



Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia
1588 Barrington Street
PO Box 36111, RPO Spring Garden, Halifax, B3J 3S9

March 1, 2012

Mr. Terry Smith-Lamothe, Chair and
Members of the Design Review Committee
Halifax Regional Municipality

Dear Committee Members:

The Trust asks you to refuse the variances requested, and to refuse the site plan approval for 1592 Barrington Street. The proposal would be incongruous, out of context with its neighbours, and completely inappropriate for a heritage conservation district.

The proposal would destroy Allan Duffus' Tip Top Tailors Building and would negatively impact the abutting buildings. The proposed building would not even comply with the National Building Code and would risk placing a snow load on the roofs of all three abutting buildings. The proposal would block light to the south-facing windows and light well on the Tramway Building. It is not sufficient to say these matters would be addressed in private at the building permit stage. The public has an interest in the long-term survival of these buildings. We were dismayed to learn that neither the applicant nor HRM had notified the owner of the Tramway Building about this project. No approvals should be given or recommended for a proposal that does not comply with the Code.

The Trust was also very concerned that the staff report to the Heritage Advisory Committee was seriously deficient, omitting any mention of the mandatory, five-page Section 4.5, which requires retention of the architectural features of the existing building. It is not reasonable to allow an applicant to ignore the detailed provisions of Section 4.5 by applying to demolish a building in the Conservation District. The applicant is proposing to alter the facade by removing it and replacing it by a different facade. The Heritage Property Act clearly includes this as an "alteration". We have not seen the staff report to your committee, but worry that some of the same omissions may be carried over. We attach a description of some of these omissions, an analysis of the criteria in the Design Manual, and a discussion of alternatives.

Please turn down the present application, so the owners can come forward with an application that complies with the Design Manual.

Sincerely,

Phil Pacey
HRM Committee

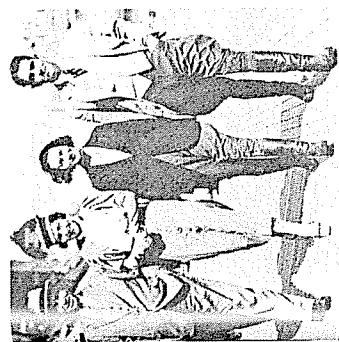
Alternatives for 1592 Barrington Street

There are several alternatives that would be more in keeping with the Design Manual than the proposal by the applicant:

- a. **Restoration:** The building could be restored, bringing back the limestone tiles of the parapet and pilasters, the maroon Vitrolite tiles of the cube and second storey, and the Roman bricks of the ground floor. A quick search of the internet reveals that restoration of Vitrolite tiles is a popular activity in heritage conservation districts in both the United States and Europe. The maroon Vitrolite tiles used by Allan Duffus in this design would blend with the red brick of the Khyber Building and the grey of the Tramway Building. This building could once again be a striking, modernist presence on Barrington Street.
- b. **Horizontal expansion:** The existing building could expand laterally into the light well. Doorways could be opened up through the north wall of the present building into this new space. An extra staircase or elevator could be placed in the new space. Alternatively, the new space could be a stand-alone shop. Most of the shop would be only eight feet wide, but it would have fourteen feet of frontage. It is worth remembering that the Tip Top Tailors' empire grew from a shop on Yonge Street with only eleven feet of frontage. It would be necessary to have discussions with Mr. Strug, the owner of the Tramway Building, about the right-of-way, which provides light to his building, and enables him to make repairs.
- c. **Vertical expansion:** The building could be expanded vertically. Some of the supports for a superstructure could be built in the present right-of-way, and would not disturb the present structure. An engineering assessment would be necessary to determine the best way to support the addition above the present building. The applicant argued that vertical expansion would be invasive, and would destroy historic materials. However, vertical expansion would certainly be less invasive than the applicant's proposal, which would destroy all of the materials. Any addition would have to be limited in height and bulk in order to respect the Church of England Institute, the Tramway Building, and Neptune Theatre, and to satisfy the snow load provisions in the Building Code.
- d. **Cosmetics:** The present building could be retained in its present envelope. The light well could be cleaned. The building could be cleaned and repainted. The building was occupied recently and could be occupied again.
- e. **Sale:** The property could be sold.

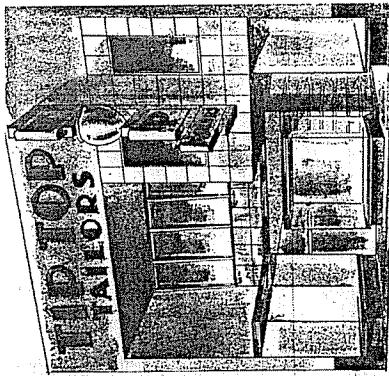
David Dunkelman
(left) was an innovator.

He founded the leading men's clothing firm in Canada.
He liked modern architecture.



1950:

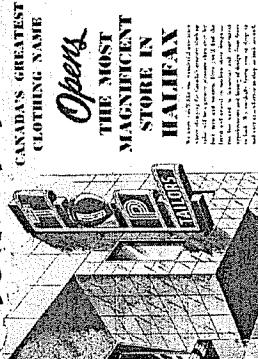
Allan Duffus' innovative front elevation for Tip Top Tailors is a study in cubes, squares and rectangles, inspired by contemporary art.



TOMORROW-

CANADA'S GREATEST CLOTHING NAME

Open
THE MOST MAGNIFICENT STORE IN HALIFAX



October 10, 1951:

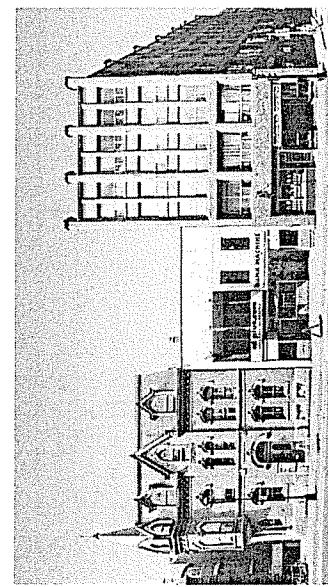
The Herald described the new building as "distinctively modern in design". Tip Top advertised that the building had "the latest and newest in modern store design - the last word in luxurious and convenient appointments and beauty of design from front to back".

Young Halifax architect, Allan F. Duffus, left, was commissioned to design a new Tip Top store.



- Tip Top Tailors Building has heritage value because of its association with a brilliant Canadian businessman, a leading Canadian clothing firm, and an outstanding Halifax architect, and because of the originality of its design.

The Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District was approved in 2009.



- Studies show that, in heritage conservation districts where the rules are followed, customers are attracted, and business increases. Property values rise more rapidly inside proper conservation districts than in areas outside conservation districts.
- Please maintain the integrity of the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District by recommending that this application be turned down.

Land Use By-law, Section 8(4):

- "In addition to the requirements of this By-law, development on a non-registered Heritage Property in a Heritage Conservation District shall be subject to Sections 4.5 and 4.6 of the Development in Heritage Contexts section of the Design Manual."
- Section 4.5 was not mentioned in the staff report to the HAC. Section 4.5 is directly relevant to this case. The application violates several parts of Section 4.5, as explained in the following slides.

Design Manual, 4.5

- Section 4.5:
 - Trust comment:
 - Tip Top Tailors is in the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District so the **mandatory guidelines** in Section 4.5 apply.
- “These guidelines shall apply to all registered heritage buildings, and **all buildings in heritage conservation districts.”**

Design Manual, 4.5, slide 3

- Guideline 4.5.4b: “Vertical elements such as pilasters, columns, cornices, and projecting bays should be **retained”**.
- Guideline 4.5.4e: “Existing fenestration patterns should be retained.”
- Section 4.5.5: “The intent of these guidelines is to encourage the retention, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of original windows.”

Trust Comment:
The application would not retain the architectural elements of the Tip Top Tailors Building, including the side pilasters, the cornices, and windows. The application should be turned down.

Design Manual, 4.5, slide 2

- Guideline 4.5.1 a: “The traditional architectural elements of historic building facades such as columns, pilasters, entries and shopfronts which establish a pedestrian scale and rhythm, should be **retained”**.
- Guideline 4.5.2 a: “Existing traditional shopfronts should be **retained”**.

Trust Comment:
The application would not retain the architectural elements of the Tip Top Tailors Building, including the side pilasters, the entries, and shopfront. The application should be turned down.

Design Manual, 4.5, slide 4

- Section 4.5.6: “The objective is to **retain** the character of historic building facades by using traditional materials for both rehabilitation and new construction.”
- Trust comment:
A glass curtain wall is not traditional and is not among the materials listed.

Design Manual, 4.5, slide 5

- Guideline 4.5.7a:
 - Trust comment:
 - The cornice and parapet of the Tip Top Building would be destroyed in the application, and would be replaced by a cornice two storeys too high.

Design Manual, 4.1

Trust comment:

“..., new additions, exterior alterations, or new construction **should not destroy** historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize a property.”

The application **would destroy** historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize this property. The application should be turned down.

Design Manual, 4.1

Trust comment:

“..., new additions, exterior alterations, or new construction **should not destroy** historic materials, features, or spatial relationships that characterize a property.”

The application **would destroy** historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize this property. The application should be turned down.

Design Manual, 2.5

Trust comment:

“Protect heritage buildings from unwarranted demolition.” Protecting the building requires turning down this application.

Design Manual, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4: “In instances where the heritage value of a building includes its three-dimensional character (width, depth and height), the entire building envelope **should be conserved**, and the transition of new construction to, and from, the heritage buildings should respect all three dimensions.”

The heritage value of Tip Top Tailors includes its **three-dimensional character**, the L-shaped recess, the display windows, and the light well. The building envelope should be conserved. The first step is to turn down this application.

Design Manual, 4.2.1 and 4.3.1

- “Maintain the same or similar cornice height established by existing heritage buildings for the podium (building base) to create a consistent streetwall height...”
 - Trust comment:
 - The cornices of the Tip Top and Khyber Buildings are only two storeys (9.8 m) high.
The proposal requests a variance to be more than four storeys. The variance should be turned down.

Acknowledgements:

- Original research by Heritage Trust members
 - Garry Shutlak, Public Archives of Nova Scotia
 - HRM Archives
 - Dunkelman family, Toronto
 - Duffus family, Halifax
 - Canadian Business Hall of Fame
 - Heritage unit, HRM staff

Summary:

- The Design Manual encourages and requires the conservation of buildings and features in the Conservation District.
- The application would not conserve the features of the Tip Top Tailors Building.
- The application should be turned down.