APPENDIX E – DESIGN GUIDELINES

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN MANUAL

The Design Manual is to be the primary reference document used to provide guidance on design of buildings within King's Wharf.

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1.3. APPROACH TO BE USED IN INTERPRETING THE DESIGN MANUAL

The design criteria of the Design Manual are set up in such a way to be interpreted in a pragmatic and flexible manner. Creative solutions should be considered in the interpretation of the Design Manual that meet the spirit and intent of all guidelines.

2.1. THE STREETWALL

This section provides guidance for how buildings shall interface with the sidewalk and thereby the quality of the enclosure they provide to the street. A streetwall is formed when buildings line or front onto a street with largely consistent setbacks. The placement, scale and design quality of the building's streetwall, as well as the uses provided at- grade, can determine the nature and character of the streetscape and reinforce desired pedestrian and broader public realm objectives.

The three subsections in this section are concerned with:

a. appropriately located pedestrian-oriented commercial uses;
b. the setback of the streetwall from the front property line (streetwall placement), and;
c. the height of the streetwall up to the point where upper storey stepbacks are required.

2.1.1. PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL

Grade related commercial uses such as retail stores and restaurants enhance the pedestrian environment. Within the Urban and Marina Districts as identified on the Site Plan, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses are required to ensure a critical mass of activities that engage and animate the sidewalk.

As an exception, pedestrian-oriented commercial uses are encouraged but not required on the pedestrian street running between King's Wharf Place and Prince Street Extension as well as on building faces fronting on the Yard Park and Canal Area.

All retail frontages should be encouraged to employ sound, place-making design elements including, but not limited to the following:

a) The articulation of narrow shop fronts, characterized by close placement to the sidewalk.
b) High levels of transparency (non-reflective and non-tinted glazing on a minimum of 75% of the first floor elevation).

c) Frequent entries.
~~d)~~ Protection of pedestrians from climatic conditions with awnings and canopies ~~required~~ encouraged along portions of pedestrian-oriented commercial frontages (especially entrances)
e) Sidewalk cafés and other spill-out activity is permitted and encouraged where adequate width for pedestrian passage is maintained.
f) Where non-commercial uses are proposed at-grade in those areas where permitted, they should be designed in such a manner that future conversion to retail or commercial uses is possible.

2.1.2. STREETWALL SETBACK

In downtown Dartmouth, the placement of the building relative to the front property line generally corresponds to the grade-level uses and intensity of pedestrian traffic. For the most part existing development in the downtown is uniformly placed at the sidewalk with little or no setback, and it is desirable that future development follows that example. However, there are areas that observe a variety of streetwall setbacks. To reinforce existing and desired streetscape and land use characteristics, streetwall placements are therefore categorized according to the following setback standards:

a) Minimal to no setback (0-0.5m): Corresponds to the traditional retail streets and business core of the downtown. Except at corners or where an entire block length is being redeveloped, new buildings should be consistent with the setback of the adjacent existing buildings.
b) Setbacks vary (0-1m): Corresponds to streets where setbacks are not consistent and often associated with non-commercial and residential uses or house-form building types. New buildings should provide a setback that is no greater or lesser than the adjacent existing buildings.

2.1.3. STREETWALL HEIGHT

To ensure a comfortable human-scaled street enclosure, streetwall height should generally be no less than 8 metres and generally no greater than 15m. Accordingly, maximum streetwall heights are defined and correspond to the varying conditions of downtown streets. Schedule H: Cross Sections for streetwall heights in specific locations.

2.2. PEDESTRIAN STREETSCAPES

2.2.1. DESIGN OF THE STREETWALL

In designing streetwalls, the following guidelines shall be considered:

a. The streetwall should contribute to the ‘fine-grained’ character of the streetscape by articulating the façade in a vertical rhythm that generally consists of 20’ bays as is consistent with the prevailing character of narrow buildings and storefronts.
b. The streetwall should generally be built to occupy 100% of a property’s frontage along streets.
c. Above the maximum streetwall height, further building heights are subject to upper storey stepbacks.
d. Notwithstanding 2.2.1(c), buildings featuring 5 or fewer storeys shall not be subject to stepback requirements.
e. Streetwalls should be designed to have the highest possible quality of material and detail.
f. Streetwalls should have many windows and doors to provide ‘eyes on the street’ and a sense of animation and engagement.

g. Along pedestrian frontages at grade level, blank walls shall not be permitted, nor ~~shall~~ should any mechanical or utility functions (vents, trash vestibules, propane vestibules, etc.) be permitted.

2.2.2. BUILDING ORIENTATION AND PLACEMENT

The orientation and placement of a building on a property helps define the quality and character of the public realm. The following guidelines shall be considered with regards to building orientation and placement:

a. Except in rare instances (refer to Schedule B: Site Plan, for locations where buildings do not meet this criteria), buildings should orient to, and be placed at, the street edge with clearly defined primary entry points that directly access the sidewalk.
b. Alternatively, buildings may be sited to define the edge of an on-site public open space, for example, plazas, promenades, or eroded building corners resulting in the creation of public space.

2.2.3. RETAIL USES

Retail uses are most successful, and help to animate a street when located at-grade in areas of high visibility and pedestrian traffic, and when appropriately designed and focused.

The following guidelines shall be considered with regards to retail uses:

a. commercial uses at-grade shall feature a minimum 75% glazing on street facades to achieve maximum visual transparency and animation.
b. Buildings shall be design for provision of weather protection for pedestrians through the use of awnings, canopies or other elements.
c. Where retail uses are not currently viable, the grade-level condition should be designed to easily accommodate conversion to retail at a later date. This is not required in areas designated as residential.
d. Minimize the transition zone between retail and the public realm. Locate retail immediately adjacent to, and accessible from, the sidewalk.
e. Avoid deep columns or large building projections that hide retail display and signage from view.
f. Ensure retail entrances are located at or near grade. Avoid split level, raised or sunken retail entrances. Where a changing grade along a building frontage may result in exceedingly raised or sunken entries it may be necessary to step the elevation of the main floor slab to meet the grade changes.
g. Commercial signage should be well designed and of high material quality to add diversity and interest to retail streets, while not being overwhelming.

2.2.4. RESIDENTIAL USES

Care should be taken to create building forms for residential uses that have a residential look and feel. The following guidelines shall be considered with regards to residential uses:

a. Individually accessed residential units (i.e. town homes) should have front doors on the street, with appropriate front yard privacy measures such as setbacks and landscaping. Front entrances and first floor slabs should be raised above grade level for privacy, and should be accessed through means such as steps, stoops and porches.
b. Residential units accessed by a common entrance and lobby may have the entrance and lobby elevated or located at grade-level, and the entrance should be clearly recognizable from the exterior through appropriate architectural treatment.

c. Projects that feature a combination of individually-accessed units in the building base with common entrance or lobby-accessed units in the upper building are encouraged.
d. Units with multiple bedrooms (2 plus bedroom units) should be provided that have immediately accessible outdoor amenity space. The amenity space may be at-grade or on the landscaped roof of a podium.
e. Residential uses introduced adjacent to pre-existing or concurrently developed eating and drinking establishments should incorporate acoustic dampening building materials to mitigate unwanted sound transmission.

2.2.5. SLOPING CONDITIONS

Sloping streets pose challenges to creating pedestrian-oriented streetwall conditions. New buildings must provide a good interface to these sloping street conditions, utilizing the design strategies outlined in these guidelines. Greater flexibility in interpretation of the guidelines is required, as is greater creativity and effort in design.

The following guidelines shall be considered when dealing with sloping conditions:

a. Maintain active uses at-grade, related to the sidewalk, stepping with the slope. Avoid levels that are distant from grade.
b. Provide windows, doors and other design articulation (internal floor or ceiling lines) along facades; blank walls are to be avoided.
c. Wrap retail display windows around the corner along sloping streets, where retail is present on the sloping street.
d. Wherever possible, provide pedestrian entrances on sloping streets. If buildings are fully accessible at other entrances, consider small flights of steps or ramps up or down internally to facilitate entrances on the slope.
e. Flexibility in streetwall heights is required in order to transition from facades at lower elevations to facades at higher elevations on the intersecting streets. Vertical corner elements (corner towers) can facilitate such transitions, as can offset or “broken” cornice lines at the top of streetwalls on sloping streets.

2.2.6. OTHER USES

All uses should help create an animated street environment with doors, windows and pedestrian activity fronting and directly accessing the public realm.

The following guidelines shall be considered when non-commercial uses are proposed at-grade:

a) Non-commercial uses at-grade should animate the street with frequent entries and windows.

2.3. BUILDING DESIGN

2.3.1. BUILDING ARTICULATION

The articulation of a building is what gives it a human scale and a sense of quality, through attention to detail. Articulation implies a three-dimensional facade, where windows and other elements have depth, creating a dynamic play of light and shadows through the use of solids and voids. Typically the articulation will indicate the

transition between floors and interior spaces, giving a human scale to the facade. This articulation can also include changes in materials, or material treatments.

The following guidelines shall be considered in regards to building articulation:

a) To encourage continuity in the streetscape and to ensure vertical 'breaks' in the façade, buildings shall be designed to reinforce the following key elements through the use of setbacks, extrusions, textures, materials, detailing, etc.:
    i. Base: Within the first three storeys, a base should be clearly defined and positively contribute to the quality of the pedestrian environment through animation, transparency, articulation and material quality.
    ii. Middle: The body of the building above the base should contribute to the physical and visual quality of the overall streetscape.
    iii. Top: The roof condition should be distinguished from the rest of the building and designed to contribute to the visual quality of the skyline.
b) Buildings should seek to contribute to a mix and variety of high quality architecture while remaining respectful of downtown's context, ~~and~~ tradition and maritime vernacular.
c) To provide architectural variety and visual interest, other opportunities to articulate the massing should be encouraged, including vertical and horizontal recesses or projections, datum lines, and changes in material, texture or colour.
d) Street facing facades should have the highest design quality; however, all publicly viewed facades at the side and rear should have a consistent design expression.

2.3.2. MATERIALS

Building materials help define the character and quality of a building and how it relates to its context. Of importance in material selection is longevity and ability to age with grace. Materials like stone, brick and glass will endure well over time.

The following guidelines shall be considered in respect to materials:

a) Building materials should be chosen for their functional and aesthetic quality, and exterior finishes should exhibit quality of workmanship, sustainability and ease of maintenance.
b) Too varied a range of building materials is discouraged in favour of achieving a unified building image. Except at the street level?
c) Materials used for the front façade should be carried around the building where any facades are exposed to public view at the side or rear.
d) Changes in material should generally not occur at building corners.
e) Building materials recommended for new construction include brick, stone, wood, glass, in-situ concrete and pre-cast concrete. Need to add in a lot of materials.
f) Stucco and stucco-like finishes shall not be used as a principle exterior wall material.
g) Vinyl siding, plastic, plywood, concrete block, and EIFS (exterior insulation and finish systems where stucco is applied to rigid insulation) are prohibited, other than the possible use of EIFS in areas that are not accessible to public/residents and are not highly visible.
h) Darkly tinted or mirrored glass is prohibited. Clear glass and glare reduction coatings are preferable to light tints other than for railings.

i) Unpainted or unstained wood, including pressure-treated wood, is prohibited as a building material for permanent decks, balconies, patios, verandas, porches, railings and other similar structures, except that this guideline shall not apply to seasonal sidewalk cafes.

2.3.3. ENTRANCES

The entrance of a building is the most recognizable and used part of a facade, and provides an important visual cue. It must be prominent, recognizable and accessible.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to entrances:

a) Emphasize entrances with such architectural expressions as height, massing, projection, shadow, punctuation, change in roof line, change in materials, etc.
b) Ensure main building entrances are covered with a canopy, awning, recess or similar device to provide weather protection for pedestrians.
c) Modest exceptions to setback and stepback requirements are possible to achieve the goals of the above guidelines.

2.3.4. ROOF LINES AND ROOFSCAPES

Roof lines and roofscapes have a significant impact on the image of the city. Due to the vantage points afforded by the sloping condition of downtown, the bridges, the Dartmouth Commons, and the long views across the water, the design of roof conditions must be carefully considered. This is true of low, mid and high-rise buildings, and is true for the roofs of podiums and other building form articulations.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to roof lines and roofscapes:

a) Buildings above six storeys (mid and high-rise) contribute more to the skyline of individual precincts and the entire downtown, so their roof massing and profile must include sculpting, towers, night lighting or other unique features.
b) The expression of the building ‘top’ (see previous clause) and roof, while clearly distinguished from the building ‘middle’, should incorporate elements of the middle and base such as pilasters, materials, massing forms or datum lines.
c) Landscaping treatment of all flat rooftops is required. The incorporation of green roofs is strongly encouraged.
d) Ensure all rooftop mechanical equipment is screened from view by integrating it into the architectural design of the building and the expression of the building ‘top’. Mechanical rooms and elevator and stairway head-houses should be incorporated into a single well-designed roof top structure. Sculptural and architectural elements are encouraged to add visual interest.
e) The street-side design treatment of a parapet should be carried over to the back-side of the parapet for a complete, finished look where they will be visible from other buildings and other high vantage points.

2.4. CIVIC CHARACTER

The downtown's civic character is largely defined by highly visible sites occupying important symbolic locations, or that have important public functions. These include sites that form view termini, sites adjacent to significant public open spaces, corner and gateway sites.

The following guidelines shall be considered in respect of highly visible sites occupying important symbolic locations, or that have important public functions:

2.4.1. PROMINENT FRONTAGES AND VIEW TERMINI

These are frontages and sites with exceptional visibility and opportunity for signature or landmark architectural treatments or features. These sites can enhance the quality of public areas, reinforce downtown or precinct identities, orient pedestrians and strengthen civic pride. Accordingly, development on these sites has a greater civic responsibility that obliges consideration for the highest possible design and material quality. The design of these buildings should provide distinctive massing, articulation and architectural features so as to reinforce their visual prominence.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to prominent frontages and view termini:

a) Prominent Visual Terminus Sites: These sites identify existing or potential buildings and sites that terminate important view corridors and that can strengthen visual connectivity. On these sites, distinctive architectural treatments such as spires, turrets, belvederes, porticos, arcades, or archways should be provided. Design elements (vertical elements, porticos, entries, etc.) should be aligned to the view axis.
b) Prominent Civic Frontages: These frontages identify highly visible building sites that front onto important public open spaces, and physical connections to the waterfront.

2.4.2. CORNER SITES

Corner buildings have a greater visual prominence given that they terminate two streetwalls and that they have excellent visual exposure from the open space created by street intersections. This special condition should be acknowledged with design responses.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to corner sites:

a) Provision of a change in the building massing at the corner, in relation to the streetwall.
b) Provision of distinctive architectural treatments such as spires, turrets, belvederes, porticos, arcades, or archways.
c) Developments on all corner sites must provide a frontal design to both street frontages.
d) Alternatively, buildings may be sited to define the edge of an on-site public open space, for example, plazas, promenades, or eroded building corners resulting in the creation of public space.

2.5. PARKING, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

2.5.1. VEHICULAR ACCESS, CIRCULATION, LOADING AND UTILITIES

Service areas are a necessary part of buildings, but often do not create a welcoming pedestrian environment. Care must be given to the design in order to minimize their presence and impact on the public experience by locating them to less visible parts of the building and by integrating them within the building mass.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to vehicular access, circulation, loading, and utilities:

a) Locate parking underground or internal to the building (preferred), or to the rear of buildings.
b) Ensure vehicular and service access has a minimal impact on the streetscape, by minimizing the width of the frontage it occupies, and by designing integrated access portals and garages.
c) Locate loading, storage, and areas for delivery and trash pick-up out of view from public streets and spaces, and residential uses.
d) Where access and service areas must be visible from or shared with public space, provide high quality materials and features that can include continuous paving treatments, landscaping and well-designed doors and entries.
e) Coordinate and integrate utilities, mechanical equipment and meters with the design of the building, for example, using consolidated rooftop structures or internal utility rooms.
f) Locate heating, venting and air conditioning vents away from public streets wherever possible.
g) As much as possible, locate utility hook-ups and equipment (i.e. gas meters) away from public streets and to the sides and rear of buildings, or in underground vaults.
h) Siamese connections, where visible to the public, are to be of stainless steel.

2.5.2. PARKING GARAGES

Parking garages often provide a much needed supply of vehicular parking spaces to service downtown destinations. However, unless special attention is paid to their design, they can be very detrimental both aesthetically and functionally to the future success of the downtown.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to parking garages:

a) Where multi-storey parking garages are to be integrated into new developments, they should be visually obscured from abutting streets by wrapping them with ‘sleeves’ of active uses.
b) Animated at-grade uses should occupy the street frontage, predominantly retail, with 75% transparency.
c) At-grade parking access and servicing access to retail stores should be provided to the rear and concealed from the street.
d) Provide a façade treatment that conceals the parking levels and that gives the visual appearance of a multi-storey building articulated with ‘window’ openings.
e) Design the parking garages such that they can be repurposed to other uses (i.e. level floor slabs) is encouraged.
f) Utilize high quality materials that are compatible with existing downtown buildings.
g) Locate pedestrian access to parking at street edges, with direct access. Ensure stairs to parking levels are highly visible from the street on all levels.
h) Ensure all interior and exterior spaces are well lit, inclusive of parking areas, vehicular circulation aisles, ramps, pedestrian accesses, and all entrances.
i) Maintain continuous public access to parking at all hours and in all seasons.
j) Minimize the width and height of vehicular access points to the greatest practical extent.
k) Provide clear sightlines for vehicles and pedestrians at sidewalks, by setting back columns and walls, and providing durable low-maintenance mirrors.
l) Bicycle parking must be provided in visible at-grade locations, and be weather-protected.

2.5.3. SURFACE PARKING LOTS

The following guidelines shall be considered with regards to surface parking lots:

a) Surface parking lots shall be designed to include internal landscaping or hardscaping on islands at the ends of each parking aisle, clearly marked pedestrian access and paths, lighting and be concealed with landscaped buffers or other mitigating design measures.
b) In addition to landscaping, a variety of hardscaping materials should be used to add visual texture and reduce the apparent scale of surface parking lots. Landscaping should be low maintenance.

2.6. LANDSCAPING

2.6.1. GROUND LEVEL LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The following guidelines shall be considered regarding the landscape design at ground level:

a. Create a strong visual and physical connection between the building setback and public streetscape through the use of consistent materials, grades, and design elements. Maintain universal access to public and shared entrances, particularly where there are changes in topography.
b. Organize landscape elements to support safe and comfortable pedestrian movement, highlight important building features, such as entrances, screen less attractive activities, such as parking access, add four season interest, colour, and texture, and provide shade, where appropriate.
c. Provide sustainable landscape design by:
    i. providing sufficient soil depth and high-quality growing medium for new shade trees and plant material;
    ii. using light-coloured (high-albedo) and permeable paving materials on parking lots, walkways, and other hard surfaces to manage the urban heat island effect and stormwater;
    iii. maximizing on-site stormwater infiltration, capture, and reuse;
    iv. installing energy efficient, pedestrian-scale lighting with shielded fixtures and automatic shut-off devices.
d. On streets characterized by soft landscape setbacks or where ground floor uses require more privacy from the adjacent sidewalk, provide additional landscaping between the building face and public sidewalk. Such treatment may include tree and shrub planting, water features, minor grade changes, railings, curbs, low walls, fences, public art, lighting, and seating, etc.

2.6.2. ROOFTOP AND PODIUM LEVEL LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The following guidelines shall be considered with regards to the landscape design for rooftops and podiums:

a. Organize landscape elements to enhance the visual appearance of the property, to provide an amenity area for the building's occupants, or a combination of both.
b. Provide sufficient soil depth and high-quality growing medium for shade trees and plant materials.
c. Consider rooftop and podiums level wind conditions in the design and layout of amenity and landscaped areas.

2.6.3. PLANT MATERIAL

The following guidelines shall be considered with regards to plant material:

a. Plant material should be of the highest quality, appropriate for the local climate, and require minimal maintenance.
b. As much as possible, plant material should be self-sustaining in its planted environment, and require minimal watering.
c. The minimum acceptable sizes for plant material should be as follows:
    i. high branching deciduous trees at grade – 60 mm caliper;
    ii. high branching deciduous trees on slab – 45 mm caliper;
    iii. coniferous trees – 1.5 m in height; and
    iv. shrubs – 0.6 m in height or spread.

2.7. LIGHTING

Night image is an important aspect of the downtown's urban character and form. The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to lighting:

a. Attractive landscape and architectural features can be highlighted with spot-lighting or general lighting placement.
b. Consider a variety of lighting opportunities inclusive of street lighting, pedestrian lighting, building up- or down- lighting, internal building lighting, internal and external signage illumination (including street addressing), and decorative or display lighting.
c. Illuminate landmark buildings and elements, such as towers or distinctive roof profiles.
d. Encourage subtle night-lighting of retail display windows.
e. Ensure there is no 'light trespass' onto adjacent residential areas by the use of shielded "full cut-off" fixtures.
f. Lighting shall not create glare for pedestrians or motorists by presenting unshielded lighting elements in view.

2.8. SIGNS

Signs play an important role in the overall image of downtown. Signs should contribute to the quality of individual buildings and the public realm. They should reflect the unique characteristic of their context. High quality, imaginative, and innovative signs are encouraged.

The following guidelines shall be considered with respect to signs:

a. Integrate signs into the design of building facades by placing them within architectural bays, friezes or datum lines, including coordinated proportions, materials and colours.
b. Signs should not obscure windows, cornices or other architectural elements.
c. Sign scale should reinforce the pedestrian scale of the downtown, through location at or near grade level for viewing from sidewalks.
d. Large freestanding signs (such as pylon signs), signs on top of rooftops, and large-scale advertising (such as billboards) are prohibited.
e. Street addressing shall be clearly visible for every building.
f. The material used in signage shall be durable and of high quality, and should relate to the materials and design language of the building.