

**Design Review Committee**  
**October 11, 2012**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Design Review Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Brad Anguish, Director of Community and Recreation Services

**DATE:** September 26, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Case 17446, Amendments to the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, and Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law to permit a 48 storey mixed use building at 1591 Granville Street, Halifax

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**ORIGIN**

Application by United Gulf Developments Limited (United Gulf).

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Design Review Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council not approve amendments to HRM's Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, and Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law to enable a building of up to 172 metres in height at 1591 Granville Street, Halifax.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

United Gulf proposes a 48 storey building comprised of two 44 storey towers above a four storey podium, for a total height of 172 metres (inclusive of roof top mechanical equipment) at 1591 Granville Street, Halifax. The company has named this development “Skye Halifax.” It requires substantial amendments to HRM’s planning policies and regulations, the most notable of which concerns its height. The maximum permitted height on the site is 66 metres and the project violates the Rampart View requirements that preserve certain views from inside the Citadel.

The Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (the Plan) has policies that outline the circumstances under which major amendments to the policies might be considered. This includes instances where the Plan is under a periodic review, where there is a need to address unforeseen circumstances, or where a proposal confers significant economic, social, or cultural benefits. It is found that the project does not meet these circumstances and that it may serve to introduce speculation and a loss in confidence towards the current Downtown Halifax Plan at a time when there is a resurgence of new downtown development.

With regard to the form of the proposal and amendments that are necessary to accommodate it, particular concerns are raised regarding the proposed height and the extension of the towers to the limits of the adjoining streetlines. Staff have determined that the proposal does not fit with the overall height framework that has been established for the downtown and its size and shape will dominate the adjoining streets.

It is recommended that the current policies and regulations within HRM’s planning documents be retained, thereby refusing the Skye Halifax proposal. A public hearing is not required for Regional Council to take this action.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2006, Regional Council approved a development agreement with United Gulf to allow a 27 storey (87 metre) mixed-use building, comprised of two 23 storey towers above a four storey podium at 1591 Granville Street, Halifax (Map 1). The agreement requires that construction of the building commence by March 21, 2010. United Gulf did not proceed with the project or request a time extension and the site remains undeveloped. The development agreement has now expired and HRM has adopted new policies and regulations in the downtown that would no longer allow a building of a similar height and shape that was approved in 2006.

In June 2011, Regional Council began to consider the possible discharge of the development agreement. In response to Council’s action United Gulf stated, in a presentation to Regional Council, that discharging the existing development agreement should not occur for reasons that include that the company was:

1. under the impression that the expiry date was actually in March 2011, due to an appeal to Council’s approval, and that any request that it might make to Regional Council was not too far beyond that date; and
2. that United Gulf was in the process of devising a new proposal for the property that it would

soon submit to HRM.<sup>1</sup>

In response to United Gulf's presentation, Regional Council did not discharge the development agreement. On February 12, 2012, United Gulf's new proposal, called Skye Halifax, was presented to Regional Council for their consideration in initiating amendments to HRM's planning documents. It is a 48 storey building comprised of two 44 storey towers above a four storey podium, for a total building height of 172 metres, inclusive of roof top mechanical equipment (Attachment A). This will require substantial amendments to HRM's planning policies and regulations concerning maximum permitted building heights and other built-form requirements (Attachment B) that dictate the overall allowable size of a building. Regional Council agreed to consider the proposal, requesting public input and additional staff advice, which is the subject of this report.

The possible discharge of the existing development agreement will be the subject of a future staff report.

### **Project Rationale and Technical Documents**

In addition to images of the proposal, Attachment A contains a detailed rationale for United Gulf's proposal. It describes a significant number of benefits to the downtown that would be realised with its project. This includes an increase in the number of downtown residents, a range of dwelling unit sizes, and slender towers.

Following Regional Council's February 12, 2012 decision to consider the Skye Halifax proposal, United Gulf submitted a wind assessment and a shadow study as contained in Attachments C and D.

### **Required Amendments**

Since the original presentation of the Skye Halifax proposal to Regional Council, United Gulf has provided additional details about the overall shape and size of the proposal. With this additional information there is greater clarity about which of HRM's planning policies and regulations need to be amended to allow Skye Halifax as outlined on Attachment B.<sup>2</sup> They include the following:

#### *Permitted Height*

The Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law specify that the maximum permitted height on the United Gulf site is 66 metres (Map 2). To allow Skye Halifax to be built up to 172 metres in height, planning documents need to be amended.

#### *Rampart Views*

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy, and the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Council minutes, June 7, 2011

<sup>2</sup> The additional design details that have prepared by United Gulf have resulted in an increase in the building height from 150 metres (exclusive of mechanical equipment) to 172 metres (inclusive of mechanical equipment) and more full understanding of elements such as the extent of the curves to the build's towers.

contain policies and regulations that specify that buildings are not to violate the Citadel Rampart View requirements. These requirements stipulate that buildings are not to be seen from within defined areas of the Citadel's parade square, over the ramparts of the fort. United Gulf has submitted technical documentation that indicates that the upper half of the building, above a point between the 24 and 25 floors, would be visible from inside the parade square (Attachment E)<sup>3</sup>. Attachment F contains a rendering of the project which shows how much of the towers will be visible from inside the parade square.

#### *Streetwall Stepbacks*

The Land Use By-law stipulates that as a building gets taller, it increasingly needs to stepback (taper in) from streetlines. Specifically, at a maximum height of 18.5 metres from Sackville and Hollis Streets and 15.5 metres from Granville, the building is to stepback a minimum of 3 metres. At a height of 33.5 metres, it is to stepback a further 1.5 metres. The By-law specifies that at the height at which a building stepback is to occur, no part of the building is to be built above it. The towers of the Skye Halifax proposal do not meet these requirements, having curves that result in the building extending out and over the lower parts of the building to the limits of the streetlines.

#### *Interior Property Boundary Stepback*

The Land Use By-law requires that at a height of 33.5 metres, buildings are to be a minimum of 11.5 metres from an interior property boundary (a property boundary that is not a streetline). To enable the Skye Halifax proposal, the southern tower needs to be able to be built as close as 7.39 metres to the property's southern property line. This situation applies to only a small part of the property line and is the consequence of an irregularity in this boundary (see Attachment B).

#### *Balconies*

The Land Use By-law specifies that balconies may protrude into a required stepback, but only when they occupy less than 50 percent of the width of the face of the building upon which they are located. The balconies on the proposed Skye Halifax building wrap completely around the towers, thereby occupying 100 percent of the width of the building face as shown on Attachment B.

### **Regional Council Process**

United Gulf's application to amend HRM's planning documents is solely for its property (site-specific amendments). Regional Council has complete discretion as to whether it wishes to allow or refuse the application. Should Regional Council wish to consider allowing the proposal, it will need to hold a public hearing.

It is important to note that Regional Council is not approving an actual building at this time. If it adopts the requested amendments to the planning documents, United Gulf will be able to more fully design their project, submit more detailed studies, and then apply for a substantive site plan approval for a building that meets the amended by-law provisions and the Design Manual. Through the site

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<sup>3</sup> View position no. 8 is used in the survey

plan approval process, HRM's Development Officer and the Design Review Committee would be the approval authorities for such an application.

## **DISCUSSION**

Skye Halifax is a challenge to several significant and longstanding planning policies and regulations, particularly over the matters of building height and the Rampart View requirements. It is also a test to the 2009 Downtown Halifax Plan that defined building heights and other built-form requirements that were previously a matter of subjective evaluation.

It is important to assess the changes being sought by Skye Halifax against the overall planning policies that are found in HRM's planning documents. It is also relevant to review the amendments to the proposed built-form requirements and to consider the shadow and wind studies that have been submitted.

### **Overall Planning Policies**

The Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy contemplates circumstances where the planning documents might be reviewed and amended. One of which is during a periodic review of the plan in its entirety and another is when there are unforeseen circumstances or when a project presents significant benefits.

#### *Five-year Review*

In addressing possible periodic amendments, the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy states:

*“The amendment process may include an annual review and a five-year review. The annual review generally is limited to those amendments resulting in non-substantive technical changes. The five-year review is designed to address amendments which propose substantive changes. This amendment process, based on a defined cycle, provides sufficient time to measure the effects of new land use initiatives, and provides predictability to determine when new land use initiatives may be introduced.”*

The Downtown Plan was adopted by Council in 2009. The United Gulf proposal is undoubtedly a substantive change that should not be considered outside of a comprehensive review that might be associated with a five-year review.

#### *Unforeseen Circumstances/Benefits*

There is a further circumstance under which Regional Council might consider significant amendments to its planning documents. The Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy states:

*“Policy 89 Notwithstanding the foregoing policies, where a proposed amendment addresses unforeseen circumstances, or is deemed by Council to confer significant economic, or social, or cultural benefits to HRM beyond the bonus zoning provisions of this Plan, such amendments shall be considered by Council at any time regardless of the schedule for reviews.”*

The United Gulf proposal is not an unforeseen circumstance; building heights were a key consideration in devising the new downtown plan. United Gulf’s proposal simply does not fit with the height framework that was adopted by Regional Council. With regard to its potential to offer significant economic, or social, or cultural benefits, there is no question that the proposal has positive attributes. However, these same benefits are already envisioned to be realized under the existing planning policies and regulations. As noted in the Economic Competitiveness section of the Downtown Halifax Plan:

*“This Plan provides for short, medium and long-term development growth targets. Within the next 15 years, this Plan provides capacity for at least 16,000 residents, 15,000 jobs, and up to three million square feet of office development within downtown Halifax. Over the course of this Plan, full realization of the build out of the downtown vision could yield upwards of 15 million square feet of development.”*

With further regard to the matter of projects that may provide significant benefits, it is important to consider the magnitude of the change that is proposed through such a large project. With its size, there are equal considerations about the economic, social, and cultural *losses* that may result with a potential undermining of the new plan. Allowing the proposal has the potential to create an atmosphere of general uncertainty about Council’s commitment to its planning documents and lead to real estate speculation rather than development.

It is also important to note that when a detailed review of the Skye Halifax project was initiated by Regional Council in February 2012, there was considerable discussion about there being little development occurring in the downtown and the need to spur development. This was cited as a reason for supporting Skye Halifax. However, it is increasingly clear that development is occurring in the downtown within the context of the current plan. Since February, when Council originally considered the proposal, there have been substantial projects that are underway or planned for construction, including:

- construction of the RBC Waterside Centre;
- construction of the Central Library;
- demolition of the Citadel Hotel and construction of a new hotel and residential development;
- the substantial addition to the TD Bank Building that is expected to commence in the fall of 2012; and
- the announcement of the new convention centre.

These development projects demonstrate that Skye Halifax should not be supported on the basis of a lack of downtown development.

### **Requested Amendments to the Built-form**

#### *Height*

The maximum permitted height on the United Gulf site is 66 metres. A change to 172 meters would be necessary to allow the Skye Halifax proposal. Through careful study and public engagement, Regional Council exercised considerable effort in devising the current vision, policies, and development requirements for the Downtown Halifax Plan. The very first sentence in the Downtown Halifax Plan is, "This Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPS) reflects the vision that Halifax Regional Council and the citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) have for the downtown core of Halifax."

One of the most substantial issues that were addressed through the new planning documents was the matter of defining maximum permitted building heights. From this, a height framework was devised in the Downtown Halifax Plan which is described as follows:

*"The maximum heights framework provides a rational and balanced height pattern resulting from the synthesis of a complex set of urban design considerations tailored to the downtown Halifax context including:*

- (a) protection of the pedestrian street level experience with a height-to-width ratio of approximately 1:1 which promotes skyviews and sunlight penetration to the street;*
- (b) reinforcing the existing and desired character of the nine downtown precincts;*
- (c) the introduction of Heritage Conservation Districts;*
- (d) respecting the modestly scaled historic block and street pattern;*
- (e) a transition in heights to the Citadel, heritage areas, low-rise neighbourhoods and the waterfront;*
- (f) reinforcing a distributed and varied height pattern by directing taller buildings to areas where they already exist; and*
- (g) upholding the Citadel View Planes and Ramparts requirements from the Land Use By-law for Halifax Peninsula."*

Although United Gulf submits that its application is solely for its site, making such a substantial change to the maximum height requirements calls the entire approach to building heights in the downtown into question when the height framework is relatively new and was the subject of considerable public input. There were extensive public consultation sessions concerning the desired pattern of height in the downtown.

As noted in preceding sections of this report, amending the height requirements is inconsistent with HRM's municipal planning strategies and would have a negative impact on the overall intent of the downtown Halifax Plan.

#### *Rampart View Requirements*

One of Halifax's unique attributes is the Citadel. There are longstanding planning policies and

regulations that buildings are not to be seen from defined areas of the Citadel parade square, over the walls (the ramparts) of the fort. The purpose of these policies and regulations is to preserve the historic sky view from these positions. This intent has been incorporated into the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy as follows:

*“6.3.2 Within the area bounded by North Street, Robie Street and Inglis Street, no development shall be permitted that is visible over the top of the reconstructed earthworks on the Citadel ramparts, from an eye-level of 5.5 feet above ground level in the Parade Square of the Citadel.”*

There is further support for the Citadel Rampart View protection within the Regional Plan and the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy.

United Gulf’s proposal would significantly change the value associated with the Rampart Views. The upper parts of the building would clearly be visible from inside the parade square (Attachment F). This should not be supported given the importance that is assigned to these views as expressed in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy, and the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy as cited above.

Staff have noted some negative public sentiment that has been expressed towards the planning policies that protect the Rampart Views. These opinions are often centred upon questioning the merits of retaining views at the expense of development. While the Rampart View requirements do prohibit a building as tall as Skye Halifax, it is clear that these requirements are not generally stifling development in the downtown. As Regional Council is aware, there are numerous approved downtown development projects, including the 27 storey Tex-park project for the subject property, that meet the Rampart View requirements but that have not been built. There have been and there will continue to be numerous high-rise development projects that meet the Rampart View.

#### *Streetwall Stepback*

The streetwall stepback requirements ensure that there is a comfortable pedestrian-realm at the street level without buildings towering over streets. Elements such as streetwall heights and setbacks above the pedestrian realm are important matters when considering tall buildings from a “best practices” perspective. Coupled with its height, the extension of the proposed towers to the limits of the adjoining streetlines, results in a building that dominates over the adjoining streets. While the curved nature of the building may be attractive, this is being done at the expense of the pedestrian-realm, with the proposal being simply too large for the limited size of the site.

It should be noted that requests were made to United Gulf to produce images to show the building from different vantage-points so as to allow a better assessment of the impact of the proposal on areas such as the pedestrian realm. United Gulf has chosen not to submit such renderings at this time.

#### *Interior Property Boundary Stepback*

The stepback requirements from interior property boundaries are to ensure that there are adequate separation distances between towers along adjoining property lines for privacy, daylight penetration and sky view purposes. United Gulf’s proposal is to be a minimum of 7.39 metres from interior property boundaries rather than the required 11.5 metres under the land use by-law. In some



instances this might present an issue. However, with the presence of the view plane to the south, a tower on the adjoining property is not possible. Therefore, there are no significant issues that are foreseen in reducing the interior property boundary stepback requirement on the subject site.

### *Balconies*

Balconies are only permitted to extend into prescribed stepbacks where they occupy no greater than 50 percent of the width of a building face. At 100 percent, the balconies on the Skye Halifax building will result in the towers having a wider appearance than that which is permitted by the land use by-law. While this is an issue, it does not have the same impact as the proposed change in height and streetwall stepback of the building.

### **Wind and Shadow Studies**

In support of their application for amendments, United Gulf submitted a wind assessment and a shadow study for the proposed building. As stated previously in this report, Council is only being asked to consider amendments to the building envelope for a building on the subject site not the approval of the building design. Therefore, the submitted wind and shadow information has little or no bearing on the amendments as the final design of the building can change before an application for Substantial Site Plan Approval is submitted. Therefore, neither the wind assessment nor the shadow study has factored greatly in staff's decision not to recommend the project.

In regard to the wind and shadow studies submitted, staff wishes to provide the following information:

#### *Pedestrian Wind Assessment*

The pedestrian wind assessment commissioned by United Gulf is an initial study (Attachment C). A further more detailed study involving wind tunnel testing would need to be commissioned as part of an eventual site plan approval application that would follow should Regional Council adopt the amendments that have been requested by United Gulf.

Essentially, the current study finds that taller buildings of the shape that is proposed by United Gulf, can accelerate wind speeds, but that there are mitigation measures that can be implemented to address such conditions. The Principal Results section of the report is as follows:

“The principal findings and results of the pedestrian wind assessment can be summarized as follows:

- Generally, the existing wind conditions on and around the site are expected to be suitable for standing in the summer and walking in the winter. Uncomfortable wind conditions are probable along Salter Street, near the Maritime Centre.
- With the proposed development in place, wind conditions are generally expected to remain suitable for standing in the summer and walking in the winter. However, along Sackville Street, wind conditions are more likely to be conducive to the standard for walking in the summer and potentially uncomfortable in the winter.
- Currently, severe wind conditions, creating safety issues, could occur along both Sackville and Salter Streets. With the proposed development in place, these severe

wind conditions will remain. Wind mitigation measures are provided in the report to improve these wind conditions.”

It should be noted that the study states:

“The two towers of the proposed development are each approximately 161m in height (see Image 2) and have a footprint of approximately 30m by 25m.”; and

the study assumes that the site includes the adjoining Metro-Park site (currently owned by HRM).

Both of these points do not represent the actual proposal. The towers are in fact taller in size, are of a greater width, and the proposed site does not include HRM’s Metro-Park site. Until a full wind study is completed and the types of mitigation measures are identified, staff can offer little advice with respect to the wind conditions that may result from the project and the mitigation measures that may be necessary.

#### *Shadow Study*

The shadow study offers a comparison between the 2006 Tex-park project that was approved by development agreement and the current proposal (Attachment D). However, it is most relevant to consider the impact of the current proposal on its own, as the development agreement has now expired. Furthermore, the development agreement allowed a building of approximately 87 metres in height, while the current land use by-law maximum height is 66 metres. A comparison between the shadow impact of the Skye project and a building at a height of 66 metres has not been prepared.

In review of United Gulf’s shadow study, it is found that the proposal will have shadow impacts on three identified major open space areas: Citadel Hill (Citadel Fortress), Grand Parade, and Sackville Landing, which is also referred to simply as the “waterfront” in some parts of the study. Of the three areas, the Skye Halifax proposal would impact Sackville Landing the most. Assigning a weight to the impact of shadows is subjective. Although it is found that the proposal casts shadows on certain open space areas, this should not in isolation, dictate its appropriateness.

#### **Conclusions**

The Downtown Halifax Plan has policies that provide a context as to when substantial amendments should be considered. These include:

- during a periodic review of the plan;
- when there is an unforeseen circumstance; and
- when a project confers significant economic, social, or cultural benefits.

Skye Halifax is neither at a time of periodic review nor is it an unforeseen circumstance. There may be benefits to the project, but there is also a great deal of unpredictability and lack of confidence in the built-form regulations that would arise with its approval. This lack of clarity has the potential to lead to real estate speculation rather the redevelopment of the downtown. This would occur at a time when there is new development that is occurring within the context of the Downtown Halifax plan.

With regard to the form of the proposal and amendments that are necessary to accommodate it, particular concerns are raised in particular about the proposed height and the extension of the towers to the limits of the adjoining streetlines. It is found that the proposal does not fit with the overall height framework that has been established for the downtown and its size and shape will dominate the adjoining streets.

It is recommended that the current policies and regulations within HRM's planning documents be retained, thereby refusing the Skye Halifax proposal. A public hearing is not required for Regional Council to take this action.

### **Potential Amendments**

Despite staff's recommendation that Council refuse the United Gulf application, potential amendments to HRM's planning documents to enable the proposed development have been prepared for Council's consideration (Attachments G through J). The amendments are specific to United Gulf's site and provide the company with an option to either follow the existing requirements of the Land Use By-law, including the height limitation of 66 metres, or to proceed with its current proposal. With the amendments, United Gulf could choose a building with a different shape and size, provided that it meets the requirements that are prescribed in the amendments.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The HRM costs associated with processing this planning application can be accommodated within the approved operating budget for C310 Planning & Applications.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The community engagement process is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was consultation, achieved through a Public Information Meeting on May 3, 2012 (Attachment K). Notices of this meeting were posted on the HRM website, in the newspaper and mailed to property owners within the notification area (Map 1).

A public hearing has to be held by Regional Council before it can consider approval of any amendments. Should Council with proceed with a public hearing on this application, in addition to published newspaper advertisements, property owners within the notification area will be advised of the public hearing by mail.

The proposal will potentially impact property owners and residents in the surrounding area and the region, given the size of the building.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Beyond those which have already been discussed above, no environmental implications of this project have been identified.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Design Review Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council not approve amendments to HRM's planning documents, thereby refusing United Gulf's application to develop a building of up to 172 metres in height at 1591 Granville Street, Halifax. This is the staff recommendation.
2. The Design Review Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council request additional information about the proposal, including a full wind analysis and more detailed images of the proposal. This should only be done if Regional Council is conceptually in agreement with the height and other built-form elements of the project, but desires additional information of a detailed nature. This alternative is not recommended for reasons outlined in this report.
3. The Design Review Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council refuse the proposal at this time and request that staff undertake further study of the height requirements during the scheduled five-year review of the downtown plan (2014). The objective of this alternative would be to have staff undertake a comprehensive review of the height framework to consider increasing permitted overall heights within the downtown. This alternative is not recommended for reasons outlined in this report.
4. The Design Review Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council approve amendments to HRM's planning documents, as contained in Attachments F through I, thereby allowing United Gulf's application. A public hearing is required if Regional Council wishes to consider adopting the amendments. This alternative is not recommended for the reasons outlined in this report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Map 1	Location and Zoning
Map 2	Maximum Post-bonus Heights
Attachment A	United Gulf's Application Document
Attachment B	Building Elevations and Land Use By-law Issues
Attachment C	Pedestrian Wind Assessment
Attachment D	Shadow Study
Attachment E	Citadel Rampart Survey
Attachment F	Citadel Rampart View Rendering
Attachment G	Amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy
Attachment H	Amendments to the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy
Attachment I	Amendments to the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy

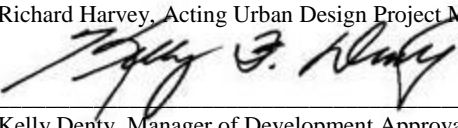
Attachment J      Amendments to the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law  
Attachment K      Public Information Meeting Minutes

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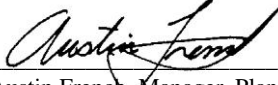
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:      Richard Harvey, Acting Urban Design Project Manager, 490-6495

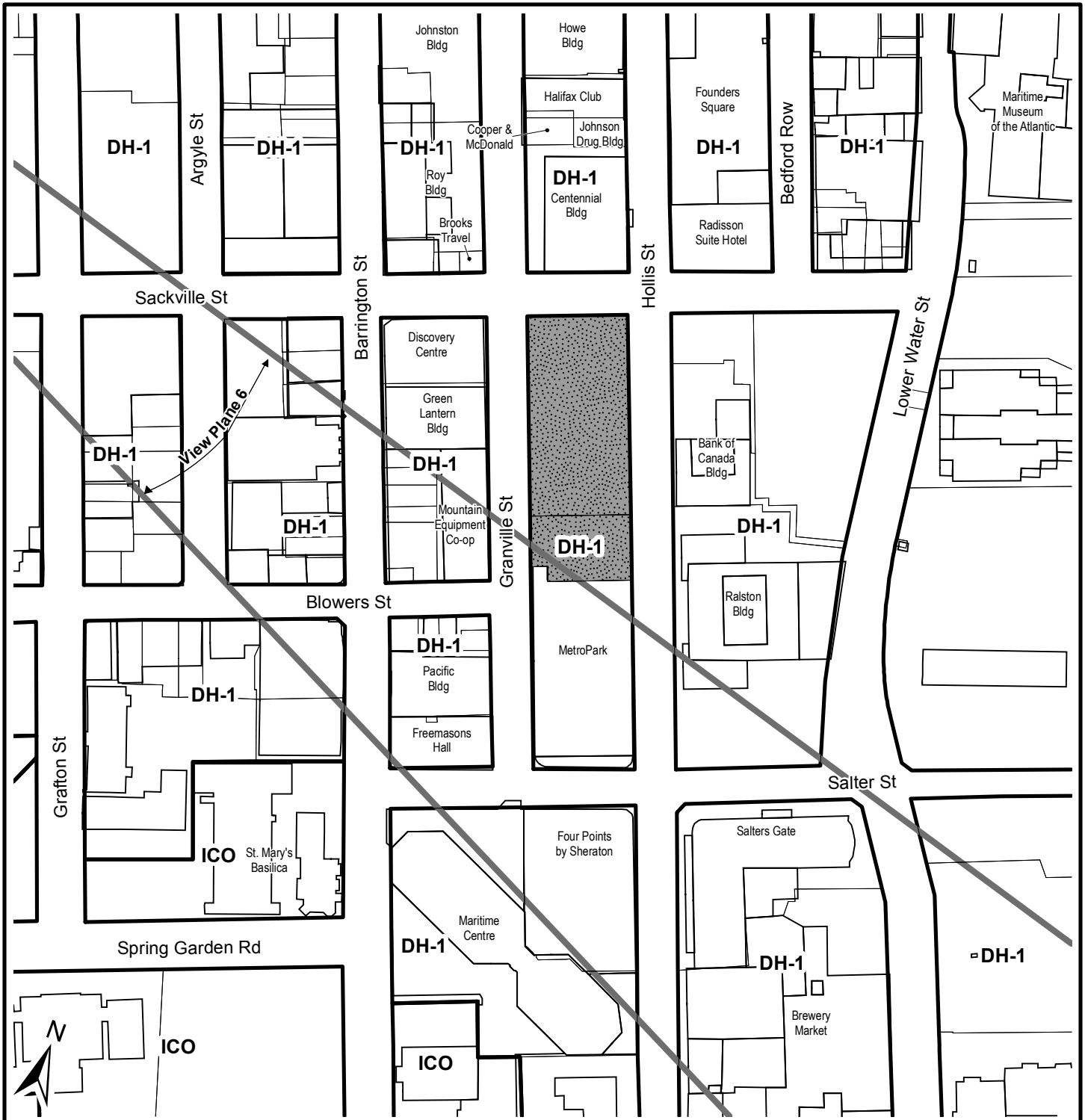
Report Approved by:

  
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Kelly Denty, Manager of Development Approvals, 490-4800

Report Approval by:


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Austin French, Manager, Planning, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-6717

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**Map 1 - Location and Zoning**

1591 Granville Street  
Halifax

 Subject site

 View plane

**Zone**

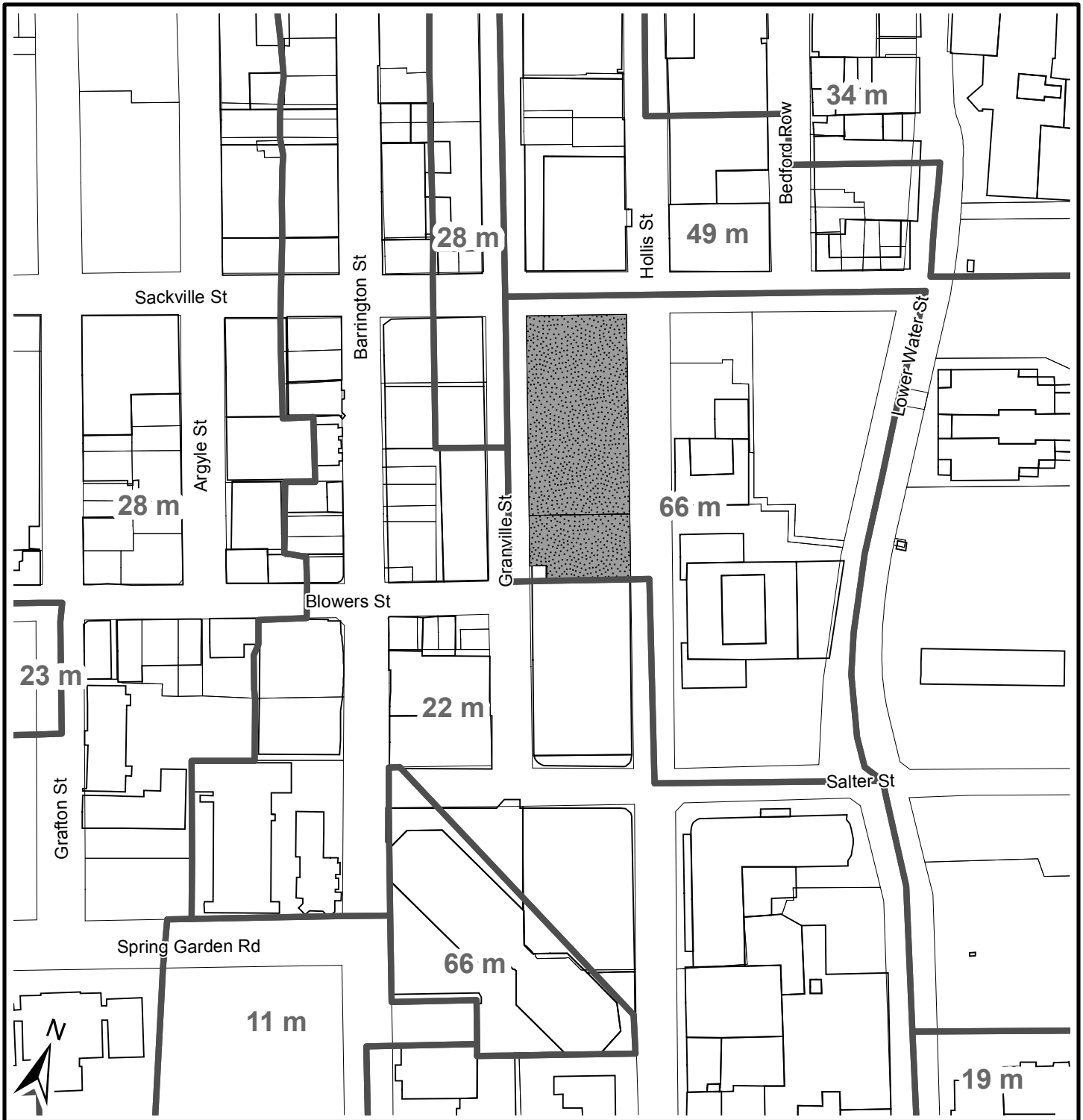
DH-1 Downtown Halifax 1  
ICO Institutional, Cultural & Open Space

Downtown Halifax Plan Area



This map is an unofficial reproduction of a portion of the Zoning Map for the plan area indicated.


HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.



**Map 2 - Maximum Post-Bonus Heights**

1591 Granville Street  
Halifax



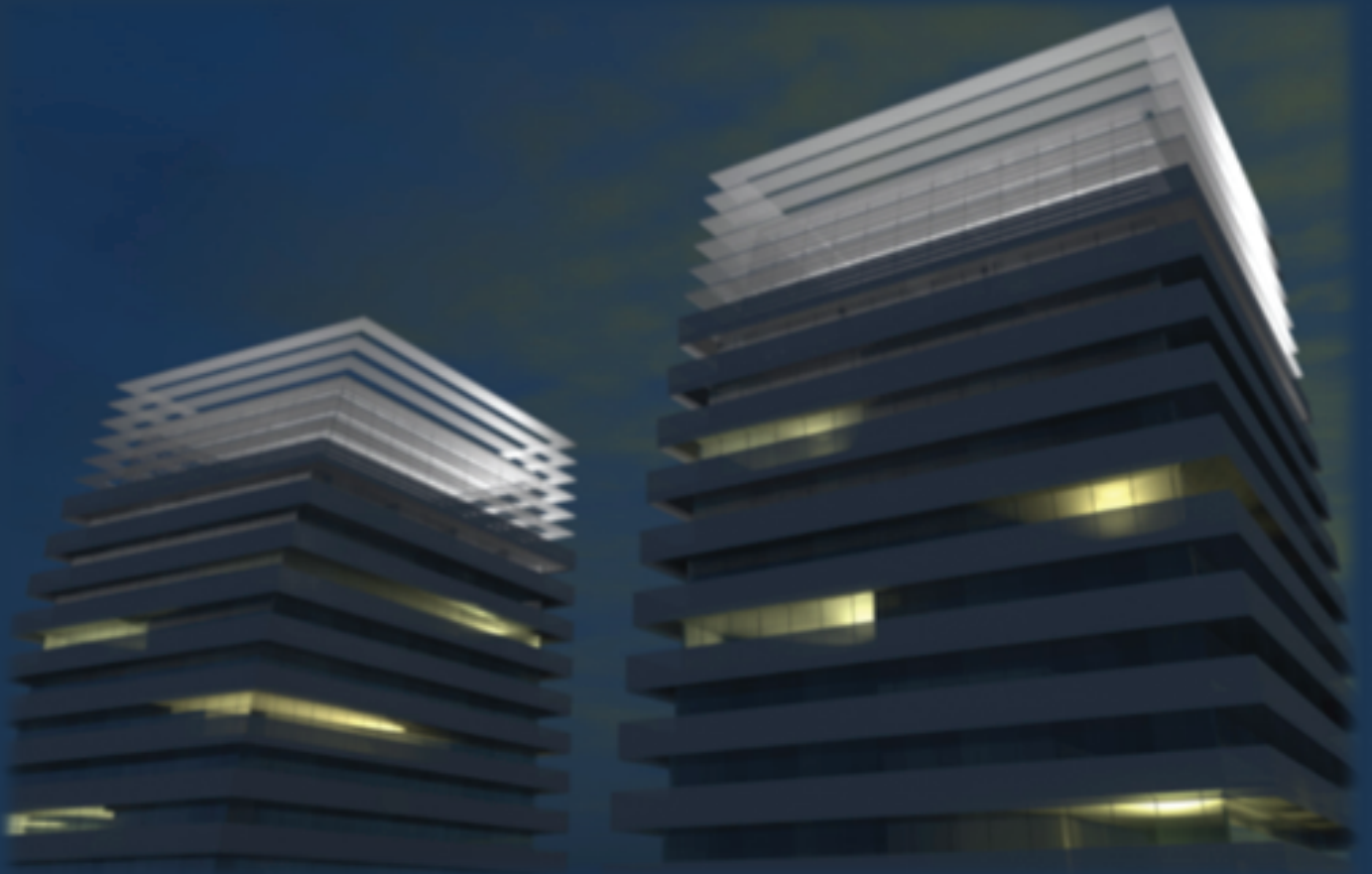
 Subject site



Downtown Halifax Plan Area

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.

# Skyye Halifax





Kelly Denty, Supervisor, Planning Applications  
Western Region Office – Bayers Road  
7071 Bayers Road, Suite 2005  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3L 2C2

July 19, 2011

Dear Kelly:

**RE: Tex Park site – MPS/LUB Amendment Application**

United Gulf Developments Limited (United Gulf) is requesting an amendment to the Halifax Peninsula Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law (MPS/LUB) and the Downtown Halifax MPS/LUB to create site specific policy and a site specific zone for the land parcel known as “Tex Park” located between Granville Street, Sackville Street, and Hollis Street in downtown Halifax. The purpose of this amendment request is to allow for a new landmark development project to replace the “*twisted sisters*” project that is currently approved for the site.

HRM staff, Regional Council, and United Gulf underwent a lengthy process to get to where we are today regarding the Tex Park site. It all began in 2004 with HRM advertising the sale of the site, followed by Council’s approval of the development agreement in March of 2006, which was subjected to an 18 month appeal. During this time, the economy took a downturn which affected consumers’ purchasing patterns relative to housing, resulting in a commensurate change in the market demand for condominium unit types in downtown Halifax. As a result, United Gulf underwent an extensive review of the “*twisted sisters*” unit design, layout, and economics and has concluded that the project is no longer appropriate.

Simply put, the current design does not meet market expectations in terms of unit variety, design, or pricing options. People today want more sunlight, which requires a building that has more window area and less inner space. A building needs to have the ability to provide a bachelor, one bedroom, two bedroom, or three bedroom unit easily with minor wall modifications. Therefore, United Gulf is proposing a new building design that is tall and narrow to accomplish the additional sunlight, has smaller footprints and floor layouts that allow easy internal modification, and to enable more affordable units.

United Gulf is requesting that Regional Council consider this MPS/LUB amendment application before considering a discharge of the Tex Park development agreement. The policies that enabled the Tex Park development agreement no longer exist so there is no mechanism to amend the development agreement to allow a new building design. The old policies have been replaced with “Halifax By Design” rules, which did not envision a change to the Tex Park development agreement and as such would not allow the “*twisted sisters*” proposal or the current proposal. The new building design has been achieved through an extensive process and is not suitable for negotiation or input from a design committee. Therefore, we are requesting site-specific MPS policy and a site specific zone that would allow the new proposal to be built as-of-right. This new zone would replace the development agreement for the site, which could then be discharged, if Council approves the new zone.

Regional Council has made it very clear that they want to see construction on the Tex Park site as soon as possible. It would be prudent and appropriate for Council to consider this MPS/LUB amendment request as a means to move forward with the development of the Tex Park site with the confidence that the decision rests solely with Regional Council. This MPS/LUB application would not be subject to an appeal process. United Gulf is committed to the construction and completion of the project as soon as possible.

### **Building Design & Theme**

The proposal, *Skye Halifax*, named to recognize our Scottish heritage, is a landmark condominium development that has been designed in a manner to reflect Halifax's sea faring traditions and rich maritime history. While respecting our past the design celebrates Halifax's present status as the center of Atlantic Canada economically, socially, and culturally, while beckoning the world with our progressive ideals for the future. Its design will identify Halifax as a showpiece and place it on the world stage.

The two buildings resemble a ship's twin sails that push the seafarer toward the horizon – analogous to future opportunity and discovery. Many have also remarked that the design resembles outstretched arms reaching into the Skye –symbolic of hope, prosperity, a new beginning. This too is a very fitting parallel as Halifax was once Canada's gateway for over a million immigrants who sought the same.

Through sculpted design, the structures with their beacon-like rooftop features, will show case the city and establish Halifax as an international destination. The unique architecture will enhance Halifax's reputation as a city of contrasts –one that celebrates its past while embracing its future on the world stage. *Skye Halifax* has internal "floating" ballrooms and flowing lines representative of the sea and sails that is at the architectural level of other landmark buildings that have an international draw.

The design of *Skye Halifax* has a less imposing mass than that of the "twisted sisters." The two towers have footprints that are 40% smaller than those of the "twisted sisters. This reduces the mass and scale of the buildings, thereby reducing wind and shadow impacts as well as opening up a larger view corridor between the towers. To accommodate this reduced mass, the slimmer towers will be taller, at 48 storeys each.

### **LEEDS Certified:**

*Skye Halifax* will exceed expectations as it relates to the utilization of green technology and the promotion of sustainable building and environmental practices. The project will: utilize geothermal heating and cooling; offer green roof terraces; see the installation of grey water systems; and the use of low flow plumbing fixtures and elements. The project will be constructed with non-reflective glass and will potentially see the creation of living walls in public/interior spaces/corridors. By "getting off the grid" carbon footprint reductions associated with the project will be equivalent to the removal of two passenger vehicles from the road each year for each condominium.

Active transportation will be promoted with the project by providing amenities such as secured indoor and outdoor bicycle storage and the installation of shower stalls for commercial and retail tenants who commute by bicycle. Many LEED objectives are designed for high density development, and cannot be met with low or medium density building design. *Skye Halifax* will be LEED capable.

*Skye Halifax* proposes:

- A gross floor area of approximately 950,000 square feet
- A mixed use building – primarily of residential, but also hotel, office, and retail
- Approximately 350 – 400 parking spaces
- The residential unit mix will have a range of prices and design flexibility to accommodate families, couples, and individuals
- Units are designed to allow for changes to meet market demands
- Sustainable and “green” design and technology
- Will offer a car share program for the residents

### **HRM Core Statistics & Trends**

Despite the relocation of commercial tenants within downtown Halifax (Nova Scotia Power, Capital Health and the Discovery Center), there has been an exodus of major tenants from the downtown core. Recent departures include HRM, ADP Canada, Lockheed Martin, Johnson Insurance, Carsand Mosher, the Red Cross, Dominion of Canada General Insurance, The Chronicle Herald, and various Provincial and Federal offices. Further fostering this situation is the establishment of new commercial entrants in retail and business parks that skirt the city (i.e. RIM, Sun Life). Free parking, reduced construction costs, and convenience have fueled the expansion of commercial space in HRM retail and business parks at the expense of downtown Halifax. Meanwhile commercial vacancies continue to increase downtown.

Providing more office space will not bring new residents to the downtown. For the downtown core to retain its status as the regional financial and economic heart of Nova Scotia, we have to regain the residential population that has declined from a high of 106,000 (1956 Census) to 72,000 today (2006 Census). While the peninsular population has declined a near 34,000 over this period, the metropolitan population has increased by significantly more. Approximately 40,000 people commute in and out of the HRM core each day. They spend their retail dollars at suburban business parks skirting the city rather than downtown.

Re-populating the HRM core is one of the primary goals of the Halifax Peninsula and Regional Plans. Bringing residents back to the urban core is promoted by “Smart Growth” experts and is a necessary first step that brings the commercial, art and cultural activities that follow. In North America, “Smart Growth” cities such as Vancouver and Portland are experiencing a reversal of the trend wherein residents left the downtown to live in the suburbs.

To quickly and surely rejuvenate and re-populate the downtown core, many cities have had to create high quality, unique residential options. This has been demonstrated with Toronto’s harbourfront and the once downtrodden but now fashionable Byward Market area of Ottawa. In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s the cores of these cities were empty after 6:00 PM, now they are downtown neighborhoods with an eclectic urban fabric celebrated by residents and visitors alike. Once a turn of the century landfill, Boston’s Back Bay is now revitalized and extremely popular. A new term, “eco-density” has become the buzzword representing smart, efficient, and affordable high density development.

Once people were given new residential opportunities in these cities their downtowns saw: expanded art galleries and museums; new retail choices; and enhanced attractions whether in the form of cuisine, arts, education or sports venues. Toronto’s “Distillery District” is a prime example of the

successful a “Brownfield” conversion that now, along with multiple residential choices, nurtures a burgeoning arts community. Witness the City’s growing theatre district (Third largest in the World); The international draw of the Toronto International Film Festival and its new home the Bell Light Box Theatre (a 5 storey podium with multiple theaters, with a 41 storey 458 unit condo tower atop of it); Internationally renown architect Daniel Libeskind’s expansion of the Royal Ontario Museum; and Frank Gehry’s celebrated addition to the Art Gallery of Ontario.

“We really need to see greater residential population downtown as the key to help reverse (The downtown office) trend.” (Commercial Broker at CB Richard Ellis; commentary relative to the lack of commercial development in downtown. Allnovascotia.com, Halifax, June 28, 2011).

### **HRM Tax Revenue Comparisons**

*Skye Halifax* will generate over six million tax dollars to HRM each year.

The \$6,000,000 in annual tax revenue generated by this proposal is approximately the same as the taxes paid by 2000 suburban residential homes or one large commercial business park. The amount of land required for 2000 residential homes is equivalent in area to 80% of the land mass of peninsular Halifax. Essentially the downtown site generates the same tax revenue to these major suburban developments yet at a fraction of the land mass with the added benefit of eliminating rate payer financial burdens. The Tex Park site:

- Is already serviced with municipal water and sewer
- Does not require additional infrastructure
- Does not seek HRM, Provincial or Federal funding
- Does not require the construction of new schools
- Does not put an additional demand on snow plows
- Does not require additional utilities
- Does not increase the travel demand on fire, police or emergency services
- Does not require additional garbage or recycling services
- Does not require HRM road maintenance

### **Views & Corridors**

Halifax has protected the views (including rampart, view planes and corridors), as experienced from Citadel Hill for many years. United Gulf is aware of the reasons behind the protected views and understands that Haligonians feel very strongly about them. United Gulf is proud of the beauty of Halifax and also felt very strongly about protecting the views. Then we found, that the rampart height restriction essentially prevents any modern, affordable, flexible multiple residential projects because it forces buildings to be built in a short and wide configuration with large building footprints. This is the opposite formula from the eco-density formula that is so successful today.

The current Halifax rules regarding height/rampart view and corridor restrictions result in buildings that are short and wide having large building footprints. This has some negative “human scale” outcomes by creating “canyon” effects and shadows that are cast for longer periods of time. Tall narrow structures cast longer shadows within their radius yet for lesser periods, often referred to as a “sundial effect” and have a reduction in shadow impacts. Under this scenario pedestrian wind thresholds

are more easily mitigated (via podium design treatment and tower set backs, as currently proposed), as well as greater possibilities associated with amenity space at the pedestrian level.

United Gulf feel that there are other, equally important views that are not being considered. This would include views from the harbour, views at the pedestrian level, and the overall view, massing, and scale of the Halifax skyline. People who spend their days downtown at the pedestrian level don't have the opportunity to have unobstructed views of the harbor or Citadel Hill unless they are looking along a street, because existing buildings are consistently wide and block these views. *Skye Halifax* would provide this view opportunity by widening the view corridor from 52 feet to 110 feet. These improved corridor views have been achieved as a result of a 40% reduction in the building footprints and allowing the buildings to be taller by relaxing the rampart height restrictions for this site.

If all the current height restrictions continue to apply to the downtown, it will result in the eventual creation of a "tabletop" effect or "a flat" skyline. A city's progressiveness is often measured by its skyline. More often than not, "progressiveness" includes high-rise buildings. Currently, images that define Halifax include both old and new landmarks. Often the Citadel, Purdy's Wharf or both are depicted. The Citadel represents our military history and the Purdy's complex is a metaphor for progress, success and embracing new opportunities. Halifax could have an impressive skyline that both protects views and respects our heritage and is deemed progressive by introducing *Skye Halifax*.

Many cities offer both height and view plane guidelines that may be relaxed on an exceptional basis based on the merits of a project. Measures such as aesthetic value, economic impact, social and environmental contributions often supersede these rules. We seek a similar relaxation given the current state of downtown Halifax and the overall changes that have occurred to the economy.

It is time to re-consider whether protecting the rampart views on this site for the purposes of tourism is still preferred over the benefits of economic revitalization, creating an interesting skyline with a new internationally recognized landmark, and the importance of protecting views at the pedestrian level for year-round downtown users. Relaxing the rampart height limit for the Tex Park site does not set a precedent for others to follow. This site is unique due to its history of partnership between HRM and United Gulf, the fact that there is an existing development agreement that was enabled under MPS policies that have since been removed from the MPS, and the current pressing need to have a catalyst development to revitalize the downtown. Any future requests would not fit this formula.

**An Improved Value Proposition:**

The recent shifts in the economy over the past three years has affected consumers' purchasing patterns relative to housing which has affected the market demand for condominium unit types in downtown Halifax. As a result United Gulf's review of the "*twisted sisters*" design has been deemed restrictive. Simply put, the current design does not meet market expectations in terms of unit variety, layout, or pricing options. There are now younger people in the marketplace looking for affordable housing options. Buildings need to be able to provide a range of housing for all the market groups: young students, empty nesters, professionals, and high-end buyers.

Urban residents today want:

- More sunlight in their homes
- More flexibility and variety in unit design
- Cities with an urban style

- Cities with established universities, research centers & hospitals
- Cities with artistic, cultural, and social environments
- The freedom to travel without worrying about home maintenance or car ownership
- Cities that have economic and social value where they can establish roots in the community.

Many people who moved to the suburbs are now realizing that long commutes into town for cultural events and activities for their children is not how they want to spend their time. They have expressed a desire to live closer to HRM's core so they may: walk or bicycle to work; easily partake in cultural events; be closer to their children's universities; and have reduced costs of living. From seniors, and young families, young urban professional or the recent foreign student graduate, many wish to experience urban living and all the amenities it offers - choices not found in or near a retail park or suburban strip mall.

*Skye Halifax* fulfills the aspirations of this growing and under-served consumer demographic. Where standardized layouts were once the norm a modular approach may be had with individual unit types. Walls can be removed or slid open to reveal an extra guest room or den, or simply to allow more sunlight within a living space. Essentially flexibility is sought in terms of form, function and price, while reflecting residents' unique tastes.

Rather than competing with the current amenities in Halifax, *Skye Halifax* is in an entirely different category and will be a complementary addition to our historic city's blend of old and new. The Tex Park site, located between the waterfront and the Citadel, is an excellent location for promoting the entire downtown, not just the waterfront or the historic areas. It will increase the value of downtown lands and generate new and long term benefits to the Port of Halifax, Waterfront Walk, Neptune Theatre, the Art Gallery, museums, and other special attractions of Halifax and surrounding areas like Peggy's Cove and our National Parks.

### **Economic Impact to HRM**

This project will offer approximately:

- \$6,000,000 per year in tax revenue (\$150 million over 25 years)
- A total project cost of \$350 million
- Construction jobs
- Priority given to local trades
- Boutique, hotel, and corporate events centre jobs
- Office, condo management/operation, hotel, and retail jobs
- More people living downtown
- Residents have immense buying power – they spend millions per year on personal care, household items, food, recreation, and transportation. *Skye Halifax* residents would put approximately \$20 million per year into the downtown economy

A residential and mixed use development of *Skye Halifax's* scale has never been proposed for Halifax. *Skye Halifax* is a catalyst for positive change. Its offering was never anticipated or envisioned through the current Halifax MPS/LUB or the Downtown Secondary Plan. *Skye Halifax* fulfills the broader HRM Regional Planning goals of re-populating the downtown and revitalizing Halifax's economic core. *Skye Halifax* and the residents it will draw will be a step toward reversing the economic decline in downtown Halifax.

HRM needs more than just tourism and a tourist season to feed the economy. *Skye Halifax* will generate economic activity on a year round basis. This will be the first major development undertaking in Halifax since the construction of Purdy's I & II twenty years ago. Large projects in HRM usually involve the request for government funding. *Skye Halifax* does not seek public funds - it is completely a private investment.

*Skye Halifax* goes beyond the promise of "build it and they will come" by answering the call "build it and they will stay." We echo many opinion leaders that the only way to stem the outgoing tide of retail and commercial enterprises leaving the downtown is by creating greater residential opportunities. By doing so, many will reconsider their relocation decisions and it may also encourage other developers to invest in the downtown core.

### **Public Interest**

*Skye Halifax* meets many of the objectives stated in the Greater Halifax Partnership's (GHP) "Economic Strategy for 2011 to 2016." One such goal is to improve the "Regional Center" downtown in terms of livability and attractiveness. Another is to see \$1.5 billion in private investment in HRM over the next 5 years. *Skye Halifax* represents a \$350 million private investment.

The GHP wishes to see the population of the regional center increase by 8,000. It uses the words: "engagement", "international", "welcoming the world", and "making Halifax welcoming for immigrants and entrepreneurs to prosper". *Skye Halifax* will help achieve these goals metaphorically and otherwise.

Given the significant public exposure to the "*twisted sisters*" project, United Gulf has reached out to a variety of public interest groups, opinion leaders, and stakeholders in the community to inform them of the new proposal and to seek their opinions. United Gulf will also host a public gathering to hear from the architect, Peter Clewes. This extensive outreach program includes the creation of a website and the creation and monitoring of social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In.

### **Public Benefit**

In cooperation with the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design and Dalhousie University, United Gulf would like to offer space within the project wherein young artists will have an opportunity to display their works. Contributions from private artists will also be welcomed.

The "United for Artists Gallery" will be located within the building's podium, and possibly on its rooftop for larger works of art such as sculptures.

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS) is currently assessing its long term space requirements. United Gulf would like to investigate potential synergies with the AGNS in this regard. Space would not be the sole discussion point, rather scholarship and fund raising programs may also be examined.

*Skye Halifax* will also offer a bicycle sharing system that provides bicycles for use by the public, similar to what you see in Washington D.C. This program provides public bicycles, at a nominal fee or security deposit, for people to use anytime as a means for getting around the downtown.

On this Tex Park site, Richard John Uniacke hosted the first gathering of the Charitable Irish on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1786, which became their first general meeting. The name of this site for the gathering was The Golden Ball Inn. The purpose of the Society was that all Irish would work together for each other and the betterment of the community. Formerly on the Tex Park garage, there was a historical plaque recognizing this historical event. United Gulf would like to commemorate the site again with a plaque. The year 2011 celebrated 225 years of the Society in Halifax.

### **Timeline**

United Gulf is committed to begin construction as soon as possible. While United Gulf shares the pressing need to advance the project, there are certain key milestones that must be achieved once the required approvals have been granted. The finalization of the detailed design of the building will require 12 months' effort; building permits may take six months; and pre-sales of the residential units could take 6 to 12 months as a condition of financing of this \$350 million construction project. (This financing condition differs from other projects that have the benefit of public funding).

United Gulf is an award winning company that has put over \$750 million of investment into HRM development. *Skye Halifax* will achieve United Gulf's goal of over one billion dollars invested in HRM for the creation of intelligent housing options for a wide range of residents. United Gulf is committed to prioritize *Skye Halifax* and will proceed with development as soon as possible.

### **Summary**

MPS amendments are reasonable and appropriate if they address something that was not anticipated or envisioned when the MPS was written. When an MPS change provides benefits for the greater good, it is even more justified. Times and circumstances change. It is time to change the downtown core to make it healthy and strong once again. *Skye Halifax* will be the catalyst for change. *Skye Halifax* will, if not restore, then enhance our sense of optimism and inspire others globally to consider opportunities in our downtown.

Progressive cities are progressive because they make bold development decisions. Decisions that keep existing residents, bring new immigrants, feed the economy, and make landmark statements on the international stage. We are only limited by our imagination.

Sincerely:

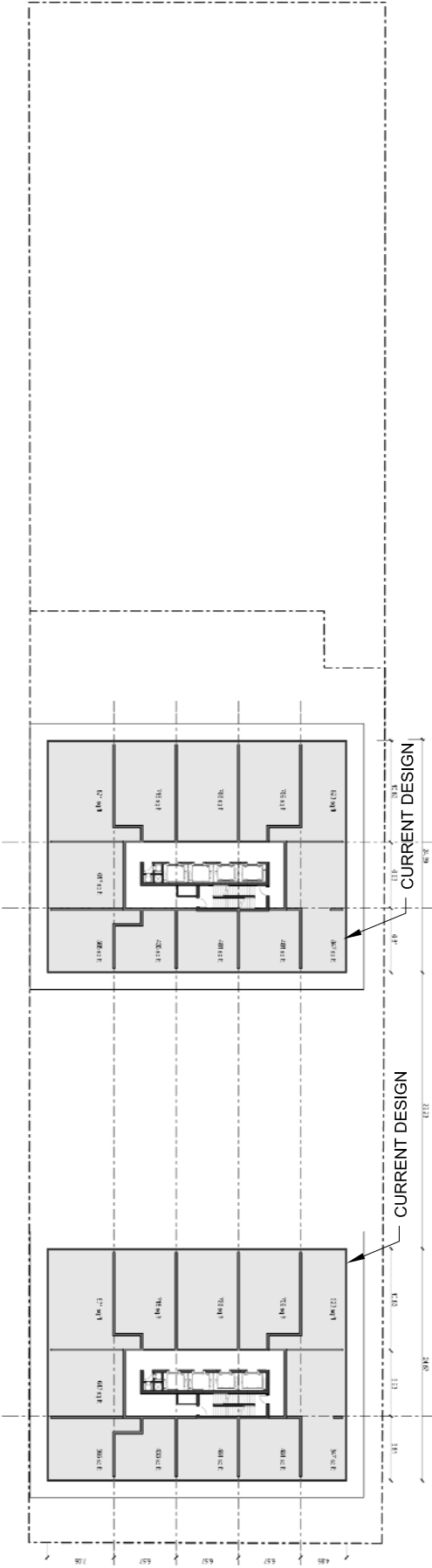
Jenifer Tsang, MCIP  
Planning Consultant for  
United Gulf Developments Limited

### **Enclosures:**

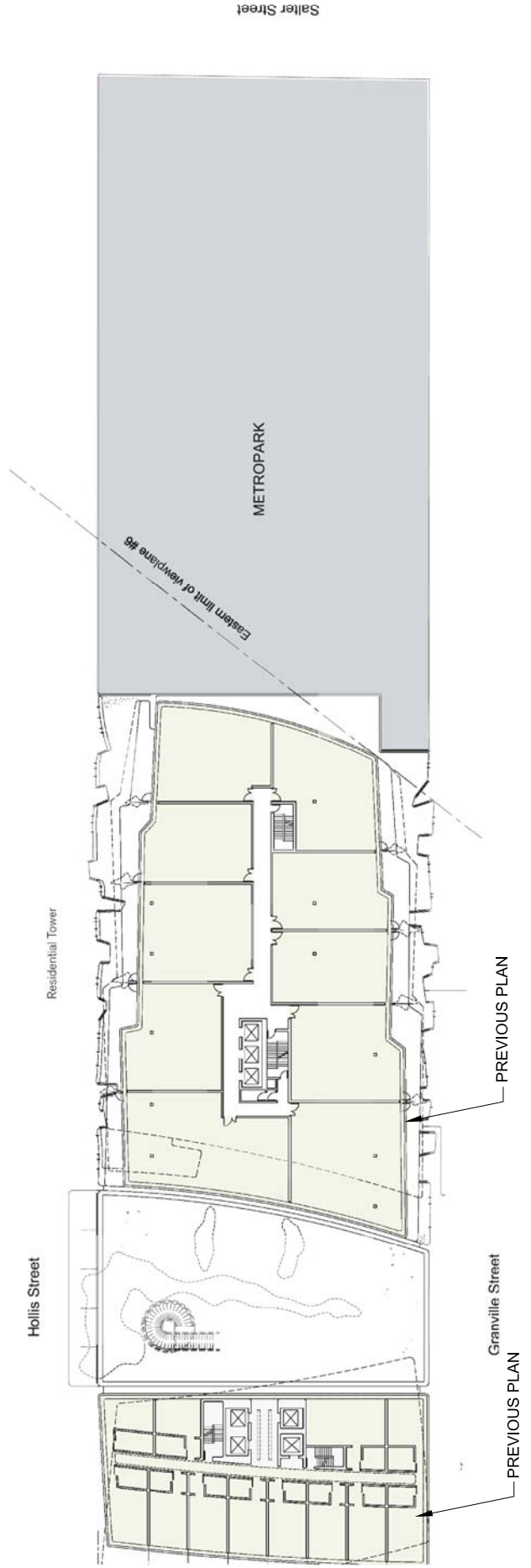
Footprint Comparison Plan  
Building Mass Comparison Plan  
Nighttime View of Skye Halifax  
Skyline View from the Ramparts



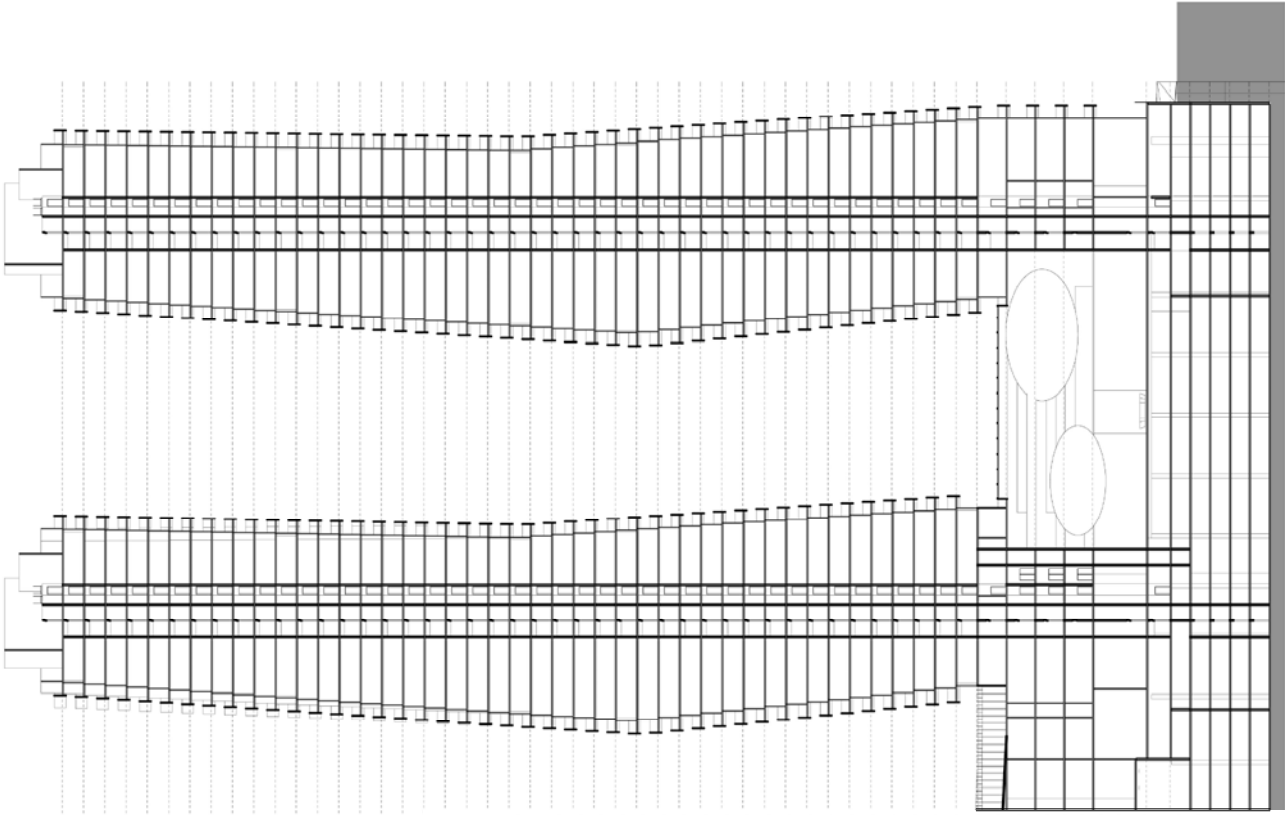
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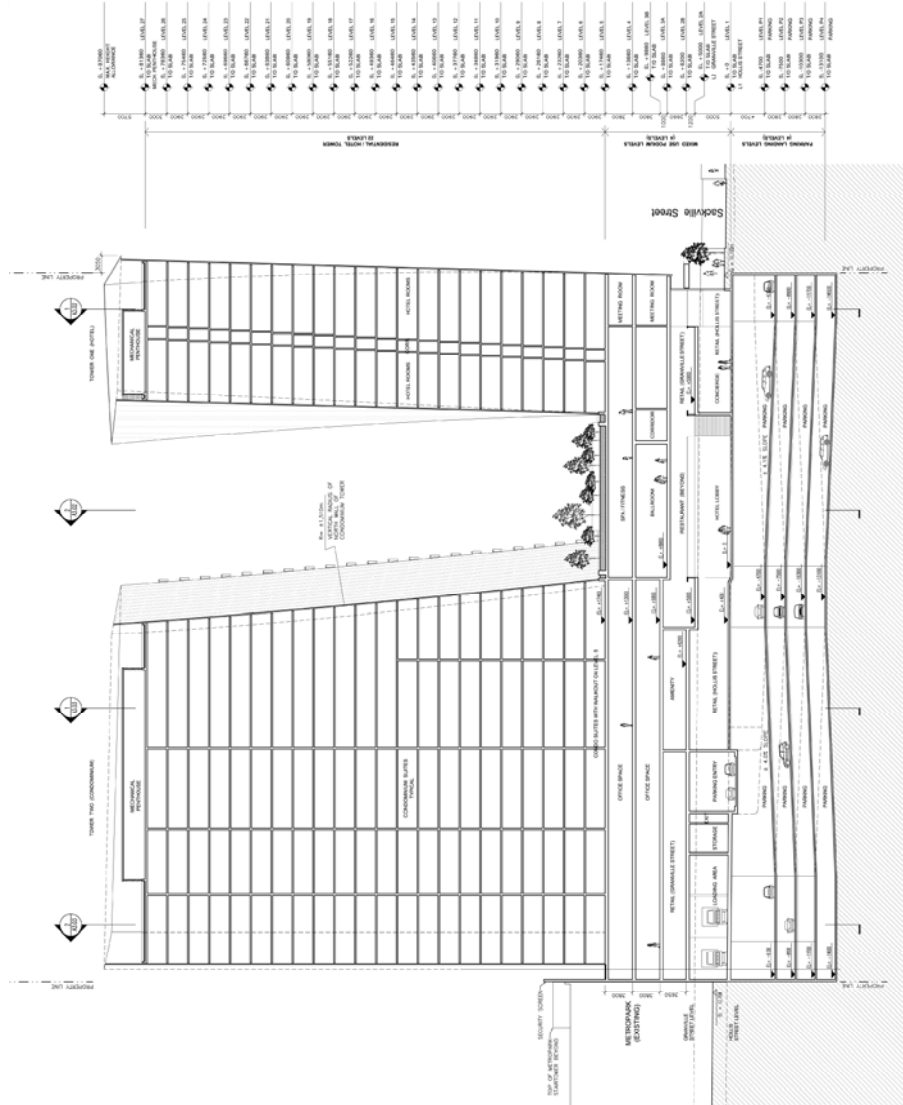
SKYE HALIFAX



TWISTED SISTERS

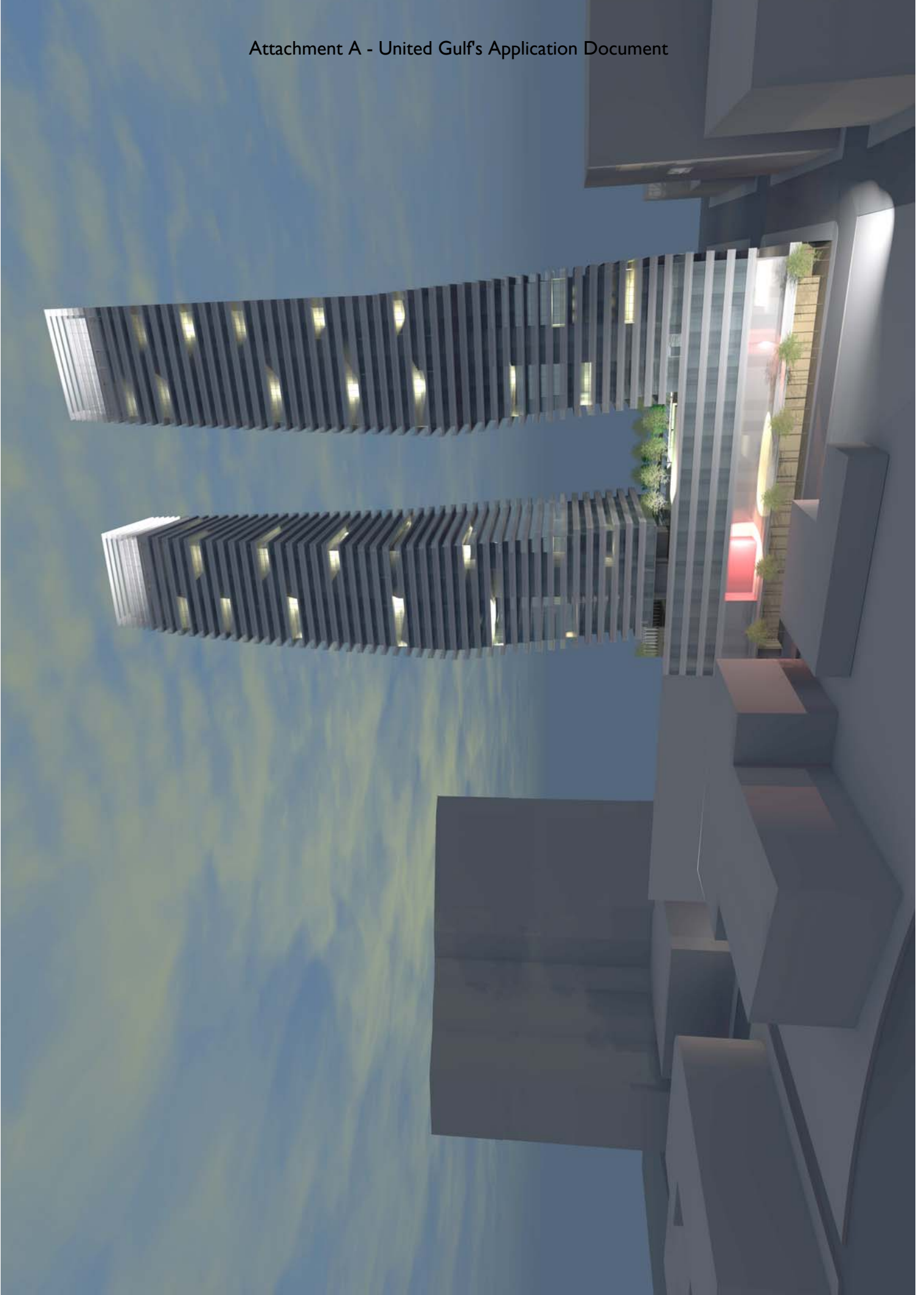


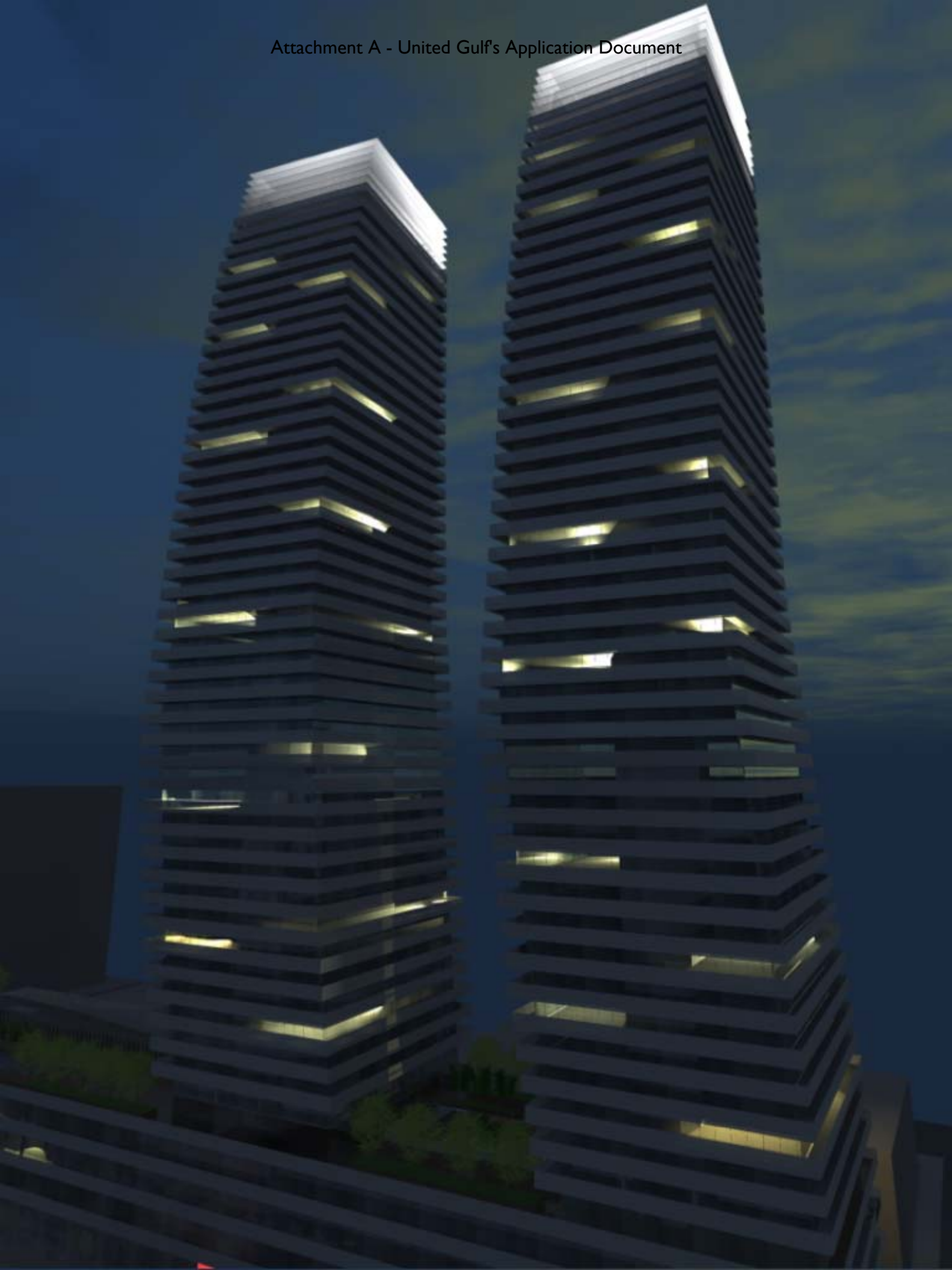
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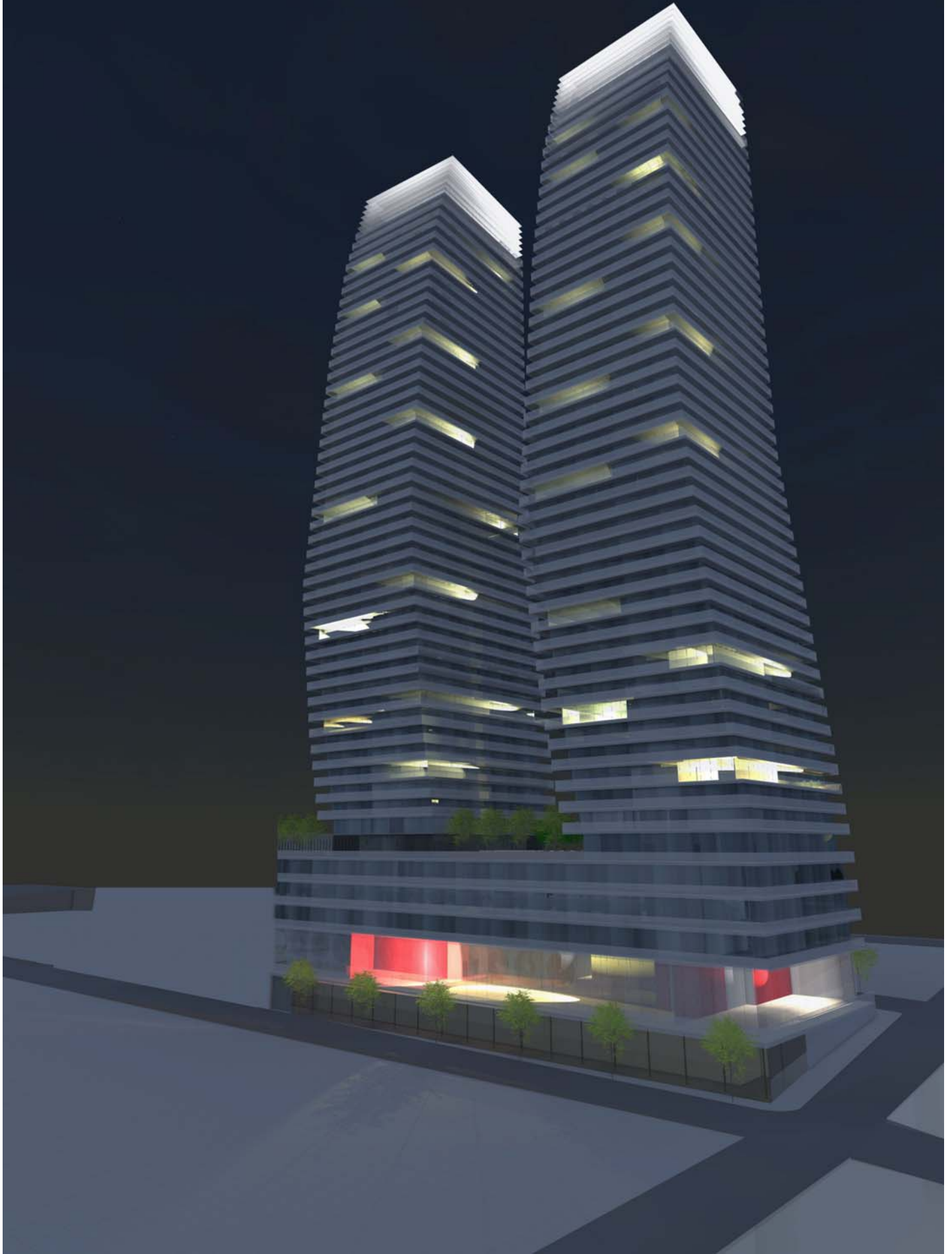


TWISTED SISTERS

BUILDING MASS COMPARISON PLAN

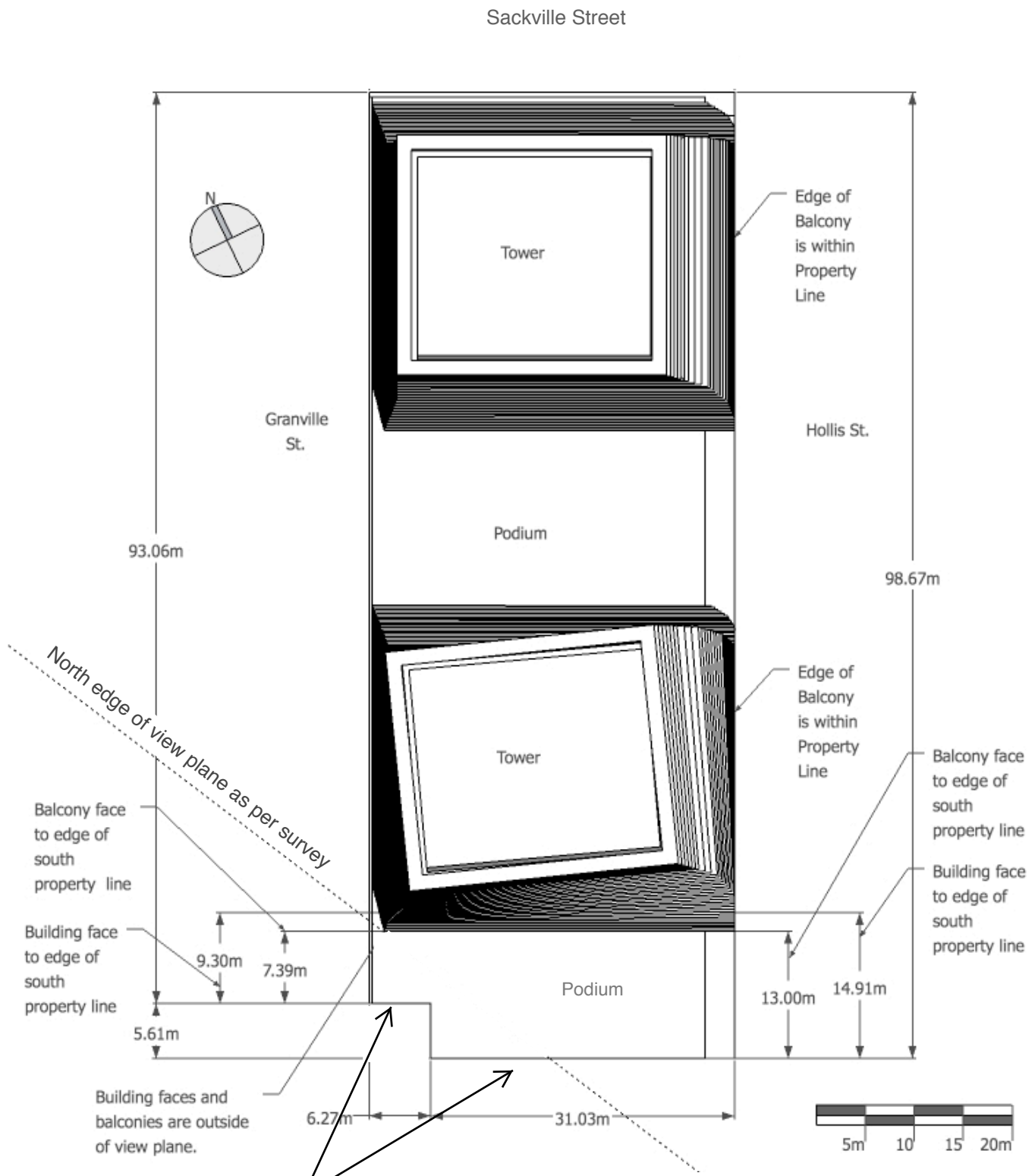






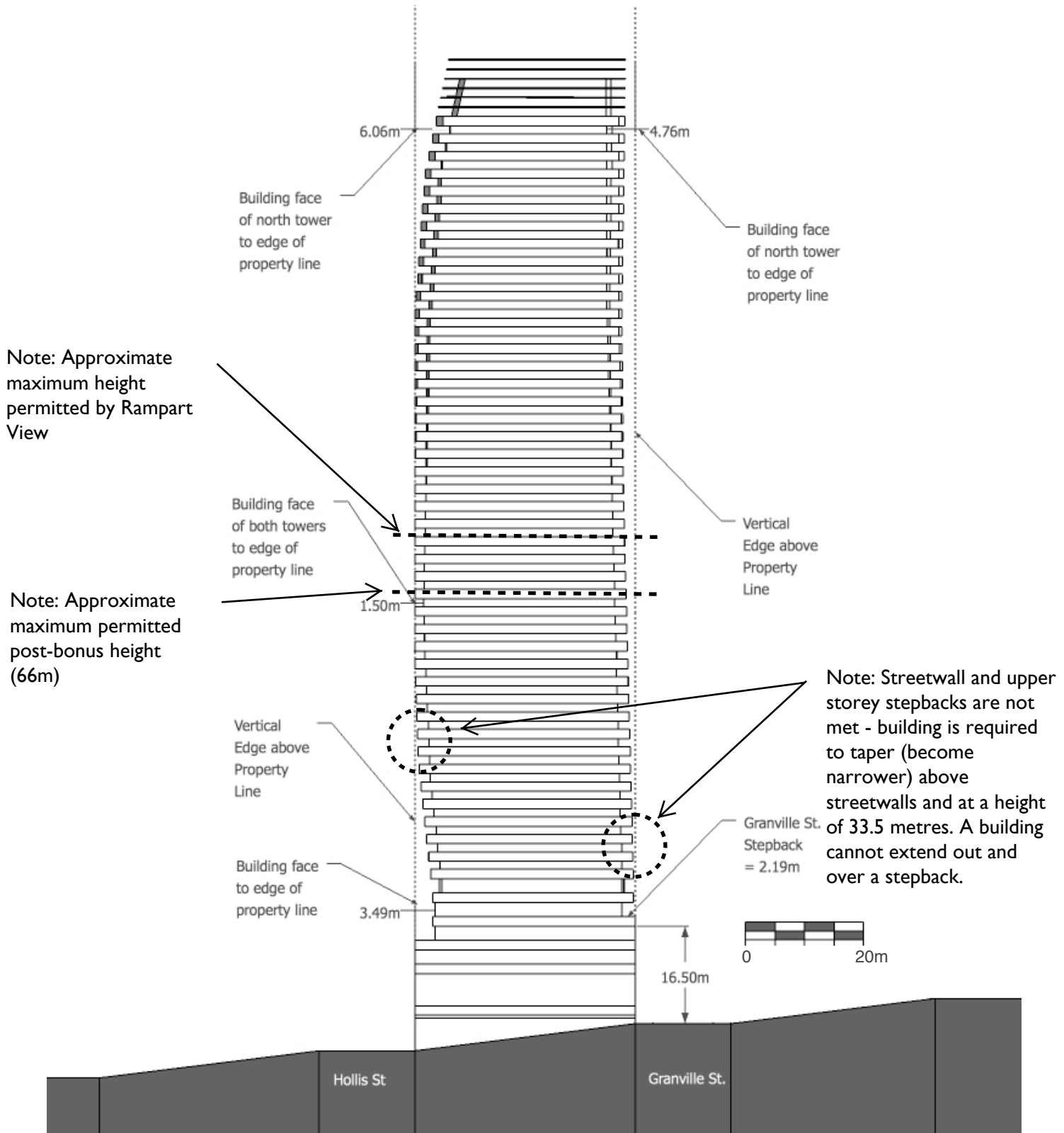


# Plan View



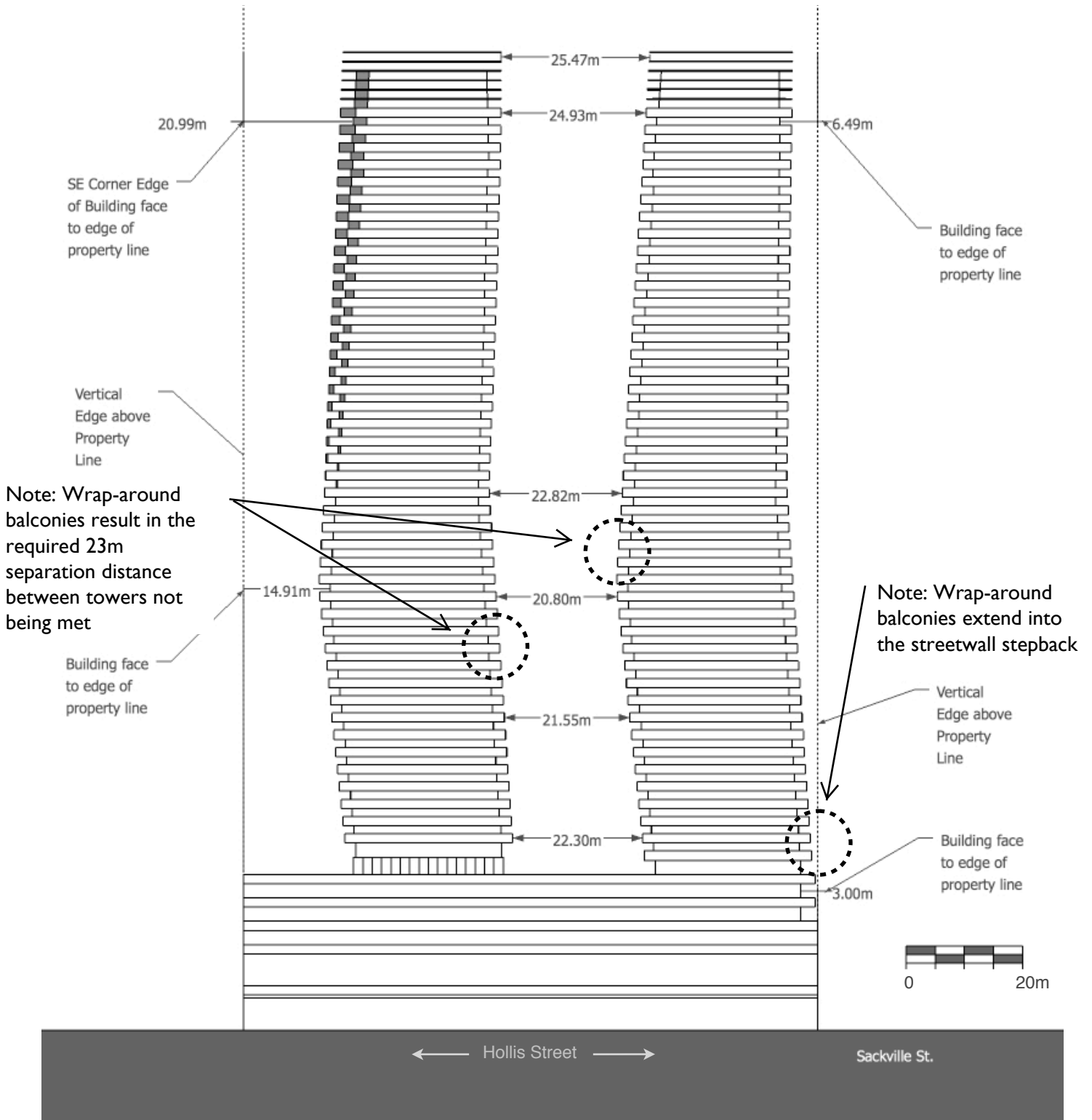
Irregular southern property line referred to in staff report

# North Elevation

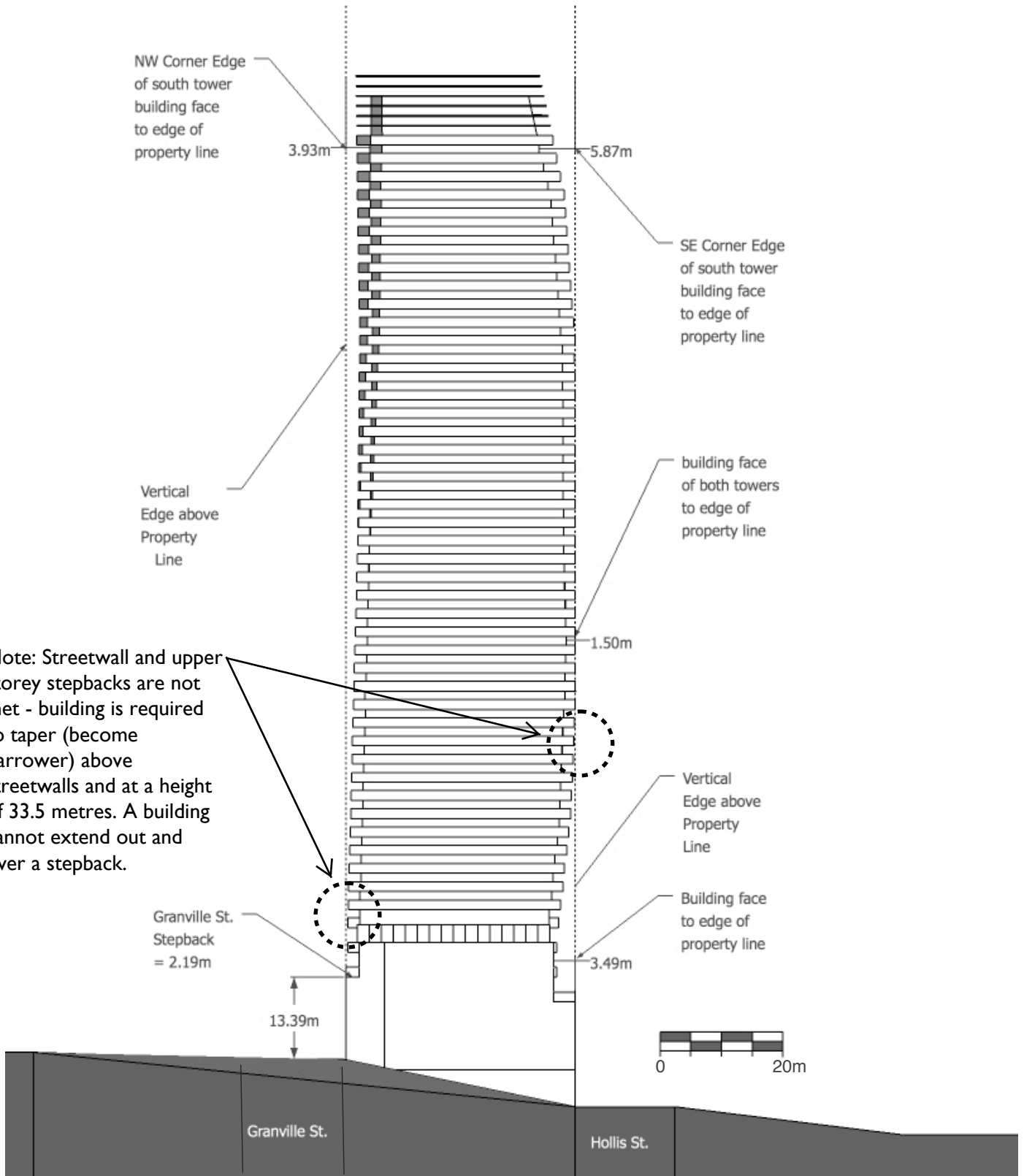




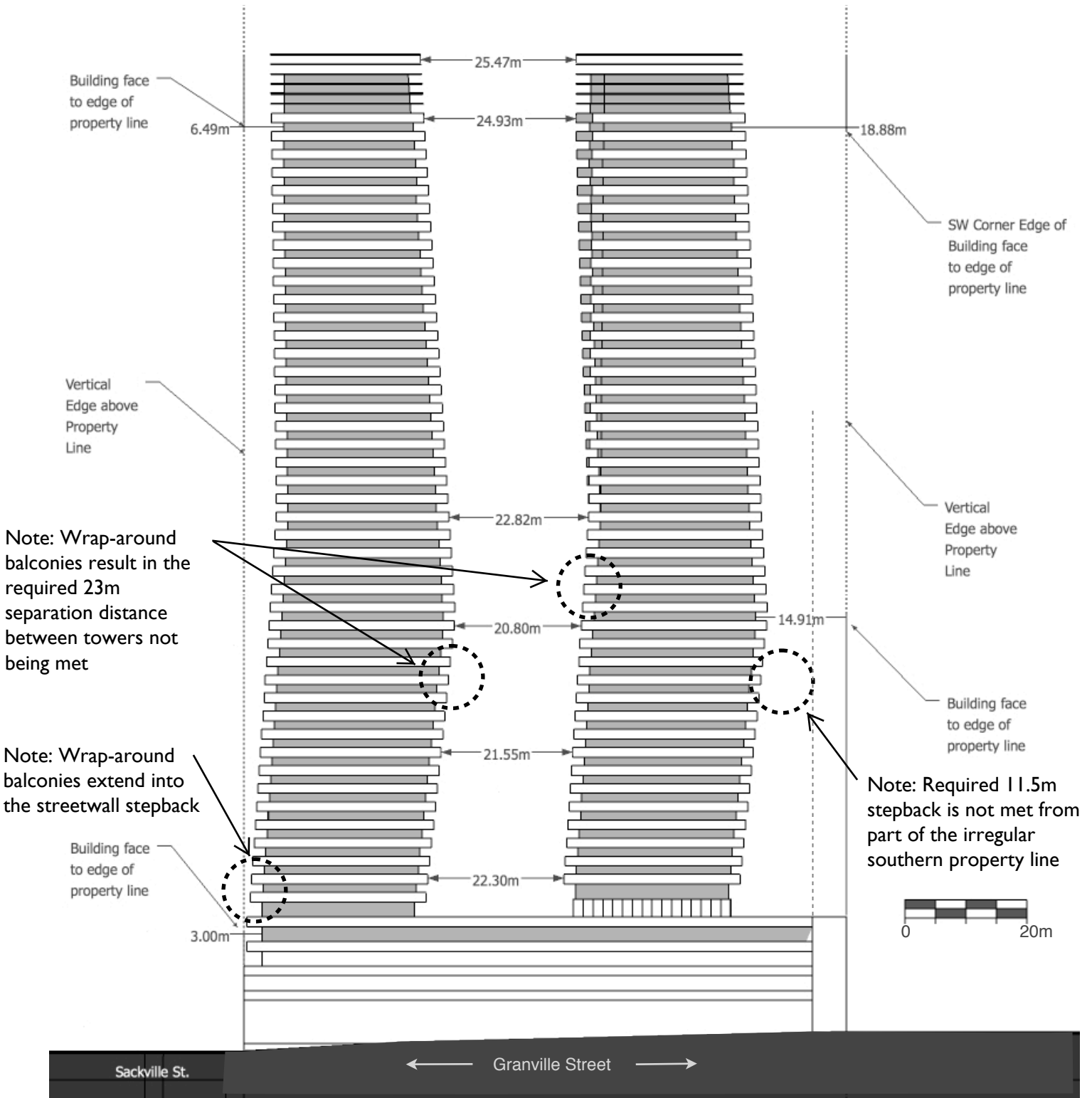
# East Elevation



# South Elevation



# West Elevation





CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
& SCIENTISTS

## Attachment C - Pedestrian Wind Assessment

Tel: 519.823.1311  
Fax: 519.823.1316

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650 Woodlawn Road West  
Guelph, Ontario, Canada  
N1K 1B8

# Skye Halifax

Halifax, Nova Scotia

## Final Report

### Pedestrian Wind Assessment

RWDI # 1201510  
April 5, 2012

#### SUBMITTED TO

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CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
& SCIENTISTS

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## Figures

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Figure 1: Site Plan

Figure 2: Directional Distribution (%) of Winds (Blowing From) Shearwater Airport (1953 – 2009)



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Rowan Williams Davies & Irwin Inc. (RWDI) was retained by United Gulf Developments Limited to assess the wind effects at pedestrian areas around the proposed Skye Halifax project in Halifax, Nova Scotia. RWDI had previously conducted a Pedestrian Wind Assessment<sup>1</sup> and Pedestrian Wind Study<sup>2</sup> in 2005 of an alternate building massing proposed for the same site. The objective of the current qualitative analysis is to estimate the pedestrian wind conditions on and around the proposed Skye Halifax when added to the existing buildings and those under construction. This qualitative assessment is based on:

- a review of regional long-term meteorological data in Halifax;
- previous wind studies, undertaken by RWDI, in the vicinity;
- design drawings received March 13, 2012;
- our engineering judgement and knowledge of wind flows around buildings;
- our experience of wind tunnel modelling of various building projects<sup>3</sup>; and,
- use of software developed by RWDI (*Windestimator*<sup>4</sup>) for estimating the potential wind comfort conditions around generalized building forms.

In the absence of wind tunnel testing, this qualitative approach provides a screening-level estimation of potential wind comfort conditions and identifies anticipated areas of accelerated wind speeds or areas of relative calm. This method can be used for an initial qualitative estimate of pedestrian wind conditions at the planning stage and for an evaluation of different design options. To quantify the wind conditions or refine any conceptual wind control measures, physical scale model tests in a boundary layer wind tunnel facility would be required. Note that other wind issues, such as those relating to door pressures, stack effect, exhaust re-entrainment, etc. are not considered in the scope of the assessment.

---

<sup>1</sup> T. Lovlin, F. Hochstenbach and H.A. Baker. "Pedestrian Wind Assessment – Texpark Site". RWDI Project #05-1210. February 7, 2005  
<sup>2</sup> T. Lovlin, F. Hochstenbach and H.A. Baker. "Pedestrian Wind Study – Texpark Site". RWDI Project #05-1210. May 7, 2005.  
<sup>3</sup> C.J. Williams, H. Wu, W.F. Waechter and H.A. Baker (1999). "Experience with Remedial Solutions to Control Pedestrian Wind Problems". *10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Wind Engineering*. Copenhagen, Denmark.  
<sup>4</sup> H. Wu, C.J. Williams, H.A. Baker and W.F. Waechter (2004). "Knowledge-based Desk-Top Analysis of Pedestrian Wind Conditions". ASCE Structure Congress 2004. Nashville, Tennessee.



## 2. PRINCIPAL RESULTS

The principal findings and results of the pedestrian wind assessment can be summarized as follows:

- Generally, the existing wind conditions on and around the site are expected to be suitable for standing in the summer and walking in the winter. Uncomfortable wind conditions are probable along Salter Street, near the Maritime Centre.
- With the proposed development in place, wind conditions are generally expected to remain suitable for standing in the summer and walking in the winter. However, along Sackville Street, wind conditions are more likely to be conducive to walking in the summer and potentially uncomfortable in the winter.
- Currently, severe wind conditions, creating safety issues, could occur along both Sackville and Salter Streets. With the proposed development in place, these severe wind conditions will remain. Wind mitigation measures are provided in the report to improve these wind conditions.

## 3. SITE INFORMATION

The proposed development is located in downtown Halifax, in the block encompassed by Sackville Street to the north, Hollis Street to the east, Salter Street to the south, and Granville Street to the west. Currently the site is a parking lot, with an eight-storey parking structure on the south half (see Image 1).



**Image 1** – Aerial View of Existing Site  
 (Courtesy of Google Earth™, dated September 7, 2011)



**Image 2** – Rendering of Skye Halifax

The proposed site is rectangular in shape with the long axis aligned in the north-northwest / south-southeast direction. The site has an overall footprint of approximately 32m by 160m. The two towers of the proposed development are each approximately 161m in height (see Image 2) and have a footprint of approximately 30m by 25m; both of these towers are located on the north half of the podium. A site plan



of the development can be seen in Figure 1. The two entrances to the residential towers are located along Granville Street (Locations A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub>), as is the entrance to the retail space (Location A<sub>3</sub>) and the hotel entrance (Location A<sub>4</sub>). There are also numerous retail entrances along Sackville, Granville, Hollis and Salter Streets (Locations B). On the podium (Level 5) there will be outdoor amenity space between the two towers (C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>), as well as an outdoor pool on the southeast corner of the podium (C<sub>3</sub> through C<sub>5</sub>).

This preliminary analysis was carried out using modeling information wherein the tower podium would be fully extended south to Salter Street. This would see the replacement of an existing parking structure (Metro Park) of similar mass. Study results would be the same with or without the replacement of this existing structure.

In the following discussions references to the buildings locations relate to the “Project North” shown in Figure 1, while the wind directions are referred to “True North”. These differ by approximately 20°.

The development site is two blocks west of the harbour and is immediately surrounded by medium-rise developments to the north, south and west. Immediately east are low-rise commercial buildings. Beyond the immediate surroundings there is the Halifax Citadel to the east, the downtown core to the north, the harbour to the east, with medium-rise commercial buildings to the south. Immediately southwest of the site is the Maritime Centre, which is a tall tower with known wind issues; to the northwest is the proposed Roy Building, which will be 16 stories in height.

## 4. METEOROLOGICAL DATA

Wind statistics at the Shearwater Airport, in Dartmouth, NS, between 1953 and 2009 were analysed for the summer (May through October) and winter (November through April) seasons. Figure 2 graphically depicts the distributions of wind frequency and directionality for these two seasons. The left wind rose identifies the summer wind data. Winds from the southwest quadrant are predominant in this season when all winds are considered, with secondary winds from the northwest quadrant. The right wind rose shows the winter data, indicating the predominance of winds from the northwest quadrant during this season.

Strong winds of a mean speed greater than 30 km/h measured at 10m above grade at the airports occur for 4.1% and 14.2% of the time during the summer and winter seasons, respectively. The east winds are prevalent in both seasons, as demonstrated by the wind roses in Figure 2, while northwesterly and southwesterly winds are predominant in the winter. Based on the above analysis of wind data and the potential for local wind acceleration caused by the proposed and existing buildings, winds from the southwest and northwest, as well as easterly directions are considered important in the assessment of pedestrian wind conditions, although all other wind directions have also been considered in our analysis.





## 5. WIND COMFORT CRITERIA

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The RWDI wind comfort criteria deal with both pedestrian safety and comfort, as they relate to the force of the wind. Thermal effects (e.g., temperature, humidity, sun/shade, wind chill in cold regions, etc.) are not considered in these comfort criteria. These criteria, developed by RWDI through research and consulting practice since 1974, have been published in numerous academic journals and conference proceedings. They have also been widely accepted by municipal authorities as well as by the building design and city planning community. RWDI's criteria have been used in over 2000 pedestrian wind projects and adopted as part of environmental planning guidelines by several major cities around the world. The pedestrian wind comfort criteria used in this assessment are categorized by three typical pedestrian activities:

- **Sitting:** Low wind speeds during which one can read a newspaper without having it blown away. These wind speeds are appropriate for outdoor cafes and other amenity spaces that promote long term sitting.
- **Standing:** Slightly higher wind speeds that are strong enough to rustle leaves. These wind speeds are appropriate at major building entrances, bus stops or other areas where people may linger but not necessarily sit for extended periods of time.
- **Walking:** Winds that would lift leaves, move litter, hair and loose clothing. Appropriate for sidewalks, intersections, plazas, parks or playing fields where people are more likely to be active and receptive to some wind activity.

Wind conditions are considered suitable for sitting, standing or walking if the wind speeds are expected for at least four out of five days (80% of the time). An **uncomfortable** designation means that the criterion for walking is not satisfied.

**Safety** is also considered by the criteria and is associated with excessive gust wind speeds that can adversely affect a pedestrian's balance and footing. If winds sufficient to affect a person's balance occur more than two times per summer or winter season, the wind conditions are considered severe. Wind control measures are typically required at locations where winds are rated as uncomfortable or they exceed the wind safety criterion.



## 6. ASSESSMENT OF WIND CONDITIONS

---

### 6.1 General Background

Predicting wind speeds and occurrence frequencies is complicated, involving building geometry, orientation, position and height of surrounding buildings, upstream terrain and the local wind climate. Over the years, RWDI has conducted more than 2000 wind tunnel model studies on pedestrian wind conditions around buildings, yielding a broad knowledge base. This knowledge has been incorporated into RWDI's proprietary software (*WindEstimator*) that allows in many situations for a qualitative, screening-level numerical estimation of pedestrian wind conditions without wind tunnel testing.

Generally, wind conditions suitable for walking are appropriate for sidewalks; lower wind speeds comfortable for standing are preferred at major building entrances. It is generally desirable for wind conditions on terraces and around pools to be comfortable for sitting more than 80% of the time in the summer. During the winter, these areas would not be used frequently and increased wind activity would be considered appropriate.

### 6.2 Existing Wind Conditions

Currently, the north half of the existing site is a parking lot, while the south half is an eight-storey parking garage. Wind conditions along the surrounding sidewalks are expected to be suitable for standing in the summer and walking in the winter, with the potential for uncomfortable wind conditions along Salter Street, near the Maritime Centre. There is also the potential for gusting, and hence severe wind conditions along Salter Street, as well as along Sackville Street under the existing building configuration without the proposed development.

### 6.3 Predicted Wind Conditions

With the construction of the proposed building, wind speeds in the vicinity are expected to increase, as the towers will intercept the stronger winds at higher elevations and redirect them downwards, creating local wind accelerations at grade level or on a podium, resulting in a downwashing flow. In addition, when two buildings are situated side by side, wind flow tends to accelerate through the gap between the buildings due to a channelling effect. As the gap between the two towers is exposed to the prevailing westerly and easterly winds, there is the potential for local wind accelerations on the podium between the towers.

Generally, wind conditions on the sidewalks in the summer are expected to be suitable for standing, with the potential for windier conditions along Sackville Street (Locations B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>), as well on Salter Street, near the Maritime Centre (Location B<sub>3</sub>). Overall, in the winter, wind conditions are expected to be comfortable for standing or walking. However, due to channelling and downwashing wind flows, there is the potential for uncomfortable wind conditions along Sackville Street (Locations B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>), as the



proposed towers redirect wind flows on to the street. Uncomfortable wind conditions are also expected to remain along Salter Street, in the vicinity of the Maritime Center. In addition, severe wind conditions, resulting in safety issues, are expected along Sackville and Salter Streets in the winter season. These conditions currently exist in the area without the proposed development in place, as discussed in Section 6.2.

With these elevated wind speeds along Sackville and Salter Streets, it is a positive design feature to place the main entrances to the development along Granville Street (Locations A<sub>1</sub> through A<sub>4</sub>). However, to further improve wind conditions at these entrances, we suggest recessing the doors from the main facade, in addition to including vestibules. Alternatively, large entrance canopies can be installed to improve the wind conditions at these entrances.

On the podium, wind conditions are generally expected to be comfortable for walking in the summer, due to the channelling of the prevailing southwesterly winds between the towers, and the overall exposure of the podium to the winds (Locations C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>5</sub>). In more sheltered areas, such as along the east facade of the spa building, wind conditions are expected to be conducive to standing in the summer (Location C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>4</sub>). In the winter, uncomfortable wind conditions are expected on the podium, but they are not of a major concern due to limited usage of the outdoor amenity area.

In general, the slender shape of the towers and the wrap-around balconies tend to promote horizontal wind flows and reduce the downwashing effect. The proposed podium is also a positive design feature for wind reduction at grade. Additional wind mitigation solutions will need to be developed to improve the wind conditions in the area. Wind tunnel tests should be conducted at a later design stage to quantify the wind conditions and to evaluate wind mitigation options.

### 6.4 Recommendations

Previous wind tunnel studies conducted in the spring of 2005 highlighted the difficulties of the site with regards to mitigating wind conditions. The podium presents a large facade to the prevailing winds; the resulting redirection of the wind flows can create significant wind accelerations in some areas. The addition of the towers can exacerbate this issue, by redirecting the strong winds found at higher elevations down to grade; however, under the new proposal, the slender nature of the towers is a benefit in this regard, as the winds are more likely to flow around the towers than down to grade.

To mitigate these potential wind comfort issues, the design team should consider the following wind control measures:

- Installing large canopies around the development at the first or second level, to minimize the influence of downwashing flows on Sackville Street (Image 3);
- The installation of wind screens (minimum 2.5m tall, minimum 50% solid) on the sidewalk along Sackville Street to disrupt horizontal wind flows along the street (Images 4, 5 and 6);



CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
& SCIENTISTS

- Recessing the entrances along Grandville Street or providing entrance canopies;
- The installation of tall parapets (minimum 2.5m tall, minimum 50% solid) around the perimeter of the podium (Image 4);
- The installation of local wind screens around seating areas on the podiums (Image 4, 5 and 6); and
- The inclusion of canopies and trellises on the podium around the base of both towers, in order to redirect downwashing flows.

Note that in order to quantify both the expected wind conditions and the effectiveness of any mitigation measures, wind tunnel testing will be required.



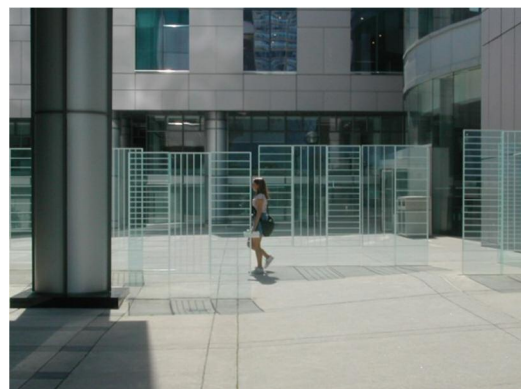
**Image 3** – Example of Canopies



**Image 4** – Porous Wind Screens



**Image 5** – Example of Local Wind Screens



**Image 6** – Example of Local Wind Screens



## 7. SUMMARY

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Given the local climate, the existing wind conditions in the area are generally expected to be comfortable for standing in the summer and walking in the winter; higher wind speeds are expected along both Sackville Street and Salter Street due to the interaction of wind flows with the existing buildings. These potentially uncomfortable wind conditions in the winter could also result in severe winds in these areas. With the proposed development in place, similar wind conditions are predicted on and around the site, including high wind activity on Sackville Street and Salter Street. Wind mitigation concepts have been discussed in the report and they can be optimized at a later design stage to improve the wind conditions.

## 8. APPLICABILITY OF RESULTS

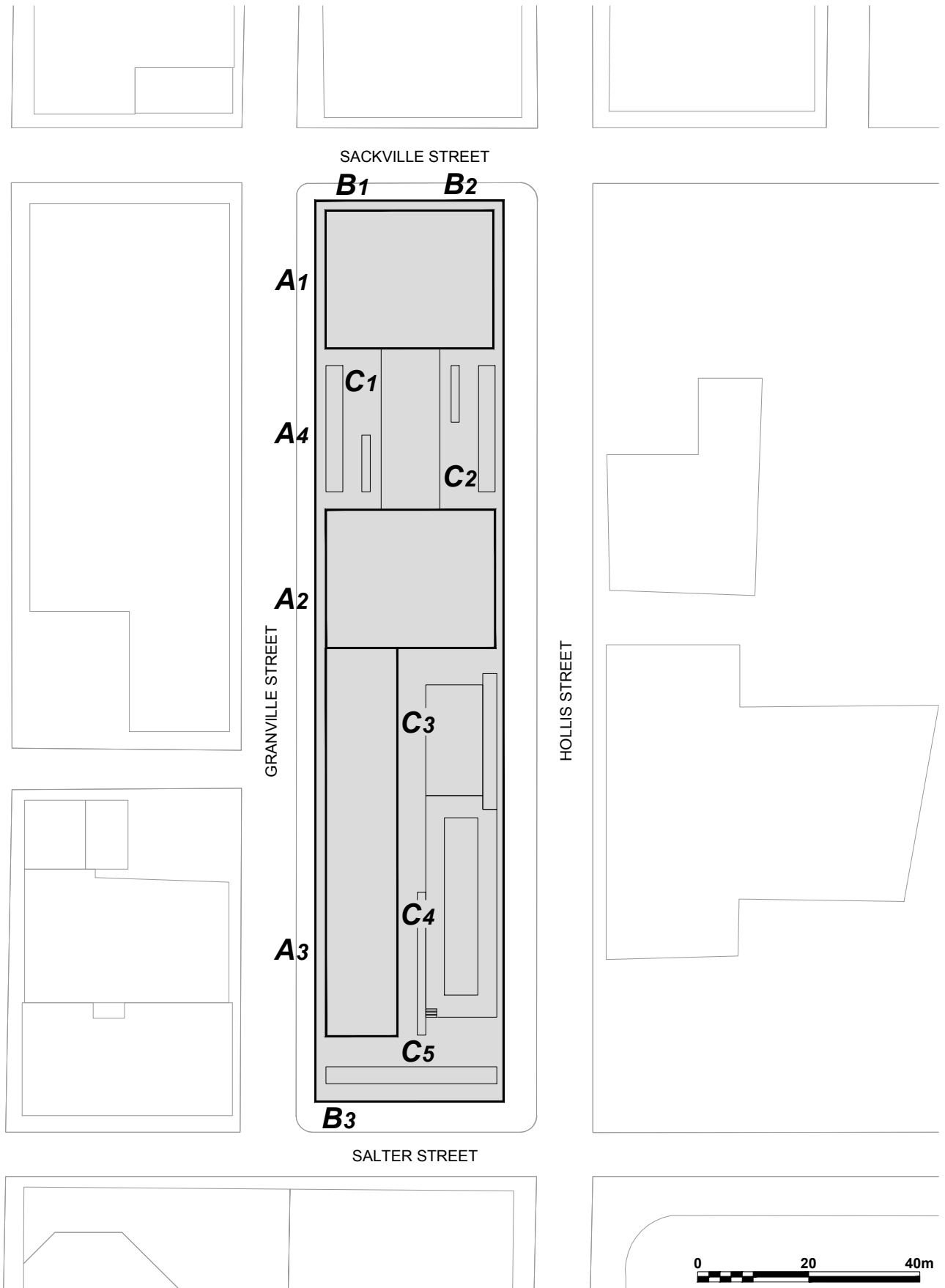
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The assessment and recommendations presented in this report are based on the proposed geometry and design drawings provided to RWDI. The interpretation of wind flows determined by this pedestrian wind assessment are applicable to the particular building configurations examined and the existing and future surroundings identified to RWDI. This qualitative assessment cannot be used for analysing issues related to door pressure, stack effect, exhaust re-entrainment, etc.

In the event of any significant changes to the design, construction or operation of the building or addition to the surroundings in the future, RWDI could provide an assessment of their impact on the design considered in this report. It is the responsibility of others to contact RWDI to initiate this process.

# FIGURES

Attachment C - Pedestrian Wind Assessment



**Site Plan**

Skye Halifax - Halifax, NS

Project North True North



Project #1201510

Drawn by: DJM

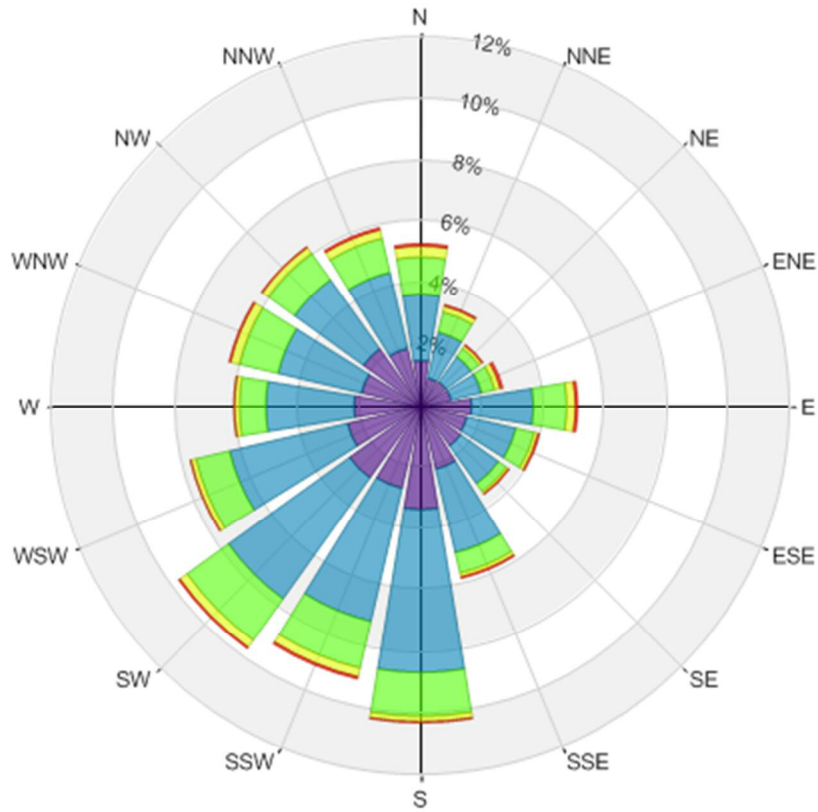
Figure: **1**

Approx. Scale: 1:1000

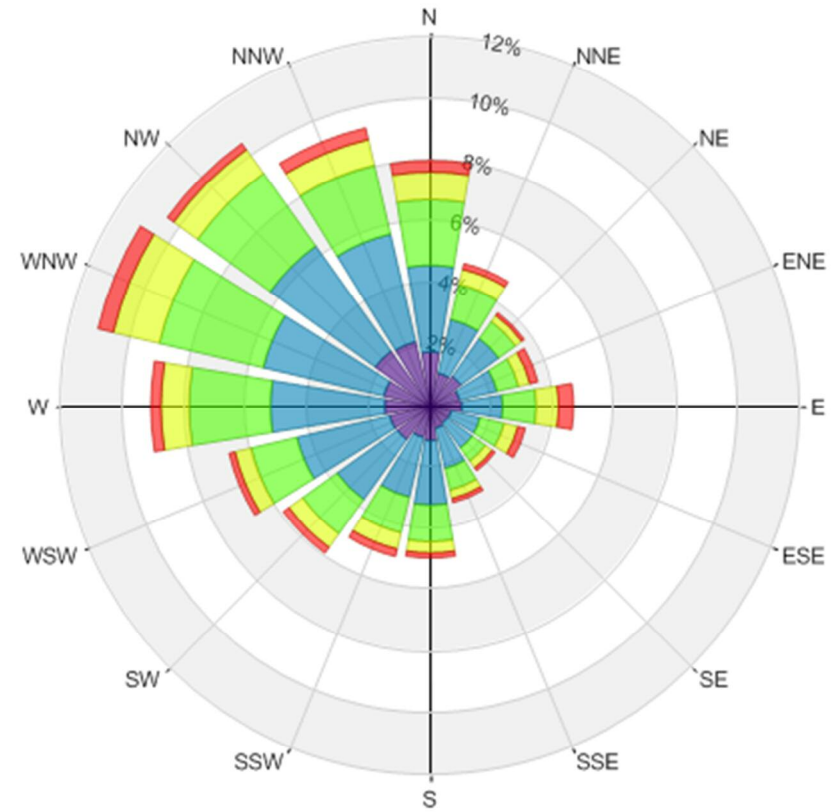
Date Revised: Mar. 21, 2010



# Attachment C - Pedestrian Wind Assessment



Summer Winds  
(May - October)



Winter Winds  
(November - April)

Speed (km/h)	Probability (%)	
	Summer	Winter
Calm	6.2	3.8
1-10	31.1	20.5
11-20	43.1	37.0
21-30	15.4	24.5
31-40	3.4	10.0
>40	0.7	4.2



**Directional Distribution (%) of Winds (Blowing From)**  
Shearwater Airport (1953 - 2009)

Skye Halifax – Halifax, Nova Scotia

Project #1201510

Figure No: 2

Date: 3/21/2012





**UNITED GULF DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

380 Bedford Highway Halifax Nova Scotia B3M 2L4

Richard Harvey, Planner  
Community Development  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
7071 Bayers Road  
Halifax NS B3L 2C2

April 30, 2012

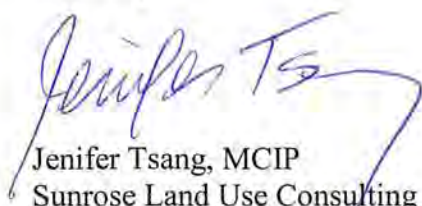
**Re: Shadow Analysis for Skye Halifax – 1591 Granville Street**

Dear Richard:

Please find attached a Shadow Analysis Report that includes a comparison between the Twisted Sisters design and the Skye Halifax proposal. The shadow information addresses the impact of shadows on the public spaces of Citadel Hill, Grand Parade and the waterfront. Still photographs are attached to this report to illustrate the findings.

Please let me know if you require any additional information.

Sincerely



Jenifer Tsang, MCIP  
Sunrose Land Use Consulting

For:  
United Gulf Developments Limited

Attachment D - Shadow Study  
**UNITED GULF DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**  
380 Bedford Highway Halifax Nova Scotia B3M 2L4

**Introduction:**

United Gulf Developments Limited contracted Connor Architects and Planners (CAP) to undertake a shadow model for the proposed Skye Halifax located at 1591 Granville Street which is the property bounded by Sackville, Granville and Hollis streets in downtown Halifax. The shadow model is a video showing the movement of the shadows as they pass throughout the day on four days of the year: March 21<sup>st</sup>, June 21<sup>st</sup>, September 21<sup>st</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup>.

This site, known as the “Texpark” site, has previously been approved for a development project nicknamed the “Twisted Sisters”. This letter provides a comparison of the shadow impacts of the Twisted Sisters design and the Skye Halifax design on three popular public open spaces in the downtown area: Citadel Hill and fortress, the Grand Parade square, and the waterfront - with some emphasis on Sackville Landing.

The difference between the two designs is that the shadows from the Twisted Sisters are shorter and wider than the shadows cast from Skye Halifax. The Skye Halifax shadows reach a bit further by having a longer radius and sometimes have a shorter duration due to their more narrow design. This occurs in our shadow demonstration during the winter months when the sun is low in the sky which casts a longer shadow. This longer radius with shorter duration is sometimes referred to as a “sun dial effect”.

Another difference between the shadows of the two designs is that the Skye Halifax twin towers have a greater separation distance between them than the Twisted Sisters towers, which provides a wider break of light between their two individual shadows. The time duration provided in this analysis addresses the time from when the first tower’s shadow enters the public space to when the shadow of the second tower leaves the space. Within each time duration there is a break of light between the first and second shadows.

**Summary of Findings:**

Citadel Hill:

The Twisted Sisters design does not cast shadows on the Citadel Fortress in the summer, fall or winter. It’s shadow does touch the fortress in March from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.

Skye Halifax shadows do not affect the fortress or the hill in the summer or winter months. The shadows do touch Citadel Hill in March from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and in September from 7:15 a.m. until 8:45 a.m.

Grand Parade: The Twisted Sisters shadow does not affect Grand Parade in the spring, summer or fall. It’s shadow does cross the eastern portion of the Grand Parade in the winter between 8:30 a.m. and 10:45 am.

The Skye Halifax shadows do not cross Grand Parade in the summer. They do touch the far eastern end (by St. Paul’s Church) of Grand Parade in March from 10:30 a.m. to 11:00

Attachment D - Shadow Study  
**UNITED GULF DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

380 Bedford Highway Halifax Nova Scotia B3M 2L4

a.m., in September from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and in December from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Waterfront: The Twisted Sisters shadow crosses the waterfront at Sackville Landing in March from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. In June it crosses Sackville Landing from 5:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and in September it crosses from 4:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. In December it does not affect Sackville Landing.

The Skye Halifax shadows begin to cross the waterfront in March from 3:15 p.m. and pass through Sackville Landing and beyond until 6:15 p.m. when it blends with other shadows. In June, the shadows cross the waterfront from 3:45 to 8:00 p.m. In September the shadows enter the waterfront at 3:15 p.m. and cross through Sackville Landing until 6:30 p.m. when it blends with other shadows. Skye Halifax shadows enter the waterfront at 12:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. but do not affect Sackville Landing in December.

**Conclusion:**

This shadow analysis reviews the impact of shadows from two development proposals for a site located at 1591 Granville Street on three public open spaces in downtown Halifax: Citadel Hill, the Grand Parade square, and the waterfront.

The site has previously been approved for a development project nicknamed “Twisted Sisters” and is currently being reviewed for a new proposal named Skye Halifax. The Skye Halifax proposal casts two individual shadows that are longer in reach yet have a larger separation between shadows than the previous Twisted Sisters design.

The impacts on the Citadel Fortress is that the Twisted Sisters design impacts it during March for one hour in the morning. Skye Halifax impacts Citadel Hill for two hours in March (75 minutes of which are on the fortress) and 1.5 hours in September (45 minutes of which are on the fortress), both in the early morning. Skye Halifax shadows do not impact Citadel Hill in the summer or winter.

Shadows from the Twisted Sisters occurs on Grand Parade during December in the early morning for approximately two hours. Shadows from Skye Halifax cross the far eastern end of the square for half an hour in March and one hour in September. Skye Halifax shadows cross the Grand Parade square in December for 1.5 hours in the morning and do not affect the Grand Parade square at all in June.

The shadow impacts on the waterfront at Sackville Landing occurs from Twisted Sisters in March, June and September for approximately 2 hours at the end of the day. The Skye Halifax shadows cross the waterfront in March and September for approximately 3 hours at the end of the day (2 of which affect Sackville Landing) and in June for approximately four hours at the end of the day. During June, the break of light between the two shadows is most noticeable. In December, Skye Halifax shadows affect the waterfront for three hours in the afternoon but do not affect Sackville Landing.

Attachment D - Shadow Study  
**UNITED GULF DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**  
 380 Bedford Highway Halifax Nova Scotia B3M 2L4

**Table 1 – Shadow Impacts of Twisted Sisters design**

Time of Year	Citadel Fortress	Grand Parade	Sackville Landing
March 21st	7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.	No Shadow	3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
June 21st	No shadow	No Shadow	5:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
September 21st	No shadow	No Shadow	4:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
December 21st	No shadow	8:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	No Shadow

**Table 2 – Shadow Impacts of Skye Halifax design**

Time of Year	Citadel Hill	Grand Parade	Waterfront
March 21st	Sun rise at 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. (75 minutes at fortress)	10:30 a.m. to 11a.m. Just over the church at edge of square	3:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. when it blends with other shadows
June 21st	No Shadow	No Shadow	3:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
September 21st	Sunrise at 7:15 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. (45 minutes at fortress)	9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. Just over the church at edge of square.	3:15 p.m. to sundown 6:30 p.m.
December 21st	No Shadow	8:30 a.m to 10:00 a.m.	12:30p.m. to 3:30 when it blends with other shadows.

HALIFAX HARBOUR

HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

QUEEN STREET

SPRING GARDEN ROAD

8:00 7:45

March 21st

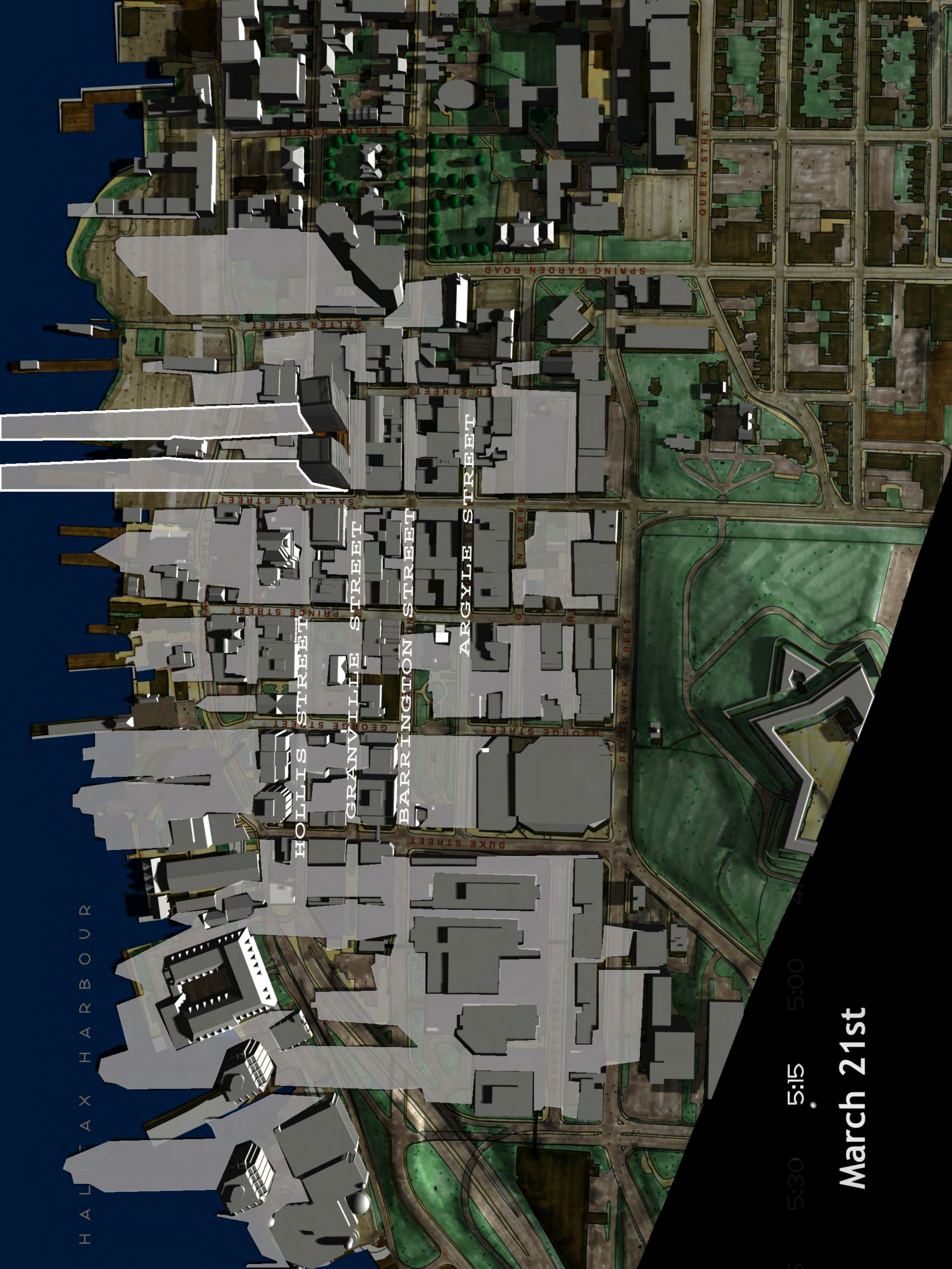


HALIFAX HARBOUR



11:00 10:45 10:30

March 21st



HALIFAX HARBOUR

HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

SACKVILLE STREET

PRINCE STREET

GEORGE STREET

DUKE STREET

GEORGE STREET

GREEN STREET

BRUNSWICK STREET

SALTER STREET

HER STREET

SPRING GARDEN ROAD

QUEEN STREET

5:30 5:15 5:00

March 21st

HALIFAX HARBOUR



HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

SACKVILLE STREET

PRINCE STREET

GEORGE STREET

DUKE STREET

SALTER STREET

SACKVILLE STREET

PRINCE STREET

GEORGE STREET

DUKE STREET

BLOWER STREET

GEORGE STREET

DUKE STREET

SPRING GARDEN ROAD

SPRING GARDEN ROAD

SPRING GARDEN ROAD

QUEEN STREET

QUEEN STREET

QUEEN STREET

QUEEN STREET

QUEEN STREET

QUEEN STREET

8:15 8:00 7:45

June 21st



HALIFAX HARBOUR



11:00 10:45 10:30

June 21st

HALIFAX HARBOUR



5:15 5:00 4:45

June 21st

HALIFAX HARBOUR

HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

8:15 8:00 7:45

September 21st

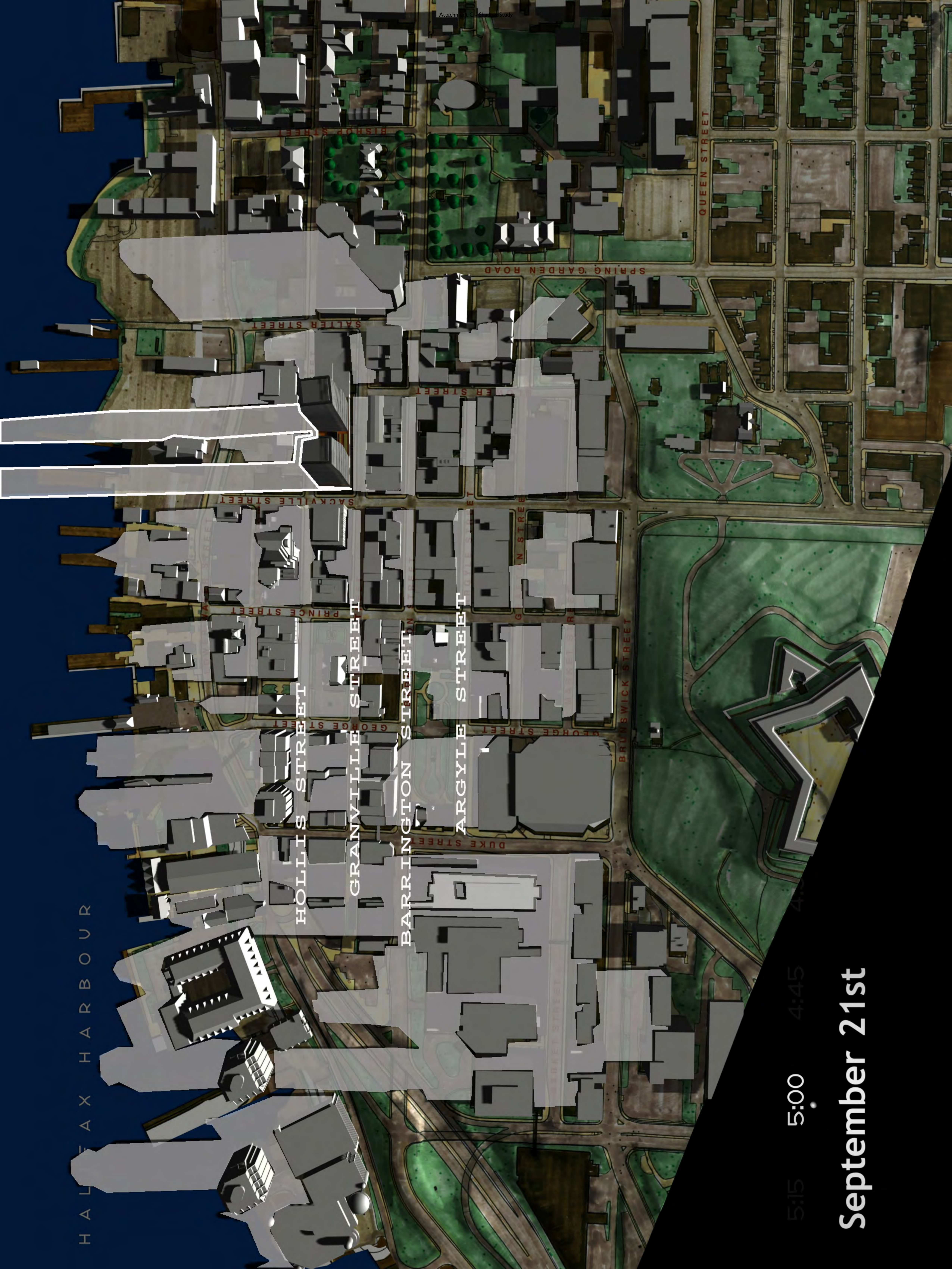


HALIFAX HARBOUR



10:45 10:30 10:15

September 21st



HALIFAX HARBOUR

HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

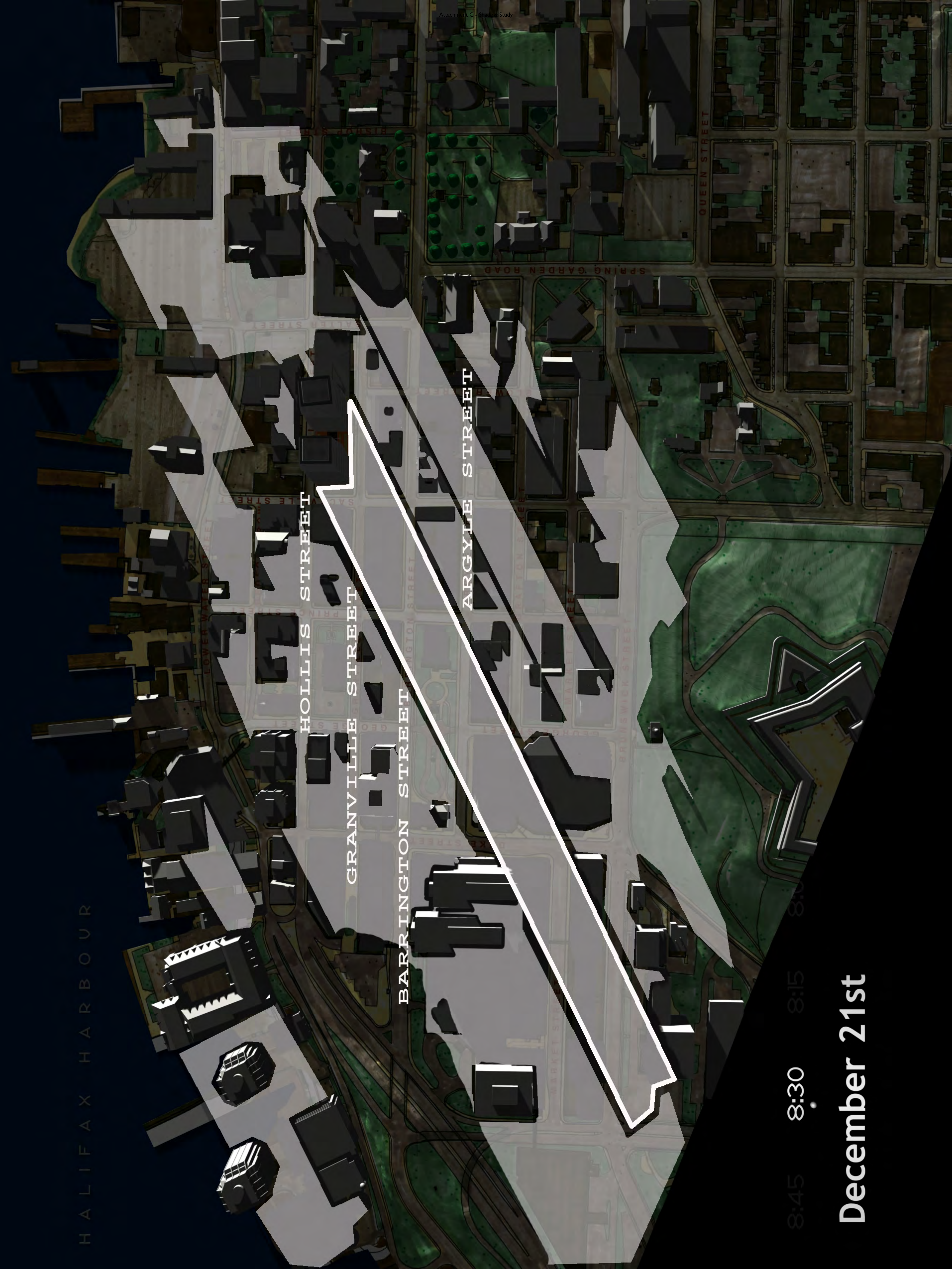
SACKVILLE STREET  
PRINCE STREET  
SALTER STREET  
BISHOP STREET

SPRING GARDEN ROAD  
QUEEN STREET

GEORGE STREET  
BRUNSWICK STREET  
DUKE STREET  
GARDEN STREET  
N STREET

5:15 5:00 4:45

September 21st



HALIFAX HARBOUR

HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

SPRING GARDEN ROAD

QUEEN STREET

BRUNSWICK STREET

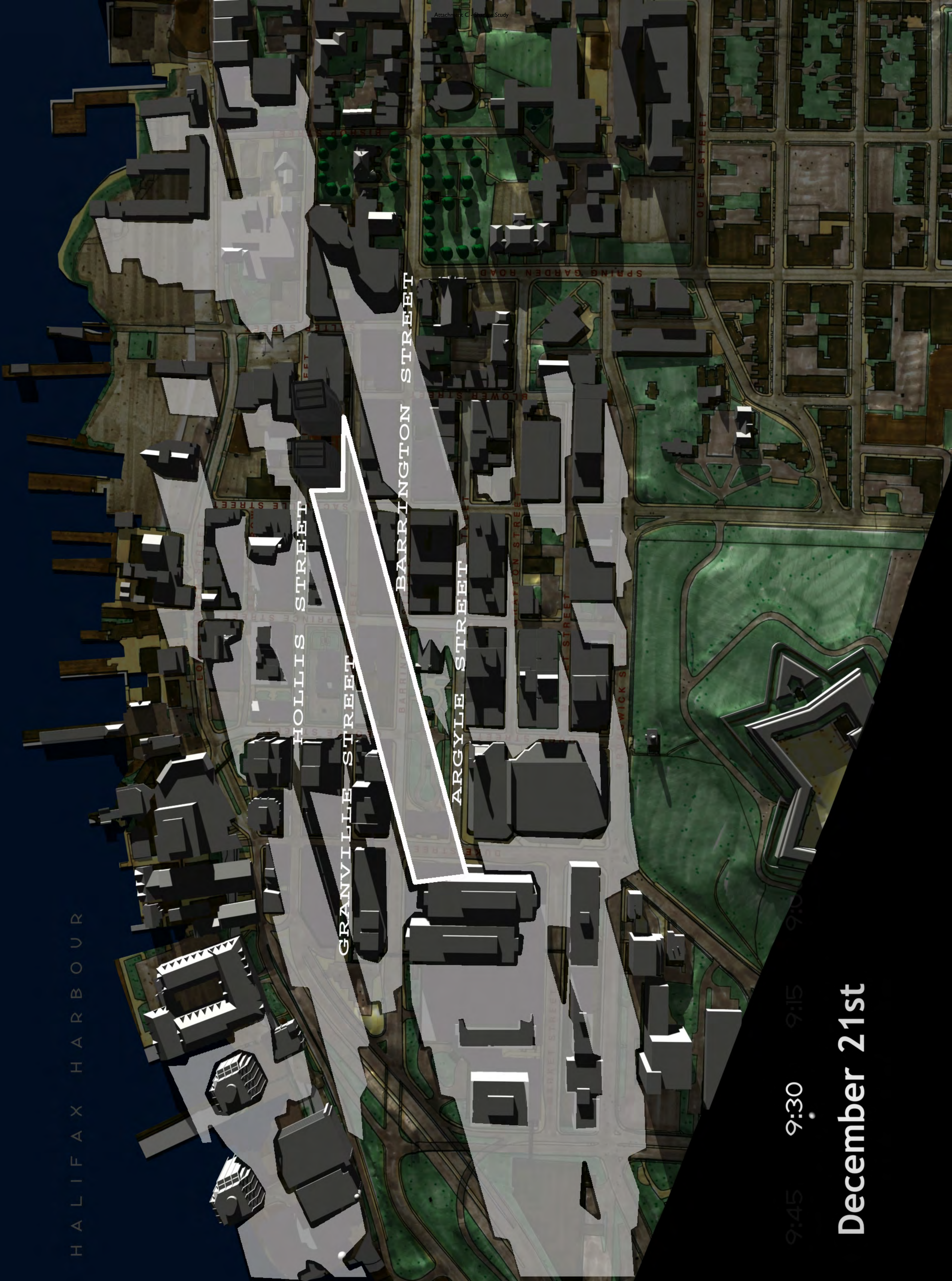
8:45

8:30

8:15

December 21st

HALIFAX HARBOUR



HOLLIS STREET

GRANVILLE STREET

BARRINGTON STREET

ARGYLE STREET

9:30

December 21st

9:45

9:15

9:00

HALIFAX HARBOUR



12:45 12:30

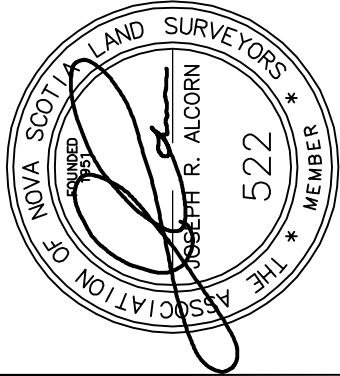
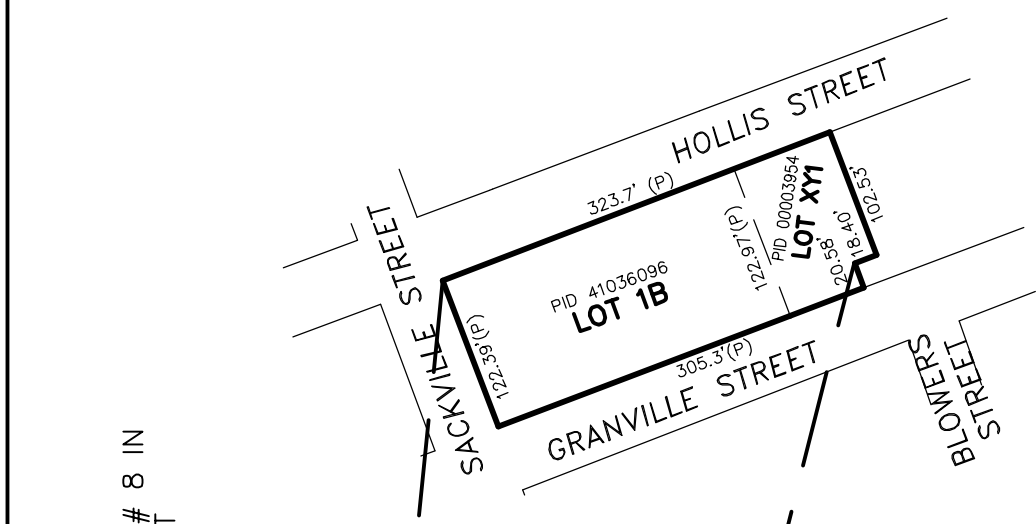
December 21st



# Attachment E - Citadel Rampart Survey

## NOTES

1. SIGHTLINES MEASUREMENTS ARE SHOWN IN FEET
2. CALCULATIONS ARE BASED ON VIEWING POSITION # 8 IN THE CITADEL PARADE SQUARE WHICH IS THE MOST RESTRICTIVE POSITION FOR THIS SITE.
3. VALUES FOR POINT #8 ADN RAMPART HEIGHTS WERE DERIVED FROM HEIGHT PRECINCT MAP "ZM-17", EFFECTIVE JUNE 7, 1995.



## SKETCH OF

PROJECTED VERTICAL SIGHTLINE FROM THE HALIFAX CITADEL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE (SIGHT POINT #8) TO THE PROPOSED SITE OF SKYE HALIFAX (PID 41036096 & 00003954)

PREPARED FOR : UNITED GULF DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED  
 SACKVILLE STREET, GRANVILLE STREET & HOLLIS STREET  
 HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

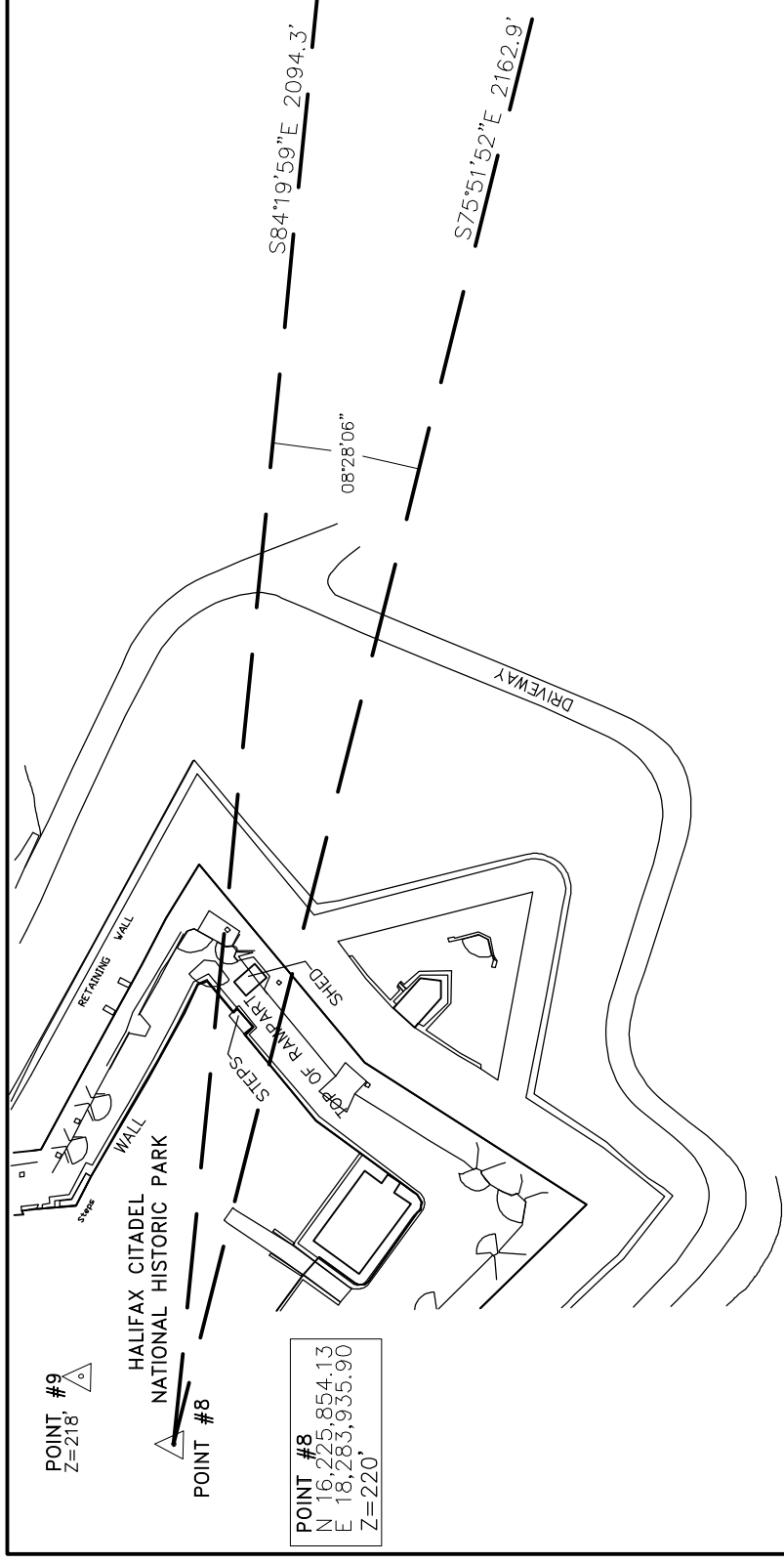
## Alderney Surveys Limited

Nova Scotia Land Surveyors  
 327 Prince Albert Road,  
 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 1N7

Drawn:	NLS
Scale:	1" = 150'
Date:	18 OCTOBER 2011

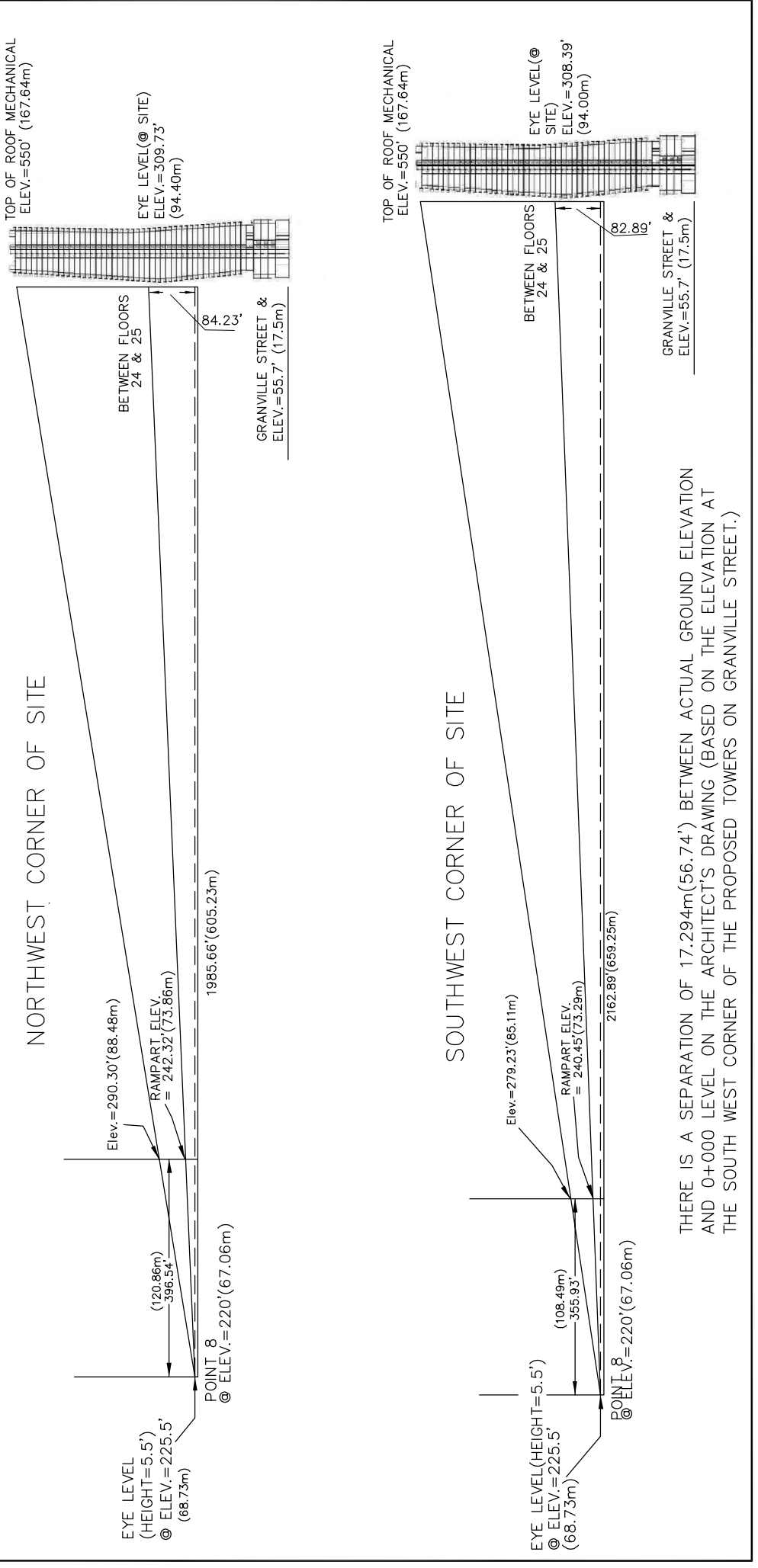
118657-1

Drawing Number



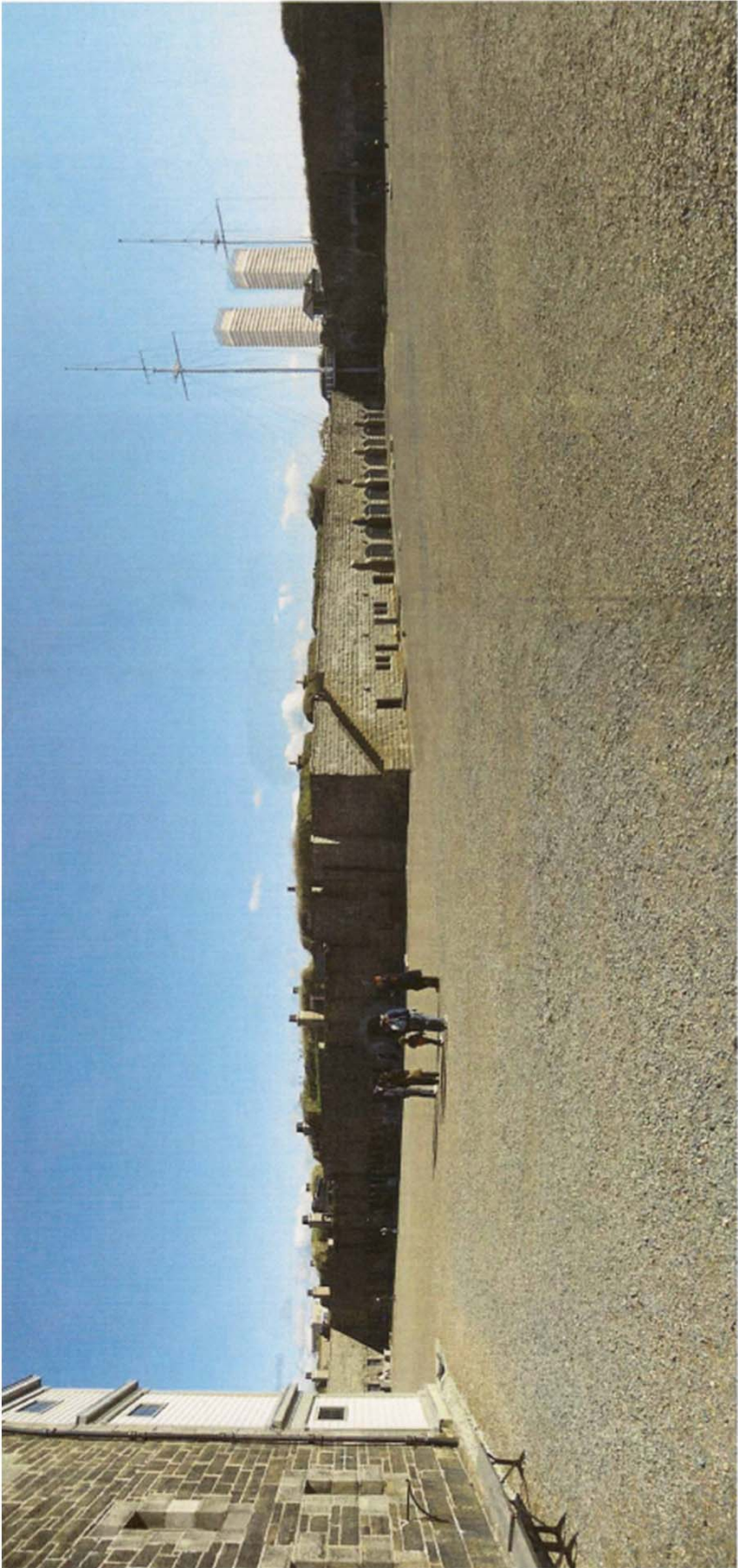
## APPROXIMATE ELEVATION SITE LINE: PROPOSED SKYE HALIFAX

NOT TO SCALE



THERE IS A SEPARATION OF 17.294m(56.74') BETWEEN ACTUAL GROUND ELEVATION AND 0+000 LEVEL ON THE ARCHITECT'S DRAWING (BASED ON THE ELEVATION AT THE SOUTH WEST CORNER OF THE PROPOSED TOWERS ON GRANVILLE STREET.)

Attachment F - Citadel Rampart View Rendering



Attachment G  
Amendments to the Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

BE IT ENACTED by the Regional Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy is hereby amended by inserting the following text shown in **bold** as follows:

6.2.2 Scenic Views

Scenic resources are an important component of the cultural and heritage values of HRM. Significant views such as those from Citadel Hill and the Dartmouth Common to Halifax Harbour are of regional significance, and are already protected at the community planning level. Additional scenic views of Halifax Harbour will be considered through secondary and other associated planning processes. This Plan reinforces the importance of these views to the cultural identity of HRM, and seeks to extend these protections to other regionally significant views throughout HRM as identified through the Cultural Landscape Model for HRM.

Scenic views also include the gateways to HRM communities, often described as “the view from the road”. These scenic entry routes should encompass the outstanding natural features and picturesque landscape qualities of the area. To retain scenic views and culturally significant landscapes, such as the Northwest Arm of Halifax Harbour, prominent coastal headlands and coastal villages, HRM will consider identifying and preserving views as a component of cultural landscapes. In these areas, measures will be taken to preserve the integrity of the scenic views and cultural landscapes of a community.

In addition to the above-noted views, it is important that there be a sensitive relationship between buildings and Citadel Hill, with particular regard to the height of buildings that immediately face it. Community plans limit building heights on lands that are upon Sackville Street, Brunswick Street, and Rainnie Drive. In 2011, a new YMCA recreation facility was proposed as part of a mixed-use development, extending from the south-east corner of Sackville and South Park Streets, on lands known as the CBC Radio and YMCA properties. Part of the proposal included a residential tower, to a maximum height of 49 metres, on lands where the maximum permitted height is 23 metres. The change in the height requirement to accommodate the proposal was viewed favourably given the public benefit of a recreation facility. In addition, allowing greater height on this site has limited impact upon Citadel Hill and provides an important corner building at the edge of the Spring Garden Road Precinct and at the intersection of three streets.

**Sky views from points within the parade square of the Citadel are also important. Known as Rampart Views, they ensure that historic views from inside the Citadel are protected by limiting the height of buildings in downtown Halifax. In 2012, a proposal to develop a building to a maximum of 172 metres in height, on lands located on the south side of Sackville Street, between Hollis and Granville Streets (the former Tex-park site), was granted an exception to the Rampart View requirements on the basis of its cultural, economic, and social benefits.**

- CH-5 HRM shall support views and viewplane policies and regulations adopted under the Halifax Secondary Planning Strategy and Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law, the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (RC-Jun 16/09;E-Oct 24/09) and Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law and the Downtown Dartmouth Secondary Planning Strategy and Downtown Dartmouth Land Use By-law. These shall not be relaxed by way of any land use regulation or development agreement process. Any alteration shall only be considered as an amendment to this Plan.
- CH-5a Notwithstanding Policy CH-5, lands within the Brightwood Viewplane and Dartmouth Common Viewplane where the potential for downstream views are negated by existing structures or policy permitted building height, may be developed in a manner where the building height does not further impact the existing Viewplane penetration.
- CH-5b Notwithstanding Policy CH-5, a reduction in a view corridor(s) may be permitted where it is demonstrated that additional view corridors will be created and/or an overall net gain of the intended protected view is achieved. (RC-Jul 8/08;E-Jul 26/08)
- CH-5c Notwithstanding Policy CH-5, but subject to the Rampart requirements of the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law, HRM shall, permit an increase in the maximum building height on lands at the south-east corner of Sackville Street and South Park Street from 23 metres to 49 metres, where a new multi-district recreation facility is developed in whole or as part of a mixed-use development on the lands known as the CBC Radio and YMCA properties. With the additional height, there shall be provisions for the upper storeys of a building on these lands to be stepped back from Sackville Street and South Park Street.
- CH-5d Pursuant to Policy CH-5c, a multi-district recreation facility means a building or part of a building that is a minimum of 6 500 square metres of gross floor area, which is used for community recreation activities, for which a membership or instruction fee may be charged, and that includes a gymnasium, an exercise room, a swimming pool, meeting rooms, and community gathering areas.
- CH-5e Pursuant to Policy CH-5, HRM, shall through the applicable land use by-law, provide an exception to the Rampart View requirements for a building of a maximum of 172 metres in height on the former Tex-park lands, located on the south side of Sackville Street, between Hollis and Granville Streets.**
- CH-6 HRM shall, when considering any alteration to the Armdale Rotary, consider maintaining the current views of the Northwest Arm from St. Margaret's Bay Road, Chebucto Road and Joseph Howe Drive.

Attachment H  
Amendments to the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy

BE IT ENACTED by the Regional Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy is hereby amended by inserting the following text shown in **bold** as follows:

- 6.3.2 Within the area bounded by North Street, Robie Street and Inglis Street, no development shall be permitted that is visible over the top of the reconstructed earthworks on the Citadel ramparts, from an eye-level of 5.5 feet above ground level in the Parade Square of the Citadel.
- 6.3.2A HRM shall, through the Land Use By-law, provide an exception to policy 6.3.2 for a building to a maximum of 172 metres in height on the former Tex-park lands, located on the south side of Sackville Street, between Hollis and Granville Streets.**
- 6.3.3 Policy 6.3.2 **and 6.3.2A** above shall not be deemed to waive any other height or angle controls.

Attachment I  
Amendments to the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy

BE IT ENACTED by the Regional Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy is hereby amended as follows:

1. By inserting the following text shown in **bold** as follows, immediately before section 3.3.3:

**3.3.2A Former Tex-park Site**

**In 2012, a proposal to develop a building to a maximum of 172 metres in height, on lands located on the south side of Sackville Street, between Hollis and Granville Streets (the former Tex-park site) was granted an exemption to the Rampart View requirements on the basis of its cultural, economic, and social benefits. The building was also granted an exemption to the maximum tower width requirements, with regard to its balconies, and to the setback requirements from abutting streets and the interior property line, in recognition of its vertical curved shape.**

**Policy 9C Notwithstanding the Rampart View policies and the Maximum Post-bonus Height Map requirements, HRM shall, through the Land Use By-law, permit a building to a maximum of 172 metres in height on lands located on the south side of Sackville Street, between Hollis and Granville Streets (the former Tex-park site).**

**Policy 9D In addition to allowances of policy 9C, HRM shall, through the Land Use By-law, permit:**

- i) parts of tower portion of the building to extend to the adjoining streetlines and closer to the interior property boundary than that which is permitted in the Land Use By-law, in recognition of the vertical curved shape to the building; and**
- ii) balconies to extend across the full width of each face of the tower portions of the building.**

Attachment J  
Amendments to the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law

BE IT ENACTED by the Regional Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that the Downtown Halifax Land Use By-law is hereby amended as follows:

1. In the Table of Contents, inserting the following text shown in bold:

Publically-Sponsored Convention Centre .....	19
Sackville and South Park Multi-district Recreation Facility .....	19
<b>Former Tex-park Site</b> .....	[insert page no.]
Institutional, Cultural & Open Space Zone (ICO).....	20
Permitted Land Uses .....	20

2. Following clause 15(C), inserting the following text shown in bold

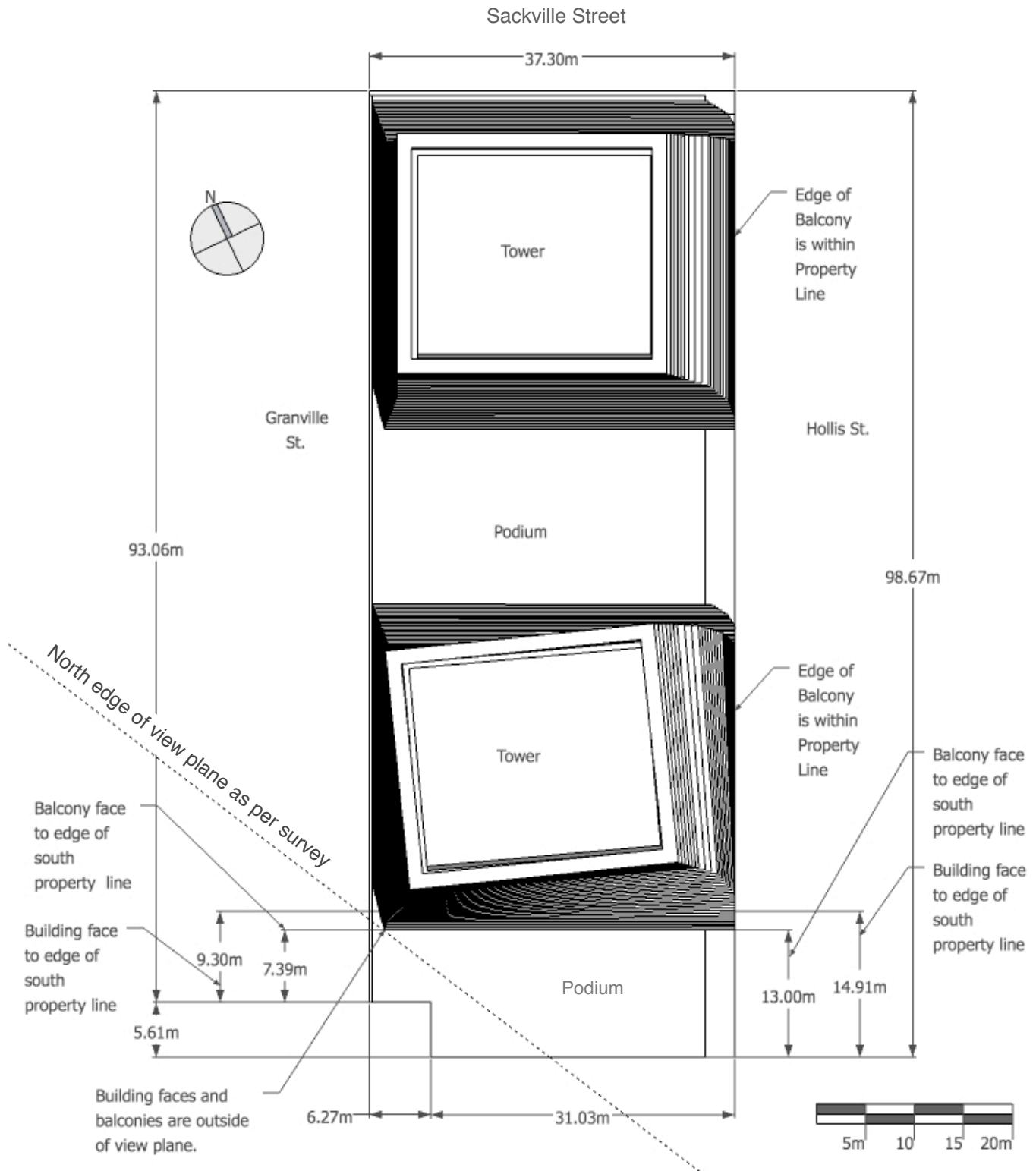
**Former Tex-Park Site**

**(15D) Notwithstanding clauses 8(7), 8(8), 8(17), 9 (7), 10(4), 10(5), 10(7), 10(8), 10(9), 10(11), and 10(13), but subject to all other requirements of this By-law, a building to a maximum height of 172 metres may be permitted on the lands identified on Appendix D, subject to the requirements specified therein.**

# Plan View

**Requirements:**

- All shown setbacks shall be minimum setbacks.

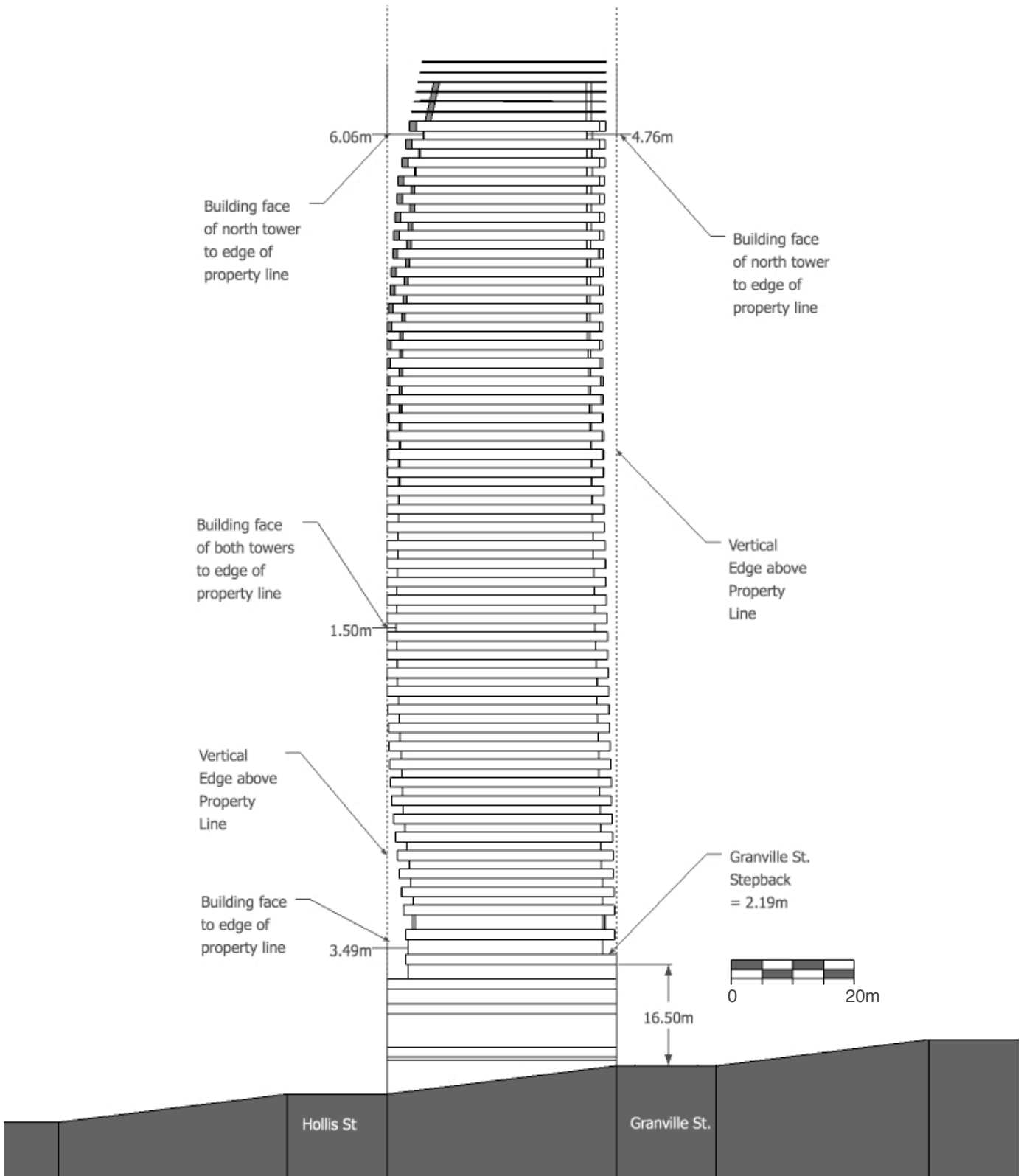




# North Elevation

## Requirements:

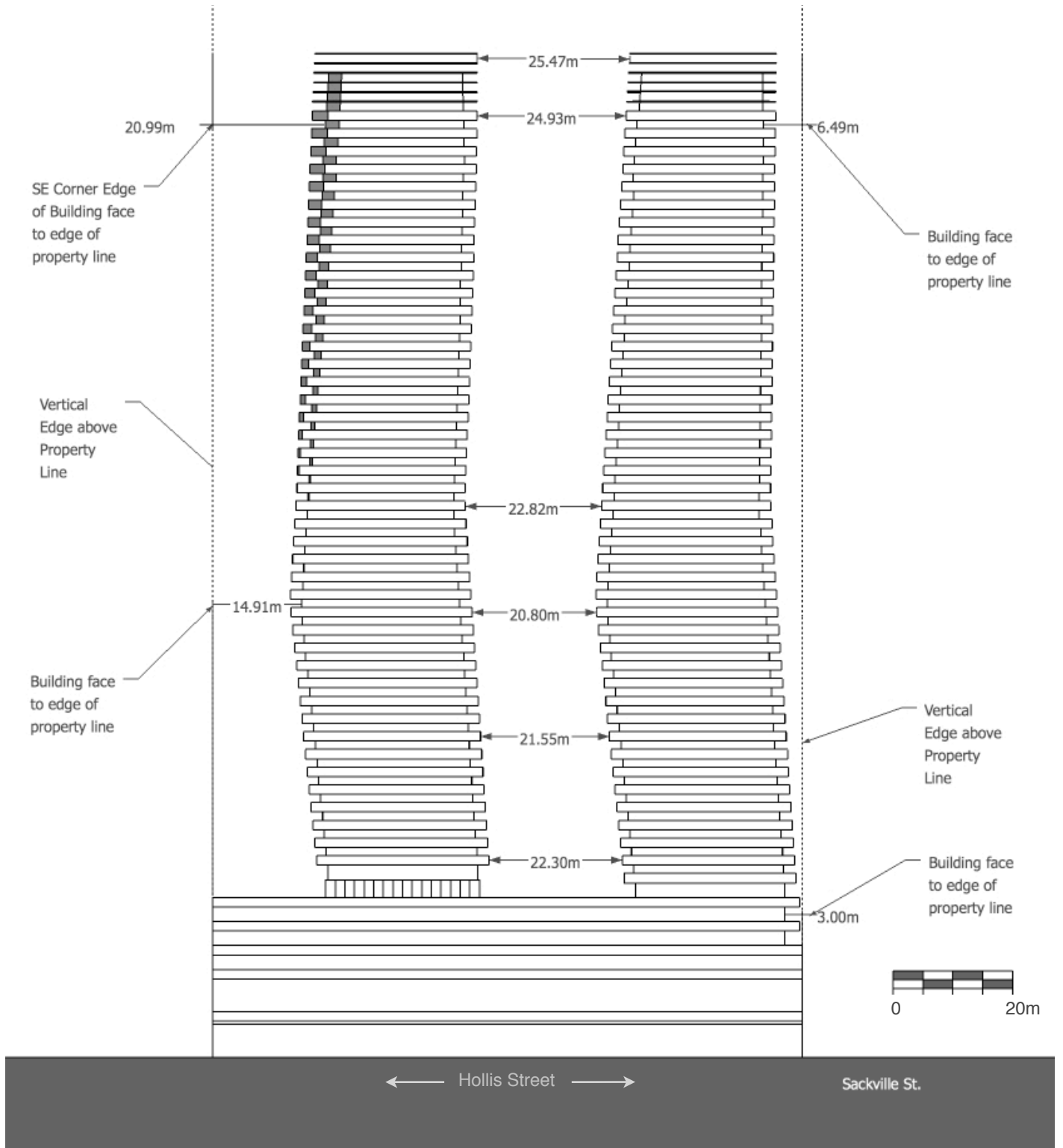
- All shown setbacks shall be minimum setbacks.
- The maximum height shall be 172m.



# East Elevation

## Requirements:

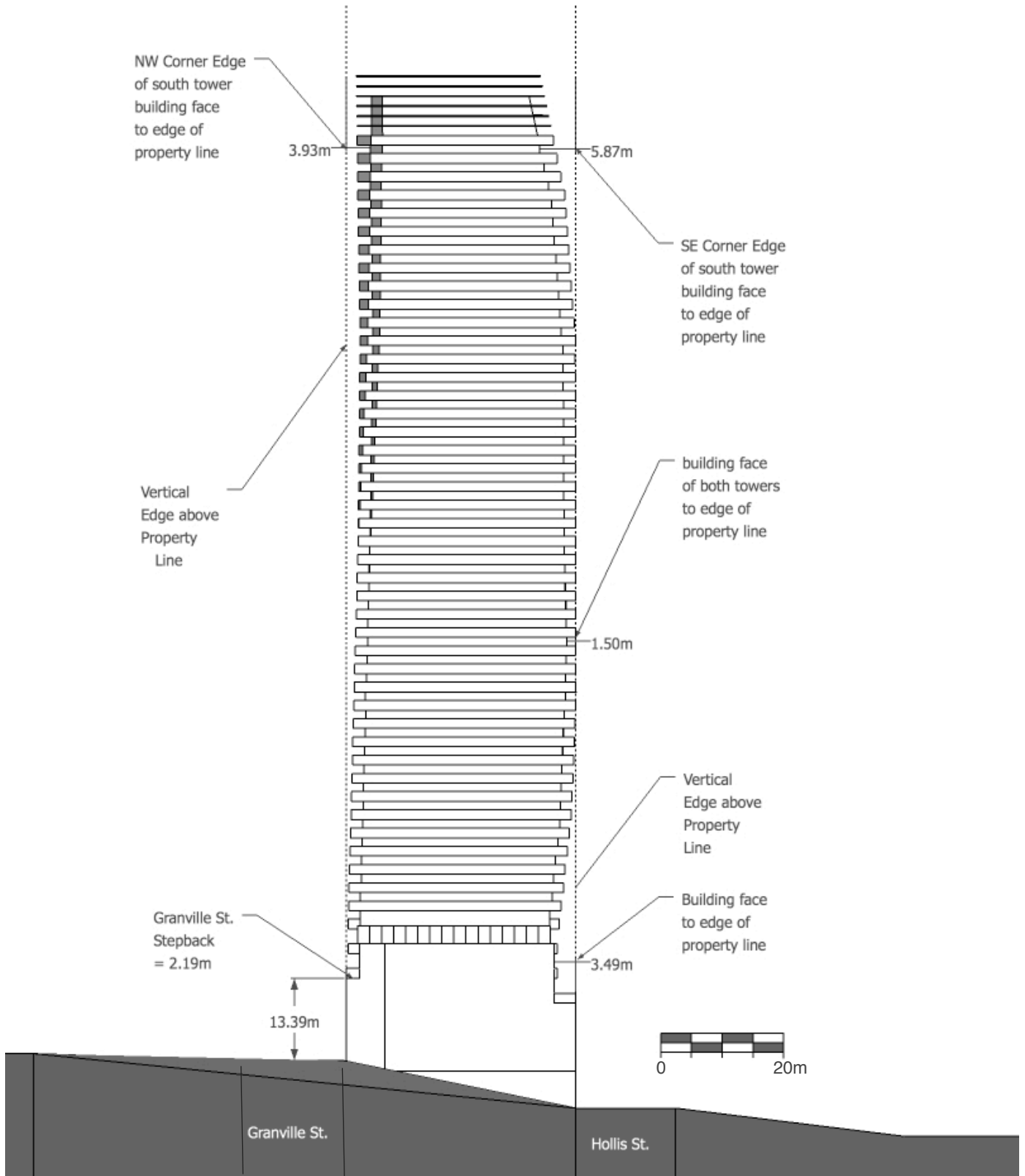
- All shown setbacks and tower separation distances shall be minimum setbacks and tower separation distances.
- The maximum height shall be 172m.



# South Elevation

## Requirements:

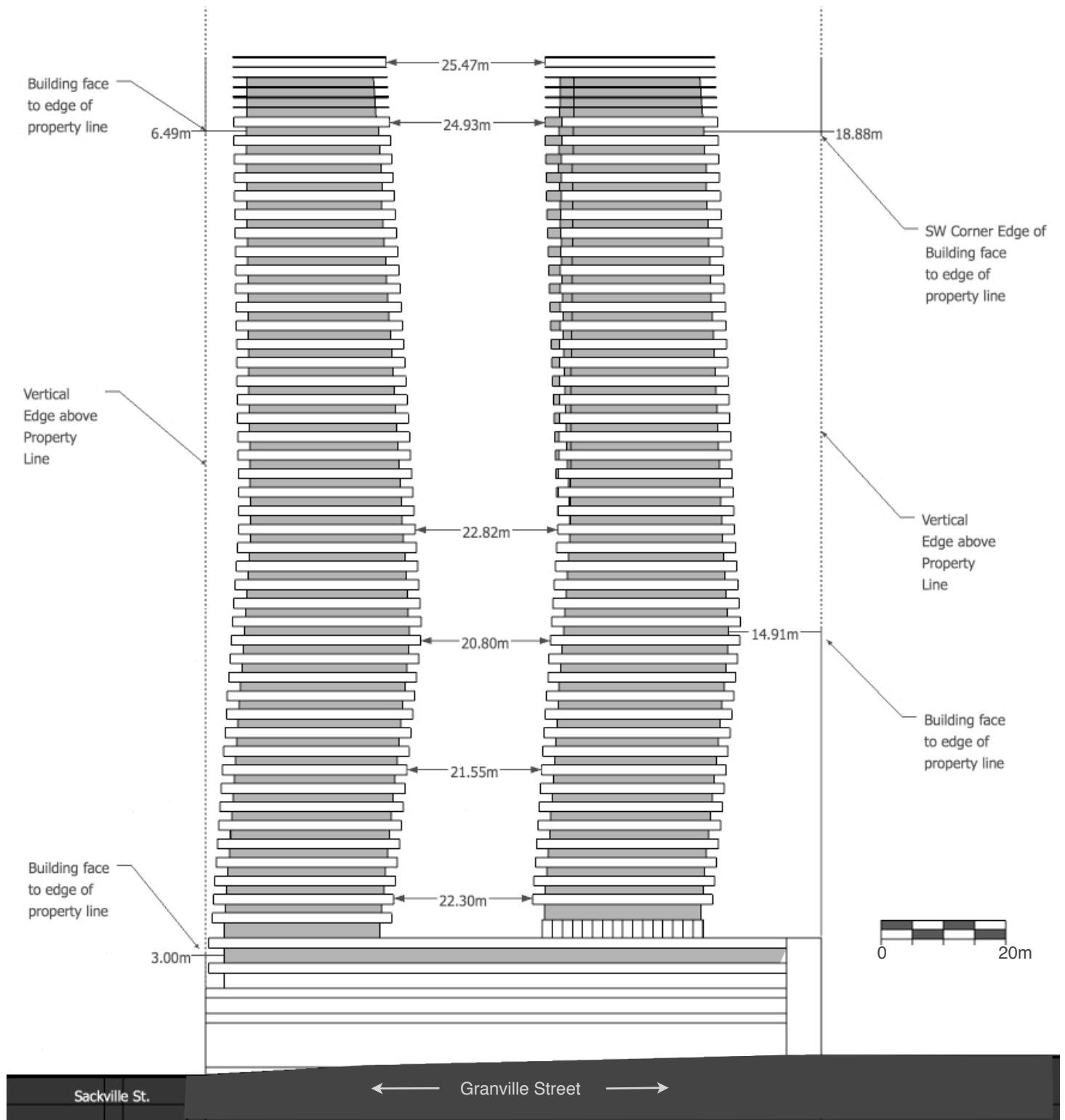
- All shown setbacks shall be minimum setbacks.
- The maximum height shall be 172m.



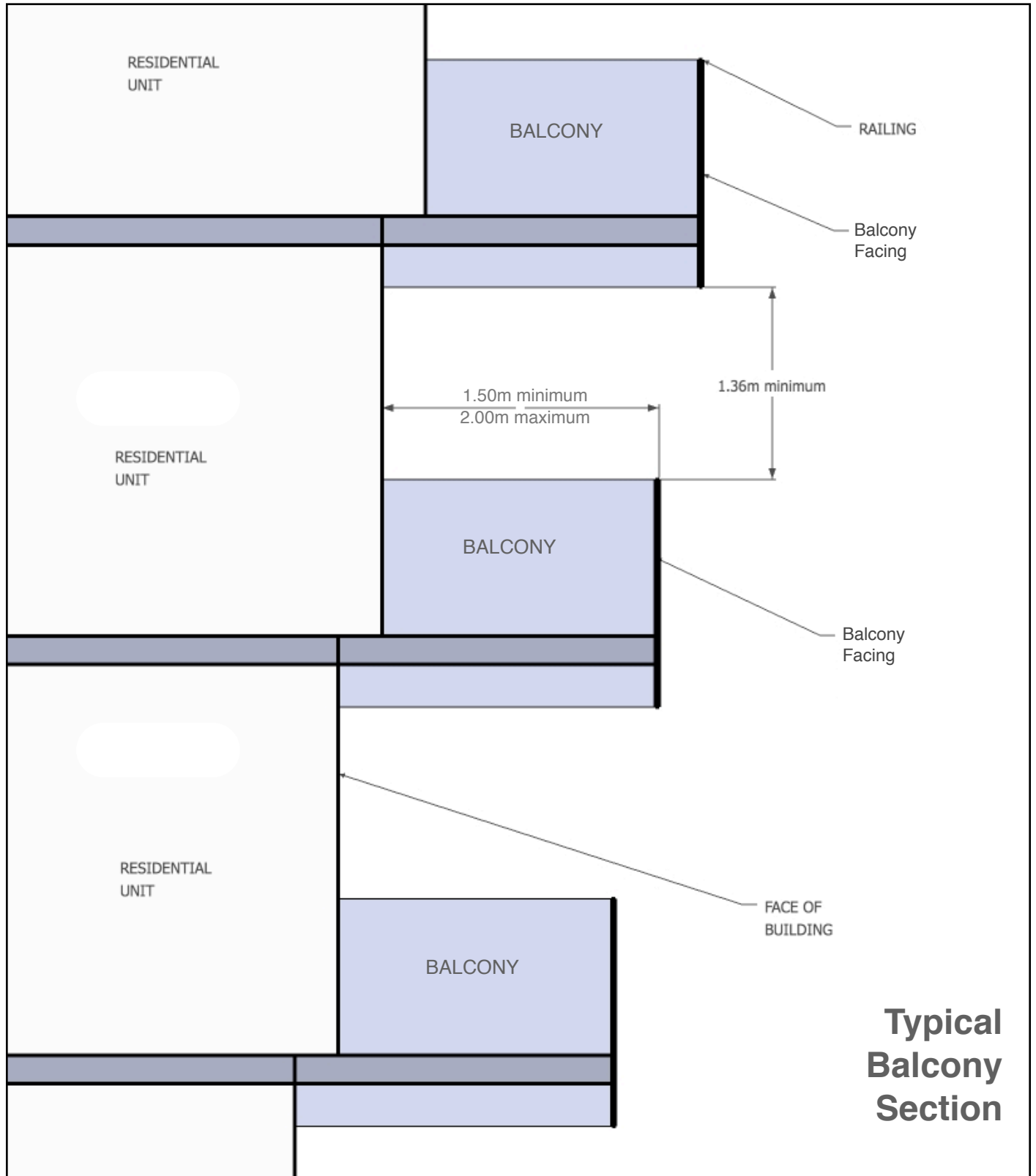
# West Elevation

## Requirements:

- All shown setbacks and tower separation distances shall be minimum setbacks and tower separation distances.
- The maximum height shall be 172m.



# Balcony Section



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**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING  
CASE NO.17446 – Skye Halifax – 48 Storey Proposal**

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**7:00 p.m.  
Thursday, May 3, 2012  
Ondaatje Hall, Marian McCain Arts & Social Sciences**

**STAFF IN**

**ATTENDANCE:** Richard Harvey, Planner, HRM Planning Services  
Hilary Campbell, Planning Technician, HRM Planning Services  
Tammy Pombert, Kelly Services

**COUNCILLORS IN**

**ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Dawn Sloane  
Councillor Russell Walker  
Councillor Jennifer Watts

**PUBLIC IN**

**ATTENDANCE:** 81

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The meeting commenced at approximately 7:06 p.m.

**Opening Remarks/Introductions (Richard Harvey)**

Mr. Richard Harvey introduced himself as a Senior Planner with HRM and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss a proposal from United Gulf Development to amend HRM's planning policies and regulations to allow for a 48 storey building, comprised of two towers, at 1591 Granville Street in Halifax. He indicated that information about the planning policies and regulations and the proposal will be provided, following which the public will be invited to make comments and ask questions.

**Planning Policies and Regulations (Richard Harvey)**

Mr. Harvey identified 1591 Granville Street on a map. In 2006, Regional Council approved a development agreement that allowed a 27 storey building, comprised of two towers, on this site. The development agreement specified that construction of the project had to have commenced by March 21, 2010, but United Gulf did not act upon this or request a time extension and the site remains undeveloped. In June 2011, Regional Council began to consider whether the development agreement should be discharged. In response to this, United Gulf requested that Regional Council not discharge the development agreement, stating that it had not proceeded with the project for a variety of reasons, including that there was a lengthy appeal period that followed Council's approval. It also stated that it was soon going to submit an application for a new proposal, which is now the subject of this evening's meeting.

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Mr. Harvey provided an overview of the zoning and maximum allowed building heights for the site and its surroundings, noting the maximum height for the site is 66 metres. He also indicated that buildings in the downtown are not permitted to exceed what are known as Rampart View requirements. He explained that this view requirement specifies buildings are not to be seen over the ramparts of the Citadel from certain prescribed points of the fort's parade square.

At a height of 150 metres, the proposal greatly exceeds the maximum allowance of 66 metres. It also exceeds the Rampart View requirements which would limit the height of the building proposed for the site to approximately 25 storeys, rather than the 48 which is being requested. Mr. Harvey concluded by stating that United Gulf has also requested an allowance to situate one of the towers closer to a small part of its southern property boundary than that which is allowed under the land use by-law. There is also a request to have reductions in tower separation requirements to allow the building to have wrap-around balconies. However, the amendments to the building height allowances are the most substantial changes.

Mr. Harvey explained that what was under consideration was not the approval of a building at this time. The requested amendments to the planning policies and regulations would allow for a building to be considered in the future. He further explained that if amendments to the planning policies and regulations were to be approved, a building of the type that is being proposed by United Gulf would be able to be considered through the site plan approval process by HRM's Development Officer and the Design Review Committee.

Mr. Harvey indicated that an initial staff report to Regional Council recommended that no further action be taken to consider the amendment request from United Gulf; that Regional Council refuse the proposal. This was largely on the basis that the project is inconsistent with the only recently adopted Downtown Plan. However, Regional Council decided to further consider the application by requesting a detailed staff review and public input. He concluded by stating that this evening's meeting was one of the opportunities to receive such input. He then turned to United Gulf representatives to provide an overview of the proposal.

### **Overview of Proposal (Jenifer Tsang, United Gulf)**

Jenifer Tsang started her presentation with an overview of the original 27 storey building that was approved by Regional Council in 2006. She stated that since that time, a lot has changed that has caused United Gulf to pursue its current Skye Halifax proposal. She explained that there is an emerging trend of people looking to live downtown and consequently there is a need for more affordable housing and smaller units than that which was originally envisioned. United Gulf has placed an emphasis on a new proposal that is tall and narrow, thereby maximizing the number of units that will have views. Ms. Tsang also highlighted that downtown housing allows people not to use a car every day. Aside from the residential aspects, it was stated that the building would have a hotel, ground floor commercial uses, and a large open lobby area that would be ideal for public art.

Ms. Tsang reviewed the amendments that were being sought. She explained the prospective amendments respecting the southern property boundary and the balconies. She noted that the property boundary is irregular and the balconies helped to address wind impact. She proceeded to outline the amendments being sought to the Rampart View requirements, explaining that an

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amendment to a view plane is not being considered. It was noted that the Rampart View requirement is different and that its purpose is to protect a view from inside the Citadel, with the goal being to prevent modern buildings from being seen from a historic setting. Ms. Tsang suggested that this is rule that is more for the benefit of tourists rather than citizens. She stated that these types of benefits should be questioned and that there are many advantages to the citizens of HRM with the Skye Halifax project, including a revitalized downtown. It was indicated that there were significant municipal and social cost savings to the Skye Halifax project when compared to an option of continuing to build in suburban areas. Residents of project the will spend between 16 and 20 million dollars on goods and services, by living and working in downtown. She summarized her presentation by stating that the proposal results in a smarter design while fulfilling regional planning goals by putting people in downtown. She stated that amendments to by-laws are reasonable when looking at something exceptional and that an opportunity such as Skye Halifax had never been presented until now. She indicated that shadow and wind studies had been prepared and could be reviewed in greater detail if there were questions from the public. She then introduced Peter Clews, the architect for the project.

### **Overview of Proposal (Peter Clews, Architect)**

Peter Clews introduced himself as having grown up in Montreal and now living in Toronto. He indicated that it is important to understand how cities are evolving with regards to revitalization and sustainability. He noted that in 2000, over 75% of housing starts in the greater Toronto area were single family suburban housing, with only 25% being high-rise residential and other forms of housing. By the year 2010, those numbers flipped and now 75% of all housing built in Toronto is high-rise residential. With the previous suburban development, office development followed housing outside the Toronto core. This resulted in a something a of confused city, until there was a new investment made in residential intensification in downtown Toronto, which has consequently resulted in new office development and new vibrancy.

Mr. Clews highlighted a tall building project that was a comparable circumstance to the Skye Halifax proposal. He noted that the Toronto planning regulations allowed for a wide 19 storey tower, but what was proposed was a slender 36 storey building. While there is always a concern about building height, it is important to note that slender buildings limit negative impacts and that a building's presence on the street is essential in creating a positive pedestrian experience.

Mr. Clews proceeded to provide an overview of the Skye Halifax proposal. He noted how the building addresses the surrounding streets through a podium that is appropriately scaled in height and design. Comparing the current proposal to the previous development agreement proposal, he highlighted the narrowness of the towers, noting that the design results in units that have a corner views which are attractive to a wide variety of people and age-groups. There can be a multitude of unit sizes. Other attributes of the design were expressed and the presentation concluded with an image of the proposal as part of the skyline of the downtown.

### **Questions and Comments (Richard Harvey)**

Richard Harvey indicated that the remainder of the meeting would be largely devoted to hearing



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questions and comments from the public. Before proceeding to this, he indicated that there was a matter of clarification to be understood by the public. Mr. Harvey explained that the central question before the public is not whether there is a preference for the Skye Halifax proposal rather than the approved development agreement project. He noted that the previous development agreement cannot be acted upon at this time and that the new plan for the downtown has requirements that would call for design elements such as slender rather than wide towers. He suggested that based upon the United Gulf application, the central question is really whether the height and Rampart View requirements should be amended.

Mr. Harvey provided an overview of how the public question and comment part of the meeting was to occur and then opened the floor to the audience.

### *Lisa Roberts*

Lisa Roberts stated that her biggest concern is that the height is partly related to the number of empty lots in downtown. She stated that concentrating the amount of development that is being proposed on one site will result in little development on other sites. Her preference is for modest proposals that would fill up these lots. She cited that are interesting buildings, such as one on Morris Street that are modern and make a positive impact. She would prefer to see many more of these rather than one building.

### *Steven Patterson, Bedford*

Steven Patterson stated that he is a resident, citizen and a taxpayer. It has been over 30 years since something meaningful has occurred in the downtown. It is important for there to be opportunities for housing for young people including his children in Halifax. He highlighted that he spends much of his time travelling between home, work, and school, but has not been to the Citadel in a very long time. There would be tremendous tax benefits to the city with the project, that are needed, citing both high residential taxes and business taxes. It is time for Halifax to move forward on a progressive way. If someone is prepared to invest \$350 million then he supports it.

### *Petra Mudie, Halifax*

Petra Mudie indicated that she resides downtown and has experience with the impacts of new nearby buildings. She stated a concern about the impacts of constructing such a tall building in a windy city and wondered if any analysis about this had been done. Would the structure be able to withstand a hurricane or even an earthquake? Another point concerns the character of Halifax and the fact that many of the visitors to Halifax want to experience a city that is the opposite of New York or Toronto. She indicated that she takes visitors to the Citadel and they have questioned why buildings were allowed that block the view. She stated that only a few more buildings would completely lose the view. Finally, she stated that the by-laws of the city should be not violated because they protect things that are important and making changes creates uncertainty.

Richard Harvey stated that with respect to the point raised about wind impact, there is a wind study that has been submitted and that while it does not address construction, it considers pedestrian comfort.

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Ms. Mudie asked about wind and earthquake impacts from construction perspective. Mr. Harvey indicated that these were matters that might fall more under National Building Code requirements rather than planning policies and regulations.

*Ken McPhee, Halifax*

Ken McPhee stated that he has a goal of moving to the downtown and being able to sell his car and walk wherever he needs to go. He is concerned about the likelihood of this occurring, with there being so little downtown development. If there are only small buildings there will be a lack of affordable units. It would be outstanding to have a building of the size that is being proposed; this would be a benefit to the city. Protecting so many views from the Citadel deteriorates the city.

*Colin Stuttard, Halifax*

Colin Stuttard indicated that he lives on Edward Street in Halifax, within walking distance of the proposal. He indicated that he is not in favour of the proposal because so much time was taken to develop the HRMbyDesign plan. The plan should be followed, without amending it simply because developers make requests for amendments. He cited that other developments were occurring under the rules of the plan and wondered why the same could not be done for the site in question. He concluded by stating that the proposal should be rejected.

*Dr. Carla Wheaton, Dartmouth*

Dr. Carla Wheaton introduced herself as a Culture Resource Manager for Parks Canada, which is responsible for the Halifax Citadel. Parks Canada's mandate is to protect and present natural and cultural treasures for present and future demarcations of Canadians. The Ramparts View legislation should be retained and not be amended. First introduced in 1985 the intent was to maintain the historical integrity of the Citadel by ensuring that no modern structure would be constructed so that could be seen by standing within the parade square of the fort. Should the proposed amendment be approved this would no longer be the case as instead of seeing only the sky above them, visitors standing in the Citadel would see the upper portions of the two 48 storey towers rising high above the ramparts. If built, these will be the first modern structures of these types to intrude into the views of the ramparts, but are certainly not likely to be the last.

These height protections which have been in place for several decades reflect the values that residents of HRM have placed on Halifax Citadel as an important part of their community and the city's identity. It is Park Canada's perspective that development which respects the current planning strategies should be encouraged so as to insure that the continued relevance of the Citadel as an important valued part of Halifax's Heritage and nationally recognized symbol of this city.

*Andrew Murray, Halifax*

Andrew Murray stated that people are leaving Halifax. Whether it's from the downtown or suburbs, they are going for jobs elsewhere. He indicated that businesses are closing down all the time and that restricting height is leading to developments outside of the suburbs going relatively unchecked. He noted that issues that result from this including transit and transportation issues and a loss of wildlife areas. He thought the limiting height from a few places inside the Citadel was not

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worth the losses solely to benefit tourists.

*Kyle DeYoung, Halifax*

Kyle DeYoung supports the project but stated that he is concerned that 350-400 extra units will saturate the market where there are already a lot of vacant lots. This other concern is that size and the height would be out of place with the neighborhood.

*Roberta Munden, Halifax*

Roberta Munden stated that she came from Toronto 23 years ago and that she is a business owner in downtown Halifax. It saddens her that in over 23 years nothing has changed in Halifax. Barrington used to be the main artery, but it is now dead. The downtown core is dead and there is nowhere to live for young professional people. She thinks it is time for Halifax to grow up and have a vision.

*Wayne Mason, Halifax*

Wayne Mason stated that he is opposed to the project because it does not represent the community plan that was developed for the downtown.

*Dave Belt, Halifax*

Dave Belt stated that he works 6 days a week at small business at Pier 20. He is the President and Chairman of the Board of the Halifax Seaport Farmers Market. He represents 260 small independent businesses ranging from farmers to artisans. He sees a great deal of good things from this proposal including increased population. He indicated that he likes the design and that he feels that it is important to have an attractive downtown rather than suburban sprawl. He concluded by stating that he is strongly in favour of the development.

*Beverly Miller, Halifax*

Beverly Miller indicated that she has a number of concerns including the assertion that the project's units will be affordable. She stated that a \$350 million dollar project with 400 units could not be affordable. She estimated that average unit costs might be in the range of \$750 million dollars, without including condo fees and taxes. She concluded by stating that the numbers that have been provided do not make sense and that there is little economic justification for the project.

Jenifer Tsang stated that the numbers do work on the basis of the anticipated mixture of dwelling units and the other uses such as the hotel component.

*Eric Thompson, Halifax*

Eric Thompson stated taxation should not be used as a rationale for the project, because the building would result in taxation income regardless of where it is built. He also questioned the public benefit of the building, asking why it was that people would visit it.

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Peter Clews cited that would be a number of public amenity features, including amenity space, atrium space, semi-public areas, hotel areas that would be visited by people, and rooftop access.

*Robert Montgomery, Halifax*

Robert Montgomery stated that the building does not fit in with the surrounding area. He suggested the downtown plan needs to be adhered to without exceptions being made on a case-by-case basis. He stated that comparisons should not be made to Toronto or New York as Halifax is different and this is a factor that should be embraced.

*Shirley Shamak, Halifax*

Shirley Shamak stated that she moved from Toronto 7 months ago. She has heard much about HRMbyDesign and while she respects Halifax's history and culture, she thinks that it is important to be progressive and to move forward. On this basis, she supports the project. She indicated that there are many vibrant places in Toronto with a good sense of community and that it is important to have housing for younger people. A question was raised about amenity space.

Peter Clews confirmed that there are to be both private and public rooftop amenity areas.

*Mark Herrington, Halifax*

Mark Herrington stated that owns and operates a business in the downtown core. He stated that he feels strongly that it is necessary to start bringing arts and culture into the core of the downtown Halifax. He complimented the Architect on a beautiful building that will bring youth and culture back into the area. He is frustrated with the city for spending resources on suburban sprawl and halting the development in the downtown.

*Trevor Rose, Dartmouth*

Trevor Rose indicated that he is from Amherst and has lived in Halifax for 15 years. He is concerned about the amount of business loss in the downtown and building demolition. He wonders if this is a result of high costs which have caused relocations to the suburbs. Halifax needs to encourage more growth, people, energy, and development downtown. While he respects heritage, he feels that more needs to be done to promote development in the downtown and that unless this occurs, it will become a museum

*Jean Chard, Dartmouth*

Jean Chard stated that she was one of the people that was involved in the development of the HRMbydesign plan. She stated that the plan includes designated areas for high-rise structures and wondered why this project could not be located in such an area.

*Nick Antoft, Lucasville*

Nick Antoft stated that he lives in Lucasville and is one of the people that contribute to the HRM sprawl. He came back to Halifax almost 30 years ago and was involved in business development

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and he therefore understands the difficulty in trying to move forward with interesting and innovative structures. He cited that Halifax has some ugly structures like Scotia Square that are going to be around for a considerable amount of time. He hopes that his son will be able to stay in Halifax and develop his career. Mr. Antoft believes the proposal is a phenomenal design and that in the past 30 years he has only been to the Citadel twice. He believes that it would be positive to have a contrast with the fort.

*Phillip Pacey, Halifax*

Phillip Pacey stated that it is important to remind people that this meeting is not about the building being shown; it is about a plan amendment to the change to the height that allowed on the property. He cited policy 89 which allows for plan amendments where there is public benefit, stating that it up to the applicant to prove those benefits exist. He has listened to the applicant and read the documents and there is no reason to believe that there would be any benefits from this. Green aspects, roof terraces, non-reflective glass, bicycles are all requirements by HRM by design, nothing special that would be of benefit. Contrary to what has been cited, he suggests that the proposal will be 69% larger than the twisted sisters and as such there would be a substantial increase in mass that is being requested. The HRMbyDesign plan allows for 13 million square feet of residential development in downtown Halifax. There is 1 million square feet of vacant land in downtown Halifax, so there is lots of room to build. A report to council indicated that there is 70 thousand square feet of potential residential space that is needed in downtown Halifax each year. This development at 950 thousand square feet would actually satisfy the demand for residential space in downtown Halifax for about 13 years.

Mr. Pacey stated that the price that was paid for the property was low, at about 1.5% of the total project's cost, and that this does not justify such a tall building. He cited that the developer has had an opportunity to build on the site for a considerable amount of time and that he has concerns that if an amendment is made there will be no time commitment for the project to proceed.

*Glenn Woodford, Lucasville*

Glenn Woodford stated that he has lived all of his life in HRM. He went to school here in 1989 but it looks pretty much what it looked like back then. He stated that we need to do something different if we want the growth in the downtown. He is very much in support of this project for two main reasons. One is that we need the economic boost; we need people in the downtown and this will bring people in the downtown. Secondly, if you are willing to take \$350 million of your own money and invest it in the downtown then someone should be applauding that, and it needs to happen quickly.

*Pegah Atbin, Bedford*

Pegah Atbin was born and raised in Halifax. She stated that nothing in downtown area has changed. She convinced her husband to come to Halifax, but that it looks like they are going to be moving to Toronto, as there are no opportunities for him here. She works for a real estate business, and the majority of people who move here will stay for maximum of a year and then they will leave to bigger cities like Vancouver, Toronto, and Montréal. She thinks this is a great opportunity.

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*Mike Kilfoil, Halifax*

Mike Kilfoil stated that he is for development and that suburban sprawl needs to be stopped. However, he can't see the necessity for this development and for this by-law change. The Waterfront has unbelievable amount of room for growth. He stated that if this project is not approved, others will take its place and the markets will be there. This particular tower is unnecessary and the HRMbyDesign plan should be respected.

*Paul Hill, Halifax*

Paul Hill stated that for the last 24 years he has lived out of a suitcase, traveling on a monthly basis to large urban centers. His longstanding opinion is that downtown area is declining, with retailers moving out and no one moving in. He thinks this is the key to the future of the city to bring people in to the downtown.

*Paul MacKinnon, Halifax*

Paul MacKinnon introduced himself as the head of the Downtown Halifax Business Commission. He stated that the project could not be supported because it is contrary to the HRMbyDesign project. He suggested that the plan is successful and since 2009, seven projects have been approved. He described the history of the development of plan, indicating that there were a lot of different interest groups and that the most important achievement was to establish predictable building rules so that there would not be lengthy appeals. The HRMbyDesign plan is working and there are no longer project delays as a result of uncertainty and appeals. This particular project opens that whole argument up again and should therefore not be supported.

*Blair Beed, Halifax*

Blair Beed cited a number of projects that have been approved and never built and ideas such as a revolving restaurant over Citadel Hill that was somehow needed because every other city had one. He indicated that it was important not to be dismissive of downtown and if developers want to build in Burnside they should go ahead, but it should be remembered that there are also height restrictions there.

Mr. Bead stated that he been to the HRMbyDesign meetings and thought the arguments about matters such as height were resolved. He runs a tour business and visitors love the Citadel experience. We don't have to be like downtown Toronto; we don't have to follow their model. We do need a vibrant downtown, but we need to find the reasons why the existing commercial space is empty. However, it cannot all be empty because we don't have two tall buildings that are overlooking the Citadel Hill. We do not need to block the rampart view to have development. We should stick with the rules.

### **Closing Comments**

Richard Harvey thanked the audience for attending and stated that the issues raised tonight will be addressed by staff and included in the staff report before council. He encouraged anyone with

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further comments or concerns to contact him. He asked United Gulf to make any final comments.

Jenifer Tsang thanked everyone for attending. She stated that Skye Halifax is a serious proposal. While the HRMbyDesign plan needs to be respected, plans cannot anticipate all circumstances and proposals. Skye Halifax is an extraordinary proposal and circumstance.

Richard Harvey outlined the planning process and indicated that a report will proceed to the Design Review Committee and Regional Council for its consideration. Should Council wish to consider adopting possible amendments to the planning documents, a public hearing will be required.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:01 p.m.