Lemoine's concerns and shared that it would be addressed for the next presentation.

Further, Mr. Lemoine noted that he would like to see more detail as part of the development plans for landscaping at grade. Mr. Smith shared that the project plans for landscaping at grade were still in consideration and he stated that he would take Mr. Lemoine's comments into consideration. The Chair echoed Mr. Lemoine's comments.

Mr. LeBlanc asked whether any bylaw issues associated with interior lot lines had been considered. Mr. Smith and Mr. LeBlanc continued to discuss the building's plans for interior lot lines and how this would affect the development.

As well, Mr. LeBlanc shared that he would like to see the terminus to Market Street be animated more as it seemed flat for such a prominent view. Mr. Smith responded that a treatment for the terminus is something that would be considered.

Mr. Buhr inquired whether plans for exterior lighting had been considered at this stage of the development. Mr. Smith shared that lighting for the project is presently in discussion with the client although final plans have not yet been determined.

Mr. Lemoine continued by echoing Mr. LeBlanc's comments regarding the Market Street elevation. Mr. Smith responded that they would look at defining it with texture.

The Chair asked for clarification on the connection between Grafton to Brunswick Streets, and inquired whether a material other than asphalt would be considered. Mr. Smith responded that it will remain until this portion of the property has been transferred from the city to the province and agreed that it could certainly be considered. The Chair commented that it was a really good opportunity to connect the two sites. Mr. Conley commented further that lighting in particular along this corridor would aid in crime prevention. Mr. Smith shared that discussions on this topic were being held with both his client and the church as security and usage of this public/private driveway was a concern for all.

Mr. Conley asked for clarification on the accessibility of the courtyard on the north side. Mr. Smith clarified that this area was only accessible by tenants as it is elevated one storey. As well, Mr. Conley asked whether the rooftop would be accessible and Mr. Smith responded that it would not be.

The Chair inquired about the context of the site and asked whether there were any plans to improve the wall along Grafton Street. Mr. Smith responded that generally there was a program for retention of the buildings as well as renovations on the church property itself, and clarified that these areas would need to be considered as part of a separate application.

Ms. Sampson commented that she did not believe Car Share Halifax would be able to service a space in underground parking. Mr. Smith noted Ms. Sampson's comment. Ms. Sampson continued by asking for clarification on the proposed materials. Mr. Smith responded by stating that a variety of materials are being considered such as different composite aluminum panels, stone flush panel brick or brick-like material made of ceramic, as well as an aluminum or high density fiberboard panels. Ms. Sampson shared her concerns with the units' 9 foot ceiling heights, particularly for units classified as two-bedrooms. Mr. Smith noted that maximizing the floor to floor height was a priority and considered the units to appeal as micro-living.

The Chair asked whether the Committee had any further questions or comments for the presenters.

Mr. Buhr provided some final thoughts. He complimented the design's inset balconies although noted that the mastings seemed top heavy. Mr. Smith stated that since it was a very urban site, inset balconies were an important design feature to encourage its use by tenants, and acknowledged Mr. Buhr's comments on its mastings.

The Chair thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Greenwood for their presentation.

### **7.1.2 Preliminary Presentation: CBC/YMCA Redevelopment Proposal**

The following was before the Committee:

- South Park Project Data Sheet, Southwest Properties.

Mr. Fillmore and Mr. LeBlanc declared a Conflict of Interest and took seats in the gallery.

Mr. Eric Burchill provided the Committee with a brief introduction, citing that the proposed architectural concept is a reflection of years of work and partnership on a complex project culminating into what is truly a mixed-use development in the centre of the city's downtown. He then invited Mr. Jim Spatz to speak briefly.

Mr. Spatz shared that Southwest Properties was thrilled to be chosen by the YMCA three years ago to be a partner on this project. He commented on the project's rich community aspects as well as the site's significant location, across from the Halifax Public Gardens, an historic greenspace in downtown, and its prominence at an important entry point into the downtown area. He continued that this would be the home of the new YMCA facility and he remarked on its overall importance to city and what a privilege it has been to work on a project of this significance. He noted the project's complexities as well as collaborations, and remarked on how it was important for the new development to pay homage to the CBC building the site's predecessor. He then invited Mr. George Roger to speak briefly.

Mr. Rodger remarked that the project has taken a long time in order to present as much detail as possible on the renewed YMCA site and he stated that the intents of the initial design are mirrored in the proposed concept. He commented that the needs of the YMCA have been met with this design and that this included spaces for community development and functional, flexible and accessible public and member spaces which achieve program requirements. Mr. Rodger then invited Mr. Mansoor Kazerouni of IBI Architects to present.

Mr. Kazerouni provided an overview of the existing site at the intersection of Bell Road, Sackville Street and South Park Street, and he noted that the terminus to the site was an important consideration of the design and that its curved edges help to address the idea of terminus. He described the views from various vantages, north, south, east and west, surrounding the site. He also noted that the east end of the site is narrow and that it fulfills a service function for the development.

Mr. Kazerouni remarked that the schematic that had been prepared by the YMCA, which had been subject to an application, and Appendix C, which outlined the Land-Use Bylaw site restrictions, were the key informants to the design. However, he also noted that there are some variances currently being discussed with the city and the design is seeking to conform within existing regulations.

Mr. Kazerouni continued that as the site is arranged by an east-west link that terminates in the Halifax Public Gardens this became an important organizer of land. He went on to state that the site effectively contains two buildings on it which are both accessed by the east-west walkway, designed as a pedestrian passage. Additionally, he noted that the north building contains the YMCA in its podium.

Mr. Kazerouni took the Committee through the ground floor plans which have retail at grade. He stated that essentially the entire South Park frontage accommodates retail. Also, he stated that the YMCA has

distinct entrances for the public leading to a central stairwell which becomes a central organizer as well as a secondary entrance. Mr. Kazerouni continued by noting that walking and sitting steps continue as part of the Amphitheatre. As well, he commented that the proposed design is animated by retail functions located along South Park Street, and is animated by YMCA functions at grade along Sackville Street.

Mr. Kazerouni noted that the proposed design creates lobbies which accommodate indoor spaces that are linked and are visually connected by an outdoor space. He commented that the landscape designs are still being developed and noted that as the view transitions it creates a terminus, or an event, in the congressional spaces that help to distinguish the lobby areas.

Mr. Kazerouni went on to describe the second floor where from the winding staircase, the public will be able to look down to the pool area and look up to the gym area. He noted that all of the training areas are along South Park Street and that all of this activity will be very visible and will contribute to the animation of the street. More of those conditioning spaces appear on the upper levels. Mr. Kazerouni pointed out bridges that run across the membership spaces as well as the running track which is a high volume space wrapped within residential spaces. Mr. Kazerouni commented that the spaces are further defined by "in skin" membership and "outer skin" public areas. He also noted that the podium on the north building is a combination of residential and that the podium on the south building is all residential above the retail base. He stated that there are a variety of units and that the ones on the walkway, along the north and south buildings, have been given a sawtooth treatment so that they have some kind of orientation to the Halifax Public Gardens. He went on to note that the central spaces are occupied by storage spaces and that the upper floors are occupied by amenities which lead to an amenity terrace.

Mr. Kazerouni further stated that there are three levels of below grade parking which are common to both spaces holding approximately 395 cars. He commented that there are 82 condominium units in the north building and 200 in the south building for rental. Also, he noted that the pavilion condo units are very generously sized which they anticipate will be occupied mostly by end-user tenants.

Mr. Kazerouni continued by commenting that there is a rampart view plane that regulates the height on the site, which became an important determinant in shaping the roof form. The proposal takes the opportunity to use this unique view plane to shape the roof form.

Mr. Kazerouni described the west elevation along South Park Street and showed the mid-block walkway, retail areas, the YMCA conditioning spaces and the residential units. He highlighted the residential rental and residential condo units as well as the building's various setbacks.

Furthermore, Mr. Kazerouni made mention of the curved edges, an idea borrowed from the existing building, which keep the edges soft and draw the public in. Curves are also introduced in the roof form and balconies.

Mr. Kazerouni described the different views for the Committee. As well, he shared that the YMCA space integrates a childcare facility with both indoor and outdoor space.

Mr. Kazerouni went on to describe the materiality. He stated that most of the elements will be metal panels and composite wall treatment. He continued that colour is introduced in a subtle and playful manner at the base only to help distinguish the YMCA spaces. Although, Mr. Kazerouni also noted that by virtue of the absence of balconies and the high volume these areas will express themselves differently. He commented that the playing with colour allowed for a balance of transparency and glimpses of the activity in these spaces.

Mr. Kazerouni described that as it looks above, the multiplicity of forms and stepping, presents a unifying architectural expression. He commented on the ability of the white ribbons to develop a continuous element that carries across the buildings and stated that the white ribbons soften the building's façade while creating texture contrast and scale.

Mr. Kazerouni remarked that the vertical glass fins extend across to the base of the podium and while the elements are linear in one area, they loosen up and begin to jump around to help distinguish different functions and add visual interest. Mr. Kazerouni commented that the extension of the paving may provide for a subtle difference in the colour or texture to be pedestrian focused. It also provides opportunity to have a corner café as well as signage and landscaping. He closed by commenting that the view terminus pays homage to what was there but in a very different way in form, material and function.

A copy of the presentation is on file.

The Chair thanked Mr. Kazerouni for presenting as well as Mr. Spatz and Mr. Rodger for their introductions, and opened the floor to questions and comments.

Ms. Sampson inquired whether the swimming pool area will always be transparent. Mr. Rodger responded that spaces, including the pool, will be flexible in design to accommodate cultural and program sensitivities by employing varying degrees of lighting as well as shades and the area to be secure and welcoming in a way that is not obtrusive. Mr. Kazerouni also noted that there is a slight grade difference along Sackville Street.

Mr. Buhr commented on the pedestrian walkway and inquired about the potential for including a vehicular pass-through given the high traffic on South Park Street. Mr. Kazerouni commented that it was something that was originally contemplated and that it would be a great amenity for the YMCA and residents, although it may not be possible because of existing conditions.

Mr. Lemoine asked what happens at the end of the pedestrian passage way. Mr. Burchill responded that the passageway tees at Brior Lane, a one-way lane. He continued that Brior Lane is an interesting piece which is being looked at in terms of ways to service and maintain the area to keep it safe and secure. Mr. Burchill continued to describe to the Committee the complexities of Brior Lane in context of the masterplan of the mixed-use site and he shared that the city is part of these consultations.

Ms. Sampson noted the 50 outdoor parking spaces and inquired where those were located. Mr. Burchill clarified that it would be 50 outdoor bicycle parking spaces. He continued by noting that 70 of the indoor parking spaces would be designated for hourly parking and 35 will be owned by the YMCA.

The Chair inquired whether or not the project would be phased. Mr. Burchill responded by stating that it will be continuously built although there will some phasing.

The Chair commented that the units appeared to be quite long. Mr. Kazerouni responded that the length is approximately 55 feet and that the units have been mocked up and the flow of the spaces work well.

The Chair inquired whether or not the glazing on the poolside would be a variance. Mr. Burchill responded that to date it had not been identified as a variance, however it was noted that the streetwall height around the North building is an issue due to the grading issues. Therefore, he continued that there will be a streetwall height variance.

The Chair asked for clarification on the elevations of the units. Mr. Kazerouni clarified that the width of the building is 39.6 metres. As well, the Chair commented that it would be helpful for the Committee in their review of the next package to have coloured images for reference. Mr. Burchill shared that the coloured images from today's presentation would be sent to the Committee.

The Chair commented on the activation and beautification of back alleys being explored in other, older cities and remarked that this development presents an opportunity to look at what is being done in other places, such as public art, and the ways in which it could apply to this space. The presenters stated that it was a great suggestion.

Mr. Dalziel commented that there is opportunity to provide greater detail in terms of landscaping. Mr. Kazerouni noted that this would be included in the next iteration of plans and that the landscape features are in development.

Ms. Sampson asked for clarification on whether the building was legal and how this impacted the exterior design. Mr. Kazerouni commented that it is entirely legal and that conditions did impact the exterior design. He continued that a meeting will be held next week with the client to discuss strategies on how to handle the exterior façade.

The Chair commented that a midblock crossing may be something to consider discussing with the city considering the significance of the development as well as the distance between Spring Garden Road and Sackville Street.

Mr. Dalziel commented on the effectiveness of the sawtooth design idea. Mr. Kazerouni shared that every architectural gesture was designed to maximize the sites' potential. Mr. Lemoine commented that it was nice to see some exemplary development in Halifax and noted that great homage was paid to the existing building.

The Chair inquired about the development's proposed timeline. Mr. Kazerouni responded that it has a projected completion date of 2018.

Mr. Dalziel inquired whether modeling the colours all in red was ever a consideration. Mr. Kazerouni responded that it was not.

Mr. Lemoine noted that he was interested to see how the development makes out with energy modeling considering all of the glass. Mr. Kazerouni shared that good strategies are in development for the use of spandrel glass and that the project is committed overall to sustainability.

The Chair thanked Mr. Burchill, Mr. Spatz, Mr. Rodger and Mr. Kazerouni for their presentation.

**7.2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE**

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – August 13, 2015 beginning at 4:00 p.m.**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Cailin MacDonald  
Legislative Support