



**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 12, 2015**

PRESENT: Steve Murphy, Vice Chair
Rick Buhr
Catherine Courtney
Jared Dalziel
Louis Lemoine
Anna Sampson
Malcolm Pinto

REGRETS: Kourosh Rad, Chair
Kevin Conley
Noel Fowler
Rob LeBlanc

STAFF: Richard Harvey, Major Projects Planner
Paul Sampson, Planner
Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Manager
Karen Brown, Solicitor
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/151112DRCAgenda.php>

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. and adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 8, 2015

MOVED by Mr. Buhr, seconded by Mr. Lemoine

THAT the minutes of October 8, 2015 be approved as distributed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

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

MOVED by Ms. Sampson, seconded by Mr. Lemoine

THAT the agenda for November 12, 2015 be approved as distributed. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence

6.1.1 Emails from David Hirsh, Sharon Palermo, Lynn Shokry, Krystyna Panek, Curt Huebert, Krystyna and Roman Panek, Lynn and Peter Ruttimann, Shari Conley-Barrett, Dawn Frail, Deborah Vandewater, Lorne and A. Audrey Mitton, Deborah Toogood and Curt Walsh regarding Case 20126, proposed Brenton Street mixed-use development was distributed to the Committee. The correspondence was noted as being received by the Committee.

6.2 Petitions

6.3 Presentation

6.3.1 Preliminary Presentation, Redevelopment of the Block Bounded by Spring Garden Road, Doyle, Brunswick and Queen Streets, Halifax.

The Vice Chair invited Mr. Dan Goodspeed, to present the Preliminary Presentation by Kassner Goodspeed Architects for the redevelopment of the block bounded by Spring Garden Road, Doyle, Brunswick and Queen Streets, Halifax, to the Committee.

Mr. Goodspeed began by providing an overview of the general area, noting that the site is located at a prominent block bounded by Spring Garden Road, Doyle, Brunswick and Queen Streets. He continued by sharing that Kassner Goodspeed was tasked with organizing a collaborative design process with Westwood Developments and Susan Fitzgerald.

Mr. Goodspeed described the site located at the east end of Spring Garden Road as part of the commercial district and neighbouring the monument district, noting that the area is characterized by a number of historic buildings and its proximity to the new Halifax Central Library. He continued by sharing key considerations as part of the proposed design, including sunlight penetration to Spring Garden Road, weather protected sidewalks and enhancing the pedestrian experience.

Mr. Goodspeed commented that the site currently has four buildings located on it and will have approximately 200 feet of frontage on Spring Garden Road and approximately 300 feet of frontage on Doyle Street. He continued by commenting that the site has a pronounced slope which drops approximately 11 feet from the southwest to the southeast corners and remarked that the overall site offers a tilted and complicated plane.

Mr. Goodspeed remarked that the design brief included a full commercial ground floor and that the upper floors would be a combination of residential and hotel spaces. He went on to describe the conceptual design options explored by the design team including an atrium, double-loaded C shape, two masses and a secret garden, and remarked that these concepts did not work for various reasons and therefore an S shaped design was conceived.

Mr. Goodspeed commented that the proposed design has two cutouts in the upper stories and noted that these presented challenges from a by-law perspective, sharing that the design looked to make use of space on the western end of the site that is not in the view plane. He continued by sharing that the proposed design is anchored by a rotunda at the corner of Queen and Doyle Streets which will serve as the hotel and residential entrance and is an important location marking the approach from the Citadel Hill district. Mr. Goodspeed commented that the driveway is located on Doyle Street and that it was important for the developer to contribute additional public parking and three levels of below grade parking are being proposed.

Mr. Goodspeed outlined that the proposed design is focused on the notion of the streetwall and given the sites' proximity to the monument district, monumentality was considered in its design. He continued by noting that a full streetwall screen will be developed to the property line and that the commercial space will be setback approximately 5 feet which allows for a wider sidewalk as well as weather protection without canopies. He commented that the rotunda was purposely placed at the northwest corner as this area receives a lot of sunlight as well as gives a visual link from Spring Garden Road to Doyle Street.

Mr. Goodspeed shared that the building form was conceived as a glazed screen which gives weather protection. As well, he noted that along Brunswick Street there were concerns with the narrowness of the existing sidewalk which have been addressed in the proposal. He continued by commenting on the character of the area and noted that the intent of the design is to mark the transition from the retail district to the monument district. Mr. Goodspeed described some of the characteristics of the design including defined volumes, setbacks as well as a glazing. Mr. Goodspeed commented on the view plane of the site and noted that it was not possible to build to the allowable pre-bonus height.

Mr. Goodspeed commented on the materiality proposed for the development which includes a limestone material. He went on to share that the ground floor will be glazed as well as described an aluminum plate system being proposed in a wood finish that can be removed and replaced as tenants change over time.

Mr. Goodspeed commented on the corner of Brunswick Street and Spring Garden Road and noted that the by-law discusses the significance of this corner. He continued that space did not allow for a corner elaboration and therefore to address the by-law a rounded corner was introduced at this intersection. He went on to share that the same aluminum plank system in a wood finish would be carried around as well as the inclusion of crystal clear glass for the storefronts. He shared that this will be the same glass used on the bottom floor of the Halifax Central Library and that the upper stories would utilize a combination of grey tinted finish glass and grey tinted spandrels, and that the windows would be set back 8 to 10 inches.

Mr. Goodspeed remarked that the roof will be fully landscaped and noted that the west end will be developed as a rooftop bar with elevator access from the underground parking area.

Mr. Goodspeed commented on the Spring Garden Road façade. He shared that the by-law indicates 80 per cent of the streetwall needed to be frontage and that the design allowed for this in the centre of the block rather than the ends as intended by the by-law. Mr. Goodspeed continued that the by-law may not have been designed to take into account full block developments and articulated that the frontage was placed with the spirit of the by-law in mind. Mr. Goodspeed commented that there is also an anticipated

variance on the west end of the building and that a slightly higher streetwall along part of Spring Garden Road is being requested and shared that continues on to Queen Street.

Mr. Goodspeed commented on the Doyle Street façade and noted that there are issues with the grading around the site. He shared that the groundfloor height reduces from approximately 16 feet to 12 feet and noted that the by-law does seem to allow for some flexibility when on a steepening site. He also commented on the top floor stepback noting it would be about 7 feet, rather than 9 feet, to allow for private terraces.

Mr. Goodspeed remarked that the proposed design is expressive of the qualities and requirements maintained in the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law given the unique challenges of the lot.

A copy of the presentation is on file.

The Vice Chair thanked Mr. Goodspeed for his presentation and opened the floor to questions and comments from the Committee.

Mr. Buhr asked for clarification on the relationship between the materials used in base of the building and those used in the upper stories. Mr. Goodspeed responded that the ground level is recessed and that it will be completely glazed. He continued by stating that the masonry screening reaches to the property line to create a recessed weather protective covering overtop of the sidewalk and that the masonry continues to the upper stories.

Ms. Sampson commented on the Spring Garden Road façade, noting that 80 per cent frontage in the centre of the block seemed fitting and suggested not connecting the materials to break up the spacing and the massing. Mr. Goodspeed responded that currently the design meets the minimum streetwall height requirement and that developing a false wall was considered.

Ms. Sampson commented on whether there was an opportunity with scale and colour to break up the block, sharing that she would encourage the use of colour although she appreciated the classically modern palate presented. She continued by commenting on how the proposed rooftop patio relates well to the surrounding buildings and shared that she enjoyed the rotunda, noting that there is an opportunity to make the area highly pedestrian friendly by including places to sit. Mr. Goodspeed shared that although the space includes the driveway access, the sidewalk would continue to flow through as a pedestrian pathway and that this space would be animated with lots of sunlight during the day and brightly lit at night. Ms. Sampson also noted that there is a transit stop located on this block, remarking that there is an opportunity to incorporate street furniture into the design. Mr. Goodspeed shared that discussions have been held on this matter. Ms. Sampson shared that she liked the durability of the precast being proposed as well.

Mr. Lemoine shared that it was apparent that the building's design was constrained by the view planes. Mr. Goodspeed added that the mechanical gear is located in the shadow of an existing Morris Street tower, noting that it does show in the view plane.

Mr. Lemoine commented that he liked the way the building emulates on both sides of Spring Garden Road and Doyle Street, remarking that there is an opportunity to explore making the design more playful with its use of colour. He continued by commenting on street landscaping, noting that this redevelopment presented the opportunity to replace the existing wooden poles with modern street lighting. Mr. Goodspeed responded that they are hoping to see a refurbishment of Doyle Street and have it return to a pedestrian friendly street. He continued by stating that he hopes to see the pavement changed and commented on the functionality of the street to vehicular traffic flow, remarking that he would like to see it become a shared street and that discussions are underway with municipal staff about what is possible.

Mr. Dalziel commented that at the pedestrian level there are existing sandstone blocks that he would like to see incorporated into the design. Mr. Goodspeed responded that incorporating salvaged materials is being considered.

The Vice Chair asked whether the Committee had any further questions, and hearing none, he thanked Mr. Goodspeed for his presentation.

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Case 20146: Substantive Site Plan Approval: 1537 Brunswick Street (St. David's Church Hall), Halifax (Preliminary Presentation-July 9, 2015)

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated November 12, 2015.

Mr. Paul Sampson, Planner, provided a brief presentation by reviewing the existing context, project description and matters for discussion for the Committee as identified by staff. He continued by describing the proposed site, St. David's Church Hall, located on the western portion of the property at 1537 Brunswick Street and outlined that a 7-storey mixed-use development is being proposed.

Mr. Sampson commented that three variances are being requested including to the streetwall setback, the streetwall height and land uses at grade. He also shared that on April 28, 2015, Regional Council approved amendments to the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law which included the rezoning of the site and an amendment of the streetwall setback for 1537 Brunswick Street from 4 metres to between 0-1.5 metres.

Mr. Sampson described the process of the application to the Committee, stating that following the Committee's decision, the application would go to Regional Council for substantial alternation since it is a heritage property. He outlined that substantial alternation for this application would be for the removal of the church hall and the subdivision of the property to establish a property line. He went on to comment that the western portion of the property would then be deregistered as a heritage property and a permit would be issued following Regional Council's decision.

Mr. Sampson noted the attachments to the report, stating that the proposed redevelopment would include ground floor commercial space totaling 500 square metres, six floors of residential units and leasable space for the church. He also noted that the applicant is seeking approval of a formal easement over the land from the Province to allow for the continued use of the driveway for access purposes.

Mr. Sampson briefly reviewed the following discussion items: canopies and awnings, sloping conditions and heritage context, outlined in the staff report.

Mr. Sampson explained that the Heritage Advisory Committee and staff recommendation to the Committee is approval, without conditions, of the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application and approval of the requested variances.

The Vice Chair thanked Mr. Sampson for his presentation and opened the floor to questions and comments from the Committee.

MOVED by Mr. Lemoine, seconded by Mr. Dalziel

THAT the Design Review Committee approve the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for the mixed-use development at 1537 Brunswick Street, Halifax, as shown on Attachment A; and approve the requested variances to the Streetwall Setback, Streetwall Height and Land Uses at Grade (ground floor height), as shown in Attachment A.

Mr. Pinto inquired whether there were concerns with the excavation due to the archeological significance of the site. Mr. Sampson shared that this is an issue that the applicant is working with the Province to address.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.1.2 Case 19898: Substantive Site Plan Approval: Emera Pedway and Building Recladding, Lower Water Street and Terminal Road (Preliminary Presentation August 13, 2015)

Ms. Sampson declared a Conflict of Interest and took a seat in the gallery.

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated November 5, 2015

Mr. Harvey provided the Committee with a brief presentation reviewing the existing context, project description and overview of the matters for discussion. He commented that this application was received from WSP Canada Inc. on behalf of Emera, for the development of a pedway and alterations to the buildings at 1223 Lower Water Street and 5151 Terminal Road, Halifax. Mr. Harvey reminded the Committee that their role is to approve the qualitative elements and that Council would be deciding the merit of the pedway, and that the Committee may comment on external appearance of the pedway.

Mr. Harvey shared that the applicant plans to reclad 5151 Terminal Road with aluminum and glass to complement the 1223 Lower Water Street façade. He noted that the applicant is also proposing the establishment of a pedway linking the two sites.

Mr. Harvey commented on the matters for discussion outlined in the staff report, including the exterior cladding and the pedway, and noted for the Committee the areas within the Design Manual that relate to pedways.

Mr. Harvey shared that the staff recommendation to the Committee is approval, without conditions, of the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application.

The Vice Chair thanked Mr. Harvey for his presentation and opened the floor to questions and comments from the Committee.

MOVED by Mr. Buhr, seconded by Ms. Courtney

THAT the Design Review Committee approve the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for the pedway and building alterations at 1223 Lower Water Street and 5151 Terminal Road, Halifax, as shown on Attachment A.

Mr. Pinto asked for clarification about whether transparency, in regards to the pedway, included its roof. Mr. Harvey clarified that it is anticipated that the pedway will be glass and highly transparent, and he noted that staff have not placed any emphasis on the roof itself.

Mr. Murphy commented that the pedway encroaches on a public space and that it is being developed primarily for the benefit of one tenant and wondered whether there had been any discussion with the applicant to add a public benefit to their proposal as a trade-off for the loss of public space. Mr. Harvey responded that at this stage in the process, staff is reviewing to determine whether the proposal meets criteria outlined in the Design Manual and noted that this may be part of a consideration by Council. Mr. Murphy suggested that the Committee add that the applicant look at including some kind of public benefit like public art or landscaping. Mr. Harvey recommended that the Committee look at making a separate motion for any concerns regarding the pedway.

Mr. Pinto commented that he understands that the pedway will be publicly accessible and Mr. Harvey confirmed that the proposal indicates this.

Mr. Buhr asked whether staff had felt that landscaping concerns, discussed at the preliminary presentation, had been addressed. Mr. Harvey responded that this was not something that has been part of Emera's proposal at this stage.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee further discussed with staff creating a second motion outlining their recommendations around the inclusion of landscaping as a public benefit. Mr. Harvey recommended language which was considered a friendly motion and the Committee adopted this.

MOVED by Mr. Dalziel and seconded by Mr. Pinto

THAT the Committee recommend to Regional Council to consider public art, landscaping or other public realm improvements as part of the request for approval.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Sampson returned to her seat.

7.1.3 Staff Update – Identification of Next Steps - Downtown Halifax Plan 5YR Review (Oral)

The Vice Chair invited Mr. Jacob Ritchie, Urban Design Manager to present an update on the Downtown Halifax Plan 5 Year Review.

Mr. Ritchie shared that the most recent version of the Downtown Halifax Plan is available on the city's website. He continued that this is an opportunity to talk about policy and noted that planning details of different jurisdictions within the downtown have been included in the Municipal Planning Strategy. He also shared that the changes include how the By-law refers to variances and has identified what is an allowable variance. Mr. Ritchie went on to note that staff have extended the public comment on the Land Use By-law and encouraged the Committee to review the Plan online.

The Vice Chair opened the floor to questions, and hearing none, he thanked Mr. Ritchie for his presentation.

Mr. Dalziel departed from the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

The Vice Chair thanked Mr. Lemoine for his two years of excellent service on the Design Review Committee. As well, he reminded Committee members nearing the end of their first term that they will need to reapply if they would like to serve another term.

7.2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – December 10, 2015 beginning at 4:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:27p.m.

Cailin MacDonald
Legislative Support