

**OLD SOUTH SUBURB HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
STAKEHOLDER STEERING COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
May 16, 2016**

PRESENT: Mr. John Lawen
Ms. Elizabeth Pacey
Mr. Dylan Ames
Ms. Kerry Gosse, Chair

REGRETS: Mr. Brian Vallis
Ms. Aurora Camaño

STAFF: Mr. Seamus McGreal, Heritage Planner

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting. Supporting documents and information items circulated to the Old South Suburb HCD Stakeholder Steering Committee are available online: <http://shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/old-south-suburb>.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. and adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Lindsey Room, Halifax Central Library.

Mr. McGreal advised the committee that this is a special meeting of the Committee. The Black Binney Place proponent will again not be presenting but Dexel Architecture is here to give a short presentation.

Mr. McGreal presented the objective of the meeting to review and discuss the revised heights framework for the District.

Ms. Pacey discussed the intent of protecting heritage properties designated under the Heritage Property Act or as part of a Heritage Conservation District, particularly with regard to historic additions and ells, in the oldest neighbourhood in Halifax.

Ms. Pacey requested to show documents, including photos and building plans, illustrating rear ells on historic buildings.

Ms. Gosse mentioned the importance of moving forward quickly with this discussion as there are many issues to cover in the two hours available today.

Ms. Pacey presented documents to the Committee. She stated that rear ells and historic additions are signature features, protected under the Heritage Property Act. When you have a Heritage Conservation District, it makes the area more attractive and raises the value of the whole area.

Mr. McGreal mentioned that this is a very significant area. However, it's not a National Historic Park but a living neighbourhood with many private interests that need to be taken into account. The municipal heritage files rarely discuss these rear wings in their descriptions of the significance of the heritage buildings. These discussions are always about the main building and its elements and details. Some rear wings, including ells and additions, could be significant but are subordinate to the main building. Reducing the permitted height over the main building would serve as a conservation measure to protect it. Increasing height behind the main building is not a "death sentence" for rear wings since the removal of a rear wing or substantial alteration would need to be considered by municipal staff, the Heritage Advisory Committee and Regional Council before it can be removed according to the draft Plan. There will also be financial incentives available to support the integration of significant rear wings into new development.

Ms. Pacey suggested that the older heritage files rarely discuss rear wings because it would have been assumed at the time of registration that these feature were part of the heritage

building. She maintained that the rear wing of the Black Binney House may be of significance to its designation as a National Historic Site.

Mr. McGreal explained that the rear wing of the Black Binney House is not identified as a character defining element in the property's Statement of Significance for the National Historic Site designation published on the Parks Canada website.

Mr. McGreal noted that the draft Heritage Conservation District By-law will interpret the height of the main building separately from the height behind the main building. It uses the rear wall of the main building as the dividing line separating the different permitted heights.

Ms. Pacey stated that this will split the building in half and give permission to destroy the rear ells and historic rear additions. The situation will be worse for heritage than it is now.

Ms. Gosse requested that a map of all properties already designated as Heritage be displayed on screen. She suggested that an investigation of when these ells and additions were added to the backs of these buildings would be appropriate. It would be helpful to determine if these are recent additions, in the last forty to fifty years or are they in fact part of the heritage of these buildings.

Ms. Pacey agreed that recent additions should not be recognized as heritage features but historic additions should be protected in accordance with Standard 2 of the Conservation Standards which says that we should conserve changes to a historic place that have become character-defining elements in their own right, over time.

Mr. Dylan Ames mentioned that he is not comfortable telling private property owners what they can do to the back of their properties and that the Committee should be more concerned with the protecting streetscape instead. He likes the proposed policy in the draft Plan to reduce height over the main building and increase height in the rear yard.

Ms. Gosse stated that the Committee must put this matter aside for now, until more info can be discovered regarding rear ells. She invited Dixel Architecture to present to the Committee.

Mr. John Lawen mentioned that he will remain at the table during the presentation of his brother, Louie Lawen, because there is no conflict of interest since the Committee is only receiving information at this time.

Mr. Louie Lawen and Mr. Brent Robertson of Dixel Architecture presented to the Committee. They have plans to rehabilitate two registered municipal heritage properties at 1349-53 Barrington Street and 1333-35 Barrington Street. They will remove the building between these two heritage buildings and construct an appropriate infill building there. They want to keep the relevant heritage aspects of the two buildings. The current rules make rehabilitation very difficult. All of the brick and other elements such as windows will be removed and replaced on 1349-53 Barrington Street and the rear half of 1333-35 Barrington Street will be removed and

replaced with a new structure to incorporate the heritage building into a larger development, which they would like to be 28 meters in height, in behind the heritage buildings. They are prepared to work with the HRM Planning Department and this Committee including any municipal financial incentives program.

They will demolish three buildings along Bishop Street at the corner of Hollis including 5134 Bishop Street, 5140 Bishop Street, 5144-46 Bishop Street and 1363 Hollis Street. They wish to build a 37 meter building at this location. Dixel Architecture concluded their presentation and invited questions. They then left the meeting room.

Mr. McGreal suggested that the Committee now discuss the heights framework in the District.

Ms. Pacey stated that the heights are currently set at a 45 feet (13.7 meter) limit on the block bounded by Barrington, Bishop, Hollis and Morris. She suggested that this height should remain unchanged since this block is the most significant block in the District.

Mr. McGreal suggested that it may be appropriate to allow increased height in the centre of the block behind the heritage buildings since the Plan proposes to reduce heights over the heritage buildings. We may also consider post-bonus height where the developer would make substantial investments in heritage building conservation in exchange for extra height.

Mr. McGreal presented 3D (Sketchup) drawings of different height options on a projected screen along with aerial photography (Pictometry) and street photos (Streetview). He highlighted Standard 11 of the Conservation Standards and the principle that additions are required to be subordinate to heritage buildings but subordination is not a question of size; a small, ill-conceived addition could adversely affect an historic place more than a large, well designed addition.

Ms. Pacey would like confirmation from Parks Canada that the rear wing of the Black Binney House is not a character defining feature of the National Historic Site. If it is character defining then the existing 22 meter height allowance is not appropriate.

The Committee agreed that the next meeting will address rear ell and heights framework in more detail.

The next meeting will be scheduled for either June 8th or 9th.

Motion to adjourn (Ms. Gosse)

Seconded by Mr. Ames

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.