



**DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
November 14, 2019**

**PRESENT:** Colin Duggan, Chair  
Ted Farquhar, Vice Chair  
Gregory MacNeil  
Marianne Abboud  
Tara Ralph  
Catherine Ann Somerville Venart  
Rimon Soliman  
Matt Neville

**REGRETS:** David Hanna  
Nicholas Robins  
Ade Olatunde  
Erica Armstrong

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Navid Saberi, United Gulf Developments Limited  
David Plummer, United Gulf Developments Limited  
Amir Amin, United Gulf Developments Limited  
Ali Saboori, United Gulf Developments Limited  
Arnold Nasha, United Gulf Developments Limited  
Mike Quigley, United Gulf Developments Limited  
Ian Watson, Upland Planning and Design Studio  
Peter Clewes, Upland Planning and Design Studio  
Richard Kassner, Kassner Goodspeed Architects Limited

**STAFF:** Carl Purvis, Planning Applications Program Manager  
Dean MacDougall, Planner III  
Paul Sampson, Planner II  
Sara Knight, Solicitor  
Judith Ng'ethe, Legislative Assistant  
Alicia Wall, Legislative Support

*The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.*

*The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca).*

*The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. the Committee adjourned at 7:26 p.m.*

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. at Halifax Hall, 2nd Floor City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 25, 2019**

MOVED by Gregory MacNeil, seconded by Ted Farquhar

**THAT the minutes of July 25, 2019 be approved as presented.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

MOVED by Marianne Abboud, seconded by Gregory MacNeil

**THAT the agenda be approved as presented.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE**

## **5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

Ted Farquhar declared a conflict of interest for Item 9.1.2 - Case 22444.

## **6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE**

## **7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS**

The Legislative Assistant noted that a petition was received from Dr. Petra Mudie containing 26 signatures regarding Case 22129 - the Cunard Proposal, 1325 Lower Water Street, Halifax and would be forwarded to staff.

## **8. INFORMATION ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD – NONE**

## **9. REPORTS**

### **9.1 STAFF**

#### **9.1.1 Case 22511: Substantive Site Plan Approval for 1144, 1148, and 1150 Barrington Street, Halifax**

The following was before the Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated October 30, 2019 with attachments
- Staff presentation dated November 14, 2019

The Chair invited Dean MacDougall, Planner III, to present Case 22511.

Dean MacDougall displayed drawings and plans of the site and the proposed five-storey mixed use development. MacDougall explained that the properties are zoned DH-1, are located within Precinct 2, Barrington Street South and are encumbered by Viewplane 8. MacDougall noted that the properties are located on a prominent civic/cultural frontage.

MacDougall indicated that as the ground floor is proposed to be leased to one retail tenant, multiple entries are not called for and that, accordingly, the facade has been divided by columns between the glass storefront and the entrance to give impression of multiple commercial frontages. These conditions reinforce the main street qualities.

MacDougall spoke to the five variances being requested indicating they are the streetwall width, streetwall setback, side/rear yard setback, streetwall stepback and upper storey stepback.

A copy of the staff presentation is on file.

The Committee considered the application with staff responding to questions. The following points were noted:

- Members questioned if the development complies with Section 3.4.1B of the Design Manual
- Inquiries were made regarding the relative positioning of garage and entrance doors

MacDougall responded to the Committee's questions noting that the proposed plan emulates the historic feature of multiple storefronts along the ground floor and enhances the pedestrian experience and that the set back of the entrance door is due to cars exiting the garage.

The Chair invited Richard Kassner of Kassner Goodspeed Architects Limited to take the floor to respond to the Committee's questions.

Kassner indicated he was stepping in for their partner who was unavailable and would try to respond adequately to the Committee's questions.

The Committee considered the application further. The following points were noted:

- Concern was expressed over articulation
- Members asked who the commercial tenant will be
- Members expressed their opinion that the proposal does not contain enough historic features or special architectural flourishes

Kassner stated they did not share the same concerns regarding articulation as there is a lot of glass and glazing. They confirmed they would pass the Committee's concerns along to the designer. They further stated that the commercial tenant is yet to be identified.

The Committee inquired as to the heritage status of the buildings currently on the site.

MacDougall noted that the buildings are not registered heritage properties but that the Old South Suburb Heritage Conservation District proposal would shortly be coming to Council for consideration. Should this go forward, the buildings would qualify as heritage properties.

Carl Purvis, Planning Applications Program Manager, advised that the Committee should consider the application using the rules and policies that currently apply.

MOVED by Matt Neville, seconded by Gregory MacNeil

**That the Design Review Committee:**

- 1. Approve the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for 5 storey mixed-use development at 1144, 1148, and 1150 Barrington Street, Halifax as shown in Attachment A of the staff report dated October 30, 2019; and**
- 2. Approve the five variances to the Land Use By-law requirements regarding streetwall width, streetwall setback, side/rear yard setback, streetwall stepback, and upper storey stepback as contained in Attachment C of the staff report dated October 30, 2019.**

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

The Committee noted that the refusal was based on its view that the overall building design is not consistent with the Design Manual with respect to prominent civic frontage, namely, more distinct articulation and architectural features to reinforce the visual prominence and the historical nature of the site. The Committee further recommended that further consideration be given to sections 3.2.1A, 3.3.1D, 3.3.3A, 3.4.1B, 3.1.1C, 2.3.2 of the Design Manual and requested that the Architect attend the Committee meeting to respond to questions should the application return.

### **9.1.2 Case 22444: Substantive Site Plan Approval – 1591 Granville Street and 1568 Hollis Street, Halifax**

Ted Farquhar stepped away from the table.

The following was before the Committee:

- Staff recommendation report dated October 28, 2019 with attachments
- Staff presentation dated November 14, 2019

The Chair invited Paul Sampson, Planner II, to present Case 22444.

Sampson displayed drawings and plans of the site and confirmed the zoning is DH-1, that the property is located within the southwest corner of Viewplane 6 and is located in Precinct 4, Lower Central Downtown. The property has prominent civic frontage on Sackville Street and the proposed development is a 21 storey mixed-use building containing retail, a hotel and residential units.

Sampson explained that staff had a number of concerns with the proposed development, including lack of detail with respect to animation, lack of corner elements, accessibility concerns in the through-building plaza, entries not being prominent enough, lack of distinctive corner elements and architectural treatment along the Sackville Street frontage and lack of visual interest at the base and top. Sampson noted that staff would like to see more distinguishing architectural features such as sculpting and night lighting and do not feel it meets the Design Manual guidelines as there was a violation of built form objectives.

Sampson spoke to the variances and indicated the wind study identified one problem spot on the rooftop of the north tower and higher guard rails were installed as a result. The wind study was otherwise in order.

A copy of the staff presentation is on file.

The Committee considered the application with staff responding to questions. The following points were noted:

- Members pointed out that the staff report states this application “violates the secondary plan” and questioned why it would come to the Committee if this is the case

Sampson stated that the Land Use By-law sets out the specifics while the Design Manual sets out the objectives and variance criteria and that therefore an application may still come forward.

The Chair invited Peter Clewes, of Upland Planning and Design Studio to take the floor.

Peter Clewes stated that this is an interesting site and spoke to the public benefit of the plaza noting that people tend to gravitate towards terraced areas such as those envisioned in the through-building plaza in the proposed development. Clewes displayed pictures of similar features in other locations.

Clewes spoke to the wrap-around balconies and stated they are a nice effect to the units as they extend the ceiling and floor visually and act as an intermediary zone between unit and exterior in tight urban conditions, as well as provide shading. Clewes also spoke to building materials and the articulation on the rooftop. Clewes agreed that the top should be articulated questioned to what degree.

Clewes noted the challenge regarding the best way to articulate the façade along Sackville Street and felt that extensive glazing was the best option. Clewes expressed an interest in receiving the Committee's feedback regarding streetscaping.

The Committee considered the application further. The following points were noted:

- Inquiries were made as to the public benefit and the accessibility of the public cut through space with respect to railings being up to code
- Members questioned whether or not underground wiring could be done
- Members asked why so many variances are being requested
- It was noted that retail uses are critical to the usage of street frontage

Clewes noted that there are provisions in the building code that allow for stairs with railings on one side of a broad staircase and indicated a willingness by the owner to accept a requirement for underground wiring.

Clewes spoke to the requests for variances and noted the difficulty in balancing creation of a compelling design and the desire on the part of an owner to maximize density.

MOVED by Colin Duggan, seconded by Matt Neville

**That the Design Review Committee:**

- 1. Refuse the qualitative elements of the substantive site plan approval application for a 21-storey mixed-use development at 1591 Granville Street and 1568 Hollis Street, Halifax as shown in Attachment A of the staff report dated October 28, 2019, as the proposal does not comply with Sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.3.1, 3.3.4, 3.4.1, and 3.4.2 of the Design Manual, as noted in Attachment E of the staff report dated October 28, 2019; and**
- 2. Refuse the requested variances to the Land Use By-law requirements regarding streetwall width, upper storey streetwall stepbacks, and maximum tower width and separation, as contained in Attachment C of the staff report dated October 28, 2019, as the proposal does not comply with Sections 3.6.4, 3.6.5, and 3.6.7 of the Design Manual, as noted in Attachment E of the staff report dated October 28, 2019.**

**MOTION PUT AND DEFEATED.**

An alternative motion was proposed.

MOVED by Matt Neville, seconded by Catherine Ann Somerville Venart

**THAT the Design Review Committee:**

- 1. Approve the qualitative elements of the proposal subject to the following conditions:**
  - a. The minimum tower separation distance be 15 metres inclusive of balconies; and**
  - b. Universal accessibility of the through cut block access be assured and meet or exceed Rick Hansen standards or the National Building Code whichever is more stringent.**
- 2. That consideration be given to the following:**
  - a. The proposed ramp on Granville Street be redesigned so as to ensure landscaping of the retaining wall is contained within the property;**
  - b. Sunlight access be ensured in the through cut block;**
  - c. Interactive elements including possible public art be located within the through cut block connection; and**
  - d. An element be included to address wind on Hollis Street.**
- 3. Recommend that the Development Officer accept the public benefit of underground wiring of overhead electrical and communication distribution system as the post-bonus height benefit for the development and that the Development Officer accept the findings of the wind study.**
- 4. Approves all variances which are recommended by staff within their report in addition to approving the following variances for the subsequent reasons:**

- a. Section 3.6.4 of the Design Manual – there is a clear purpose for the publicly accessible space similar to other buildings in the area such as the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia;
- b. Section 3.6.5 of the Design Manual – locating the south tower close to Hollis Street is an improvement to the ground level condition on Granville Street; and
- c. Section 3.6.7 of the Design Manual – variance is approved to a new total of 15 metres separation distance inclusive of balconies and the resulting building width based on that the allowed volume permitted on the site has been relocated from elsewhere on the site for the purpose of creating a publicly accessible through cut access.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**9.1.3 – 2020 Design Review Committee Meeting Schedule**

MOVED by Colin Duggan, seconded by Catherine Ann Somerville Venart

**THAT the Design Review Committee defer Item No. 9.1.3 - 2020 Design Review Meeting Schedule, until the next meeting of the Committee.**

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**10. PRELIMINARY PRESENTATIONS - NONE**

**11. ADDED ITEMS - NONE**

**12. IN CAMERA (IN PRIVATE) – NONE**

**13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – November 20, 2019, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Alicia Wall  
Legislative Support