

EXTRACT OF JUNE 12, 2014 DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

**7.1. Case 19322: Substantive Site Plan Approval – Nova Centre, Halifax
(Previously before the Committee on October 10, 2013)**

Mr. McBride and Mr. Fowler declared a conflict of interest and took a seat in the gallery.

The following was before the Committee:

- *A staff recommendation report dated June 6, 2014 including Map 1 and the Design Manual Checklist*
- *Attachment A, Substantive Site Plan Approval dated June 3, 2014*
- *Attachment B, Design Rationale and other supporting documents, Substantive Site Plan Approval, dated June 3, 2014*
- *Attachment B, Pedestrian Wind Study*
- *Correspondence from Mr. Phil Pacey, Chair of the Halifax Committee, Heritage Trust, dated June 12, 2014 as noted above.*

Mr. Joe Ramia, President, Argyle Developments Incorporated introduced a presentation to the Committee. He indicated that this project was delivering on the commitment to the people of Halifax and the rest of Nova Scotia. He discussed the vision of the project and re-introduced the original design of the centre. He highlighted that the design of the centre has changed since the initiation of the project as a result of the public engagement process. Mr. Ramia made note of several of the ideas that came forward during the public engagement including the four regions of the province being represented and showcased within the project.

Mr. Ramia then presented various profiles of the site from different street sides. He explained some of the changes made as a result of the consultation with the Design Review Committee in October 2013. He indicated that the new design represents Nova Scotia's history and future. A rendering of the Grafton Street entrance from Prince Street was presented and Mr. Ramia highlighted the importance of lighting for this area of the site. He understands that this is an area of concern and noted that they have hired a well-known lighting consultant to work on the plan for the site.

Mr. Ramia thanked the Committee and turned the presentation over to Mr. Jamie Wright, Director, IBI Group and Mr. Trevor McIntyre, Architect, IBI Group. Mr. Wright and Mr. McIntyre presented a short video to the Committee. The video highlighted the progression of the Nova Centre design and some of the key features of the space from various views. After the conclusion of the video, Mr. Wright presented to the Committee.

Mr. Wright noted that this particular building would represent a new type of building for Halifax. Mr. McIntyre added that this project would represent all of Nova Scotia and there is attempt to represent the different cultural landscapes of the province. Mr. Wright noted that one of the challenges of the site was the size of the project and also that the building doesn't really have a back. He indicated that they created a look of individual buildings to try and break up the site.

Mr. Wright then discussed the roofscape. He noted that the ballroom roof cannot be landscaped; however they attempted to create a sculpturally pleasing roof. He also presented the major entry points at Argyle and Prince Street and noted some key features at the entrance such as the clear glass bay window that interacts with the intersection. Mr. Wright also presented the materiality of the building and its interface with the function of the building.

Mr. McIntyre presented the ground plan and the public space programme. He indicated that although it is a big block, there is a large amount of public space. He noted that the Grafton Street space could potentially hold up to 2000 people. During the day, a lighting box feature would provide light and would reflect the time of day. At night the lighting box feature could be programmed to reflect images.

Mr. McIntyre continued his presentation and described some of the features of the public spaces. He indicated that one of the challenges of the site was the grade at Sackville Street. He also noted that a water feature would be installed to hide the venting that needs to be hidden along that elevation. The surface materials were presented and discussed. Mr. McIntyre briefly explained the green roof plans for the site.

Mr. Wright and Mr. McIntyre concluded their presentation and invited questions from the Committee.

Mr. Fillmore noted some conflicts found in the various sets of drawings provided to the Committee. He asked about the trees represented on some of the images provided by the applicant and wondered if these were going to be planted. Mr. McIntyre responded by presenting an overview of the site and indicating the location of the trees. He explained that the majority of the trees are on Argyle Street and would provide a continuous canopy. He noted that the plantings along Market Street are tight to the building. Mr. Wright added that the process is on-going and some of the renderings show design intent. The Committee held a brief discussion on the representation of trees on images provided by applicants. Mr. Fillmore indicated that the Committee is interested in knowing where the “real trees” would be located.

Ms. Sirrs asked about the Argyle Street section. She indicated that in the presentation, Argyle was shown with planters and as a very animated space; however within the submission documents these features were not represented. She asked that the applicant speak to this area of the site. Mr. Ramia responded that what the Committee was presented would be what they would get. Ms. Sirrs noted that the challenge is that the items shown in the renderings are not on the submission documents. She would like to have some clarification on these conflicts. She noted that on the east side of Sackville Street, it shows a water feature and vents on the submission documents, but it also shows plants on the renderings. Mr. McIntyre described the plan to Ms. Sirrs and noted that there were no plantings around the water feature. The Chair asked for clarification on the vents and Mr. Ramia noted that they would be vertical. Ms. Sirrs expressed concern that the renderings show a lot more plantings than what is in the approval documents and indicated that there should be more representation in the submission documents.

Ms. Sinclair commented that the Committee is particularly interested in these features along Argyle and Prince Streets because there are many guidelines that are not being met, due to the nature of the building. Ms. Sinclair added that it is not helpful to have the applicant present intentions because it does not facilitate the Committee's ability to make a decision.

Mr. Lemoine asked for further clarification on Argyle Street traffic. Mr. Harvey confirmed that Argyle would remain a vehicular passageway. Mr. Lemoine also indicated that the Market Street side feels very much like the "back door" to the building and suggested that the applicant look at ways for the side to become more animated. Mr. Wright responded and explained some of the challenges with that side of the site and how they have added some liveliness. He explained the masonry used and the glazing. He noted the retail in the middle of the elevation, and the slightly industrial look and feel that it would have. Mr. Wright added that the garage doors would be a translucent material. He made a comparison to the "Gas Town" look.

The Chair asked Mr. Wright to clarify if the garage doors are going to be a translucent acrylic material as noted. Mr. Wright confirmed this material. Ms. Sirrs agreed that this would be a great material; however she indicated that the material of this door is not noted on the elevation. Mr. Saleh added that some of these discrepancies in the drawings could potentially be incorporated as conditions in the motion. The Chair confirmed that adding conditions would be possible. Ms. Sirrs added that she appreciates the changes that have been made to the Market Street side as a result of the applicant's previous consultation with the Design Review Committee.

Ms. Black asked if the roof of the ballroom had been considered as a public space. She added that there would be many eyes on that location. Mr. Wright added that view planes don't allow them to put the structure in place that would be necessary to support that area as a public space. He added that their own project does look down on to that space therefore it is a very important feature of the site and they are working to make it lively. Mr. Wright presented various examples of other roofs with a sculptural quality that serve as an influence to the Nova Centre's ballroom roof. The Chair asked about the sloping on the roof making reference to Level L-6. Mr. Wright responded and noted the impact of the viewplane on the roof's design. Mr. Ramia added that the trusses are 10 ft. deep.

Ms. Sinclair inquired about the Market Street elevation and made reference to drawing SPA-005. She noted a discrepancy regarding the metal louvers on the drawing and the curtain wall that was illustrated in the rendering and also in Attachment B. Mr. Ramia responded that he believes it is an error on drawing SPA-005. Mr. Wright added that mechanical engineers are still working on the systems for the building. Ms. Sinclair asked if the applicant could explain the strip along Market Street that isn't loading bays. She made reference to drawing SKA-393 and asked about the role of the space between gridlines J and K. Mr. Ramia responded that it was for Nova Scotia Power service space. Ms. Sinclair then asked about various openings in the streetwall and if they were changing. The Committee held a brief discussion on the discrepancies between the various drawings and plans. The Chair noted that these can all be considered as conditions in the motion.

Mr. Conley asked about the event plaza space and expressed concerns over vehicular traffic, acoustics and exhaust. Mr. McIntyre explained that these are definite issues and described the measures used to mitigate those effects, such as extraction fans. Ms. Sirrs asked who would be responsible for programming the event space. Mr. Ramia indicated that at the moment it currently belongs to them, the developer.

The Committee entered into discussion regarding the inconsistencies between the elevations, plans and renderings. The applicant provided clarification on the discrepancies. Mr. Harvey cautioned that the Committee would be making their decision based on what is in Attachment A and not on renderings that are conceptual in nature. The Committee discussed the addition of conditions and recommendations to the motion. The Committee ended their discussion and recessed to provide an opportunity for staff to work with the Committee to develop wording for the conditions.

The Committee reconvened and Mr. Harvey presented a brief overview of the June 6th staff report. He noted that the items for discussion from the Design Manual Checklist have been grouped into categories. He encouraged the Committee to look at the responses in the report and discuss their decision. Mr. Saleh indicated that he believed the Committee has discussed many of these items already. Mr. Harvey noted some of the items from the Design Manual Checklist that have been highlighted in the report. He indicated that there are a number of items from the checklist that, due to the nature and size of the building, fall into the “discussion” category of the Design Manual Checklist.

Mr. Fillmore suggested that the Committee move through the various items highlighted in the report and ask staff to provide clarification on any items that warrant discussion. The Committee entered into discussion on the process used to review the Design Manual Checklist and the following motion was put:

MOVED by Mr. Fillmore, seconded by Mr. Saleh that the Design Review Committee:

- 1. Approve the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for the mixed-use development for the Nova Centre (lands bounded by Argyle, Prince, Market, and Sackville Streets), Halifax, as shown on Attachment A, of the June 6, 2014 staff report; and**
- 2. Accept the findings of the quantitative wind impact assessment found in Attachment D of the June 6, 2014 staff report.**

The Committee discussed the motion and reviewed the Design Manual Checklist. Ms. Sinclair asked for clarification on item 2.6d as she feels that the Market Street side does not comply. She then asked for clarification on 2.6h and with reference to drawing SK-391, she noted some discrepancies between what was represented in that drawing and on drawing SPA-003. Ms. Sinclair asked for clarification on which roofs are green and which are not. She added that perhaps the Committee could recommend that more green be added. Mr. Harvey noted that the applicant would be dealing with some limitations due to mechanical equipment. Mr. Saleh requested that the applicant provide some clarity on the issue. Mr. Ramia responded that they

would like to do as much as possible for adding in green roofs; however they need to have a better understanding of the mechanical equipment necessary. He added that in order to achieve LEED Gold the more green roofs the better.

Ms. Sinclair asked about 3.2.1g. She commended the applicant for the way in which they have addressed the mechanical equipment on the sloping streets; however she expressed concern about what that area would look like in the winter. Mr. Saleh responded that he believed there would be seasonal landscaping. Ms. Sirrs echoed the concerns of Ms. Sinclair and noted that seasonal plants are not recorded anywhere in the submission documents. Ms. Sinclair added that seating along that sloping side would be beneficial.

The Committee reviewed the remaining checklist and the Chair asked if the Committee had any other comments or concerns. Ms. Sinclair asked if it could be confirmed that the Pedestrian Wind Study (Attachment D) is up to date in terms of the new building height. It was suggested that perhaps the Committee could condition their approval on the building passing the test. The Committee once again commented on the discrepancies found in the documents. It was noted that these issues could be addressed as conditions of approval.

With the agreement of the Committee, Mr. Fillmore withdrew his original motion and put the following motion on the floor:

MOVED by Mr. Fillmore, seconded by Mr. Lemoine that the Design Review Committee:

- 1. Approve the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for the mixed-use development for the Nova Centre (lands bounded by Argyle, Prince, Market, and Sackville Streets), Halifax, as shown on Attachment A, of the June 6, 2014 staff report;**
- 2. Accept the findings of the quantitative wind impact assessment found in Attachment D of the June 6, 2014 staff report;**

With the following conditions:

- 1) That trees shown on plans and elevations, other than L-100 of Attachment A, not be included for substantive site plan approval.**
- 2) That on drawings SPA -005 and SPA-005a of Attachment A:**
 - a) the reference to ‘metal louver’ above the loading bays be replaced by curtain wall with glazed spandrel panels, and**
 - b) the overhead panel doors be identified as a translucent material.**
- 3. That drawing SKA-393 of Attachment A be corrected to represent the doors and windows shown in drawings SPA 005 and SPA 005a of Attachment A**

4. **That drawing SKA-391 of Attachment A be corrected to represent the canopies shown on drawings SPA 003 and SPA 003a of Attachment A**
5. **That planters and water feature enclosures along Prince and Sackville Street be designed to allow for seating.**
6. **That drawing SKA-396 of Attachment A be corrected to represent that the roof area to the south of the Argyle Street tower, between section 7 and 10, be identified as ‘Possible Green Roof’.**
7. **That drawing L-100 of Attachment A include a provision that the water feature along Sackville Street contain seasonal landscaping.**
8. **That information and conclusions contained in attachment D, the Wind Study, be confirmed by the Development Officer.**
9. **That the area between the sidewalk and the building on L-100 of Attachment A be comprised of a mixture of high quality surface materials, including pavers and plant materials.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Recognizing that the Committee had no mandate relative to decisions of the Development Officer, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Development Officer the following:

MOVED by Mr. Saleh, seconded by Mr. Fillmore that the Design Review Committee recommend to the Development Officer:

1. **That the “off-site” street trees along Argyle and Market streets, pursuant to the images provide by the applicant, be considered for implementation.**
2. **The canopy feature, pursuant to the images provided by the applicant shown at the Prince Street entrance be considered for implementation.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.